

PERCEPTION OF SELF AND OTHERS --- A STUDY OF COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' RACIAL AND ETHNIC BIASES IN MULTICULTURAL  
EDUCATION CLASSROOMS IN HAWAI' I

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## Abstract

Strikingly brutal racial violence has occurred repeatedly in recent decades worldwide. Racial and ethnic biases have become critical and urgent topics in multicultural societies because they impact racial violence (Lawson, 2015; Park, 2017). Simultaneously, when students and teachers have biased perceptions toward others, it interferes with their learning, teaching, and growth and hinders school lessons (Jacoby-Senghor et al., 2016). This study's objective was to examine undergraduate students' racial and ethnic biases and learning processes sequentially. The central research question is *How do undergraduate students in the college of education in a Hawai'i university examine their personal racial and ethnic biases?* James Banks's multicultural education and critical multicultural education theories were the theoretical frameworks, applied through a qualitative phenomenological method. Ten undergraduate students voluntarily participated in in-depth interviews. The findings showed that all participants hesitated to reveal their perceptions and bias-related stories. This reaction could be a signal of disclosing their awareness and attitudes toward their biases. Students formed their biases based on their experiences; proximity, such as family input or friends' stories, did not always influence their biases. Also, two of the ten participants, who noted they were privileged, denied racial and ethnic biases. Finally, three multiethnic Hawaii-origin students showed biases toward Caucasians and Caucasian tourists, explained by the ingroup and outgroup relations of their positionalities. The findings contribute to the existing literature on Hawai'i and multicultural educational practices and theories by providing insights to help improve future multicultural communities and schools by reducing racial and ethnic-related conflicts.

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Some people believe that the globalization concept began in 1350 when the international trade network started (Abu-Lughod, 1991). Others have explained that it started when economic development began worldwide in the early nineteenth century (O'Rourke & Williamson, 2002). The term *globalization* emerged in public use during the early 1990s with various meanings and interpretations, such as technology innovation, economic growth and decline, mobility of human capital and goods, and unification and separation of regions and nations (Wilpert, 2009). In migration, which is a part of globalization, people from various countries relocate to different regions in the contemporary world because they cannot be confined to the same location geographically. For example, the world population of international migrants has been expanding rapidly, especially in recent decades: it increased by 14.7 percent from 2010 (n=220 million) to 2017 (n=258 million) due to more efficient, accessible transportation, enabling people to search for better jobs, education, and quality of life (United Nations, 2017).

In the United States, one immigration peak was nearly 1.2 million (n=1,183, 505) in 2016, and the migration number was consistently over one million until 2019. After that, however, the immigrant number tremendously decreased (n=707,362) by 46% in 2020 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020a). Pierce and Bolter (2020) speculated about the reasons, “the [Trump] administration has considerably reduced illegal entries at the United States’ southern border and renewed efforts on interior enforcement” (p. 1). Additionally, the pandemic further closed the borders (Pierce & Bolter, 2020). Although the immigrant numbers dropped in 2020, the number of migrants has expanded historically through multigenerational households. The result for the U.S. has been to become a multicultural nation.

## Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation begins with problem statements related to current racial and ethnic issues. Along with the COVID-19 pandemic, brutal racism, and the war between Russia and Ukraine, people's biases have impacted various severe conflicts worldwide. Chapter 1 discusses some blatant incidents linked to people's biases, mainly in the U.S. In school, biased perceptions affect students' performance and teachers' practices (Leonardo & Grubb, 2014; Polite & Saenger, 2003). This study examines undergraduate students' biased perceptions and learning processes in the context of Hawai'i. The chapter covers the dynamics of a "multicultural paradise," Hawai'i, including its history of immigration and diversity and followed by an explanation of multiculturalism and diversity in multicultural education. It also discusses people's identities and intersectionality and multicultural issues because these are essentially interrelated with their biases. Finally, at the end of Chapter 1, the objective of the study and the significance of the study are discussed.

Chapter 2 covers the literature review of this study. The first section explores bias study tendencies and the definitions of bias in the existing literature, traditional dictionaries, and bias-related educational theories. Since people's biases are personal and explained by personality (Allport, 1937; Fishbein, 2002), I first discuss personal traits theory and prejudice. This framework explains aspects of implicit and explicit bias and prejudice. I also explore different educational theories related to biases and prejudice to examine how biases are positioned and explained: multicultural education and critical multicultural education, critical pedagogy and critical race theory, and social desirability and social identity theory. After examining how these theories explain biases and their relations, I synthesized them and defined *bias* for this study.

Secondly, since this study focuses on students' racial and ethnic biases, it is essential to explore the highlights of the meanings of race and ethnicity, including the colorblindness concept. Thus, I explore how race and ethnic biases impact people's lives, academia, and in Hawai'i's context. After discussing the impacts, the theoretical frameworks for this study are explained: James Banks's multicultural education (2007, 2015) and critical multicultural education. In addition, the chapter shows several effective multicultural approaches based on the frameworks to discuss how biases and prejudice are situated in the approaches.

Chapter 3 covers the research design, a qualitative phenomenological method. First, the overarching research question is stated: *How do undergraduate students in the college of education in a Hawai'i university examine their personal, racial and ethnic biases?* Then, five sub-questions follow to discuss the research rationale. The next section explains the methodology, which includes the research location, site, participants' demographics, and the data collection method. I used three instruments: An open-ended questionnaire, in-depth interviews, and note-taking from observation during interviews. After the methodology is explained, I discuss the study procedure and timeline. The reliability and validity of the research are also explained. Data analysis and interview review board (IRB) protocols are followed. I discuss my positionality as a researcher in this study because identity and intersectionality are highly related to a bias study. As a result, readers understand the background of this research. Assumptions are added at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 4 reports the research findings. First, I summarize the background data: number of survey and interview participants, site, and procedure. In addition, I include a table of brief interview participants' backgrounds, such as gender, age, origin, educational standing, and length of time living in Hawai'i. Next, I explain the data analysis and then the data findings, which are

organized by the research sub-questions. Many direct quotes from both survey and interview participants are included to discuss each common theme. Before moving to the next chapter, I recapitulate the common themes to prepare for the discussion.

Finally, Chapter 5 consists of the discussion, recommendations, and conclusion. This chapter highlights the research findings compared with those in the literature. First, based on the five common themes from Chapter 4, I state three theoretical concepts. The next section covers significant implications for three fields: racial and ethnic biases in Hawai‘i’s context, racial and ethnic implicit biases, and theory and practice. I then explain limitations and recommendations for future research and my reflections on the research methodology. Finally, the conclusion contains an overview of the study and re-emphasizes the importance of the process of students’ learning about their biases.

### **Diversity and Current Issues**

When people of different backgrounds live in a society, it does not always positively affect everyone. It also brings challenges or conflicts, such as misunderstanding, miscommunication, or disagreement due to their differences. Race and ethnicity can explain prominent differences because people have distinctive cultures and customs, which make people sometimes misjudge others and behave adversely. As a result, various social injustices still exist.

Various types of discrimination and racial violence have occurred throughout the world. For example, in the war in Ukraine started by the Russian invasion in February 2022, some citizens faced discrimination and racism. Moreover, the racially and ethnically diverse country of Ukraine comprises Tatars, Jews, Romas, African Americans, and Asians, and some of these non-majorities in Ukraine encountered discrimination at the border with Poland while escaping the war situation (Przemysl, 2022).

Moreover, strikingly brutal racial violence has occurred in the current decades in the U.S. In a recent case, a 22-year-old African American male, Amir Lockes, was killed by Minneapolis police officers on April 5, 2021, while they were conducting a search warrant (*Amir Locke, killed*, 2022). Locke had no criminal record; however, he was shot while sleeping on a couch. Similar cases are unarmed African Americans George Floyd, killed in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020, and Breonna Taylor, killed in Louisville on March 13, 2020. However, the violence has not been done only by police officers. For example, a seventeen-year-old high school student, Trayvon Martin, was shot and killed by a Hispanic neighborhood watch captain in 2012 (*Trayvon Martin*, 2020).

Many similar incidents have occurred among different groups, such as Mexican Americans, who also suffered from a similar situation in East Los Angeles (Delgado, Stefancic, & Harris, 2017). Nevertheless, African Americans have been victimized much more than other races (Lawson, 2015). In particular, African American males have been murdered by Caucasians nearly ten times more often than Caucasian males have been murdered by African Americans (Delgado et al., 2017).

Similarly, anti-Asian hate crimes have increased during the COVID-19 pandemic because the coronavirus is “believed to have emerged in Wuhan, China in late December 2019 and began rapidly spreading around the globe throughout the spring months of 2020” (Gover, Harper, & Langton, 2020, p. 647). In January 2021, the vaccines started to be distributed worldwide, and people’s lives have slowly progressed. In the meantime, the number of hate crimes against Asians has escalated nationwide. Lim (2021) reported that an African American male killed an 84-year-old Asian American man in San Francisco in January 2021, and the police noted that the motives were unclear. Shortly after, a Caucasian gunman killed three Asians in a



spa in Atlanta (Ramachandran, 2021). Some activists spoke out to “show Black and Asian solidarity” (Brumback, 2021); however, this proclamation could have been harmful because it created the stereotype that certain races were victims and others were not.

A recent case in Hawai‘i is that of a sixteen-year-old Micronesian male, Iremaber Sykap, who was killed by Honolulu police officers (Kelleher, 2021). The police explanation was that Sykap had been involved in a series of crimes, including armed robbery and purse-snatching. When the incident happened, he was driving a stolen car. This case may not be the same as those above; however, the police force took a Micronesian teenager’s life, which escalated discussions and protests because the police department released minimal information, including unreleased body camera footage on the shooting (Jedra, 2021).

Many police shooting cases involving officers reflect implicit racial biases (Lawson, 2015). However, from the police and their supporters’ point of view, “race had nothing to do with the shootings” (Lawson, 2015, p. 344). Banks (2001) pointed out that “racial profiles and suspect descriptions alike are prone to intentional misuse and inadvertent error,” which includes officers that have justified their misconduct and wrongful information about victims (p. 1101). Either way, race-based suspect descriptions jeopardize people and society and lead to such current brutal racial violence. Consequently, police racial crime has to massive protests, reflecting a history of police violence against black people in the U.S. (Forliti, Karnowski, & Sullivan, 2020; Simko-Bednarski, Snyder, & Ly, 2020).

At the historic march on Washington, at the Lincoln Memorial on August 28th in 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. spoke out about racial injustice in his popular speech: “Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God’s children” (Mount, 2010). Nearly 60 years after Dr.

King's remarkable speech, racial violence still occurs. Such racial violence, on a deeper level, can start from stereotypes, which produce biases and then aggressive, irrational violence.

In academia, when students with diverse backgrounds work toward the same goals in class, they can collaborate successfully and produce creative and innovative results. Simultaneously, they may face challenges understanding each other because of their different cultural norms and perceptions. These perceptions and preferences are explained as prejudice or biases (Allport, 1954). Students' and teachers' biased perceptions toward other groups may interfere with their learning, teaching, and growth by hindering collaboration with others (Jacoby-Senghor, Sinclair, & Shelton, 2016). Therefore, overcoming or reducing biased perceptions and behaviors can reduce conflicts and tensions. Consequently, students can focus on their learning and progress in their relationships with others, and teachers can deliver meaningful lessons.

### **Growth in a Multicultural State, Hawai'i**

Mobility is one of the processes by which nations, societies, and schools become multicultural spaces. International students' mobility worldwide consistently expanded from 1989 to 2019; 6.1 million international students enrolled in tertiary institutions in 2019, which was more than twice the number in 2007. The U.S. had the highest numbers of international tertiary students (n= 977,000) among OECD countries, followed by Australia (n= 509,000), the United Kingdom (n=489,000), and Canada (n=279,000) in the same year (OECD, 2021).

Historically, America has been a multicultural nation, and various ethnicities from different regions of the world have settled in Hawai'i for social, historical, and economic reasons since the sugar plantation era in the early 1900s. From an economic perspective, when Hawai'i opened its doors to domestic workers from overseas to work the plantations, the various

immigration agreements allowed certain ethnic groups to relocate from their home countries for the sole purpose of a job opportunity. Hence, the prominent waves of immigration in which groups of Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, and other ethnicities settled on the islands and have raised their families for generations.

The Chinese population had started migrating to Hawai‘i prior to the *Chinese Exclusion* in 1882. However, after the annexation of Hawai‘i in 1898 by the U.S., the Chinese population became severely limited because of the *Act*. The Japanese population had grown from 25,000 in 1896 to more than 60,000 in 1900 (Daws, 1968), which is a 58 percent growth rate within four years. However, a *Gentlemen’s Agreement* in 1908 led to a similar restriction of Japanese immigration (Daws, 1968; Hormann, 1979). As a result, other ethnic immigrants, such as Puerto Ricans, Koreans, Spaniards, Russians, Filipinos, Italians, and Germans, migrated as plantation workers (Fleischman & Tyson, 2000; Tamura, 2003). Various Europeans, around 1,500 Germans and Portuguese had arrived in Hawai‘i as plantation workers from 1881 to 1897 (Hormann, 1979). Although various ethnic migrants started working in Hawai‘i, the combined population of Japanese, Chinese, and Koreans (n= 105,882) reached 55.2 percent of the total population in 1910 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1910). In the 1930 Census, Portuguese had become the most prominent Caucasian ethnic group of migrant workers, numbering 27,500 (Hormann, 1979).

Some new ethnic groups were pursuing higher wages and advancement in their lives (Fleischman & Tyson, 2000); others joined family members who had preceded them to keep their cultural ties (Nagoshi, Kurishita, Okazaki, Wong, Hanabusa, & Ota, 1976). For example, 77 percent of Filipino immigrants had migrated to Hawai‘i separately from the head of the family (Nagoshi et al., 1976). A father would migrate and settle in the new land, and then his family

followed. This process was not seen in the Japanese and Chinese populations (Fuchs, 1983) because of different cultural practices or norms.

The plantations in Hawai‘i became multicultural and created inequality among ethnicities. Not only were the immigrants working on the plantation, but Hawaiians were also included in the labor force. Fleishman and Tyson (2000) explained that there was ethnic segregation; native Hawaiian workers worked in the plantation fields because they required constant surveillance while Chinese workers were employed in the sugar mills because they did not require surveillance (Takaki, 1983).

When different ethnic groups worked together, wage inequality appeared. Daily wages were different based on the ethnicities. For example, in 1901, the Scottish received \$4.16 as their hourly wage, whereas the Japanese earned \$1.50 (Fuchs, 1983). Consequently, the Japanese population protested the pay gap and inequality based on ethnicity (Fuchs, 1983; Takaki, 1983). Various ethnic plantation workers worked at the same hours but at different pay rates; job stratification was based on their ethnicities and characteristics (Fleishman & Tyson, 2000). Specific ethnic populations from different regions migrated to Hawai‘i and encountered different challenges.

After World War Two, migration grew continually even after the peak of the plantation era. Nagoshi et al. (1976) noted that a large population of Asian descent has resided in Hawai‘i because of the Immigration Law in 1965 that allowed immigrants’ family members to join them and live in the U.S. From 1969 to 1970, the arrival of Filipino immigrants peaked. From 1980 to 1990, the foreign-born population increased: in 1980, the foreign-born population (n= 137,016) was 14.2 percent, and it slightly increased to 14.7 percent (n=162,704) in 1990 (Gibson & Lennon, 1999). Logan, Alba, Dill, and Zhou (2000) analyzed the major factors in the expanding

immigrant population between 1980 and 1990 throughout the U.S.; the new economic sector created by ethnic groups of them had established a business enterprise in the major U.S. metropolitan areas.

Today, the immigrant profile in Hawai‘i has become much more diverse; in 2020, 37.2 percent of people claimed to be Asians, whereas 22.9 percent of people declared themselves as Caucasians. Furthermore, slightly more than a quarter (25.3 %) of Hawai‘i’s population claimed to be biracial or multiracial (The U.S. Census, 2020a). Increased biracial and multiracial populations have resulted from interracial marriages after the plantation era.

### **Diversity and Multicultural Education**

One of the most salient and explicit features of diversity may be race and ethnicity. *Ethnicity* is defined as “a sense of peoplehood based on national origin” (Gollnick & Chinn, 2013, p. 70). Regarding ethnic diversity, Hasmath (2011) noted that people might define their ethnicity by their homeland or by their roots, the culture in which they were born or raised. Self-identified ethnicity is way of explaining people’s ethnicity. For example, multiethnic or multiracial people identify part of the group where they feel they belong. However, some people claim that self-identified ethnicity runs the “risk of confusing ancestry with ethnicity” (Hasmath, 2011, p. 2). In other words, since self-identified ethnicity is formed by one’s individual determination, this definition may create confusion about ethnic origin and heritage.

Nevertheless, people with multiethnic backgrounds may not possess a single ancestral background. As a result, multiethnic people can determine their own ethnicity. Furthermore, others have pointed out that ethnic identity provides security and belongingness to the group, providing solidarity within the ethnic group (Gollnick & Chinn, 2013).

Some external forms are used to explain diversity, and others can be derived from people's internal psychological characteristics, which include emotions, thoughts, and ideas. People carry different experiences, classified into physical, psychological, sociopolitical, and other relations. Another example of an internal quality is how one identifies oneself. People may describe themselves using various characteristics. Mahalingam (2007) described intersectionality as "a person's race, class, and gendered experience. . . [which] are embedded in a particular social and cultural matrix that influences the person's beliefs about various social categories and the origins of social differences" (p. 45). For example, one student may say that she is an Asian American whose parents were from China. She enjoys watching American comedy shows and spends time with people from the Catholic Church, but she identifies herself as having a firm root in Chinese culture. In this example, it is evident that she belongs to several groups or cultures simultaneously, and her intersectionality may form her identities.

Furthermore, when she represents herself, she may include her experiences, perceptions, and emotions to form her demographic identity. Her identification may manifest in numerous forms. She may change over time because of changes in her experiences and perceptions. These changes are part of diversity and cannot be predicted or known without further interactions.

Intersectionality can also be explained by cultural diversity. Culture is somewhat intangible and has symbolic aspects, including values, norms, beliefs, and perspectives (Banks, 2007). In the multicultural world, people in different cultural groups live together without giving up their cultural practices and backgrounds, an environment called cultural *pluralism* (Bennett, 2007; Gollnick & Chinn, 2013). Various ethnic groups possess their own unique cultures. Western people also carry different cultural backgrounds, such as different origins and customs; however, people have perceived that *culture* tends to be viewed as a non-Western form

(Hoffman, 1996). In other words, people discern and exclude Western culture when discussing culture. However, symbolic aspects can also exist in Western culture as well as in different ethnic cultures. *Culture* is a complex term and cannot be described by only a few features.

