Diverse and Inclusive Social Matters in Select Dissertations at HBCUs: A Summative Analysis

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Keywords

HBCU, Scholarship, Dissertation, Africentric

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Abstract

Historically, Black colleges, universities, and social workers have shared a history of serving marginalized people. This research is conducted at a point in time when the profession and academic field of social work have expressed an interest in eliminating racism, but more so in upholding the values of social work education in support of working with marginalized populations. Social work as an academic discipline and the origin of Historically Black Colleges and Universities is introduced. The integration of social work in Historically Black Colleges and Universities is analyzed by cataloging the number and type of institutions that offer social work programs. Exploratory summative content analysis is used to identify the prevalence of race-related themes in doctoral dissertations. Dissertations in social work at the doctoral level are multi-dimensional. Despite this complexity, this study indicates that students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities are likely to study issues of race and racism. Recommendations on how Historically Black Colleges and Universities can assist are offered and, in some cases, provide a roadmap for the future development of social work as a practice and discipline.

Keywords: HBCU, scholarship, dissertation, Africentric

Introduction

The genesis of the social work discipline is based on complex and competing narratives. On the one hand, it has developed to help oppressed and vulnerable populations to realize social justice (e.g., NASW, 2022; Pak et al., 2017; Reamer, 2006). On the other, the origins and applications of social work have served to reinforce racist pedagogical and policy practices (Crudup et al., 2021). Thus, the field must continuously evaluate the profession's ethos, pedagogy, practice, and scholarship. Populations at the center or heart of social work are the socially unheard and people who continue to be treated differently because of historic and institutionalized barriers. The discipline now has a *13th Social Work Grand Challenge* to uphold

and work toward eliminating racism (Spencer & Teasley, 2021). The murder of George Floyd and too many other African Americans by police has engendered this grand challenge for social workers and those currently pursuing an education in it (Teasley et al., 2021).

Scholars have emphasized that the eliminates racism addendum is symbolic of the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution in that it instituted guaranteed rights for all people to have equity (School of Social Work at UT Arlington, 2021). The underpinning of this grand challenge is viewing race as a monolithic attribute experienced similarly within every structural entity throughout society. The centrality of race as it pertains to eliminating racism begins with understanding perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors that strengthen and pervade racism.

The values of the social work profession mirror a critical perspective lens. Thus, the social work profession is concerned about human behavior and the ecological impact oppression has on others, holistically seeing the whole person. Kimberlé Crenshaw, a professor of law and theorist who coined intersectionality theory in the late 1980s, devised intersectionality to examine and illustrate how layers of identity and norms legitimate power for some and limitations for others that are legitimated (Crenshaw, 2017). Within contemporary society, when people think of the term race, the initial thought is Black or White people. The social differences ascribed to Blacks influence the interpretations of others. Due to White hegemony, the concept of blackness has a negative view with grave consequences and is often rejected or excluded (Nyborg, 2019). Discriminatory and disparate systems make up the intersectionality lens based on observable characteristics of typically darker people. Thus, social location is opined as the intersects between social issues (i.e., social status, cyclic oppression) and race (Monk, 2022).

Race/ethnicity-related topics within social work are essential for the populations social work serves and cultural competency to inform the profession better. Social workers also must be knowledgeable about the intersectionality of race/ethnicity as it has complex linkages to gender, class, sexuality, and disability in research, theory, and practice. The result is a more responsive social worker to the profession (Simon & Subica, 2022).

Background

Education has long been considered an avenue of uplift for African Americans. From founding the first Historically Black College and University (HBCU) in 1837 to the last in 1963,

HBCUs have remained key institutions for African Americans and higher education (Albritton, 2012; Bracey, 2017). The term HBCU was first used in 1965, with such institutions previously being referred to as "Negro colleges" (Mutakabbir, 2011, p. 35).

The oldest HBCU, Cheyney University of Pennsylvania, was established 28 years before emancipation (Crewe, 2017; Arroyo & Gasman, 2014). Before citizenship was granted, free and enslaved Blacks sought to improve themselves by bettering their education. However, legal and social barriers denied Blacks access to formal learning. Attempts to circumvent educational restrictions were often met with extreme violence (Bettez & Suggs, 2012). For example, South Carolina's anti-literacy law meant that even "free people of color who violated the law could receive a punishment of fifty lashes as well as a 50-dollar fine" (Russell-Brown, 2023, p. 348). Beyond legal sanctions, "history accounts for many instances in which Blacks were punished, beaten, and even killed for attempting to learn to read, write, and count" (Talley, 2022, p. 4). The turning point was the end of the Civil War when newly freed women and men could finally pursue their ambition for knowledge. HBCUs accommodated this desire while maintaining racial separation (Albritton, 2012). Approximately 90% of HBCUs are clustered in the South (Saunders & Nagle, 2018).

Most early HBCUs were private institutions funded by churches, philanthropists, local governments, business owners, and individual Blacks (Bracey, 2017). The Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 was the first congressional effort to establish funding for institutions of higher education (Bracey, 2017). Because the Act was passed during the Civil War had limited results (Crawford, 2017). In 1890, the Act was amended with a clause that banned racial discrimination in enrollment with the caveat that states could provide separate institutions for Blacks (Mutakabbir, 2011). The idea was that funding would be split evenly. Several states capitalized on the opportunity to receive federal economic funding by declaring existing schools for Blacks as land grant institutions and developing separate institutions. In some instances, departments in existing institutions purposed for educating Blacks were deemed standalone institutions, including Prairie View A&M and the University of Arkansas Pine Bluff (Mutakabbir, 2011). Federal funding was rarely, if ever, evenly split, and Black schools were disproportionally burdened with securing revenue (Bracey, 2017; Crawford, 2017).

From the late 1860s until the mid-1960s, Black college aspirants had few options for higher education (Bracey, 2017). During this period of legal segregation, 90% of all Black college students were educated at HBCUs (Albritton, 2012). Today, Black students choose to attend HBCUs for several reasons, including the environment, reputation, and cost (Johnson, 2017). Some scholars note that Black students face greater racial animus at primarily White institutions (PWIs), and HBCUs are perceived as more welcoming (Reeder & Schmitt, 2013).

HBCUs exist in 21 states, within the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The institutions vary significantly in size, location, funding, degree types, and demographics. A few, such as Howard University, Texas Southern University, and Spellman College, are set in large metropolitan areas, while others, including Mississippi Valley State University, Elizabeth City State University, and South Carolina State University, are in cities with populations smaller than 20 thousand. In West Virginia, Black students at HBCUs are outnumbered by White students by nearly 10 to 1 (West Virginia State University, Bluefield State College), while HBCUs like Fayetteville State University are becoming increasingly more diverse (Bryan, 2023).

Despite their success, HBCUs often face criticism from critics who misrepresent their capabilities and purpose (Gasman & Bowman, 2011; Williams et al., 2020). HBCUs are also mistakenly perceived as schools that seek to educate Blacks only. Inclusion is a tradition of HBCUs that opened doors to people of all races when other institutions discriminated along class and racial lines (Albritton, 2012; Gasman & Nguyen, 2015).

A common theme of HBCUs, regardless of institutional prestige or funding, is their commitment to providing opportunities to students who might never attend college. Scholars celebrate HBCUs for their willingness to engage students of varying academic talent and their work to help them be successful (Brown, 2007). This HBCU tradition aligns with the purpose of social work, which is to help those in need (Bowles et al., 2016). Crewe (2017) found that social work programs in HBCUs are pertinent to the field and that they are research-based. Thus, such programs remain beholden to the founders' provisions to address the oppressed's ubiquitous needs and fight against injustices.

Literature Review

Despite improvements made over the years, social work, like many other disciplines, is rooted in White ideologies (e.g., Yazeed, 2021; Wright et al., 2021; Bonilla-Silva & Zuberi, 2008). During the development of social work, racial inequalities that afflicted African Americans were often ignored by White social workers and social systems (Carlton-LaNey, 1999; Bowles et al., 2016). Early social workers, many of whom were White and worked for relief institutions, often blamed African Americans for the issues that impacted them (Barrow, 2007). Even an HBCU illustrated that Eurocentric worldviews are still entrenched and practiced widely in the field of social work in a Westernized culture where the history and experiences of people of color are not as valued (e.g., McPhatter, 2016). Though several African American trailblazers contributed significantly to what makes up contemporary social work practices (Carlton-LaNey, 1999), they are rarely, if ever, noted in social work curricula. Nearly all early African American leaders in social work were educated at and or taught at an HBCU (Bowles et al., 2016).

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is the accreditation body for social work programs. According to CSWE (2020), 22 percent of doctoral-level social work students who resided in the United States in 2019 were African Americans or other Blacks. In the same year, over 15,000 African Americans earned a doctorate, Ph.D., Ed.D., D.D.S., or an M.D. in various specialties compared to over 107,000 Whites who earned similar degrees (Duffin, 2021). Doctorates, specifically philosophical ones, comprise less than 2% of the population (OECD, 2021). Although Blacks continue to progress in education, the disparity in enrollment and graduation speaks to the intersectionality of race and education (Gilbert & Belgrave, 2009).