A combination of physical, psychological, and perceptual individual traits is included in explaining people's diversity. Although diversity tends to be described as various ethnic groups and their different characteristics (McGee Banks, 2005), *diversity* refers to people having different physical attributes, cultural backgrounds, and psychological states formed by their experiences, perceptions, emotions, behaviors, and preferences. By this definition, all students are classified as diverse because they all possess different histories, experiences, and perceptions.

Because diverse populations are expanding, multicultural education is one of the popular theoretical frameworks in various regions of the world (Tai, 2007). In the U.S., equal access to education for marginalized groups led to the tremendous civil rights movements in the 1960s. Schools in the U.K. also focused on human rights in a multicultural approach, such as anti-racist education in the late 1970s (Fujiwara, 2011). Meanwhile, various civil rights movements took place in Japan. For example, Korean activists and Japanese teachers attempted to develop multicultural education in the 1960s (Tai, 2007). These inequality issues could have appeared based on people's biases and lack of understanding of minority groups. As a result, multicultural education has emerged to alleviate that issue.

In school, educators are challenged to acknowledge, accept, and work with multicultural students in a classroom. However, teachers "struggle to open minds and guide the development of skills in increasingly crowded and impoverished surroundings" (Aronson & Pathoe, 2011, p. 30). Culturally focused teaching styles have increased since the middle of the 1900s because of the growth of diverse ethnic groups of students (Rychly & Graves, 2012). Hence, students from

different backgrounds learn in cooperation and collaboration by understanding and accepting one another and supporting cultural pluralism. In a multicultural classroom, team learning provides various advantages, including improving social skills and critical thinking (Aronson & Pathoe, 2011).

Students learn diverse elements in a multicultural education course, such as race and ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation, age, geographic origin, languages, religion, exceptionality, and others. Multicultural education is a concept or idea that all students, regardless of their diverse cultural factors, should have an equal opportunity to learn in school (Banks, 2015; Gollnick & Chinn, 2013). Today, at the institutional level, schools tend not to systematically deny diverse cultural groups compared to the era before civil rights in the 1960s. However, oppression within a classroom, school, society, or nation may hinder underrepresented groups from having an equal opportunity to learn.

Therefore, multicultural education supports students in diverse groups who work together cooperatively rather than showing hostility toward others. Nevertheless, pedagogies integrated with cultural awareness and understanding methods have not been adequately addressed. Gay (2002) notes, “U.S. education has not been very culturally responsive to ethnically diverse students” (p. 114). The schools in the U.S. have endorsed educational policies and practices that have forced racial-ethnic minority students to assimilate into the dominant mainstream culture (Banks, 2007, 2009; Bennett, 2007). When accepting assimilation, underrepresented groups adopt the dominant culture for the sake of national unity. The emphasis on unity indicates that most nations have tried to achieve it in the past (Banks, 2015). Consequently, a non-dominant racial group is forced to be a part of a dominant group and become more distant from its culture (Gollnick & Chinn, 2013). Multicultural educators and citizenship education theorists have



supported students from diverse backgrounds and cultures to experience worthy and fair school lives (Bennett, 2007; Gollnick & Chinn, 2013).

While students in diverse groups learn in the same classrooms, they may distinguish themselves from the mainstream culture and feel like *others*. Students are different in their physical, psychological, and behavioral characteristics. When students and teachers perceive or experience these differences, they are often unaware of people's different cultural practices and behaviors. Having biases may be common and may also be learned throughout their lives (Allport, 1979; Eagly & Diekmann, 2005). When students know how to face their biases and do not feel biases against them while interacting with their peers, they are able to focus on their academic lessons (Jacoby-Senghor et al., 2016) and enjoy their time in school. As a result, students will be more intrinsically motivated, maximizing their learning motivations and outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Harter, 1981). When students have fewer tensions or conflicts in school, their school experiences will be significantly more positive and effective.

The principles of multicultural education closely are tied into the reduction of bias, prejudice, and stereotypes. Therefore, studying these concepts and the related issues encourages finding key solutions to social injustices and inequality in education for non-majority groups and other diverse students.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Different ideologies among cultures sometimes create misconceptions, which generate powerful tensions and eventually lead to wars and human casualties (Langley, 2003). Likewise, biased perspectives can produce inequality, discrimination, and other conflicts because they tend to be associated with discriminatory beliefs that are difficult to modify. Particularly, racial and ethnic biases bring racial conflicts and violence (Gollnick & Chinn, 2013; Park, 2017). Banks

(2006) explained that many basic issues are linked to race and ethnicity-related topics that people associate with negative attitudes against certain racial and ethnic groups and induce racism.

Bias-derived social injustice is a bias that is inclined to involve racism. Racism is a belief that a human group “has the power to enforce laws, institutions, and norms” by oppressing and dehumanizing other groups (Banks & McGee Banks, 2005, p. 451). As noted earlier, the recent brutal racial violence by the police officers in Louisville and Minneapolis were connected to implicit biases when the Caucasian police officers accused and eventually killed African American individuals wrongfully. Similarly, anti-Asian American hate crimes across the country have escalated because of current media information regarding COVID-19 (Gover et al., 2020). Moreover, racist attacks against Muslims and Jewish people in the U.S. after 9/11 (Lerner, 2004) and the rise of white supremacist groups are extremely serious issues (Sciurba, 2020). Many hate crime perpetrators may not have exact motives, and the individuals in a marginalized and vulnerable group tend to be victimized. When people and citizens showed their anger against the racial violence, the Minneapolis police department mandated implicit bias training (Bird, Irwin, Kohl, Rita, & Sharma, 2020) because the violence could have started from stereotypes that then led to biases and further aggressive actions.

Racial violence has not ceased in societies, even though many have witnessed numerous incidents since the civil rights movements. In schools, racial inequality and racism “has become an educational dilemma” negatively impacting students’ learning and achievement (Leonardo & Grubb, 2014, p. 6). Therefore, many scholars and educators have studied motives and reasons for people’s biases and prejudices. While social activists combat racism, teachers and educators also try to improve the situation because societies may not be able to manage this long-lasting serious human issue. Although resolving the issues in education has been challenging, reduction in the

continuing bias and prejudice could become a key driver. Thus, teachers as leaders play important roles in reducing racial conflicts by understanding students' biases and prejudicial attitudes and observing their transformations and changes.

### **The Objectives of the Study**

This study explores the racial and ethnic biases of undergraduate students in the College of Education (COE) and their perceptions and their learning processes. This study has three objectives. First, it examines undergraduate students' race and ethnic biases and their deeper roots. Biased perceptions may be individual matters; Allport (1954) explained them as a part of people's personalities. Therefore, the students may hesitate to disclose their actual perceptions. Next, this research examines the changes and transformations of their biased perceptions and behaviors, if any. Through the study, the students may understand the importance of a bias-free environment. Although the outcome may not always be transforming in a positive direction, examining the process of students' changes facilitates a deeper examination of the students' biases. The final objective is to explore how a bias reduction practice impacts people's lives and benefits learners' education and their lives in a multicultural community. People's and students' lives improve by having fewer conflicts, which eventually helps others in different regions of the world because of globalization and mobility.

### **Significance of the Study**

Biases are complex because they reflect personal histories, experiences, and identities connected to people's wills and beliefs. Even though biases do not directly cause negative tensions, some students may feel uncomfortable or have difficulty focusing on learning in that environment (Jacoby-Senghor et al., 2016).

Based on my examination of the literature, a vast array of quantitative and qualitative studies have been done on human biases. Although many researchers have discovered factors in different biases, structures, and characteristics quantitatively (Choma & Hadson, 2008; Gupta, Szymanski, & Leong, 2011), limited research has been conducted qualitatively. The significance of this study is to understand undergraduate students' misconceptions toward racial and ethnic groups on a deeper level. Moreover, it is essential to qualitatively examine the process of students' transformations and changes in their feelings and views. This process has enabled me to gather real voices of human relationships and experiences in rich contexts. Nevertheless, biases cannot always and easily be reduced; therefore, challenging and exploring the students' biases at deeper levels is meaningful.

Another significant contribution of this study is to help diverse students discover their identities and positionalities and utilize their future adjustments for living in a multicultural society and the world. Because a diverse population is widely prevalent in every school in Hawai'i, the U.S., and other regions globally, this study will support students of the future generations through their epistemological development, which refers to the individual's ways of knowing or recognition (Hofer & Sinatra, 2010; Iding & Thomas, 2017). This study will also help students understand themselves profoundly and gain multicultural perspectives that will enhance their future education, profession, and lives.

Finally, studying undergraduate students' biases supports a fundamental pedagogy for multicultural education in the future because bias is a significant problem that impacts social injustice. In detail, one issue is that "multicultural education is too amorphous and all-encompassing to learn about, let alone implement and evaluate" (Ramsey, Williams, & Vold, 2003, p. 266). Therefore, this study will help guide the examination of biases in undergraduate

students in the College of Education. People's biases could be reduced; however, the details of bias are complex, and the empirical study will help us profoundly understand them. Finding an approach to alleviate bias-related conflicts will support the new direction of multicultural education. Reducing racial and ethnic biases may ease racial and ethnic tensions, which may decrease racial violence. This sequence overall supports living healthy lives in multicultural schools and society.

### **Summary**

Ever since the beginning of historical migration, the world, the U.S., and Hawai'i have become multicultural spaces. Through this phenomenon, people from different cultural backgrounds have been living and interacting altogether. Similarly, in schools, students in heterogeneous communities must cooperate and learn in their daily lessons. Students may realize that working in cooperation will help them learn effectively by making less tension and conflict; however, working with different people is challenging because they tend to have different perceptions, norms, or beliefs. Encountering biases may be a common experience; however, in extreme cases, biases may lead to crime, avoidance, or genocide and in the least extreme cases, to misunderstandings.

Moreover, racial and ethnic biases are more likely to lead to racial violence and produce racism. Overcoming or reducing biases and biased behaviors could be one way to help diverse students in their school lives and beyond.

## **CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Scholars from different fields and disciplines have studied human biases and prejudice for nearly a century. For example, Allport (1937, 1950) and Sun, Wang, and Bai (2019) discussed prejudice and biases from the viewpoint of one's psychological and cognitive paths; Allport (1954) and other scholars noted that prejudice can be explained by one's personality (Marlowe & Crowne, 1961; West, Meserve, & Stanovich, 2012).

In the health field, Hernández, Carranza, and Almeida (2010) examined mental health professionals' racial attitudes, while another researcher focused on implicit biases among nurse leaders (Persaud, 2019). Also, Sun et al.(2019) investigated patients' explicit and implicit biases toward physicians. Biases are still popular research topics in the clinical sector. Likewise, numbers of scholars have focused on students' biases and prejudice in the school counseling area. For example, Ponterotto, Utsey, and Pedersen (2006) and Spong (2012) studied prejudice to resolve issues in students' academic progress.

Many schools of law and law enforcement divisions also research people's biased and prejudiced views (Gamblin, Kehn, Vanderzanden, Ruthig, Jones, & Long, 2021; Kena, Thompson, & SJS Statisticians, 2021) because, as noted in the previous chapter, hate crimes and racial violence tend to be attributed to biases.

Although many researchers and scholars from various fields have studied biases and prejudice, causations are still not understood empirically (Blinder & Lundgren, 2019). Racism and social injustice can be lethal in our lives and are instigated by people's biased perceptions and prejudicial attitudes (Langley, 2003; Park, 2017). This chapter discusses three main components through the literature research: examining bias characteristics in prominent and

relevant theories, exploring the impact of bias on teaching and learning in schools, and addressing the relevant theoretical frameworks for this dissertation.

### **What is Bias?**

Historically, serious conflicts have originated from securing natural and raw resources essential for human lives (Bowie, 1923). For example, Israeli-Palestinian conflicts started several decades ago and relations are still tense. Severe battles have been related to misunderstanding in many areas, such as theology, land, politics, ethnicity, and immigration (Munayer & Loden, 2014).

Similarly, different philosophies influence conflicts. Ideologies, such as nationalism, liberalism, and Marxism, have powered wars. For example, the Cold War, behind which lay two opposing ideologies, resulted in military tensions between the U.S. and the former Soviet Union (Langley, 2003). Although different reasons may have triggered the wars, many wars related to a conflict between different perceptions, ideologies, and doctrines.

Educators and researchers in academia pursue reductions in prejudice and biases (Banks, 2007; Pang, 2001) because various multicultural issues and social injustice are attributed to them (Chung, Jung, & Lee, 2017; Truong, Museus, & McGuire, 2016). While interacting and working with others, students may misunderstand or misjudge their peers as carrying stereotypes and prejudicial attitudes toward them. As a result, conflicts, including disagreements and tense situations, may occur among different groups of students because they possess diverse philosophies, backgrounds, histories, experiences, and cultures. Therefore, when students and teachers can reduce their biased perceptions and behaviors, it may reduce occurrences of conflict and create healthier learning environments.

## Bias, Prejudice, and Stereotypes

The three conceptual terms, *bias*, *prejudice*, and *stereotypes*, are used interchangeably whether or not they are associated with cognitive processes in people's daily lives (Hamilton, 1981; West & Eaton, 2019). But do all three concepts have similar meanings? For example, Allport (1950) noted that "a stereotype, prejudice, or sometimes, more loosely, as a logic-tight compartment" can explain social phenomena (p. 17). Gordon Allport was a pioneer in studying prejudice and its relation to one's personality from 1930 to the 1950s, essentially focusing on prejudice to explain people's bias mechanisms. Likewise, multicultural education theorists and scholars James Banks and Gollnick and Chinn (2013) emphasize prejudice and stereotypes to discuss multicultural issues and endorse social justice in their theories.

On a different path, the term *bias* tends to be used in various quantitative data analyses in social science research and is used to explain participants' responses (Börger, 2012; King & Bruner, 2000). Therefore, many psychologists and educational scholars might favor using *prejudice* and *stereotypes* to discuss human bias, behaviors, and attitudes to distinguish them from data analyses. However, these three conceptual words are complex and essential; therefore, they must be clarified.

In a common dictionary, prejudice and bias are similar concepts. Both terms entail negative meanings; *prejudice* is "injury or damage resulting from some judgment or action of another in disregard of one's rights" (Merriam-Webster dictionary, n.d.). *Prejudice* appears to be one's personal preferences and decisions. Similarly, *bias* is "an inclination of temperament or outlook [;] especially [,] a personal and sometimes unreasoned judgment, which is 'PREJUDICE'" (Merriam-Webster dictionary, n.d.). *Bias* is a synonym of *prejudice*, and both terms define people's judgments, usually with a negation connotation.



Unlike the similar definitions of *prejudice* and *bias* in the dictionary, *stereotype* has a slightly different emphasis. The same dictionary, Merriam-Webster (n.d.), defines a stereotype as “something conforming to a fixed or general pattern [;] especially [,] a standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment.” In the description, a stereotype is the psychological state in which people interpret any generalized picture they possess; however, the definition does not describe it as negative or positive.

Based on the dictionary definitions, prejudice and bias are relatively similar and interrelated; there is no significant distinction. Both terms explain mainly negative judgments, attitudes, and behaviors derived from stereotypes. However, unlike bias and prejudice, stereotypes involve people’s psychological state, which could be formed by any generalizability of social relations to group norms and individual experiences to beliefs.

### **Biases in Educational Theories**

The dictionary-defined two concepts of prejudice and bias are relatively similar but stereotypes, which is a process of generating bias and prejudice. Due to the complexity of the terms, this section examines how bias and prejudice are used and defined in bias-related prominent educational theories.

#### **Personality Traits Theory and Prejudice**

I spotlight Allport’s personality trait theory because it examines prejudice as primarily human nature. Prejudice, which Allport (1950) also calls pre-judgment, is a pre-existing attitude characterized as tough and persistent. He conceived prejudice as “one sort of error so typical of judgments of personality, so persistent, seemingly unavoidable” (Allport, 1937, p. 520).

Similarly, Fishbein (2002) explained, “Nearly all humans have inherited a genetic structure that makes certain species-specific kinds of social behavior inevitable” (p. 40). His stance elaborated on Allport’s logic of pre-judgment. However, prejudice may not be limited only to pre-existing attitudes; it could form from ingroup or outgroup relations. When forming a judgment, people’s attitudes and behaviors can influence others or be influenced by social or group knowledge (Laar, 2001; Tajfel, 1981). For example, based on these scholars, an individual’s pre-judgment toward a particular group is a part of human personality. Examining ten people’s perceptions might reveal that they do not have the same judgments.

Judgment cannot always be linked to logical reasons; prejudicial perceptions may not always be associated with facts (Dor, 2005). Generally, prejudice tends to be negative attitudes toward certain groups; however, it also includes positive attitudes (Allport, 1979; Eagly & Diekmann, 2005). Moreover, positive stereotypes may not always lead to favorable outcomes. A positive stereotype can be a compliment, but it may not always have a positive result (Maddux, Galinsky, Cuddy, & Polifroni, 2008; Siy & Cheryan, 2013). Prejudice is manipulated by one’s attitude or behavior, while stereotypes comprise a complex mental process and, whether favorable or unfavorable, “exaggerating the fact and building up unjustified” ideas (Allport, 1954, p. 192). Both positive and negative perceptions may generate unfair behaviors toward others because positive and negative mindsets do not always come from true information.

The above explanations indicate that stereotypes can form prejudice. Correspondingly, bias is one’s interpretation of stereotypical information, which comes from generalizability by one’s mental images that result in categorizing a person (Jolt & Hamilton, 2005). Allport (1954) distinguished between valid generalizations and stereotypes. Valid generalizations can be adequate and accurate; however, the generalized information cannot be investigated whether it is

real before people develop stereotypical concepts. This detail implies that people's mental images are subjective and not the only facts to form their stereotyped perceptions.

Moreover, people may interpret social images to form stereotypes. Allport (1954) described a comparative study between 1932 and 1950 that indicated that people's racial stereotypes changed. He speculated that one of the reasons was communication and entertainment media. Social knowledge and information created by the media can influence people's stereotypes, which leads to prejudice. However, prejudicial attitudes are ultimately based on an individual's determination. Allport (1937) pointed out that various psychological principles can explain characteristics and the process of prejudice; however, these principles do not fully explain why people have negative attitudes toward selected groups or objects. Thus, many scholars are still investigating human prejudice.

### ***Explicit Prejudice and Bias***

Two major types of structures that can explain human prejudice are explicit and implicit forms (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005; Schimchowitsch & Rohmer, 2016). First, most people think they are less biased than others (Pronin, Lin, & Ross, 2002) because "individuals are reluctant to examine their personal and professional values and actions for bias" (Pang, 2001, p. 53). As a result, they may not be aware of their biases (Elashi & Mills, 2015; Scopelliti, Morewedge, McCormick, Min, Lebrecht, & Kassam, 2015) or intentionally deny their biases.