Despite continuing challenges in funding and enrollment, HBCUs have been of immeasurable value in social work. Scholars laud the contributions of HBCU faculty in community-based research and work primarily focused on African Americans (Bowles et al., 2016). Other scholars have called explicitly for a cultural African-based centered model (Africentric approach) within the field of social work (Carlton-LaNey, 1999; Gilbert & Belgrave, 2009). A criticism of social work is that the discipline has historically patronized African Americans through Eurocentric and ineffective interventions. Even modern evidence-based

practices prevalent in social work may overlook the specific needs of African Americans. An Africentric approach would direct social workers to use what Carlton-Laney (1999) refers to as a race lens when assessing issues within and beyond the African American population. Viewing practice, research, and service through this lens would promote greater competence and representation within the discipline of social work.

Academic scholarship in social work has a unique role as it is often meant to effect social change, yet rarely is it used for this purpose or accessed by those in need (Sliva et al., 2019). A social work department deans and directors article listed university culture, institutional levers, and academic values as impediments to public impact scholarship at the faculty level (McBride et al., 2019). It is also well-documented that White-dominant institutions, including PWIs, center Eurocentric perspectives, and social work are no exception (Crudup et al., 2021). As institutions created to serve Black people specifically, HBCU social work programs, through their pedagogy and values, may be capable of promoting scholarship that helps to de-center whiteness and encourages Africentric scholarship.

This current study provides insight into intersections of topics associated with race and social problems in the discipline of social work at HBCUs by concentrating on scholarship at the student level (dissertations). Marshal et al. (2016) studied scholarly productivity among social work faculty at HBCUs. They found that faculty scholarship focused on populations disadvantaged by systems, emphasizing people of African descent. This is the only body of work focused on scholarly research by doctoral social work students at HBCUs. This study aims to illustrate the varied degree typologies of social work programs offered at HBCUs; review completed dissertations originated at HBCUs to determine if there is an Africentric trend, and report our findings in hopes that social work scholars and educators continue to build from this work and previous studies on HBCUs. As a value in social work education, cultural competency indicates the use of evidence-based research to better human conditions. Our research question is, are doctoral students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities likely to study issues of race and racism?

Methodology

The research method for this study is descriptive and exploratory and involves quantitative and qualitative aspects. We sought to catalog each HBCU that offers any degree in social work. This was accomplished by first reviewing a list of each institution classified by the U.S. Department of Education as an HBCU. Designation as an HBCU requires that an institution be founded before 1964 and have as its primary purpose the post-secondary education of African Americans (Albritton, 2012; Mutakabbir, 2011). In addition to identifying the number and type of HBCUs that grant social work degrees, this study targeted specific dissertations completed at those institutions. Because of our interest in student scholarships from an Africentric context, we focused on social work dissertations that identify people and behaviors that implicitly and explicitly address racialized contextualization.

Inclusion required that each institution is presently open and regionally accredited. At the time of this research, there are currently 102 accredited HBCUs recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (NCES, 2021). Each institutional website was visited to determine if a degree in social work was offered. Information was verified through telephone or email contact with an institutional representative in admissions or the department offering the degree. After final confirmation, each HBCU was labeled as public or private, alphabetized, including the level of degree (if offered) and the college, school, or department where offered (see Appendix).

Descriptive and quantifiable characteristics of HBCUs provide an orderly and objective outline. However, this study moves beyond numerical analysis and explores the contextual meaning of available dissertations produced at the HBCUs offering doctorates in social work. Clark Atlanta University (C.A.U.), Howard University (H.U.), Jackson State University (J.S.U.), Morgan State University (M.S.U.), Norfolk State University (N.S.U.), and North Carolina A&T University (A&T) offer doctorates in the field of social work. The program at A&T is a joint program with the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG). The A&T/UNGG program was established in the fall of 2019, and no dissertations have been defended at the time of this writing. The doctoral-granting institutions offer the doctorate only in the Ph.D., not the Doctor of Social Work (D.S.W.).

Dissertation searches were conducted using ProQuest Dissertations & Thesis Global. We used the advanced search function by imputing only social work, target institution, and dissertation. This process removed master-level theses and yielded 2,606 total dissertations. Institutional libraries were visited and searched for social work dissertations, which yielded another 2,215 unique doctoral publications. The final number of doctorates in social work, verified by the title page of each document, totaled 323 (see Table 1).

Table 1: Distribution of Doctorate Degrees

University	N	%
Clark Atlanta	150	46.4
Howard	82	25.4
Jackson State	30	9.3
Morgan State	54	16.7
Norfolk State	7	2.2
North Carolina A&T	0	.0
Total	323	100