Explicit bias is characterized by overt controlled behavior that signifies that people do not want to show their negative prejudicial attitudes toward others (Blinder & Lundgren, 2019; Mendes & Koslov, 2013). Explicit bias is also described as conscious bias (Fazio & Olson, 2003), which may be associated with people's own decisions to disclose or conceal it.

An old-fashioned explicit prejudice is formed based on negative stereotypes toward particular social groups or racial minorities (Brochu, Gawronski, & Esses, 2008). People with explicit prejudice have “beliefs about the biological superiority of one group over another” (Edlund & Heider, 2008, p. 77). They are consciously aware of their biases. However, disclosing their perceptions is based on their determination; therefore, “self-disclosure may have cued listeners to think more deeply about the interaction and try to understand” the relationships (Roche, Arnold, & Ferguson, 2020, p. 3448).

Mahalingam (2007) examined essentialism in bias, also called cognitive bias, and characterized one’s beliefs as being fixed and immutable. Essentialism often follows categorization (Allport, 1954; Jost & Hamilton, 2005) to create stereotypes. Allport (1954) explained the psychological connection between prejudice and essentialism; he argued that beliefs in a group nature are a factor in the prejudiced personality. Today, psychologists debate causal relationships between essentialism and people’s prejudicial perceptions (Donovan, 2017). On the other hand, with non-essentialist perspectives, students and teachers can change their identities and belief systems. If explicit prejudice comes from one’s essential nature, applying non-essentialist perspectives may be able to change prejudicial attitudes and behaviors.

### ***Implicit Prejudice and Bias***

Unlike an explicit form, implicit bias is unrecognized (Glas & Faloye, 2021; Lawrence, 2015). Therefore, “when we fail to detect evidence of bias, we are apt to decide no bias has occurred and that our decision-making process was indeed objective and reasonable” (West et al., 2012, p. 515). Implicit bias has other dichotomous characteristics. Both and modern and aversive forms are characterized by people justifying that they are neither prejudiced nor racist and denying the presence of discrimination (Frediman, 2018). A distinction between these types

is that people with modern prejudice do not support public policies, such as affirmative action (Brochu et al., 2008), while people with aversive prejudice support affirmative action toward racial-ethnic minority groups. However, they unconsciously react to certain social groups inappropriately and negatively (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005; Harton & Nail, 2008). In other words, people with aversive biases may believe that they are not prejudiced; however, they unintentionally behave unfavorably against some groups. Although “aversive racism is an important and pervasive type of racial bias” (Dovidio, 2001, p. 838), the underlying negative feelings associated with aversive racism are not easily reduced because people do not fully consciously realize that they are prejudiced (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005).

Self-reported biases are evaluated by an explicit measure; however, implicit biases cannot be measured explicitly because people do not recognize them. The Harvard Implicit Association Test (IAT) (2019) has been widely used to evaluate people’s implicit biases. The test instrument examines individuals’ unconscious preferences, the roots of their thinking and feeling, and their beliefs by measuring their automatic implicit responses. Implicit bias may or may not be cognitive (Blinder & Lundgren, 2019). Thus, an automatic latency response may not be directly connected to any reason because the response is one’s stimuli. The researchers can obtain people’s implicit attitudes toward other groups (Schimchowitsch & Rohmer, 2016) from the IAT. However, although IAT results show that people have biases against a certain group, it is presumed that people may not fully admit it. In the same vein, when people did not recognize their own biases, even the test results would not help resolve bias-related conflicts and issues. The ultimate concern is how education and researchers can help these people with implicit biases recognize and understand their biased perceptions.

People's racial biases can be either explicit or implicit or both, but they may not have the forms to the same extent (Devine, Plant, Amodio, Harmon-Jones, & Vance, 2002). Self-cognition is one of the challenges in biases; how can people distinguish their perceptions as biased or unbiased? Implicit and explicit are opposing aspects of bias, like unconsciousness and consciousness; however, both types include unfavorable attitudes or behaviors toward a certain group. Furthermore, Glas and Faloye (2021) explained, "For every conscious decision made daily, there are many more made using unconscious/previously learned information" (p. 991). This notion means that conscious decisions can be based on unconscious information, indicating that the two forms of bias can be linked or be explained by a single form (Dovidio, 2001).

### **Multicultural Education and Critical Multicultural Education**

Multicultural education emerged from the extensive human rights movements in the 1960s in the U.S. during the major civil rights movement, including *Brown v. Board of Education* on school racial segregation, alleviating discrimination and inequality in society (Banks & McGee Banks, 2005; Gollnick & Chinn, 2013). However, even though racial-ethnic minority groups had the right to attend schools, compulsory segregation led these students often to receive a second-rate education (Sunstern, 2004).

Multicultural education aims to eliminate educational inequality and social injustice in underrepresented groups in the U.S. (Banks, 2009; Banks & McGee Banks, 2005). In detail, the fundamental approach is "school reform designed to actualize education equality for students from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, social-class, and linguistic groups" (Banks, 2009, p. 13). Prominent multiculturalists and theorists emphasize prejudice reduction within their frameworks because they cannot achieve the fundamental principles without it (Bennett, 2008; Pang, 2001). For example, prejudice reduction focuses on examining prejudicial attitudes, group identities,

and other characteristics of different racial and ethnic groups to reduce conflicts and misunderstandings among them (Banks, 2009). This principle conceptually helps maintain educational equality and social justice for multicultural students.

Bias-related issues are essential in multicultural educational principles. For example, students must receive equal treatment regardless of gender or different sexual orientation. Currently, people carefully disclose their diverse sexual orientations and have steadily been accepted by society. Nevertheless, people have prejudicial attitudes and biases toward these diversities. Stacey (2011) found that sexual orientation-biased crimes are more likely to occur than racial-biased crimes in school, and males are victimized by females in sexual orientation bias. Title IX, an educational amendment to a 1972 education law, protects equal educational rights based on gender (Gollnick & Chinn, 2013). However, bias-attributed crimes and inequality are still reported in schools. Law enforcement cannot fully control peoples' biases and other crimes.

While multicultural education widely supports educational equality and social justice, various scholars and advocates have responded critically to multicultural education. Despite the emphasis on educational equality in multicultural education, many issues have continued in the U.S. (May & Sleeter 2010). Critical multicultural education (CME) has evolved from multicultural education and critical pedagogy. CME encourages students to shift from "individual reaction and resistance to a systemic understanding" in multicultural education (Brantmeier, Argon, & Folkestad, 2011, p. 8-9).

Correspondingly, students and teachers understand that the social structure consists of power relations and privileges. They expand multicultural education "to include the relation of symbolic identity and struggle to the global context" (View 2010, p. 155). As a result, students

become empowered learners and problem solvers (Nieto, 2005), so they can reexamine themselves holistically and eventually be malleable. CME connects the fundamental principles of multicultural education to expand the perspectives that link to social structure and to alleviate the issues attributed to people's and students' biased perceptions and behaviors.

### **Critical Pedagogy and Critical Race Theory**

Critical pedagogy, a postmodern educational theory that “symbolized the educational left” (Ozmon, 2012, p. 263), originated from the Western Marxist tradition (Porfilio & Ford, 2015). Critical pedagogy emerged in the promotion of critical thinking in multicultural education in the 1970s and focuses particularly on “the culture of everyday life and the interaction of class, race, and gender in contemporary power struggles” (Gollnick & Chinn, 2013, p. 28). Theorists have explored how to relieve the oppression that humans suffer in the world, society, schools, and classrooms (Porfilio & Ford, 2015). Nieto (2005) noted that critical pedagogy acknowledges diversity and allows students and educators to expand their views with critical perspectives. The fundamental concept appears similar to multicultural education, which endorses social justice, equal opportunity, and social empowerment for marginalized groups (Gollnick & Chinn, 2013; Ozmon, 2012).

From a critical pedagogy perspective, educational discourse is a product of power with concrete expression and often essentialized properties (Giroux, 1985). Discourses can be formed based on socially constructed knowledge through political or media channels. Similarly, educational discourses have been increasingly racialized in schools, textbooks, and curricula developed by the privileged and power relations between the majority and the minority (McCarthy, 1994). These discourses are powerful and influential and lead to stereotypical views. Hall (1997) explained, “Knowledge [is] linked to power...[the] power to make itself true” (p.



49). This relationship appears to be strong. Therefore, people and students should critically and skeptically analyze socially constructed knowledge. For example, when students become open-minded and critically reflect on their perspectives, including stereotypes, they may realize that the stereotypes may have been formed by faulty information. However, students' behaviors or attitudes may not be promptly adjusted because stereotypes are more likely to be produced by the generalizability of social knowledge.

Similar to multicultural education and critical theory, critical race theory (CRT) developed where various racial tensions and conflicts occurred. During the *Jim Crow* era in the 1950s, laws were made to ensure racial segregation and create racial oppression (Zamudio, Russell, Rios, & Brindgeman, 2010). In the 1960s, many people filed lawsuits in federal courts. A collection of five similar public school desegregation cases became a political and social icon (Balkin, 2001). The intentional racial segregation was “designed to maintain the subordination of Blacks to Whites” (Zamudio et al., 2010, p. 24). Increased racial segregation became a pivotal point because of the Supreme Court decision of *separate but equal*, which did not solve the fundamental issue of inequality and led to racial inequality.

CRT originated when activists and scholars support the civil rights movements in the 1970s. It scrutinized racial injustice and transformed the relationship between race and ethnicity, and power by providing critiques of liberal and conservative capital democracies (Delgado et al., 2017). CRT has supported educators and students in improving their society and institutions (Zamudio et al., 2010). Today, CRT has expanded: “The Latino-critical movement, queer-crit (LGBT) studies, and a fledgling group of Muslims with an original critical challenge [to] civil rights thinkers” to reconceptualize equality and civil rights (Delgado et al., 2017, p. 113). CRT is not limited to discussing people's race and racial backgrounds but includes prominent

movements with human rights and equality among diverse groups. Although CRT originated nearly half a century ago, the current emphasis seems to alleviate the current social injustice.

### **Social Desirability and Social Identity Theory**

Social desirability and social identity theories are also linked to explain bias and prejudice. Both theories are related to one's perceived self-categorization, which may be formed by social discourse. Some people unintentionally respond to social discourse. Social desirability refers to "the defensive tendency of individuals to respond in a manner consistent with societal norms or beliefs" (Hebert, Ma, Clemow, Ockene, Saperia, Stanek, Merriam, & Ockene, 1997, p. 1046). Other researchers have defined it as the "need for social approval and acceptance and the belief that this can be attained by means of culturally acceptable and appropriate behaviors" (Marlowe & Crowne, 1961, p. 109).

When social desirability becomes a part of one's behavior, which is considered one's personality (Marlowe & Crowne, 1961), "one man influence[s] upon others, as his status in the group, or as his social stimulus-value" (Allport, 1937, p. ix). Social desirability is not formed only by social norms; people's values, status, and behaviors also influence others to shape their socially desirable behaviors. In this case, any influential individual can control others to induce favorable outcomes.

### ***Stigma***

Social desirability bias can occur when people envision their identity, traits, or perspectives on social discourses. For example, people may respond that gay and lesbian teachers negatively impact children and youth (Chonody, 2013). This social discourse links to *stigma*, which is associated with characteristics and have evolved from stereotypes (Smith,

2007) to become stigmatizing stereotypes (O'Brien, 2011). Stigma shares a negative meaning similar to prejudice (Allport, 1954). As a result of this discourse, stigmatized labeling may lead to assault if people respond in socially desirable ways because they see themselves as part of a social context and regard how others perceive them.

Social stigma can lead people and students to develop negative stereotypes that link to their biases. O'Brien (2011) explained, "Stigma is constructed by processes operating at both the macro and micro levels of social life" and people's social positionalities and identities (p. 292). A peer discourse of bullying can include negative labeling by name-calling, teasing, spreading rumors, and creating bad reputations of individuals or groups (Thornburg, 2015). As a result, stigma creates "a societal barrier to addressing inequity" by individuals' beliefs that can be reinforced in their community (Kim, Lin, Hiller, Hildebrand, & Auerswald, 2021, p.1). Smith (2007) suggested encouraging strategizing anti-stigma theoretical developments for communities. A key difference between stigma and bias is that there are different stages in developing negative attitudes. For example, social discourses influence stigma to label a group damagingly, whereas bias can perhaps be influenced by stigma, by labeling a group negatively.

### ***Ingroup and Outgroup Relations***

Other scholars define the roots of prejudice with four significant variables: group differences, perceived group differences, sociocultural factors, and personal differences (Eagly & Diekmann, 2005). Social identity theory stems from one's ingroup and outgroup relations. Individuals are influenced by membership in various groups to maintain their identity (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005; Laar, 2001). Social identity is the individual's self-concept, which "develops from their knowledge of their membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance of that membership" (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255). Tajfel (1982) examined

stereotypes as a cognitive component, the identification of the group in which people recognize their membership. When people identify themselves, they tend to show their group identifications, such as racial and ethnic components, religious affiliation, or other associations. Although people may belong to the same group, their interpretations of group identification may not be identical. Self-identification has different channels. One is to identify as oneself, while another is to identify with a group, which refers to a group's common values, customs, and expectations that influence individuals to form a social identity. However, these values, customs, and expectations could be socially constructed and not necessarily the group-produced identity (Citrin, Wong, & Duff, 2001).

Similar to social desirability, stereotypes may occur when a person has a solo status or some unusual or unfavorable behaviors toward the rest of the group (Tajfel, 1982). A woman in a group of men or an Asian individual in a group of Caucasians is an example of a solo status, which can result in a strong negative or positive impression. Interestingly, "the evaluations of that person are polarized compared with the evaluations of the same person identified as belonging to the majority in the group" (Tajfel, 1982, p. 5). One's identity can be viewed differently when one's positionality or social circumstance changes. For example, gender positions differ between the U.S. and Japan, historically and today. As a woman, I experienced more gender bias in Japan than in the U.S, but gender bias may change if I compare the U.S. and Japan today.

Various prominent educational theories emphasize the connection between bias and prejudice and their principles that tie into social justice in human lives. Implicit and explicit prejudice in personal traits theory explains the complexity of bias characteristics. The fundamental principles of multicultural education are closely intertwined with people's biases

and prejudices. Critical multicultural education explores bias and prejudice issues under powerful social structures and discourses to help students critically examine and transform viewpoints and stances. Likewise, social desirability theory and social identity theory emphasize individuals' relations to ingroups and outgroups. One's self-categorization is influenced by others and social knowledge in society. These theories focus on people's biases, prejudices, and stereotypes are interrelated to create healthy and safe school cultures for students and teachers. In this section, I have explored the definition of bias through established prominent educational theories from empirical literature.

Table 1 shows the detailed definitions of bias, prejudice, and stereotypes for this study.

**Table 1**

*Summary of Bias, Prejudice, and Stereotype Definitions of this Study*

<i>Biases and Prejudice</i>	<i>Stereotypes</i>
Positive & Negative Behaviors & Attitudes Implicit & Explicit Conscious (disclosed or concealed) or Unconscious (aversive)	Positive, negative, or neutral Group generalized Essentialized (inflexible) Mental processes or cognitive (aware)

Elaborating on Allport's (1954) and other scholars' definitions reveals many commonalities and a few distinctions. In this dissertation, I am using the terms *bias* and *prejudice* interchangeably. After synthesizing the details, I formed a definition of bias for my research: Bias is positive and negative prejudicial behaviors and attitudes derived from faulty and inflexible knowledge or stereotypes. Bias can be categorized as unconscious or overt and can be formed by positive or negative stereotypical mental states shaped by an individual's position and status in a group in society.

## What do Race and Ethnicity Signify?

When discussing people's backgrounds and origins, we may describe their physical or biological backgrounds, such as race and ethnicity. *Race* is one's physical and anthropological characteristics (Gollnick & Chinn, 2013) that constitutes "a socially and legally produced hierarchical system structurally embedded in U.S. society" (Haney-Lopez, 2007, p. 991). In a scientific classification of race, German anthropologist Johann Fredrich Blumenbach (1752-1840) divided humankind into five categories: "American, Malay, Ethiopian, Mongolian, and Caucasian" (Britannica, n.d.). Some people may not belong in these categories. Therefore, it is also noted that this classification cannot draw clear distinctions, and people can be divided according to other cultural aspects, such as language, religion, historical point of view, or immigration point of view (Britannica, n.d.). Moreover, Delgado et al. (2017) explained that different racializations may be "the idea that race has its own origin and ever-evolving history," which can be explained by intersectionality, including ethnic identity and anti-essentialism (p.10).

People can represent their identities while their social circumstances change. Cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1932-2014) explained that his cultural identity is rooted in "Caribbeanness" and the "Black diaspora"; he was born and spent his childhood in Jamaica and lived his adult life in England (Hall, 1990). Hall's identity was formed by his Caribbean roots rather than by the years, nearly his entire life, spent in English culture; his major identity could have been influenced by his Caribbean roots as his origin. Identity representation cannot be essentialized one way. Some people may cherish their place of origin, whereas others would rather choose places where they lived for a long time.

In the U.S., many people may describe their identities based on race and ethnicity. Like Hall's compound identity, ethnicity and ethnic identity can explain one's sense of belonging to a particular cultural context (Gollnick & Chinn, 2013), "a group that shares a common ancestry, culture, history, tradition, and sense of peoplehood" (Banks, 2006, p.79). For example, African Americans may not all be rooted in African origins. In a similar concept, *Caucasian* is a race; however, there are ethnic diversities within the race: Jewish, Polish, Italian, and many others. Likewise, Asians can be classified as East or Southeast Asians, categories that have many ethnicities. Moreover, like Hall's example, some people have different living experiences in diverse places. Therefore, race and ethnicity cannot be explained merely by one's physical attributes.

People may identify beyond their racial or ethnic components; they may belong strongly in a group identified by sexual orientation, religion, or other categories. Various identity studies perceive identity from both essentialist and non-essentialist perspectives. In the essentialist perspective, identity representation is fixed and unchangeable, whereas identity is never singular but rather transformable in a non-essentialist perspective (Hall, 1996; Woodward, 1997). The identity transformation process has never been completed (Hall, 1996); one's identity can continually change with interactions with others over time while living in different societies and countries.

Because people perceive their physical and psychological differences epistemologically, racial and ethnic biases can be developed and lead to conflicts. Glasford and Calcagno (2012) analyzed commonality perceptions between two racial groups, Latinos and African Americans, and found that commonalities influenced increasing political solidarity within the two groups, mediated by Caucasians. This result indicates that exploring common traits between diverse

people can create rapport, and mediation can be useful in lessening conflicts between groups. Gollnick and Chinn (2013) explained that ethnic groups might believe they have a strong loyalty toward their ethnic identity, which can maintain group solidarity. Similarly, some people may take great pride in their racial and ethnic backgrounds, while others cherish their cultural memories and practices.