Analysis

We applied a simple quantitative method to the 323 dissertation manuscript titles by counting the reoccurrence of words related to race. We then followed up with a more in-depth qualitative analysis by exploring manifest and latent usages within documents that had any of the words as primers within the title. This study utilized summative content analysis from an exploratory vantage point but has been used in different studies. Summative content analysis is a standard method in quantitative and qualitative research because it allows researchers to analyze and interpret large amounts of information. It begins with identifying and counting specific words to gain an underlying meaning within context (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Stage one of the analysis was first applied in the manifest form to selected dissertations by counting the reoccurrence of race-related words within the manuscript titles. If any word was not present, the dissertation was not reviewed. Our selected words, which were of interest a

priori based on earlier studies, are descriptive, behavioral, environmental, and limited to African American, Black, discrimination, disparate, disproportionate, minority, prejudice, race, and racism. Race-related words are targeted because, as Crudup et al. (2021) suggest, social work must "name and disrupt white supremacy and craft a counter-narrative that intentionally and specifically de-centers whiteness" (p. 661). Scholars have also called for HBCUs and their students to be more interested in exploring race matters (Buckley et al., 2022). Finally, when matters/attributes/effects of race are openly addressed, it makes the research more attractive to people beyond academia (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

By using the control plus F key search function in PDF, we could streamline searches for the selected words. When this was not possible in older documents, conversion software was used to transform PDFs into Word documents. All counts exclude words that makeup part of other words, act as surnames, account for different tenses and conjugations, are contextualized for meaning, and are limited to words within the text of manuscripts only (excluding the title and references).

Stage two used latent coding with a more in-depth analysis by exploring and interpreting reflections that related to keywords identified in stage one. This process involved selecting statements that justified behavior and interactions beyond the selected keywords. The authors screened each of the 323 dissertations and analyzed the data independently. Inconsistencies involving coded sections around race-related words were resolved through discussion until an agreement was reached.

Findings

Descriptives

We contacted 102 HBCUs and received a response from 95 (93%) that confirmed the existence, levels, or absence of social work degrees and programs at their respective institutions. Public HBCUs number (53) compared to private (49), constituting 52% and 48%, respectively. Over half of HBCUs, 59 (57.8%), currently offer social work programs at any level (see Table 2 and Appendix). Public institutions make up 64% of social work programs at HBCUs. Four of the six doctorate-granting institutions are also public.

Table 2: Distribution of Highest Degree

Degree	N	%
Associates	3	5.1
Minor	1	1.7
Bachelor	35	59.3
Master	14	23.7
Doctorate	6	10.2
Total	59	100

Theoretical

We reviewed 323 dissertations, ranging from 1982 to 2021. These manuscripts were analyzed using the identifying words African American, Black, discrimination, disparate, disproportionate, minority, prejudice, race, and racism. Of the reviewed dissertations, 147, representing slightly less than half (45.5%), contained one or more of the target words in the title. Next, we combined the total term count within all dissertations (See Table 3).

Beyond counting the frequency of keywords, the content of words was analyzed based on contextual relevance, emphasis, and differences in patterns. Although separated across space and time, the manuscripts were connected through narratives and studies of social apathy and exploitation and for the hope that future research might continue to address these ills. Four dominant interconnected themes emerged in the dissertations: inequalities, agency, trauma, and coping. Our analysis generated the themes and constructed them by reading and re-reading words concerning their broader narratives. More precisely, the keywords and structuring of themes serve as guides for understanding both individual and structural manifestations of racial marginalization within institutions and social systems and the necessity of an Africentric approach.

Table 3: Title & In-Text Counts by Institution

	University					
	Clark	Howard	Jackson	Morgan	Norfolk	
Terms						Total
African American	5279	4778	66	3064	1026	14213
Black	6504	1710	7	2539	623	11383
Discrimination	403	213	3	232	51	902
Disparate	645	63	0	86	25	819
Disproportionate	374	111	0	59	33	577
Minority	1010	248	2	113	50	1423
Prejudice	47	35	2	52	8	144
Race	2067	646	2	716	93	3524
Racism	462	200	0	259	33	954
Total	16791	8004	82	7120	1942	

Note: No NC&T dissertations are available. Jackson counts represent one in-text dissertation.

Theme 1: Inequality

Inequality is generally a motivator of social work, and within the selected dissertations, inequality was discussed as a de facto element of society (Reamer, 2006). To put it differently, inequality is normalized to the point of being given. The intersections of racial and gender inequality were widely discussed, with greater emphasis placed on the racial variant. Personalized inequality caused by racism was not ignored, as individual microaggressions were recounted in the form of stereotypes and direct discrimination, yet inequality through structural racism accounted for most analyses. For example, rather than focusing on the individual characteristics of teachers and students, Flood-Hines (2019) describes "a hidden inequality embedded within routine educational practices" that influences racial scholastic achievement and discipline (p. 29). Structural reform was also suggested to be considered internally within social

work education from an Africentric approach to reduce perpetuating manifestations of cultural superiority (Freeman, 2013).