Race and ethnic topics have been widely discussed in daily life and scholarly journals and have conceptualized the issues related to ethnic minorities in education (Banks, 2006) because these topics tend to lead to controversial discussions and conflicts. Simultaneously, students and teachers may not always speak out transparently about their struggles, including discrimination related to race and ethnicity issues (Mayfield, 2020; Wyatt, 2017).

### **Colorblindness**

Multicultural education textbooks or journals have widely used and discussed concepts of colorblindness. Along with the conceptual term *color*, colorblind and colorblindness have been used in both positive and negative ways. *Colorblind* is defined as formal “conceptions of equality, expressed in rules that insist only on treatment that is the same across the board,” which “can thus remedy only the most blatant forms of discrimination” (Delgado et al., 2017, p. 8). The definition contains a positive aspect. Equal treatment implies that colorblindness means that race does not matter; it denies a racial connection or reasoning. People focus more on individuals’ characteristics rather than on perceiving people from their racial and ethnic identity (Lewis, 2001, p. 794). This perspective, which is called liberal, colorblind individualism, refers to the idea that “race should not be an important factor in evaluating individuals and that a colorblind society should be our ultimate goal” (Perry, 1993, p. 43). Moreover, Perry (1993) explained that the colorblind concept applies to equal protection of African Americans’ and Caucasians’



relationships, emphasizing affirmative action (Banks, 2001; Perry, 1993). However, Sweeney and Rollack (2017) argued that “colorblind individualism and ideals [are] based on white dominant culture” (p. 705).

On the other hand, other scholars defined *colorblindness* as negative, as disregarding or overlooking different racial and ethnic groups and treating them not the same as others (Ponterotto et al., 2006). A multicultural education textbook explains that colorblindness connects to white privilege because it overlooks non-majority students, which creates racial and ethnic inequality (Gollnick & Chinn, 2013). Colorblindness is also referred to as being *colormute*, which implies “that race does not matter, but that social inequalities based along the lines of race do not exist, leading to the perpetuation of a discriminatory status quo” (Talmy, 2010, p. 39). Interestingly, the race-does-not-matter concept can be interpreted both positively and negatively.

Furthermore, McDermott (2015) pointed out that colorblindness generally opposes multiculturalism because the concept cannot acknowledge students’ diversity. As a result, colorblind ideology enables “teachers [to] avoid difficult issues or question the structural forces that organize, categorize and privilege some groups over others” (Wyatt, 2017, p. 90). Based on some scholars’ interpretations, the colorblindness concept literally may not support diversity. In the negative uses of colorblindness, Lewis (2001) pointed out that “colorblindness enables all members of the communities to avoid confronting the racial realities that surround them,” which include their own racial biases (p. 801).

The contemporary concept of colorblindness is intended to not merely help treat race consciousness, perhaps, but is used as affirmative action (Haney-Lopez, 2007). McDermott (2015) explained, “Some Whites simply believe that race is no longer a relevant identity in the

current era” (p. 1453). This perspective can be interpreted subjectively but may create controversy. Some may take it positively, whereas others think it discards racial identity. As a result, the same as colorblindness, colorblind ideology “leads to a lack of recognizing the role of race/ethnicity, particularly for white people” (Sweeney & Rollack, 2017, p. 706) and brings misunderstanding of its usage. Therefore, some scholars rather want to use the phrases *color-visible* (McDermott, 2015, p.1455) or *color consciousness* (Perry, 1993).

Nevertheless, either phrase includes *color* to describe people in non-majority groups. Therefore, colorblindness can sometimes lead to overlooking racial inequality because of its negative interpretation. At the same time, the fundamental idea can maintain equal protection for diverse people. Colorblindness may not be the only major factor in shaping people’s racial and ethnic biases. However, in either positive or negative interpretations of the colorblindness principle, distinguishing people by skin color can create conflicts and feed into implicit racial biases.

With a wide array of views and positions from scholars and educators, there may not be a single correct usage of a colorblind principle. However, using the term *color* can lead to a controversial discussion. Although the term has been universally and extensively adapted, it enables some people to distinguish diversity by its racial components. Colorblindness does not always refer to disregarding diverse groups of people; however, the combination of *color* and *blindness* has a negative connotation. When the term does not contain negative implications, implicit racial bias may decrease, reducing racial inequality and violence.

### **Racial and Ethnic Bias and its Impact**

Racial and ethnic biases become critical topics in multicultural societies because one of the most problematic impacts is racism. Racial bias can fuel racism and vice versa. Like bias

classifications, racism can be classified as explicit and implicit. Explicit racism is labeled as *old-fashioned racism* in which people overtly show negative stereotypes toward certain racial and ethnic groups (Brochu et al., 2008; Nteta & Greenlee, 2013). Since the civil rights movements in the 1960s, people have developed more liberal racial attitudes (Nteta & Greenlee, 2013). As a result, racial resentment, especially explicit bias, has continued to be reduced. However, implicit racial bias has become a significant issue because people deny or are unaware that they are prejudiced but behave unreasonably. Today, racism has mutated into a new form called *aversive racism* (Ponterotto et al., 2006). Similar to implicit aversive biases, people with aversive racism explain that they are not racists. They are unable to be aware of their racial characterizations of other groups of people. However, they behave adversely. Therefore, racism has become implicit but cannot be wholly dismissed.

Institutional racism exists in a society where the dominant group implements racial ideology (Banks, 2007). Consequently, people are inclined to have specific images of other minority groups. In addition, an indirect form of racism negatively affects an individual's psychological and emotional well-being. For example, people experience vicarious racism by observing or having a sense of racism from their family or friends who directly experienced racist acts from others (Truong et al., 2016). This situation may not only affect the victims of racial bias; people who perceive racism will also indirectly affect their family members who suffer from prejudicial attitudes or biases.

The other extreme impact of prejudice and bias is hate crimes, violations, or harassment (Ponterotto et al., 2006). According to the Hate Crime Statistics Act, hate crime is formed by "bias against the victim due to his or her race, ethnicity, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, religion or disability" (Oudekerk, 2019, p. 3). The National Hate Crime

Victimization survey between 2015 and 2019 showed that racial and ethnic biases (59%) was most common driver of hate crimes, followed by gender (24%), sexual orientation (20%); “Approximately one in ten violent hate crime victimizations were thought to be motivated by bias against the victim’s disability (11%) or religion (9%)” (Kena et al., 2021, p.5). Hate crimes appear to be connected to offenders’ biased perceptions.

Hate crimes occur when an offender uses hate language or symbols when committing violent and property crimes (Masucci, Langton, & BJS Statisticians, 2017). The situation could improve if people knew how to minimize biased perceptions. The estimated number of victims seems lower than the actual victim numbers because some victims may not have reported to law enforcement (Oudekerk, 2019). Thus, reducing biases may help reduce victims and severe cases.

The impact of bias can also be seen internationally. People in various regions and countries have struggled with racial and ethnic biases regarding their socioeconomic, historical, and cultural circumstances. For example, after the Second World War, in Japan, the Korean population expanded by two million slave workers, and today, five hundred thousand Koreans reside in Japan (Nomoto, 2009). As a result, racial discrimination, including harassment and violence against Koreans and Chinese in Japan, has spread and is described as “Japan’s gravest social problem” (Park, 2017, p. 65). The aftermath of the wars has created severe racism against minorities in Japan.

In Brazil, Pacheco (2008) explained, people of African and Caribbean descent struggle with inequality and racial biases, which could extend beyond their skin colors to their poor economic and social status. Although racism varies globally, the fundamental issue may be that people misunderstand others, creating hatred and leading to conflicts and tensions.

Bias-related conflicts also occur in schools, classes, and intergroup relations. When teachers encounter biased situations, their decisions to ignore or confront them may create different consequences. Confronting subtle racism has proved successful in studies by mental health professionals in the U.S. and Canada (Hernández et al., 2010). A confrontation may help reduce prejudice and racial biases; however, the effectiveness is short-lived (Chaney & Sanchez, 2018). Therefore, another challenge is to explore ways for long-lasting effectiveness in overcoming biases.

### **Implicit Racial Biases**

Along with the current racial violence and the *Black Lives Matter* movement, the Texas Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates has conducted a workshop for lawyers to discuss how to recognize their own implicit biases (*How Race and Implicit*, 2020). Racial justice advocates emphasized implicit racial biases because they could become a strategized remedy for the justice system. One of the popular instruments, the Harvard Implicit Association Test (IAT), has widely been used for testing people's latent biased attitudes and beliefs with their automatic dichotomous responses in various fields. Law and legal concepts tie strongly into implicit biases because juries' automatic biased responses influence trials' consequences. In an empirical study, Levinson, Cai, and Young (2010) selected jury-eligible students who had never been convicted of a felony at a university in the Pacific and investigated their implicit biases. The researchers found a significant correlation between judging African Americans and guilty compared to Caucasians and guilty: "People who reported feeling warmly towards African Americans were more likely to show an implicit guilty bias against Blacks" than not guilty against the same group (Levinson et al., 2010, p. 205).

Another study, from Gamblin et al. (2021), found that juror prejudice is less likely to relate to sexual orientation-based hate crime than to race-based crime. In other words, racial crimes tend to be linked to biases more than sexual orientation crimes. Therefore, their study findings suggest that judges and attorneys need to be mindful and eliminate jurors who potentially have biases toward victimized groups. In this case, eliminating those jurors could reduce the bias of the final decision. In academia, however, teachers cannot ignore or disregard students.

Another example is the brutal racial violence by the police force. Systematically, “if implicit racial bias in police shootings is to be minimized, there must be an increased focus on police training, jury education, and collaboration between police departments and their Black communities” (Lawson, 2015, p. 376). Banks (2001) noted “the suspect description dilemma,” when officers and law enforcement rely on race-based suspect descriptions (p. 1115). He also pointed out that people should never rely on racial classification. Critical race theorists have pointed out that “racial profiling, in which the police stop minority-looking motorists to search for drug or other contrabands, and ‘statistical discrimination’ carried out by ordinary people who avoid blacks and Latinos” (Delgado et al., 2017, p.121). Generalizability is the result of statistical analysis, which can create stereotypes. When media coverage addresses suspects’ racial and ethnic components, the reports can perpetuate negative stereotypes for those racial and ethnic groups. However, statistics are essential in studying tendencies that can help prevent future criminal incidents.

Implicit racism may be connected to social discourses and formed by people’s biased perceptions. Bonilla-Silva (2013) pointed out that social and national discourses on race are correlated; when social and national discourse is muted or minimized, public discourse is also

reduced. Implicit racism can be reduced when the negative discourse decreases. Nevertheless, people in society and the world feel devastated and hopeless because racial injustice has never ceased. People of non-majority and diverse ethnic groups tend to be oppressed, suffer, and struggle with similar social injustices. The categorization of race and ethnicity may be one of the powerful elements that produces violence. At the same time, reverse discrimination, which refers to “discrimination aimed at the majority group,” could lead Caucasians to feel victimized in discussions of affirmative action (Delgado et al., 2017, p. 183).

Likewise, schools and “professional workplaces can still make it extremely difficult for people from historically underrepresented groups to continue to be successful in their professions” (O’Bryant, 2015, p. 143). Teachers’ implicit biases affect students’ academic performances. For example, in the study by Jacoby-Senghor et al. (2016), when instructors showed greater implicit prejudice in academia, African American students underperformed on the test but not Caucasian students. The researchers explained that the instructors had less effective lessons because of their anxiety (Jacoby-Senghor et al., 2016).

### **Racial and Ethnic Bias Issues in Hawai‘i**

Over a century ago, various races and ethnicities immigrated and created different cultural contexts in Hawai‘i. As noted in the previous chapter, Asians are the largest population due to migration histories. Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders comprised 10.8 percent of the Hawai‘i’s population in 2020 (U.S. Census, 2020a). Although their cultures are not identical, the U.S. Census classifies these ethnic groups as one group. Pacific Islanders have three oceanic regions: Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia. In addition, hundreds of islands are in Oceania, consisting of many ethnic groups, such as Samoan, Tongan, Micronesian, Chamorro, and Nauruan.

Caucasians have generally been perceived as a dominant group elsewhere; however, they are not a majority in Hawai‘i. Caucasians during the plantation era included plantation workers from Germany, Portugal, Italy, Norway, Russia, and France and English missionaries and sailors (Hormann, 1979). In 2020, Caucasians with various backgrounds comprise 22.9 percent of the population (U.S. Census, 2020a).

Unlike in other regions, white privilege in Hawai‘i seems to be different because of its colonization and annexation history. Caucasians in Hawai‘i have been labeled *haoles*, which means *foreigners* in Hawaiian and has a negative connotation (Grace, Lee, & Lum, 2001; Rohrer, 2008). Rohrer (2008) explained three dominant racial categories in Hawai‘i: *Kānaka Maoli* (native Hawaiians), *Locals*, and *Haoles*. “*Kānaka Maoli* are the only true Hawaiians as they are indigenous to the islands, Hawai‘i, and *Locals* are residents who worked on sugar and pineapple plantations [and were from] Asian-Pacific immigrant cultures and native Hawaiian culture” (Rohrer, 2008, p. 1111). *Haoles* are perceived as settlers rather than immigrants (Rohrer, 2006) and “are not held in high regard in Hawai‘i” (Grace et al., 2001, p. 444). Similar to the other regions in the U.S., Caucasians have relatively stable socio-economic power in Hawai‘i contexts; however, Caucasian students from the U.S. mainland viewed Caucasians in Hawai‘i as having a lower social status than other cultures and ethnicities in Hawai‘i (Halagao, 2006).

A fifth generation *haole*, Harold F. Rice, filed a lawsuit in 1996 against restrictions in voting for members in Hawai‘i’s Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) as racial discrimination (Rohrer, 2006). The Supreme Court decision was that the OHA restrictions “constituted an attempt by the State of Hawai‘i to enable Kānaka Maoli self-determination” (Pino, 2020, p. 2605), which means non-Hawaiians are not allowed to vote for the board of Trustees in OHA elections.



Hawai‘i has consisted of distinctive diverse groups since the sugar plantation era, and social-discourse-related race and ethnicity stereotypes have developed. Various power structures can engender implicit biases in social relations associated with race and ethnicity issues. For example, Rohrer (2008) explained the dominant discourse is Hawai‘i: “*Haoles* and non-local people of colour [color] (African Americans, South Asians, etc.) are treated unfairly and with disrespect in Hawai‘i” (p. 1112). Another example is that one of the dominant ethnic groups in Hawai‘i is Japanese Americans because of the relatively large population ratio, and this group has maintained political power since 1987 (Okamura, 2014). Nevertheless, the population profile in 2020 did not clearly show the Japanese as a dominant race in Hawai‘i.

People’s perceptions of racial and ethnic groups in Hawai‘i is varied. In a study regarding implicit biases related to four races and ethnicities, Japanese Americans, Micronesians, Caucasians, and Native Hawaiians, Levinson, Hioki, and Hotta (2015) found that residents of Hawai‘i favor Japanese Americans over Micronesians. In other words, they had positive stereotypes of Japanese Americans and negative stereotypes of Micronesians. These stereotypes could have resulted from familiarity with the racial-ethnic minority. People could have been more familiar with Japanese Americans than Micronesians. In the same study, people in Hawai‘i showed cold explicit attitudes toward Micronesians, whereas those people displayed warmer attitudes towards the other three groups (Levinson et al., 2015).

Different ethnicities and races in Hawai‘i face problems related to racism, power, and privilege. Hawai‘i’s multiculturalism and social stratification differ from that in other regions in the U.S. Although a racial hierarchy of power and privilege entails “the dark-skinned people at the bottom” in Hawai‘i, skin color may not wholly determine social status (Halagao, 2006, p. 40). For example, Talmy (2010) described Micronesians as the “most stigmatized long line of

immigrant groups to arrive in Hawai‘i” (p. 38). Moreover, within the English as Second Language (ESL) students in public high schools, those with East/Southeast Asian backgrounds expressed racist behaviors toward Micronesians. Some stereotypical terms against Micronesians were “glow-in-the-dark Marshallese” and of Micronesians’ intelligence, “They invented the microwave, Microsoft, microphone, [and] the microscope” (Talmy, 2010, p. 45). Racial jokes are severely critical, leading to other powerful stereotypes and accelerating discrimination and racism.

Globally, in the U.S. and in Hawai‘i, racial and ethnic bias has been a critical and sensitive topic in multicultural societies. Racial bias can be based on physical and cultural differences and the social discourses people live and have experienced. These biases may not always have logical rationales. Socially constructed images are sometimes powerful and cannot be changed at an individual level.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Education is one of the approaches to supporting students’ healthy academic lives. Various educational theories focus on race and ethnicity issues to challenge racism and racial inequality in schools. Likewise, multicultural education promotes educational equality and social justice (Banks, 2006; Pang, 2001), performing “knowledge, reflection, and action as the basis for social change” (Nieto, 1992, p. 208). While racism and race and ethnic-related violence are still present, an anti-bias perspective to combat racism is one of the cores of multicultural education (Nieto, 1992; 2005).

Multicultural education is a fundamental theoretical framework for prejudice and bias reduction. Prominent multiculturalists and scholars emphasize prejudice reduction within their frameworks because it helps alleviate racial and other multicultural issues and conflicts (Banks,

2009, 2015; Pang, 2001). Bennett (2007) noted that racial and ethnic tensions and prejudice still exist in various regions in the U.S. and worldwide. Dixon, Durrheim, Kerr, and Thomae (2013) explained that “prejudice came to signify the unreasoning and unreasonable dislike of members of other social groups” (p. 240). Unreasoning feelings of hate become critical. The challenge is how to reduce unreasoning prejudice and biased perceptions.

Maintaining educational equality is a crucial concept in multicultural education. Simultaneously, retaining cultural pride in their heritage helps diverse students develop positive attitudes (Koheo, 1994) and recognize and respect cultural differences (Gibson, 1984). Berger, Brenick, Lawrence, Coco, and Abu-Raiya (2018) explained that contact interventions, a teacher intervening to highlight multicultural students’ differences and similarities in bi-monthly meetings, can reduce stereotypes and negative feelings toward others. Nevertheless, Berger et al. (2018) pointed out that this intervention has short-term effectiveness. Merely learning about individual or group differences may not be enough to understand others; it does “not lead to less reported prejudice than do other concrete forms of multiculturalism” (Rios & Wynn, 2016, p. 863). Explaining the differences and similarities between different groups of people may be an initial step but may not be the ultimate solution for overcoming biases.

Critical multicultural education (CME) has a transformative approach in which students and educators examine their holistic views. CME is derived from the critical theory that focuses on power, oppression, and privilege (Vavrus, 2014). View (2015) explained the “power analysis and activism that is expected to emerge at the most advanced stage of multicultural teaching and learning” (p. 155). Human biases are not formed merely from their determinations; social discourses and group norms influence them. Thus, the CME conceptual framework is useful for

examining the roots and formation of biases: “Critical multicultural education is crucial to understand the breadth and depth of multicultural pedagogies” (Ravitch, 2016, p. 3).

I use James Banks’s multicultural education theory as a core theoretical framework and CME as a supporting framework in this dissertation. CME is used to analyze students’ biased relations between ingroup and outgroup structures that focus on power, oppression, and privilege (Vavrus, 2014). Social structures are inevitably associated with a student’s life in school. For example, students relate to peers, families, groups, communities, societies, countries, and the world where they face social constraints and deal with powers, inequalities, or other complicated issues.

The power relation between society and individuals can be a form of “person-to-person interactions and move towards broader institutional and societal arrangement” (Brantmeier et al., 2011, p. 7). Power relation sounds oppressive and follows a hierarchical system; however, the reality is that individual surroundings are inevitably ignored in contact groups, classrooms, and societies. Therefore, CME analyzes power positively and practically. A study by Brantmeier et al. (2011) noted that CME leads students to move from “individual reaction and resistance to a systemic understanding” in multicultural education courses (p. 8-9). In this case, systematic understanding means understanding the social structure that includes power in relation to privilege, which cannot be avoided by discussing one’s biases.

### **Effective approaches**

Scholars endorse various multicultural educational pedagogies to support culturally diverse students. For example, *equity pedagogy* (McGee Banks & Banks, 1995) is defined as “teaching strategies that facilitate the learning process” (p. 152) using multicultural concepts, such as ethnicity, culture, stereotypes, assimilation, and many others. *Social responsive teaching*

uses students' culture to support their identity including cultural contexts, such as "experiences, knowledge, events, values, role models, perspectives, and issues that arise from the community" (Pang, 2001, p.192).

In *culturally responsive teaching*, essential cultural factors encompass various elements in an educational setting: "ethnic groups' cultural values, traditions, communication, learning styles, contributions, and relational patterns" (Gay, 2002, p. 107). Pang's approach focuses on culture as an individual context, whereas Gay looks at the same framework more as ethnic group values and identities. A similar approach, *culturally-responsive* or *student-centered pedagogy* shows inclusiveness by acknowledging the "cultural heritage of different ethnic groups" and teaching "students to know and praise their own and each others' cultural heritage" (Scherff & Spector, 2011, p. 12). In addition, Ladson-Billing (1995) emphasizes that not only do teachers encourage students, but they also discuss "academic success and cultural competence; they must help a student to recognize, understand, and critique current social inequality" (p. 476). However, these approaches may not be enough to combat irrational racial inequality and violence in school.

Around the same time, a pedagogy theorist, Gloria Ladson-Billing, developed *culturally relevant pedagogy*, which focuses on acknowledging different ethnic groups' cultural heritage and teaching students to mutually recognize others' cultural heritages (Scherff & Spector, 2011). She created a synthesis version called *culturally relevant education*, which focuses on students' "academic skills and concepts, cultural competence, critical reflection, and critiquing of discourses of power" for common areas of works that are grounded in social justice education (Aronson & Laughter, 2016, p.178).

Many multicultural pedagogies and frameworks are related to social justice and caring for diverse students, and these pedagogies are similar. These approaches support maintaining culturally diverse students' norms, beliefs, and other cultural characteristics and backgrounds. Focusing on students' unique features encourages them not to criticize, which helps reduce prejudice. Teachers can adjust their pedagogy based on students' backgrounds and identities to help students in their learning environment. For example, fostering critical thinkers may reduce prejudice because they critically understand other students with different perceptions and viewpoints.

Multicultural pedagogies are effective for diverse students and educators. Ravitch (2014) has idealized a daily learning space as unique for students to discuss and confront multicultural issues, which include inequality and social injustice. To implement multicultural pedagogies, teachers create a safe classroom atmosphere for each student to confront their racial and cultural biases by examining their attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs (Shockley & Banks, 2011). This implementation may take time but is feasible using the above or further approaches when students realize that reducing their biases and prejudicial attitudes against others will improve their academic lives and educational achievement.

### **Summary**

Bias, prejudice, and stereotypes are one's psychological and behavioral attitudes and perceptions influenced by personal beliefs and sociocultural and intergroup relations in society. Biases are irrational and tend not to be related to factual evidence. Therefore, misconceptions occur and create further conflicts. In school, students suffer from labeling and bullying that could result in prejudicial attitudes. Bias and prejudice reduction will stimulate peaceful interaction

with others. However, this reduction is quite challenging because biases are individual matters influenced by internal and external channels that cannot always be controlled. Some people display their bias and prejudice overtly, while others are cognitively aware or unaware of their biases. Biases can be positive or negative, and both forms provide uneasiness and discomfort to others. A positive bias does not merely have a positive effect on reducing biases; instead, it may cause competition among different groups: “Prejudice may result because groups that are doing well in certain comparison domains now represent a source of competition” (Maddux et al., 2008, p. 87). Dovidio (2001) analyzed prejudice as a social problem, and “if the problem, like a cancerous tumor, can be identified and removed or treated, the problem will be contained, and the rest of the system will be healthy” (p. 831). George Floyd’s case is considered a brutal racial homicide; however, the fundamental issue is not limited to racial inhumanity but indicates social injustice against other marginalized or vulnerable groups.

Over a half-century ago, many people heard Martin Luther King Jr.’s popular speech in 1963 and hoped the nation would evolve into his dream: “I have a dream that one day this nation will rise and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women re-created equal” (Mount, 2010). However, social injustices still exist around the community and world even after sixty years. Fundamentally, human rights is a long-lasting topic that people must always keep in mind, and each individual must respond to the issues for future improvement. Bias and prejudice reduction are critical for guiding any solutions to avoid having the same occurrence or similar brutality. Therefore, I examined students’ experiences of personal racial and ethnic biases and the potential explanations and progress. This process has helped me understand how students learn and can reduce their biases, which can support generating a safe, educational space for students and teachers.

## **CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN**

This research qualitatively examines the racial and ethnic biases of college students in a multicultural education course and explores their bias awareness, the roots of their biases, transformations or changes in future applications of their biases. The importance of educational research is to choose “the approach that best addresses the study’s purposes and research questions” (Conrad, & Serlin, 2006, p. 391). The benefit of this study is to explore an essential approach to reducing biases and alleviating racial and other multicultural conflicts in schools and societies. In this chapter, I begin with an overview of the research design, followed by the research questions and rationale. Next, the methodology section covers the research design: research site and participants, data collection, instruments, procedures and timeline, research reliability and validity, and the data analysis method. Finally, I discuss the IRB approval, my positionality, and the study’s limitations and assumptions.

### **Research Questions and Rationale**

Inequality, discrimination, and other conflicts often originate from people’s biases and prejudicial attitudes and behaviors (Brochu et al., 2008; Nteta & Greenlee, 2013). In particular, racial and ethnic biases lead to hate crimes, violations, or harassment (Ponterotto et al., 2006). The complexity of bias links to people’s cognitive states (Allport, 1954). Some may intend to conceal their perceptions, while others may disclose them. When people are conscious of their biases, they can control their responses. For example, “when evaluative concerns are high or behavior is public, individuals’ tendency to correct their racial bias is expected to be elevated” (Mendes & Koslov, 2013, p. 924). In other words, people change their attitudes when others evaluate or judge their behaviors.



On the other hand, unconscious biases are related to people's automatic implicit responses, which are more difficult for them to evaluate by themselves (Mendes & Koslov, 2013). As a result, people conclude they do not have any biases (West et al., 2012), or they deny their biases, which is an implicit aversive bias; however, they behave inappropriately toward a group (Deal, 2007; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005). The aversive form is more critical and complex because people do not realize their biases but engage in undesirable behaviors toward others.

Whether biases are unconscious or conscious, they affect students' and teachers' performances in school. For example, Jacoby-Senhor et al. (2016) found that instructors' implicit biases tend to be associated with anxiety and poor lesson quality, which affect their students' overall performance regardless of instructors' explicit biases. In addition, implicit and explicit biases hinder students' academic success and life (Jacoby-Senhor et al., 2016) and engender struggles and conflicts with others in class and school (Warikoo, Sinclair, Fei, & Jacoby-Senhor, 2016).

People are a part of a group, society, and country; therefore, they must work with others to live in harmony. If people and students maintain their racial and ethnic biases and prejudices, it will lead to major conflicts, such as hate crimes, bullying, and struggles—like recent racial violence. In schools, this will affect students' educational achievement. Therefore, bias reduction is a forefront topic in education.

Due to the complexity of biases, I modified research questions with the committee's recommendations and feedback to make the questions more focused and clearer. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) explained, "Research questions are an integral and driving feature" that connects to research purposes and examines the processes and issues in the study (p. 227). This study examined COE undergraduate students' racial and ethnic bias awareness and roots, their

bias-related experiences, and the transformation if they perceive one. In the deeper examination, the sequential process helped me to understand how their progress was processed. The following list is an overarching question and five sub-questions based on my research objectives.

*How do undergraduate students in the college of education in a Hawai'i university examine their personal racial and ethnic biases?*

- 1. How do students develop their bias awareness?*
- 2. What helps students realize the factors influencing their biases and examine the deeper roots?*
- 3. How do students perceive and describe their growth or improvement in overcoming their biases, if any?*
- 4. What helps students make conscious choices to change their biases, if any?*
- 5. How would students see the application of the changes beyond a multicultural education course?*

The overarching research question explores undergraduate students' racial and ethnic biases through their learning progress. The five sub-questions are formulated sequentially: awareness, reasons/roots, learning growth, knowledge of the change, and future applications. The first and second sub-questions explore students' bias awareness and their origins. I examine how their biases are attributed to and associated with their experiences. Some students may not be aware of their biases, whereas for others, disclosing their biases could be challenging because, perhaps, biases connote negative meanings.

The third and fourth questions investigate the continuity of their learning. A bias-free class environment becomes a healthy and efficient place for learning (Banks 2006, 2007). When students reflect and understand their biases and origins, they may recognize any improvement by

exploring the problems of living within a multicultural society (Banks, 2006). Students' growth can be examined by their epistemological development. Simultaneously, their growth may be varied; some students require more time to understand their biases and progress, while others require less time. Moreover, transformation may or may not occur and can be positive or negative. Hofer and Sinatra (2010) explained, "Learners with flexibility might also adapt their beliefs to new tasks and to learning in new areas" (p. 119), which may lead to improvement in their biased perceptions and behaviors. After these processes, the last sub-question covers their future applications of the changes and inquiries about their personal and professional journey. When students discover where their biases originated, they may understand what they want to be like in the future.

The five sub-questions are formulated based on students' learning processes. These questions elaborate on one another and ultimately provide answers to the overarching question. As a result, this investigation benefits students by helping them recognize multicultural issues, and decreasing their biases may reduce conflicts in school and beyond. At the same time, this topic is important for teacher education because having implicit and explicit biases impedes students' academic achievements and performances, and racial and ethnic conflicts can lead to educational inequality (Jacob-Senghor et al., 2016; Quinn, 2020). Thus, this study helps educators understand racial and ethnic bias complexities and may contain clues for resolving racial problems and conflicts. In addition, the dissertation process helped my educational growth intellectually and personally.

## **Methodology**

A vast array of research has investigated biases and prejudice with quantitative and qualitative approaches. Studies of racial biases have been conducted in different fields, using

quantitative methods to explore bias tendencies and relations. For example, a racial bias study focused on the relationship between instructors' biases toward African American and Caucasian students' academic performance (Jacoby-Senghor et al., 2016). Another study measured and analyzed how those two races responded to confrontations on biases (Chaney & Sanchez, 2018). Other researchers used facial images to measure children's implicit racial biases toward Asians and Africans (Qian, Heyman, Quinn, Messi, Fu, & Lee, 2016). Although analyzing racial and ethnic bias tends to prevent further issues and conflicts, it does not explain attributes. In qualitative studies, some scholars have examined pre-service teacher students' thoughts, attitudes, and experiences (Halagao, 2006; Waytt, 2017), and others have investigated students' experiences with school racial issues (Seider, Huguley, & Novick, 2013).

In this research, I studied the COE undergraduate students' racial and ethnic biased awareness and the roots of their biases by analyzing their experiences and stories using a qualitative method, which is "useful when we are interested in describing how people negotiate, understand, and make sense of the world" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 368). Since the research focuses on examining different students' perceptions of their biases and their attitudes based on their experiences, this research is classified as a phenomenological study, which refers to an analysis of humans living in a natural setting (Saldaña, 2011). In human experiences (phenomena), "there is no objective reality, but rather it is our experiences and our perceptions of these experiences that are our reality" (Leavy, 2015, p. 88). The experiences can be interpreted through phenomenological, psychological, and philosophical approaches and can relate to a material good, a relationship, memory, prejudice, or language: "Significantly, it is not the experience itself that is being studied; rather, it is the human consciousness of the experience" (Soule & Freeman, 2019, p. 859). Thus, this qualitative phenomenological approach helps me understand

undergraduate students' personal racial and ethnic bias perceptions from their thoughts, awareness, and experiences. Saldaña (2011) explained that the goal of a qualitative study is to understand the human meanings and align with social justice to engage in social issues and beyond.

Social injustice and educational inequality can originate from individuals' perceptions of bias and their behaviors. As I explained in the previous chapter, I use multicultural education and critical multicultural education theories as the framework because they fundamentally focus on social justice and educational equality and cover the relations to bias issues in different racial-ethnic minority groups. James Banks' multicultural education theory emphasizes students' equal opportunity regardless of their backgrounds (Banks, 2009). Since the civil rights movements, multicultural education has become one of the increasingly discussed theoretical educational frameworks in mainly Western countries in the last 30 to 40 years (May & Sleeter, 2010). People in various regions and countries have struggled with racial/ethnic biases in their socio-economic, historical, and cultural circumstances. For example, as noted in the previous chapter, racial discrimination, including harassment and violence against Koreans and Chinese in Japan, has spread as general racism (Park, 2017). People of African and Caribbean origins in Brazil have been hindered by racial bias and inequality based on their poor economic and social status more than their skin color (Pacheco, 2008). Although the causes of racism can be varied based on history and circumstances, the fundamental issue can be attributed to biases. While similar issues have occur continually, multicultural education progressively explores how to reduce social injustice and educational inequality.

## **Location and Site**

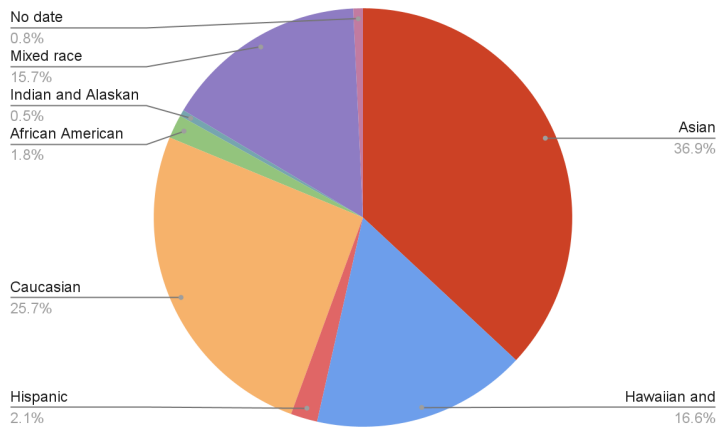
The research site was at a large university in Hawai‘i. The rationale for choosing a Hawai‘i location was its unique diversity profile since the plantation era in the late 1800s (Daws, 1968; Fleischman & Tyson, 2000). Although diversity can be widely seen in different regions in the U.S., the profiles differ. As noted in Chapter 1, the immigrant profile in Hawai‘i consisted of 37.2 percent of people being Asians and 22.9 percent Caucasians. Those immigrants created families, and in 2020, a quarter of the population claimed multiracial status (The U.S. Census, 2020a). Hawai‘i has become a uniquely diverse place.

Because of its distinctive diversity, various studies have been conducted regarding people’s biases and discriminations in Hawai‘i, particularly regarding race and ethnicity relations (Levinson et al., 2015; Mossakowski, Wongkaren, & Uperesa, 2017). Therefore, studying current students’ racial and ethnic biases in the Hawai‘i context is essential for updating existing literature.

I selected research in the College of Education (COE). Along with the diverse population in Hawai‘i, the university also contains a distinctive enrollment profile. Figure 1 below shows Fall 2021 enrollment by race and ethnicity.

**Figure 1**

*University System Enrollment in Fall 2021*(Source: Citation withheld for confidentiality reasons).



As noted in the previous chapter, various ethnic people immigrated to Hawai‘i during the sugar plantation era. Similar to the historical ethnic migrant contexts, 2021 university enrollments show that Asians had the largest percentage, consisting of 36.9 percent (n=7,053) and followed by 25.7 percent of Caucasians (n=4,899), 16.6 percent of Hawaiians or Pacific Islanders (n=3,176), and 15.7 percent of mixed races (n=2,994). In a further breakdown, Asians included Chinese, Koreans, Japanese, Laotians, Thai, Vietnamese, and others. Moreover, Hispanics made up 2.1 percent (n=394) and African Americans 1.8 percent (n=349) were nearly two percent of the entire enrollment. Lastly, 95 students were American Indians and Alaskan Natives, which is 0.5 percent.

Unlike other tertiary institutions in the U.S., this university had no dominant race and ethnicity. Sixteen percent of the mixed-raced students may have possessed multiple, mixed, or third cultures. Therefore, it is worthwhile to investigate students’ racial and ethnic biases in this unique context.

Biases can form from human nature (Allport, 1937, 1950) as part of the personality (Allport, 1954). Therefore, based on Allport's theories, students' racial and ethnic biases in a university in a Hawai'i location may not be different from those of students in other regions. However, people's biases can be influenced by others (Allport, 1979; Eagly & Diekmann, 2005). This exclusive research location and site helped to serve the research focus of exploring students' rich and contextual perspectives and the experiences related to their biases. This research can also provide a different lens or data due to the demographic composition of the diverse student profile.

The Introduction to Multicultural Education course, EDU 3XX, was the research site. EDU 3XX is an undergraduate core course for the College of Education (COE). The COE in the university meets the rigorous standards of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) system, which was provided by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in 2007 and updated in 2021.

The course contents of EDU 3XX cover extensive multicultural issues along with social justice and educational equality associated with racial and ethnic biases. The college catalog describes the EDU 3XX course as covering "concepts and methods to develop sensitivity and awareness of cultural influences on behavior as these relate to the schooling process" (citation is excluded for confidentiality reasons). The sensitivity and awareness could connect to multicultural issues, including social injustice and racial biases, where students can reflect their personal views and thoughts on a deeper level. I have obtained the course syllabus from the COE. The course contents are described as follows:

This course will study multiculturalism, its origin, development, theories, practices, and outcomes. It will examine many factors, such as social classes,



ethnicities, genders, exceptionalities, religions, languages, ages, sexual orientations, and education roles. The participants will be encouraged and challenged to identify their personal beliefs, biases, behaviors, and misunderstandings and to make transformative changes with the knowledge they acquire in the course. The course is highly interactive, creative, imaginative, experiential, reflective, and constructive. A variety of activities will allow participants to apply their learning to practice and engage in personal transformation. (citation excluded for confidentially reasons)

The student learning objectives align with the sequence of the research sub-questions.