Theme 2: Trauma

Trauma has been conceptualized as a survivor's response to abuse or harm, most often in hostile environments, and takes many forms (Menakem, 2021). Trauma also results from guilt, separation, or loss (Jones, 2019), and central to the idea of trauma is that the triggering event(s) will continue to inform a person's perception and emotional state long after the event has ended (Frierson, 2014). Similar events may also serve to retraumatize. Whether it derives from interpersonal relationships, racial injustices, illness, or natural disasters, a resounding theme was the exposure and (often inappropriate) treatment of Blacks suffering from trauma. Again, although this theme was given individual narratives, it was just as often presented collectively, given the Black experience within the United States. "Historical trauma continues to marginalize and oppress African Americans and commit internal emotional and psychological damage" (Wiley, 2016, p. 23).

Theme 3: Agency/Efficacy

An agency is a person, group, or organization that can implement a course of action related to a desired outcome (Parsell et al., 2017). Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their ability to perform and is the assessing and reassessing one's resources and motivations (Morris, 2008). Within the dissertations, attributes of agency and efficacy were explored through successes and failures in particular areas. A recurring notion was that self-determination by Blacks was different to the degree that they faced more significant artificial barriers than other groups (Freeman, 2013; Walker, 2019; Anderson, 2018). Anderson (2018) posits that gifted Black students are high-profile targets for racial discrimination and the blockage of self-actualization at PWIs, while Hammond-Greene (2016) asserts that the evolution of HBCUs has acted as "a source for individual agency and institutional autonomy" for Black engagement (p. 55).

Theme 4: Coping

Despite systematic inequalities, associated traumas, and, at times, a lack of agency, coping was a phenomenon that seemed to resonate throughout the various studies. Coping is the

process of reducing "emotional tension," adjusting to stressful situations, and "developing mastery over stressful demands" that would otherwise endanger a person's well-being (Brown, 2014, p.35). Coping assistance involves support from religious communities, family, friends, healthcare providers, and professional associations (Gadling-Cole, 2010). However, coping also has negative manifestations, such as substance abuse, violence, risky behavior, apathy, or disengagement (Menakem, 2021). Coping is nuanced, and even where it has positive effects, it cannot alleviate long-term exposure to enduring stressors. Walker (2019) makes this point by stating that "the consequences of racial discrimination cannot be fully mitigated by well-established coping strategies, and that only the eradication of racism will alleviate race-related stress for African Americans and other historically racialized populations" (p. 18-19).

Discussion

Social work is a popular discipline within the body of HBCUs, and social work programs are generally found in most HBCUs. This relationship is appropriate as the mandate of HBCUs and social work aligns in terms of service. Many HBCUs were founded and still operate in the South, and 53 of the 59 (90%) HBCUs that offer social work education are in the South. Although the regional status of the District of Columbia and Maryland might be debated in a contemporary sense, each HBCU that offers a doctorate in social work is located in the southern part of the U.S., where racial disadvantage was de jure and not simply de facto. The history of overt racial discrimination in the South has made it an enduring battleground where social workers and others fight for progress (Carlton-LaNey, 1999). The social work discipline is primarily concerned with public welfare, and it makes sense that public HBCUs account for slightly over half of all programs at 34 (58%) (Albritton, 2012).

Nearly half of all available dissertations reviewed from HBCUs in social work focused specifically on issues of race and the Black experience. Contextually, authors of the dissertations reviewed explored and examined historical traumas, issues with which they had personal experience and contemporary topics of race. While some studies prioritized topics and directly addressed issues of racial discrimination and prejudice, others expressed the impact of social systems and phenomena from a Black perspective. Collectively, the research encapsulated the

multifaceted layers, experiences, and challenges Black people face and the range of social work approaches needed for engagement.

The four themes of inequality, trauma, agency, and coping converged in meaning for a more culturally enlightened social work education. One that prepares social workers, and by extension, the discipline, for more targeted attention to the needs and concerns of Black people. The dissertations reviewed represent roughly 40 years of scholarship calling for equitable treatment and a more profound analysis of the experience of Black people within social work. Despite what sometimes appeared to be cyclic expressions of frustration with unresponsive and lethargic social institutions, a sense of hope, not defeat or victimization, has permeated the bodies of work. The types of research conducted by doctoral students reflect that they, like many HBCU faculty, emphasize the value of studying issues from an Africentric perspective (Marshall et al., 2016).

The summative content analysis revealed that when the racial descriptors of African American, Black, minority, and race were removed, the behavioral and environmental elements of discrimination, disparity, disproportionality, prejudice, and racism became more salient. To put it differently, an argument can be made that a strong relationship exists between racial characteristics and the type of treatment one can expect to receive. Removal of the racial characteristic makes the insidiousness of the offensive behavior plainer and more visible. This is not to suggest that discriminatory race-related behavior is appropriate, but rather that it is normalized and ingrained to the extent that it is often ignored. As complained by scholars, race and underlying issues have become the dominant factor (Carlton-LaNey, 1999; McCoy, 2020). Social workers must recognize individual and institutional conditioning to detect and address how race influences practice.