1. To understand the key theories and concepts of multicultural education.
2. To examine and evaluate the cultural factors that have a profound impact on education.
3. To reflect and analyze our own beliefs and behaviors.
4. To apply the learning in daily professional and personal lives.

Generally, the course is taught by various instructors, which indicates that the content and orientation may be somewhat different across sections. However, the course objectives and student learning outcomes are shared among the instructors. Furthermore, they follow the COE mission and the conceptual framework for teachers and students: “A sense of purpose, a sense of place: preparing knowledgeable, effective, and caring educators to contribute to a just, diverse, and democratic society.” Thus, EDU 3XX was the most suitable site for this research.

## **Participants**

The sample selection must be appropriate for the study objectives (Kothari, 2004). A qualitative phenomenological study explores students’ valuable contextual experiences that

explain their biases. Ozmon (2012) explained that phenomenology is associated with studying “consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view,” which includes one’s feelings, thoughts, and responsibility (p. 225). Therefore, I used the purposive sampling method to achieve representative sampling by selecting participants who were known for specific purposes and their fields of study (Cohen et al., 2011). Two sampling selection criteria were established based on the objective of this study. First, participants were in EDU 3XX, Introduction to Multicultural Education, where students study racial and ethnic inequality and other multicultural issues. Students taking this course are mostly juniors or seniors, but some first- and second-year students may take this course because there is no prerequisite. Therefore, class level was not a part of the selection criteria. Secondly, all students in the courses could be participants because they have different cultural contexts, including different origins, perspectives, and philosophies. Students who met these two criteria could become research participants. Finally, this study can be replicated in other tertiary institutions where they offer a multicultural education class.

The maximum estimated enrollment is approximately 25 students per class, with two to four EDU 3XX classes every semester. Based on a pilot study, I anticipated that some students might not be interested in the survey; therefore, I estimated that 80 to 100 students would participate, among six classes, if the instructors permitted this study. Moreover, I estimated that ten to twenty percent of the class population would be willing to participate in interviews. Through a questionnaire, I sought eight to sixteen voluntary and representative, interview participants. This sample selection design helped me in collecting different biases from students from diverse backgrounds and enabled me to analyze and profoundly understand the validity of their biases.

## **Data Collection**

The research questions guided me in determining data collection and analysis methods. This section covers the instruments, procedures and timeline, reliability, and validity of the research.

### **Instruments**

In this qualitative phenomenological study, I used three instruments to collect data on college students' racial and ethnic biases: a qualitative questionnaire, in-depth interviews, and semi-structured interview note-taking observations. Using three instruments helped me obtain sufficient and rich data for triangulation on the process of students' perceptions, experiences, and reductions in their racial and ethnic biases. Triangulation enables profound analysis of students' bias attributes (Cohen et al., 2011; Johnson & Christensen, 2004). The data collection goal was to collect students' real voices, thoughts, and views through a thorough investigation.

### ***Questionnaires***

The survey instrument was developed through a pilot study in courses in multicultural education and the social and cultural contexts of education. The main purpose of a pilot study is for researchers to gain experience and improve the research (Kothhari, 2004). After receiving feedback from the participants and my committee, I set three open-ended questions (Appendix A). As for the survey questions, the word *bias* generally contains a negative connotation (Merriam Webster, n.d.; Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). I anticipated that students may hesitate to disclose their biases, an idea which I received from the committee. Therefore, the questions

contained more neutral phrases, such as *misconceptions* and *prejudged beliefs*, for the participants to reveal their biases with less stress.

After the open-ended questions, some demographic questions were placed in the last section so that participants revealed their backgrounds after answering the questions. I learned this approach from the pilot study and the committee's suggestions. At the end of the questionnaire, I invited the survey participants to participate in voluntary interviews.

### ***Interviews***

Due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, I conducted virtual interviews on Zoom using the recording function of Otter Voice software. I formed a set of six interview questions for structured interviews to investigate students' bias perceptions at their deeper levels (Appendix B). Each interview took 20 to 45 minutes; the short interview is reasonable and meaningful (Cohen et al., 2011) when the interview questions "adequately reflect what it is the researcher is trying to find out" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 415). The interviews were intended to explore the answers to each sub-question: bias awareness, reasons, learning growth, knowledge of changes, and applications.

As an interviewer, I needed to establish rapport with the participants. Rapport refers to a relationship in which an interviewer builds harmony and trust with interviewees (Seidman, 2013). I started by posing an easy background question to make the participants feel comfortable and help them freely describe their histories and experiences. If the participants were willing to discuss their families and other background information, it would help me understand them well.

I conducted one-on-one virtual interviews rather than a focus group because a focus group could have affected participants' responses. *Conformity* is defined as uniformity in a group or social norms that people are influenced by (Crandall & Stangor, 2005; Moscovici &

Faucheux, 1972), and its characteristics display a lack of agency (Padalia, 2014). Therefore, even though a focus group may not consist of people with similar social norms, people's opinions may influence others to change their answers, which indicates that biases and prejudice may also change (Crandall, & Stangor, 2005). Therefore, having one-on-one interviews was beneficial for listening to students' racial biases and their experiences on their learning pathways.

Even in a one-on-one interview, students could face challenges disclosing their real thoughts. Some interview questions were intended to be asked indirectly because negative words and phrases might impede the participants' sharing of their stories. Like the questionnaire, I tried to use neutral words rather than biased or prejudiced ones. The interview goals were to search for students' biased roots and investigate their growth and changes if they recognized them. Changing and shifting biases is not always in a positive direction. Therefore, my role was not to induce favorable answers.

### ***Observations***

Observation is a selective and purposive method that is "a systematic viewing of a specific phenomenon" (Krishnaswamy & Satyaprasad, 2010, p. 92). Using this instrument was intended to help me discover participants' free behavioral patterns or traits. Cohen et al. (2011) pointed out, "The distinctive feature of observation as a research process is that it offers an investigator the opportunity to gather *live* data from a naturally occurring social situation" (p. 456). Participants are not manipulated; natural settings make the outcome of events more interesting because nonstructural behaviors may be present (Seidman, 2013). For example, notes and memos will become data (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Therefore, researchers must be mindful and think about what should be observed (Kothari, 2004), which supports the purpose of the interviews.

Observation takes many forms and procedures (Cohen et al., 2011). In this study, I used a semi-structured observation by taking notes during interviews. Based on the interview questions, I developed an observation chart consisting of five non-verbal behaviors that can occur naturally: facial expressions, number of pauses, movements, tones, and hesitations (Appendix E). Using a chart can help record participants' behaviors easily. One limitation is that observers may have biases (Cohen et al., 2011). Hall (1997) explained that the same culture tends to share a similar conceptual map, which indicates that languages and gestures may not be the same as in other cultural groups. I was an observer and an interviewer who might also carry different cultural interpretations of the various participants. Because of these limitations, I mindfully filled in observations during the interviews.

### **Procedures and Timeline**

The data collection period was in Fall 2021 and Spring 2022. At the end of Spring 2020, all classes had shifted to hybrid or full distance learning until the end of Spring 2022 due to COVID-19 circumstances. Before the data collection, I explained this project to instructors in EDU 3XX and obtained their permission to conduct the study with their students. First, I sent a research consent form to students using a Google Form via email. The university email system uses the Google platform; therefore, all students can easily access a Google Form. Once I received the students' consent, I also used a Google Form to distribute a questionnaire that elicited students' biases. Students answered the questions and submitted the questionnaire virtually.

I aimed to attend classes in the classroom around the fourth and fifth weeks of the semester if the instructors permitted. By this time, students and instructors would have become comfortable in class.

After obtaining voluntary interview participants from the questionnaire, I selected representative participants: different genders, ethnic and racial backgrounds, and origin and cultural backgrounds, and various bias attributes obtained from the questionnaire. The interviews were scheduled for approximately the 12th to 15th weeks of the semester in order to examine the students' growth and changes in their biased perceptions and attitudes and to delve into their future applications of any changes.

### **Reliability**

Addressing relevant reliability helps the research to be trustworthy (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). In this qualitative study, I focused on two prominent data collection reliabilities: consistency and dependability. Consistency is important for data collection and analysis that involves accuracy, honesty, and precision (Cohen et al., 2011).

Setting up the interview questions and keeping a consistent sequence increases interviews' consistency (Cohen et al., 2011). For example, when I asked participants about their socio-cultural backgrounds in the introduction, I expanded the dialog regarding family, hobbies, and interests. Since I had obtained the participants' biases from the questionnaire, I was able to study their answers; therefore, I extended the questions, asking them for details during the interviews. This approach enabled me to minimize the interview duration and maximize the contents.

Data dependability is defined as follows: "If the work were repeated, in the same context, with the same methods and with the same participants, similar results would be obtained" (Shenton, 2004, p. 71). Cohen et al. (2011) explained that a qualitative study typically examines natural occurrences; therefore, study dependability is one weakness. Obtaining the same results may not always be achievable. To remedy this, I had to make the research design fully clear;

Data instruments needed to be user-friendly for other researchers. When others follow the same methodological procedures, in similar settings, with similar participants, they can compare the results.

Using a recording device enhances data dependability because human memory is limited. After transcribing the recorded data, I could precisely interpret and quote the interviewees' words and phrases. As a result, the study has less skewed data. I had to mindfully prepare and operate the device. Inspecting the recording function on Otter Voice software before interviews enhanced the data dependability. These two reliabilities, consistency, and dependability, appear to be intersected to support the overall research quality.

### **Validity**

Maximizing validity makes a study effective and supports a valid conclusion (Cohen et al., 2011; Johnson & Christensen, 2004). I emphasized three major validities: triangulation, generalizability, and cross-cultural validity.

Different triangulations validate research: triangulation by data, method, theory, and researcher (Miles & Huberman, 1994, as cited in Paulien, Nico, & Douwe, 2002). Data triangulation establishes the credibility of the various data channels and “cross-validate[s] and corroborate[s] findings” (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, p. 426). Data collection among three EDU 3XX courses in different semesters enhanced the data triangulation because it helped obtain rich contextual human voices from comparable but various sets.

Data triangulation can also highlight valuable findings from a combination of three instruments. Each instrument has its strengths and weaknesses. Questionnaires are limited in searching for participants' motives and thoughts thoroughly, but the advantage of this questionnaire is that it was less time-consuming and brief answers are easy to obtain. In



comparison, interviews are effective in exploring in-depth analysis. Each instrument's weakness can cover the other's strength. Therefore, comparing data across the instruments increases data validity (Shenton, 2004).

Next, generalizability in a qualitative study means that the study creates a naturalistic generalization, which refers to the "process of generalizing based on similarity" (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, p. 256). Generalizability, as transferability, refers to the feasibility of transferring the same study to other situations (Shenton, 2004). For example, this research site in Hawai'i is a unique socio-cultural context that contains a different profile of diversity from other regions and states. Although the study setting is not fully transferable, selecting a similar site and population may be achievable, because many universities and colleges now offer multicultural education classes. However, having a different set of diverse populations results in different biased experiences. Readers can understand that data results are from phenomenological circumstances and populations. When the research provides a detailed description of the phenomenon under investigation, readers will understand its background properly (Shenton, 2004). Consequently, this strategy leads to success in achieving transferability.

Cross-cultural validity is also crucial in a qualitative method. When researching samples in a cross-cultural, multiracial setting with international, local, and other origins, researchers need to consider students' cultural properties (Cohen et al., 2011). Students' expressions may have different meanings based on their cultural contexts. Pauses could have further implications from different cultural contents (Halls 1997). As a researcher, I was mindful of trying to understand the students' cultural behaviors.

Achieving potential reliability and validity enhanced the research's feasibility, which validates the study's conclusion. In addition, the qualitative method approach enabled me to

examine the rich contexts of human bias behaviors and characteristics and answer the research questions profoundly.

### **Data Analysis**

Qualitative method analysis represents “a diverse set of inquiry techniques that can be used to expand a wide variety of problems, research purposes, and questions” (Conrad, & Serlin, 2006, p. 390). The data analysis method aligns with the study objectives and research questions. Three instruments were used to analyze the students’ racial and ethnic biases and experiences and their progress. First, a survey obtained brief data. The questionnaire and interviews explored answers to all the research sub-questions. Interview data revealed participants’ thoughts and feelings on a deeper level.

After obtaining the survey and interview data, I used Otter Voice software to transcribe the data. A coding procedure can automatically or manually examine the same or similar words and phrases to find repeated ideas and group them by common labels to organize the data (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Cohen et al., 2011). Manual coding helped me read the data and find a core frame. Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) suggested that researchers develop an outline for examining the phenomena. First, I counted frequency words and phrases using NVivo 12 software to examine patterns. I also outlined the data using abbreviations in an open coding method, which refers to “the process of marking segments of data (usually text data) with symbols, descriptive words, or category names” (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, p. 502) to create descriptive interview data. After that, I looked for significant statements through frequent words from the data to develop key themes and concepts.

Different types of analysis have been used in qualitative studies. In this research, I used in-depth interviews as the main data instrument to explore the students’ biases and change

process; therefore, narrative analysis was the most relevant type. Cohen et al. (2011) explained that narrative analysis “can give the added dimension of realism, authenticity, humanity, personality, emotions, views, and values of a situation” (p. 553). This analysis method helped me study the participants’ transformation of their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors by examining their stories.

Observation becomes an efficient tool for studying participants’ behaviors (Kothari, 2004). I fully engaged in the interviews and observed the interviewees simultaneously; therefore, using a chart was helpful. This observation design helped improve the data’s dependability. Similarly, I counted the frequencies of the interviewees’ behaviors and used an open-coding technique to embed them in the transcriptions. As a result, transcriptions became thorough and enhanced data reliability.

These three instruments elaborated and crucially supported my analysis of participants’ perceptions, behaviors, and their experiences. A feasible research design and plan made the study valid. Using relevant tools in the qualitative survey permitted me to explore the rich contexts of aspects of human bias and answer the research questions profoundly.

### **Institutional Review Board (IRB)**

Prior to the data collection, I explained the project details and sent informed consent to the participants (Appendix C). The consent explained this study’s confidentiality, which helped the participants feel safe in disclosing their thoughts and experiences. Because the research involved human subjects, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed the application and approved the project, first on October 18, 2019 and a modified version on April 21, 2021 (Appendix D).

As a researcher, I needed to be aware that participants might disclose sensitive matters and private experiences. The consent form included the project objectives, benefits, risks, and right to freely participate or not participate. The main objective of informed consent is to avoid risks and conflicts for participants and protect them (Cohen et al., 2011). Confidentiality and privacy are essential ethical elements; therefore, I used pseudonyms to protect the participants' anonymity. As for data security, after transcribing the interviews and completing the data analysis, the recorded data was discarded. In addition, I stored the transcribed documents in a safe, locked place. The IRB office suggested that data be stored for three years and then deleted.

### **Researcher's Positionality**

As the researcher in this study, I would like to inform readers of my situational identity. The concept of diversity has been developing for nearly twenty years and has become prominent in my life. Diverse people have resided in Japan but fewer than in other regions of the world. According to UNESCO (2009), the annual average of immigrants to Japan from 2000 to 2005 increased 0.4 percent, whereas the U.S. had a 4.5 percent increase. Other East Asian countries, such as South Korea and China, had a minus 0.3 percent, which indicates that 0.3 percent of the population in these countries migrated to other regions. Although these countries' populations are not fully equivalent, the immigration statistics imply that Japan has diversity. Nevertheless, the Japanese society is socially conservative, which "stands in opposition to demands from diverse groups for public recognition and redistributive rights" (Vavrus, 2014, p. 30).

While I was born and raised in such a Japanese community, I did not strongly recognize myself as Japanese because I inferred that most people surrounding me were also Japanese. Okamura (1981) pointed out, "Ethnicity is not always of such decisive significance for social relations in all societies nor in all social situations" (p. 454). As a Japanese, I could have had a

different interpretation after I lived in the U.S. compared to people in Japan or who immigrated elsewhere.

Living in South Carolina from 2000 until moving to Hawai'i, I gradually experienced my acculturation process; I have different customs and styles. Immigrants struggle to adjust to foreign countries even though they voluntarily relocate from their home countries (Etto, 2011). They also face different challenges in adapting to a new society or school, including negotiating their identities in the host country (Chae & Foley, 2010) and prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination that other minorities may encounter (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). Prejudice and stereotypes are not limited to experiences among immigrants; they may also develop and carry their own prejudices and stereotypes. In my experience, when I perceived others' unfamiliar cultural customs, I judged others based on my previous views and knowledge. I realized that having biased perspectives made me narrow-minded and hampered further relationships with others.

Although I encountered some difficulties, I have also experienced interactions with different people. I had an internship opportunity in a multicultural education class in Fall 2017. During this class, I observed that several students struggled to work with other students. Many of them had some extent of misconceptions, misjudgments, and misinterpretations toward other students. I experienced racial and ethnic biases as intense and powerful, as many scholars have noted within various socio-cultural contexts (Nomoto, 2009; Pacheco, 2008). In class, I recognized that when students perceived that their biases were misconceptions and not factual, they thought about them and challenged themselves to have a better relationship with others. Consequently, I witnessed students' transformation while they were learning in class; however, the degree of change varied depending on the student. This internship experience was the turning

point that led me to pursue this study of students' biases to examine the process and the pathways that impacted their transformations.

During the pilot study, I saw that most students disclosed biases or prejudicial views toward different groups, while others were unaware of or intended to conceal their personal biases. Moreover, some students noted that positive stereotypical views discouraged them because a group generalization is not always correct. Siy and Cheryan (2013) explained that even a positive categorization “can cause targets to feel that their characteristics and merits are being overlooked or unacknowledged” (p. 87). I believed that studying students' biases would be challenging but could help me discover strategies for overcoming racial and ethnic biases and reducing racial conflicts so that students can focus on learning. Overcoming biases may not always occur; however, Krupnikov (2019) suggested that “under certain conditions, they [students] are capable of making reasoned judgments about the incoming information” (p. 635). *Reasoned judgments* sounds subjective; if they have biased judgments with reasons, they could be carried away and move them negatively. Many scholars and researchers in bias and prejudice studies have looked at reducing or overcoming racial and ethnic biases (Cooley, Lei, & Ellerkamp, 2018; Levinson et al., 2010) because doing so would reduce racial conflicts and create a healthier world.

### **Assumptions**

Some assumptions enabled me to improve and ensure the accuracy of the data collection. A major assumption was that some students may not be entirely open to revealing their racial and ethnic biases because they may perceive that biases are personal. To remedy the situation, I mindfully established rapport to create a comfortable environment for the participants to disclose their knowledge. In addition, hesitation became a part of the findings.