Implications

America has always provided a standard of what social life resembles and depicts the people who create and delineate ideas that become norms. Social theory illustrates such concepts regarding standards in the United States:

Social theory can also be thought of as incorporating normative concerns bearing on debates about desirable ends or values of social life—about how social life ideally "ought

to be"—in ways that overlap closely with moral, political, and legal philosophy concerns. (Harrington, 2021, Introduction)

Scholars and researchers at all social work institutions must not exploit the Black community to gain funding. Instead, they should explicitly indicate the implications of their research and address the needs of the Black population. Faculty and administrators should embrace contemporary engagement with social issues (Wright et al., 2021).

People of color, specifically African Americans, have insecurities stemming from education being weaponized against them (Crudup et al., 2021; Yassine & Tseris, 2022). Quite often, this intellectual assault is caused by educators' neglect to acknowledge or promote the contributions of diverse innovators (Bracey, 2017). HBCUs have been and must continue to be, instrumental in fostering environments that counter marginalization and celebrate Black achievement (Albritton, 2012). Furthermore, scholars who are exposed to ideologies offered by experts with diverse lenses, including racial representation, are better prepared for general community engagement (Bettez & Suggs, 2012).

Wright et al. (2021) contend that many social workers who provide services to African Americans are White. Although this paper was about social work and dissertations authored at HBCUs, it did not focus specifically on Black students. Approximately three-quarters of all Black PhDs receive their undergraduate or graduate education at HBCUs (Albritton, 2012). Enrolled students can be engaged through a targeted curriculum. Many HBCU alums also go on to teach at PWIs. Social workers of all races can benefit from an education that applies a racial equity/critical racial awareness lens to community issues. An ideal opportunity to inspire emerging social workers to be race-conscious is during college, and HBCUs are uniquely positioned for this purpose. HBCU social work departments should promote conference presentations, seek partnerships with PWIs, and encourage scholarship through publications.

Limitations

This research had many limitations. For example, we could only visit doctoral institutions to review some archived social work dissertations. Universities must consistently make dissertations available online through third-party or institutional databases. When dissertations

from such institutions were available, it was the result of past practice or efforts of individual authors.

Our target words were another limitation. Multiple authors titled dissertations about well-known Black people, ethnic groups, locations, or situations and events that we knew primarily involved Black people. However, our requirements did not allow the inclusion of these studies. As such, the representation of dissertations within a racial context is not as robust as it would have been without less restrictive words. We also intentionally did not use White supremacy or White in our search parameters. Although these words arguably increased thematic content, they likely shifted our research away from the intended focus. Substantive scholarship exists for students studying whiteness from a non-Africentric approach (see Ford, 2012s). We also realize that social work scholarship at the doctoral level encompasses more than just dissertations. However, our study did not allow for student-led peer-reviewed publications. In addition, while often available within the acknowledgment and introductory sections of reviewed dissertations, we did not consider individual author demographics such as sex, race, or types of prior education and how they could influence student scholarship.

Conclusion

HBCUs represent a diverse group of institutions that have sought to improve the lives of disadvantaged people since their inception in the 1800s. Throughout their existence, they have offered inclusive education when other institutions have sought to restrict it. This article uncovered the intersection of HBCUs and social work programs, finding that most HBCUs offer social work education at some level. It also explored the types of social work scholarship produced at doctoral-granting institutions.

A substantial number (nearly half) of the reviewed student research addressed issues of race. Within these narratives, we uncovered themes of trauma, inequality, agency, and coping. Collectively, these themes provide a guide for future social work research, practice, and education. Despite its complex history of marginalization, the field of social work has pledged to be present in the fight to end racism. However, decolonizing education is a true challenge. For the field of social work, a core challenge is the changing of paradigms, research, and curriculum. There is a need and opportunity for scholars and practitioners to realize what it truly means to

have diversity and inclusion within the context of social work academics and to uphold what social workers strive to live up to as change agents. Diverse voices bring about opportunities to engage various perspectives for fostering social change. When Black people can tell their own stories and not be defined by Eurocentrism, those disseminated experiences may dismantle stereotypes and power structures (Crudup et al., 2021; Yassine & Tseris, 2022). This also indicates scholars disseminating the voices written by people of color in their scholarship.

The idea or concept of improving race and ethnic relations will not advance if Eurocentrism continues to permeate society. HBCUs and social workers also cannot afford to attend exclusively to Blacks, but both have a unique role in empowering this often marginalized population. Such help may be realized in research and studies that inform policy and practice. "Afrocentricity provides the shuttle between the intransigence of White privilege and the demands of African equality; without such a conduit there can be no real understanding of African agency . . ." (Asante, 1998, p. 41). However, a challenge exists in educating and training social workers to be aware of the structural obstacles within the social work discipline if they are to detect and address racially centered inequities (Crudup et al., 2021; Yassine & Tseris, 2022). HBCUs and their students have a role to play in this transition.

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Appendices

Appendix: Historically Black College and University Social Work Results

Institution	State/Type	Program	Degree	*College/ *Department*
Alabama A&M	AL/ Public	Yes	B.A., M.S.W.	*College of Education, Humanities & Behavioral Sciences
Alabama State University	AL/ Public	Yes	B.S.W., M.S.W.	*College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences
Albany State University	GA/ Public	Yes	B.S.W., M.S.W.	*College of Business, Education & Professional Studies
Alcorn State University	MS/ Public	Yes	B.S.W.	*Schools of Arts & Sciences/*Social Work*
Allen University	SC/ Private	No	NA	NA
American Baptist College	TN/ Private	No	NA	NA
Arkansas Baptist College	AR/ Private	No	NA	NA
Benedict College	SC/ Private	Yes	B.S.W., Cert. x2	*School of Education, Health & Human Services
Bennett College	NC/ Private	Yes	B.S.W.	*Division of Professional Studies*
Bethune Cookman	FL/ Private	Yes	Minor	*College of Arts & Humanities
Bishop State CC	AL/ Public	No	NA	NA
Bluefield State College	WV/ Public	No	NA	NA
Bowie State University	MD/ Public	Yes	B.S.W.	*College of Professional Studies
Central State University	OH/ Public	Yes	BS, B.A.	*College of Humanities, Arts & Social Sciences
Cheyney University	PA/ Public	No	NA	NA
Claflin University	SC/ Private	No	NA	NA

Institution	State/Type	Program	Degree	*College/ *Department*
Clark Atlanta University	GA/ Private	Yes	B.S.W., M.S.W., PhD	*Whitney M. Young Jr. School of Social Work
Clinton College	SC/ Private	No	NA	NA
Coahoma Community College	MS/ Public	Yes	Associates	*Social Science Department*
Coppin State University	MD/ Public	Yes	B.S.W.	*College of Behavioral & Social Sciences
Delaware State	DE/ Public	Yes	B.S.W., M.S.W.	*Wesley College of Health & Behavioral Sciences

Appendix: Historically Black College and University Social Work Results (Cont.)

Institution	State/Type	Program	Degree	*College/ *Department*
Denmark Technical College	SC/ Public	No	NA	NA
Dillard University	LA/ Private	Yes	B.S.W.	*School of Social Sciences
Edward Waters University	FL/ Private	No	NA	NA
Elizabeth City State	NC/ Public	Yes	B.S.W.	*School of Humanities & Social Sciences
Fayetteville State	NC/ Public	Yes	B.S.W., M.S.W., Minor, GC	*College of Humanities & Social Sciences
Fisk University	TN/ Private	No	NA	NA
Florida A&M University	FL/ Public	Yes	B.S.W., M.S.W.	*College of Social Sciences, Arts & Humanities
Florida Memorial	FL/ Private	Yes	B.S.W.	*School of Arts & Sciences

Fort Valley State	GA/ Public	Yes	B.S.W.	*Colleges of Arts & Sciences
Gadsden State CC	GA/ Public	No	NA	NA
Grambling State	LA/ Public	Yes	B.S.W., M.S.W.	*College of Professional Studies
Hampton University	VA/ Private	No	NA	NA
Harris-Stowe State	MO/ Public	No	NA	NA
Hinds County CC	MS/ Public	No	NA	NA
Howard University	D.C./ Private	Yes	M.P.H., M.S.W., M.B.A., MDiv PhD	*School of Social Work
Huston-Tillotson	TX/ Public	No	NA	NA
Interdenominational Theological Center	GA/ Private	No	NA	NA
J.F. Drake State Tech	AL/ Public	No	NA	NA
Jackson State University	MS/ Public	Yes	B.S.W., M.S.W., PhD	*College of Health Sciences
Jarvis Christian College	TX/ Private	Yes	B.S.W.	NA
Johnson C. Smith	NC/ Private	Yes	B.S.W., M.S.W.	*College of Professional Studies

Appendix: Historically Black College and University Social Work Results (Cont.)