A general assumption prior to the data collection was that students may not fully recognize their racial and ethnic biases; some may deny that they have such biases. Although the questionnaire comprised questions that revealed students' bias awareness and roots, I anticipated that some students might want to discuss their bias-related experiences through interviews, which would help them recollect their memories and meanings. Based on the pilot study, students who participated in interviews had explicit biases. Therefore, this assumption was resolved by the interviews.

As for my scholarly assumption, students may deny that they have any biases toward any racial and ethnic groups. Epistemological development, including awareness and recognition, might be a significant strategy to enable students to acknowledge their biases. Although it would have been challenging to ask students about their personal perceptions, this study investigated a deeper level of students' bias-related experiences and changes in their perceptions. If students continue to carry biases against other groups, they could behave negatively and tensions would occur among different racial and ethnic groups in school. This consequence affects their learning and their life beyond school.

### **Summary**

Biases and prejudice are human perceptions and behaviors that many scholars have studied for nearly a century. Multicultural education and other fields still focus on this complex human phenomenon because biases induce various conflicts in schools and society. This phenomenological qualitative study helped me explore and analyze the COE undergraduate students' racial and ethnic biases throughout their learning development using in-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires. The five research sub-questions guided me to obtain

comprehensive qualitative explanations to answer the overarching question. This research will ultimately help students and educators because racial and other tensions in the classroom lessen when racial and ethnic biases are reduced. When tensions are reduced, students can focus on their schoolwork, and teachers can facilitate an effective learning environment.



## **CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS**

This chapter reports data findings. First, I explain my participants' demographic information and then analyze the data results to find common themes organized by each research sub-question.

I conducted surveys and interviews between September 2021 and May 2022. Participants were undergraduate students who had taken or were taking a multicultural education course in the COE. The data were collected from 21 survey participants and ten interview participants; the 21 survey included the ten interview participants. I gathered the survey and interview data from diverse voluntary participants from various backgrounds, leading to rich and less biased data results. Although I analyzed the data from the surveys, the purpose of conducting the survey was to seek voluntary interview participants. Intentionally, to capture participants' interest and willingness to participate in interviews, the questionnaire had only three questions. I emphasized the interview results in this research because they had deep findings for directly answering each research sub-question. As a result, the ten in-depth interviews were the primary source of the research data. The survey results served as supporting data.

During the data collection period, six different professors offered eight undergraduate-level EDU 3XX multicultural education courses. A few weeks before the beginning of the semester, I contacted all six professors to explain the study objectives and procedures and to ask for permission to recruit volunteer participants; however, only three of them, (50 %) supported my study.

Only one professor allowed me to attend her classes via Zoom several times during the data collection period. Although two other instructors permitted me to recruit participants in their classes, I could not attend their classes; they were not comfortable having anyone besides

students in class. Therefore, I gave them my recruiting email and a Google Form survey. Ninety percent of the interview participants and 75 % of the survey participants were from the courses of the professor who allowed me to attend her Zoom classes. The remaining participants were from one online course with the instructor who had given the information to the students.

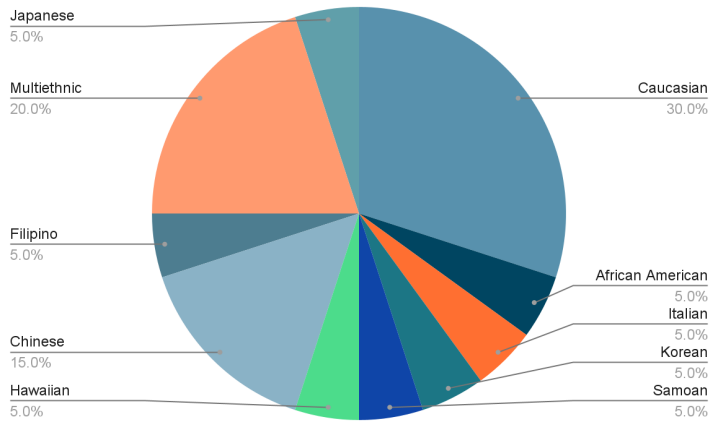
One of six professors did not want to have her class as a research site. The other professor told me he would forward the email and a Google Form. However, after I sent the Google Form and a recruitment email, communication with him suddenly terminated. COVID-19 could have been challenging for some professors.

### **Survey Participants**

The total of 21 voluntary survey participants comprised 16 female (76%) and five male (24%) undergraduate students. Their age ranges were from 18 to 32 years old. The average age of participants was 21.7 years old. Nine were from the mainland U.S. (43%), eleven were from Hawai'i (52%), and one was of international origin, from Japan (5%). The majority of the participants (n=14) were majoring in Education, and the other seven students were from different majors: psychology, Chinese, public health, human development, and sociology. Participants' race and ethnicity were diverse. Caucasians were 30 percent (n=6), followed by multiethnic, 20 percent (n=4) and Chinese, 15 percent (n=3). Other ethnicities, were African American, Korean, Samoan, Filipino, Hawaiian, Italian, and Japanese, (Figure 2).

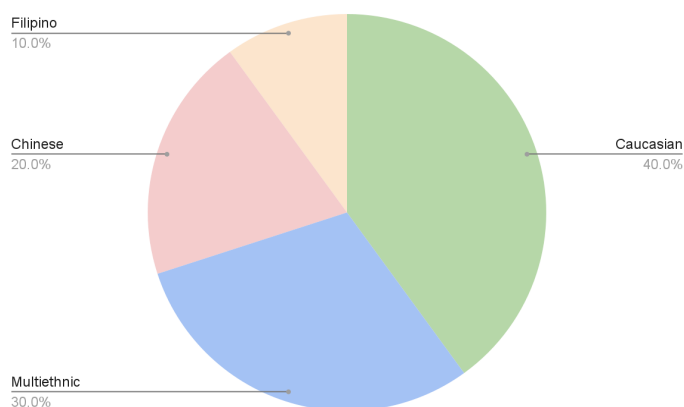
**Figure 2**

*Survey Participants' Race and Ethnicity*



**Interview Participants**

Ten students participated in an in-depth interview voluntarily during the same time period. All of them had taken the survey prior to the interviews. There were eight females and two males. Their age ranges were between 18 and 30 years old, and their average age was 21.6 years old. Four were from the U.S. mainland; six were from Hawai'i. Although diverse participants were carefully selected, there were no international participants. The majority of students (n=8) were majoring in elementary education. Two were from different majors: public health and Chinese. Participants' race and ethnicity were diverse: Caucasians were 40 percent (n=4), followed by multiethnic (n=3), Chinese (n=2), and Filipino (n=1) (Figure 3).

**Figure 3***Interview Participants' Race and Ethnicity***Table 2***Interview Participants' Profile Using Pseudonym*

Participants' names by Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Race/Ethnicity & Origin	Class level/Major	Lengths of living in Hawai'i
Ann	Female	19	Caucasian from WA	Sophomore/Elementary Ed	8 months
Bill	Male	19	Caucasian from CA	Sophomore/Elementary Ed	Less than 1 years
Cindy	Female	23	Caucasian from PA	Sophomore/Elementary Ed	8 months
Dana	Female	21	Caucasian from Southern CA	Junior/Elementary Ed	4 years
Hana	Female	18	Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Spanish, Hawaiian, and Okinawan multiracial, HI	Freshman/ Education	18 years
Jade	Female	21	Chinese American, HI	Senior/ Elementary Ed	21 years
Jasmine	Female	25	Chinese American, HI	Sophomore/Public Health	25 years
Kai	Male	30	Filipino American, HI	Junior/Elementary Ed	30 years (lived a few years in CA)
Kalani	Female	21	Chinese, Filipino, Caucasian multiracial, HI	Sophomore/Ed	21 years
Tara	Female	19	Indian/Taiwanese from HI	Junior/Chinese	19 years

## Data Analysis

The survey data analysis started with a count of word frequencies for each of the three open-ended questions in the questionnaire:

Q1: How would you describe your major racial and ethnic misconceptions or prejudged beliefs (positive or negative) if you have any?

Q 2: What do you believe are the reasons for any such misconceptions or biases you have?

Q3: How did you feel when you encountered racial and ethnic biases toward you?

As explained previously, the major purpose for having a questionnaire was to seek volunteer interview participants; therefore, the questionnaire was simple and not time-consuming for participants but was intended to capture their interest.

As noted in Chapter 3, I intentionally chose the wording *misconceptions* and *prejudged beliefs* (positive or negative) instead of using the word *bias* because the word is inclined to connote negative images. This suggestion was from a committee member and participants from the pilot study.

This first survey question referred to research sub-question #1, whereas the second question explored the roots of participants' bias, which helped answer research sub-question #2. Survey question #3 asked about the participants' feelings when they experienced racial biases against them. This question served as a way to expand participation in completing the questionnaire in case the participants said they did not have racial and ethnic biases.

Next, interview results were transcribed using Otter Voice software. Cohen et al. (2011) explained that data analysis is a balance "between maintaining a sense of the holism of the interview and the tendency for analysis to atomize and fragment the data to separate them into

constituent elements” (p. 427). After transcribing the data, I used NVivo 12 software for counting word frequencies. The coding process started by analyzing frequent words to look for repeated ideas to develop the theoretical constructs (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). The entire process investigate all the interview data to find any possible themes. Elliott (2018) further explained, “Coding is a way of doing this [making sense of text data], of essentially indexing or mapping data, to provide an overview of disparate data that allows the researcher to make sense of them in relation to their research questions” (p. 2851). Counting the codes is “important for a systematic approach to qualitative research” (Elliott, 2018, p. 2857). Therefore, this process helped organize the data to look for common themes in questionnaires and interview transcriptions.

Protecting participants’ confidentiality and privacy is essential when research involves personal and sensitive matters (Cohen et a., 2011). The survey participants reported anonymously; however, all ten interview participants had taken the survey prior to their interviews. Therefore, when analyzing the survey data as well as the interview data, the participants are described using pseudonyms to protect their privacy.

All interview participants used many filler words and phrases, such as *like*, *kind of*, or *just* to show their expressions were not too concrete. These informal fillers are meaningless or “signify the speaker’s uncertainty about an expression just used” (Oxford dictionary, 2022). Examining participants’ filler words and how frequently they used them was helpful because these words signified the participants’ hesitation and uncertainty in revealing their thoughts or positions. These filler words and phrases were taken out of the participants’ quotes unless necessary to make a concise scholarly data analysis.

I explored the definitions of bias, prejudice, and stereotypes in the literature in Chapter 2. However, these definitions were not stated during the data collection because the participants were undergraduate students who had taken or were taking a multicultural education course. Therefore, they were somewhat familiar with racial and ethnic biases, other multicultural issues, and the terms. Despite this, some participants used the terms bias, prejudice, and stereotype interchangeably.

### **Data Findings**

This section first discusses the results of the word frequency counts and repeated ideas for the survey and the interview data. These results helped me move to the next step. After examining the word frequency, I established common themes. Cohen et al. (2011) explained that codes define the contents and concepts of the data and serve as an indexing or categorizing system. Next, I cover the major themes organized by each sub-research question to show the sequence of students' bias awareness, influential factors and roots, students' growth and changes, and their future applications.

#### **Counting Word Frequency**

Counting the frequency of words or codes is useful because it shows how widespread a word is among the data, so a researcher can discern whether it is significant (Elliott, 2018). I separated the data from the survey and the data from the interviews and used NVivo12 to run the word frequency counts. Three major word frequencies were found in the survey: *people* (34 times), *culture* (14 times), and *Chinese* (11 times). Even though one question asked about the participants' misconceptions and prejudicial beliefs toward any races and ethnicities, the respondents tended not to note race and ethnicity directly; rather, they used the general word

*people* to discuss their race and ethnic biases. For example, a 19-years-old biracial (Caucasian and African American) female student explained, “A lot of people assume I’m not black, which could be great considering how black people in America are treated” (Anonymous survey, September 28, 2021). She did not specify the one who assumed her racial background. Rather she noted people in general.

Similarly, a 25-year-old Chinese American female disclosed, “People often expected me to be intelligent or great in many subjects” (Anonymous survey, November 11, 2021). She also noted people in general. Another participant discussed a positive bias against Asians. A Chinese American female noted the misconception and bias she had experienced: “Asian people are intellectual and excel academically. People often expected me to be intelligent or great in many subjects” (Anonymous survey, October 15, 2021). She did not specify any further ethnicity; she may have had in mind particular Asians or may have been comfortable disclosing any further. These results may indicate that misconceptions, biases, and prejudice are challenging topics that participants are reluctant to discuss. The other reason could be that participants may not have been comfortable pointing out particular races and ethnicities when discussing their stories.

Another example is about participants’ misconceptions. A Korean American male student noted, “I believe people just don’t care because they think all Asians look the same” (Anonymous survey, October 18, 2021). He may have had some particular experiences; however, he merely noted *people*, not a particular group of people. He explained the racial and ethnic misconceptions that he had experienced: “People think I’m one of the ‘three’ Asians, Korean, Japanese, or Chinese. It’s not really a negative thing, but it’s weird” (Anonymous survey, October 18, 2021). He pointed out that this misconception is not mean or hurtful to him.



However, people tend to group Asian-looking people together rather than describing their particular ethnic background.

The frequency of *Chinese* was in the top three, and various people discussed the Chinese. In the survey, five of the 21 participants (24%) had a Chinese background— Chinese Americans and multiracial that including Chinese. A Korean American participant noted that people asked him, “Oh, you’re Chinese?” but that it was “just a little joke here and there” (Anonymous survey, October 28, 2021). This description suggests that Chinese identification could have been used in a humorous way. At the same time, it could have been insulting.

The other participant, a 19-year-old local Chinese American female, shared her perceptions of the Chinese. She explained that when people either visited China or observed Chinese people, they tended to note that Chinese people were rude. Based on her experience, “Chinese people are the same as others around the world; they wouldn’t be rude for no reason. People in China are actually friendly and helpful when they can be” (Anonymous survey, November 15, 2021). She gave an example of one misconception that could be rooted in a misunderstanding, that many Chinese people generally are loud. However, “Living in the environment in China, it tends to be very noisy, so people adapted to using a louder voice” (Anonymous survey, November 15, 2021). She was able to describe misconceptions of Chinese people; however, she did not note that this perception is her own racial and ethnic bias. Based on her example, people’s “misconceptions” could be based on fact.

The interview word frequency data had a similar pattern. The three most frequent words were *people* (183 times), *biases* (54 times), and *Caucasian/White* (53 times). Other prominent, repeated ideas describe various ethnicities (64 times), such as *Africans*, *Asians*, *Hawaiians*,

*Indians, Blacks, and Americans*. Also, similar action words were used 71 times: *learn, know, understand, working, and experience*. This examination helped me find common themes.

I analyzed the collected data results and manually looked for common themes, which were organized by each sub-research question. This coordination showed the sequences of undergraduate students' racial and ethnic bias awareness and development. I also discuss patterns that I found throughout the data.

### **Research sub-question 1: How do students develop their bias awareness?**

Biases are personal matters, and when participants were challenged to describe their perceptions, they tended to conceal them or take some time to disclose their racial and ethnic biases. On the other hand, students who were unaware of their biases could not simply be labeled as having implicit biases unless I further examined their behaviors to verify whether they revealed biased attitudes toward particular races and ethnicities. The other consideration is that those students may not have analyzed and evaluated their biases deeply enough; they could still be in the process of learning about multicultural issues. In addition, those students who took time to disclose their biases may have hesitated or been reluctant to discuss them.

#### ***Conceal first, but then Disclose with Hesitation***

The most frequent word from survey and interview results, *people*, was the indicator for developing this theme. Racial and ethnic biases are sensitive topics, and in particular, participants' disclosing their own perceptions and personal stories. Therefore, participants may have been cautious, unsure whether they were safe to point at a particular race and ethnicity, or they may have shown their awareness that bias is not a positive thing.

*Kai* is a 30-year-old Filipino American male from Hawai‘i. He was born in the Philippines and moved to Hawai‘i with his parents when he was about four months old. After graduating high school, *Kai* attended a community college in Santa Rosa, California, to get his associate degree. He worked as a bartender at a restaurant for several years, then returned to Hawai‘i and began a degree program in the COE. *Kai*’s bias is toward Caucasians, especially tourists. However, when I asked him to share more details, he chose his words carefully and repeated the same words to discuss how he formed his bias:

I think, yeah, it was it was [repeated] early on when I really had that strong bias and discrimination in high school, and my thinking was...[a short pause] I guess I don’t know, but I think as far as going out to different places and seeing how they [Caucasians] acted out in public, I felt some of them, not all the time, but some of them didn’t care, just acted kind of funny. (Interview with *Kai*, November 4, 2021)

*Kai* tended to use filler words many times, such as *like* and *kind of*, and repeated the same phrases. After a few more questions, he started explaining: “Yeah, so I say, high school, that’s when I had negative feelings toward tourists and white people from those experiences” (Interview with *Kai*, November 4, 2021). He did not want to describe further details. *Kai* was aware of his racial bias toward Caucasians and Caucasian tourists in high school.

Likewise, two more local participants noted that they have biases toward Caucasians and Caucasian tourists. *Kalani* is a 21-year-old multiracial local female student. She was born and raised in Oahu. Her father raised her after her parents divorced when she was six years old. She explained that her father remarried, and she came from a large family, with seven siblings and five stepsiblings. *Kalani* spoke out, “I guess from all of that, it [large extended family] pushed

me and my siblings to be more independent” (Interview with *Kalani*, February 12, 2022). She took a multicultural education course in Fall 2021. When I interviewed her, she was studying abroad in London. *Kalani* disclosed that she is biased against Caucasian tourists. She first expressed her perceptions toward Caucasians:

I think about my biggest racial or ethnic biases. It is towards white people. It’s just really... Uh [paused]...I guess... that’s really made me... feel... [a long pause] negatively. Just the way that I see them. I know that I do have stereotypes in my head, and I have pre-judgments towards a lot of people because of those experiences. (Interview with *Kalani*, February 12, 2022)

*Kalani* had a few pauses at the beginning. She believed that her bias toward Caucasians came from her stereotyped views and experiences. She also offered some examples of her stereotypes:

It is common that a lot of visitors will leave trash on the beach, or they might mistreat, like, native animals or wild animals. . . . I just feel that their attitudes towards locals and local culture is disrespectful. . . . Most visitors may not be very mindful of local culture. (Interview with *Kalani*, February 12, 2022)

Similar to *Kalani*, *Hana* noted that her biases were toward Caucasians and Caucasian tourists. *Hana* is also a local multiracial female who lived her entire 21 years on Oahu Island. She explained her parents’ ethnicities: “My mom is half Okinawan and half Japanese, and my dad’s side is all the mixed plate ethnicities: Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Spanish, and Hawaiian” (Interview with *Hana*, April 2, 2022). She has an older brother and a younger sister who is 11 years old. *Hana* was active and participated in many sports, such as soft tennis, paddling, cross country, and hula, from a young age until high school. She described her friends: “A lot of the Asian backgrounds influenced whom I hung out with and whom I considered as my friends. I

think it was easier to get along with them because of similar backgrounds” (Interview with *Hana*, April 2, 2022).