Institution	State/Type	Program	Degree	*College/ *Department*
Kentucky State	KY/ Public	Yes	B.S.W.	*College of Humanities, Business & Society
Lane College	TN/ Private	No	NA	NA
Langston University	OK/ Public	No	NA	NA
Lawson State CC	AL/ Public	Yes	A.A., A.A.S.	*General Studies*
LeMoyne Owen College	TN/ Private	Yes	B.S.W.	*Social & Behavioral Sciences*
Lincoln University	MO/ Public	Yes	B.S.W.	*College of Arts & Sciences
Lincoln University	PA/ Public	No	NA	NA
Livingstone College	NC/ Private	Yes	B.S.W.	*Department of Social Work*
Meharry Medical	TN/ Private	No	NA	NA
Miles College	AL/ Private	Yes	B.S.W.	*Social & Behavioral Sciences*
Mississippi Valley	MS/ Public	Yes	B.S.W., M.S.W.	*Department of Social Work*
Morehouse College	GA/ Private	No	NA	NA
Morgan State University	MD/ Public	Yes	B.S.W., M.S.W., PhD	*School of Social Work
Morris Brown College	GA/ Private	No	NA	NA
Morris College	SC/ Private	No	NA	NA
Norfolk State University	VA/ Public	Yes	B.S.W., M.S.W., PhD	*Ethelyn R. Strong School of Social Work

Institution	State/Type	Program	Degree	*College/ Department
North Carolina A&T	NC/ Public	Yes	B.S.W., M.S.W., PhD (with UNCG)	*College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences
North Carolina Central	NC/ Public	Yes	B.S.W., M.S.W.	*College of Arts, Social Sciences & Humanities
Oakwood University	AL/ Private	Yes	B.S.W.	*Department of Social Work*
Paine College	GA/ Private	No	NA	NA
Paul Quinn College	TX/ Private	No	NA	NA
Philander Smith College	AR/ Private	Yes	B.S.W.	*Division of Social Sciences*
Prairie View A&M	TX/ Public	Yes	B.S.W.	*Marvin D. & June Samuel Brailsford College

Appendix: Historically Black College and University Social Work Results (Cont.)

Institution	State/Type	Program	Degree	*College/ Department
Rust College	MS/ Private	Yes	B.S.W.	*Social Science*
Savannah State	GA/ Public	Yes	B.S.W., M.S.W.	*College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences
Selma University	AL/ Private	No	NA	NA
Shaw University	NC/ Private	Yes	B.S.W.	*Social Work, Sociology, & Justice Studies*
Shelton State CC	AL/ Public	Yes	A .A.	N.A.
Shorter College	AR/ Public	No	NA	NA
Simmons College	KY/ Private	No	NA	NA
South Carolina State	SC/ Public	Yes	B.S.W.	*Department of Human Services*

Southern University & A&M College	LA/ Public	Yes	B.S.W.	*Nelson Mandela College of Government & Social Sciences
Southern University New Orleans	LA/ Public	Yes	B.S.W., M.S.W.	*College of Education & Human Development
Southern University-Shreveport	LA/ Public	No	NA	NA
Southwestern Christian College	TX/ Private	No	NA	NA
Spelman College	GA/ Private	No	NA	NA
St. Augustine's University	NC/ Private	No	NA	NA
St. Philip's College	TX/ Public	No	NA	NA
Stillman College	AL/ Private	No	NA	NA
Talladega College	AL/ Private	Yes	B.S.W.	*Eunice Walker Johnson Division of Social Sciences & Education*
Tennessee State	TN/ Public	Yes	B.S.W., M.S.W.	*College of Public Service
Texas College	TX/ Private	Yes	B.A.	*Division of Business & Social Sciences*
Texas Southern	TX/ Public	Yes	B.S.W.	*College of Liberal Arts & Behavioral Sciences
Tougaloo College	MS/ Private	No	NA	NA
H. Councill Trenholm State Community College	AL/ Public	No	NA	NA

Appendix: Historically Black College and University Social Work Results (Cont.)

Institution	State/Type	Program	Degree	*College/ *Department*
Tuskegee University	AL/ Private	Yes	B.S.W.	*College of Arts & Sciences
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff	AR/ Public	Yes	B.S.W.	*School of Arts & Sciences
University of the District of Columbia	D.C./ Public	Yes	B.S.W.	*College of Arts & Sciences
University of Maryland-Eastern Shore	MD/ Public	Yes	BASE	*School of Education, Social Sciences & the Arts
University of the Virgin Islands	VI/ Public	Yes	B.S.W.	*College of Liberal Arts
Virginia State University	VA/ Public	Yes	B.S.W.	*College of Humanities & Social Sciences
Virginia Union University	VA/ Private	Yes	B.S.W., M.S.W., Minor	*School of Arts & Sciences
Virginia University of Lynchburg	VA/ Private	Yes	B.S.W.	*G.W. Hayes School of Arts & Sciences
Voorhees College	SC/ Private	No	NA	NA
West Virginia State University	WV/ Public	Yes	B.S.W.	*Department of Social Work*
Wilberforce University	OH/ Private	Yes	B.S.W.	NA
Wiley College	TX/ Private	No	NA	NA
Winston-Salem State	NC/ Public	Yes	B.S.W.	*School of Health Sciences
Xavier University	LA/ Private	No	NA	NA

*Represents the type of colleges and schools where the social work program is housed. Italicized font represents academic divisions and departments. Minor represents a field of study in a degree other than the discipline of social work.