When discussing her racial and ethnic biases, *Hana* did not hesitate to disclose one of her biases that was different from those of *Kai* and *Kalani*. *Hana* shared her memories from when she was in elementary school. One Caucasian girl was in her class for all the elementary grades, and *Hana* did not like her: “I think it was just because of her attitude and her being disrespectful. At a young age, I was like, oh, all Whites are disrespectful. All Whites think they’re better than us” (Interview with *Hana*, April 2, 2022). One or a few disrespectful or unreasonable behaviors of a Caucasian girl made *Hana* have negative feelings toward the race.

Furthermore, *Hana* explained that during her middle school years, her perceptions became neutral, but they returned more severely:

During middle school, I didn’t really care for them [Caucasians]. They’re fine.

They can do whatever they want. But then, when I went to high school, it just got worse and worse because I started realizing there’s other people out there, and the media showed them [Caucasians] in a way that they weren’t, like, the best versions of themselves. So, they were always portrayed as either doing crazy things or doing stupid things. (Interview with *Hana*, April 2, 2022)

*Hana*’s biased perception developed from her perceived experiences and the media. Those combined factors made her automatically respond that all Caucasians are disrespectful.

Three local participants in the survey also discussed Caucasians and tourists. A Filipino male noted, “When I was younger and attending high school, I did not like tourists and white people” (Anonymous survey, November 3, 2021). The other two, multiracial females, had a similar opinion. One said, “I have negative misconceptions and prejudged beliefs toward many

white people in terms of the way they can often act entitled and show a lack of respect to other people” (Anonymous survey, October 18, 2021). Moreover, the other female noted, “I started to think negatively about Whites that came to this island just for our beaches and were uninterested about learning more about our rich history” (Anonymous survey, November 15, 2021). Many local participants have negative misconceptions and biases toward Caucasians and tourists. Although tourists visit Hawai‘i from all over the world, they particularly mentioned Caucasians.

Another interview participant, *Jade*, is a multilingual Chinese American from Hawai‘i who also hesitated to disclose her biases. *Jade* is 21 years old and lives with her parents and brother. Her parents immigrated to Hawai‘i from China. *Jade* explained about her parents: “They actually don’t speak English very well. They came from a village, like, a part of China and speak a dialect, Cantonese, and Mandarin” (Interview with *Jade*, December 5, 2021). *Jade* said she also speaks the dialect and other Chinese languages because her parents sent her to China, where her grandparents and relatives lived, while her mother was pregnant with another child. They took care of her for a few years. She noted that was how she learned Chinese languages—from her relatives.

When she started speaking, she also used various filler words, such as *like*, *just*, and *kind of* countless times, which were removed from the quotes unless necessary based on the context. First, she discussed some positive biases by complimenting each East Asian ethnic group: “My views of Japanese people. I think they’re really polite. They are really soft-spoken, humble, and quiet, like, reserved” (Interview with *Jade*, December 5, 2021). She continued in a similar tone describing Chinese people, and then she talked about other groups: “I think Hawaiians and Filipinos, they’re really friendly” (Interview with *Jade*, December 5, 2021). *Jade* noted that these

descriptions were from her experiences. Then, after describing major Asians with her positive perceptions, *Jade* finally but slowly started disclosing her uncertain biased perceptions:

I think toward Micronesians. I have a bit of [hesitation], well, I'm mixed because I feel like there's so many types of people even within like, [hesitation] one race or ethnicity. But I think for Micronesians, I had friends or people I know who have experienced things. One time, he [*Jade's* friend] was on a skateboard. I don't know if they're teens, but they [Micronesians] stole his skateboard from him. I think they also hit him with it. He had to go to the doctor and get his head checked. I think he developed a very negative view of Micronesians. (Interview with *Jade*, December 5, 2021)

*Jade* may have been more comfortable discussing her positive perceptions than negative ones. She repeated the same words and phrases to share her friend's story. I could see her hesitation in trying to justify that the incident may not apply to all Micronesians.

Moreover, when I asked *Jade* if her friend's incident with Micronesians became a part of her bias, she did not say that it influenced her. However, she further disclosed her feelings toward Micronesians:

Would they do something to me, or am I in danger? If the same thing happens to me...[a short pause] ...You might have that thought, like, like, yeah, like [repeating filler word] maybe just a little like, just like, [repeating filler words and hesitation] what if you might be a little bit like, like, like [repeating filler word and hesitation] conscious like, yeah, like [repeating filler words and hesitation] but it's not an extreme degree or anything. (Interview with *Jade*, December 5, 2021)

*Jade* reluctantly disclosed her concerns and feelings with filler words countless times and in various pauses with obvious hesitation.

The participants above are from Hawai‘i but of different ages, genders, and ethnicities. Most of them hesitated to disclose their racial biases. Nevertheless, eventually, they started revealing some details. *Kai*’s biases were from his experiences in high school, whereas *Jade*’s perceptions were influenced by her friend’s experience; however, she had mixed perceptions, which she noted as being semi-biased. *Jade* repeatedly noted that the story was from her friend.

Disclosing biases, especially racial and ethnic biases, was challenging for some students. Some did not want to clearly describe their perceptions, while others showed obvious hesitation by repeating the same words and phrases or using filler words. Although biases are hard to disclose, at least these participants were aware of their biases.

### ***Denial or being Unaware of Racial and Ethnic Biases***

Four of the ten participants were Caucasians who originated from the U.S. mainland. Three female Caucasian students noted that they are open-minded and do not have racial biases. *Dana* is from Southern California and has lived in Hawai‘i for four years. Her parents are chefs, and she has an older sister who lives in England. *Dana* always struggled with school, but she finally found that her goal was to become an elementary school teacher. When I asked about her racial and ethnic biases, *Dana* noted that she has no particular ones. She explained, “I was born and raised in a family that was always very welcoming. We always have family, friends, and all different types, and it didn’t matter as long as you were kind and good-hearted. That was the major key” (Interview with *Dana*, January 11, 2022). After she explained the reasons for her not having biases toward any racial and ethnic groups, *Dana* disclosed her other bias: “So, I’ve never really experienced any bad biases toward myself. I did have an [paused and hesitant] an



interesting encounter with the police force. Um... But yeah, they [the police] were quite aggressive for our mental health” (Interview with *Dana*, January 11, 2022). Later, *Dana* explained the relationship between the mental health that she noted and the incident with the police that she experienced.

After this, I asked if her bias toward police officers included any particular races or ethnicities. *Dana* clearly noted that her biases were not toward races and ethnicities but toward specifically “police males, not females or anybody who’s transitioned or anything like sis males” (Interview with *Dana*, January 11, 2022). Although *Dana* did not explain what “sis males” means, since she noted that she has a gender bias toward male, I inferred that “sis” could mean a different sexuality or sexual preference besides females or males.

Like *Dana*, *Cindy* and *Ann* also noted that they do not have racial and ethnic biases. *Cindy* is from Doylestown, Pennsylvania, while *Ann* is from a small town in Washington state. Both were majoring in Elementary Education and came to Hawai‘i about eight months ago. *Cindy*’s parents were divorced, and she has two stepparents. One of them is from Thailand. *Cindy* said that she has a lot of good friends in her life. She has had some good best friends since high school, and she also made new friends in Hawai‘i. She briefly explained her school life: “I went to a private school from kindergarten through eighth grade, and then to high school, so I was with the same group of people for, 20 kids in the same group, for nine years” (Interview with *Cindy*, April 3, 2022). *Cindy* talked about her friends from her hometown and in Hawai‘i several times during the interview.

When discussing her racial and ethnic biases, *Cindy* said she had no racially biased perceptions of which she was aware. Although she denied her racial and ethnic biases, when I asked again if she does not have any at this moment, *Cindy* repeated that she was not consciously

aware of any. In further discussion, when I asked if she had any experience with different people, she answered, “Yeah, I would say. . . . Um, [paused... recalling a memory] there are a lot of Spanish people like Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, Guatemalans but they’re mostly workers, so they usually are doing landscaping or housework” (Interview with *Cindy*, April 3, 2022). She continued, “There is a big racial divide where I live; it’s mostly white people. And then there’s some black people and Asian people, but it’s not as much” (Interview with *Cindy*, April 3, 2022). Since *Cindy* repeatedly noted that she has no biases, I had to change the topic of her experiences that are related to biases for further investigation.

*Ann* also denied that she has any biases toward any races and ethnicities. She grew up in a small town in Washington for her entire 19 years and never experienced living in a different place until now. Her parents were also born and grew up in the same small town where her grandparents lived. She has an older sister, 24 years old. *Ann* participated in cheerleading in high school, and many of her friends have come from that. She moved to Hawai‘i with her best friend from high school, and they live together. When I asked regarding her racial and ethnic biases, *Ann* first noted that she does not have any. After I repeated the same question, *Ann* slowly started to say:

I tried to think a lot about this [biased perception] before, and especially in my class that I’ve been to; we do a lot of reflecting as well. And I don’t know. It’s... it’s [repeating and hesitating] interesting to see. Its stuff buried in the back of my mind too that you don’t think about on the surface. So, I’m coming from such a small, mostly white community and just not knowing anything else. So, I can’t think of anything super specific that comes to mind except, um... a lot of

subconscious things that you don't even realize are just rooted into [my biased perceptions]. (Interview with *Ann*, April 8, 2022)

The difference between *Cindy* and *Ann* was that *Cindy* denied having biases even when I asked several times, while *Ann* indicated that her biases were buried in her mind and could appear subconsciously, but she could not think of any specific groups or people.

One survey participant, an African American female from the U.S. mainland, also noted that she does not have major biases and misconceptions toward any races or ethnicities because she was raised to be open-minded and love everyone. Nevertheless, when asked about the reasons for the roots of biases, she noted, "I think people who are racist are taught to be intolerant and ignorant" (Anonymous survey, October 19, 2021). The participant's speculation could be a general perception of bias roots because she noted that she had no misconceptions about any races. In addition, survey question #3 asked about her feelings when she encountered any racial biases. She answered, "I feel frustrated that I face the discrimination, but I handle the situation gracefully. I will speak my mind and take further steps to ensure my character and safety experiences" (Anonymous survey, October 19, 2021). This participant did not have any misconceptions toward races and ethnicities; however, she encountered racial biases against herself.

The salient pattern was that three Caucasian students and one African American student, all from the U.S. mainland, denied or were unaware of their biases. Interestingly, these four female students said they had been exposed to diversity; therefore, they became open-minded, which implies that they were less likely to have colorblindness. I tried to ask about their definitions of diversity and open-mindedness. However, despite my attempts, I was unsuccessful in further eliciting deeper descriptions and details.

### *Awareness from Experiences*

During the interviews, three students, *Bill*, *Jasmine*, and *Tara*, recognized their racial and ethnic biases based on their experiences. *Jasmine* and *Tara* took some time to disclose their biases, while *Bill* straightforwardly described his racial and ethnic biases.

*Bill*, another Caucasian participant, was born in Monterey, California and moved to Sacramento when he was in middle school. His parents divorced when he was very young, and he was raised in a single-father household. When I started the interview, I noticed that *Bill* was slightly different from the other three Caucasian participants from the mainland. His tone was simple and straightforward. He disclosed his biases, but he labeled them as stereotypes. *Bill* explained, “I guess most of my biases for racial ethnicities would probably, honestly, just be more stereotypes” (Interview with *Bill*, April 5, 2022). When he was growing up, he was close to his two African American cousins who were 10 to 15 years older than he was. He revealed his stereotypes of African Americans and Mexicans:

African Americans are the louder individuals, and they definitely are louder. So that bias does get a little truth. Then, I also grew up in a big Hispanic community in my life. So, seeing that family, I guess you could say, is another bias. I assume all Mexicans have this huge, massive family. (Interview with *Bill*, April 5, 2022)

Similar to other participants, *Bill* used many filler words to make his statement sound less solid. Nevertheless, He clearly stated that his biases toward African Americans and Mexicans were attributed to his experiences. *Bill* did mention that his other biases toward Mexican people are positive because he also clarified, “You don’t want to assume everyone who is in that ethnicity wants to be hardworking and family oriented” (Interview with *Bill*, April 5, 2022). His statement signified that his biases were from racial stereotypes but based on his experiences.

*Jasmine* is a local Chinese American female. Her family was originally from China and moved to the U.S. when she was two and a half years old. *Jasmine* speaks two Chinese languages, Cantonese and a dialect. She enjoyed writing music, playing violin, watercolor painting, arts and crafts, and making pottery. When discussing racial and ethnic bias topics, first, *Jasmine* shared her parents' attitudes toward Micronesians, but she did not conclude that that is her biased perception. When I attempted to expand the conversation and asked about any stereotypes she has, she explained:

I have more for my own race than I would have for any other races, I would say because it's an experience. I've often been back to China and saw people that are very pushy because, you know, they [Chinese people] have to make a living. I can understand. Very good at negotiating. You can be tricked very easily. So, it's just that it's more clever than smart. These are experiences that I've seen when I visited back in my home country. Yeah, we're known to be frugal. (Interview with *Jasmine*, November 18, 2021)

*Jasmine* included herself in the ethnic group and described Chinese people's characteristics based on her experiences. She stated that her experience was "not very much a stereotype, but if other people who have not experienced it, they will say the same thing [people are very pushy]" (Interview with *Jasmine*, November 18, 2021). *Jasmine* pointed out that her perceptions and experiences are real, but at the same time, her biases could be characterized as general traits or typical stereotypical views of Chinese people.

Another participant, *Tara*, is a biracial female of Indian and Taiwanese descent from Hawai'i. Her mother works in the travel industry, and her father is a college professor. She works as a tutor in high school and wants to be an educator. *Tara* first said she has no biases

because she tries to be open-minded. During the discussion, she realized or decided to disclose, “I might have one small bias... even though I’m an Indian, I’m a little bit afraid of Muslims” (Interview with *Tara*, November 24, 2021). She later explained her experience in seeing Muslim women at the airport when she was small.

## **Research sub-question 2: What helps students realize the factors influencing their bias and examine the deeper roots?**

The second sub-research question examined deeply the factors that influenced participants’ biases. Four major themes were found.

### ***Deep-rooted Biases Developed from others’ Disrespectful Attitudes***

Three local students, *Hana*, *Kalani*, and *Kai*, had biases toward tourists but only Caucasian tourists. Their backgrounds and reasons were similar. *Hana* explained that she saw Caucasian visitors’ disrespectful attitudes in tourist spots. *Kalani* also perceived on her own or from the media that Caucasian visitors mistreat native wild animals and Hawai‘i nature: “If you’re born and raised in Hawai‘i, or for me, at least...it’s because we grow up seeing all of these visitors and just the differences in the ways that we interact with the environment around us and everything” (Interview with *Kalani*, February 12, 2022). However, why did *Kalani* point out only Caucasians?

Hawai‘i is a popular destination for people from all over the world. Many Asian tourists are also seen in the popular spots in Hawai‘i. I asked if she had a similar perception of Asian tourists. She said, “I feel like not necessarily [a bias toward Asian tourists] because there is a cultural difference whereas visitors from the mainland or the U.S. are familiar with the same kinds of culture and values” (Interview with *Kalani*, February 12, 2022). She distinguished Asian

tourists as foreign visitors even if they were from the mainland. She showed her attachment to her culture and dignity in being from Hawai‘i. Her experience with people who mistreated Hawai‘i may be the key to her deep-rooted biases.

This explanation was her initial explanation of her bias toward Caucasians. When I asked further if she has a different perception of her Caucasian classmates, she noted that her bias sometimes could be similar: “If I were seeing white students [in Zoom], I would feel my mind immediately would jump to conclusions about this person, who they are, what they might think or do, or whatnot, you know”(Interview with *Kalani*, February 12, 2022).

*Hana* could have seen Asian tourists similar to the way *Kalani* saw them— people with different cultures do not know some rules. *Hana* knew that Waikiki has many Asian tourists as well as Caucasians, maybe an equal volume of people. She shared her further perceptions:

I guess when I see the Asian tourists, I think of them like, oh, my grandma, she looks like my grandma. If I see them crossing the street when they are not supposed to, it’s, oh well... They don’t know. But that one Caucasian is... Oh, my goodness, they don’t know how to follow the rules. And then it’s just like a whole rant, or I get all mad. It’s, it’s [repeating] kind of bad [laughing]. (Interview with *Hana*, April 2, 2022)

Her bias resulted from her experiences. She separated Caucasian tourists from the mainland and Asians even though they were also from the mainland. Just like *Kalani*’s case, she pointed out only Caucasians.

When discussing the reasons further, I found that *Hana* has a more strongly biased perception toward Caucasian males from the mainland U.S. After *Hana* noted that she has negative feelings toward Caucasians, she mentioned, “I just assume before I get to know them

[Caucasians], and I feel like that's why I don't really have a lot of Caucasian friends. I have Caucasian friends that grew up here, but they're not like mainlanders" (Interview with *Hana*, April 2, 2022). Her unfamiliarity with or automatic rejection of the race may have caused her solid biases toward Caucasians. *Hana* also realized that her friends from class were either locals or Asians, and the "Asians don't have to be from Hawai'i, but they could be from other states. One time, I was hanging out with a friend. He was a social butterfly. He has friends of all ethnicities, all from different places" (Interview with *Hana*, April 2, 2022). *Hana* shared a story in a narrative form:

Male Oh, let's invite one of my Caucasian friends.

*Hana* Oh...No, no, it's okay. I don't know them (I was making excuses).

Male Oh, why? Is it because he is White? Are you racist?

*Hana* No, it's just... I'm scared. I don't know them. (I feel genuinely, at the time, I was just making up excuses). (Interview with *Hana*, April 2, 2022)

Her first response to getting together with unknown people was that she was scared. Also, Caucasians from the mainland scared her because her friends were mostly Asians. When she shared her story with me, she looked nervous about disclosing it; she used several pauses and filler words, such as *like*, *just*, and *kind of*.

*Hana* also disclosed an incident with a multiracial male (mixed ethnicities of Filipino, some other Asians, and Caucasian) that made her feel scared of males. It occurred at the beginning of her college year. *Hana* recalled, "It was raining, so... we went back to my house in Mānoa, and he was just being really insistent about ...[pausing] something that I didn't want to do" (Interview with *Hana*, April 2, 2022). *Hana* recollected her memory, "I guess it wouldn't be



like a biasness [biased perception]. I think it is more of a precaution. Yeah, I think that precaution limited me and not really opening up to a lot of male Caucasians” (Interview with *Hana*, April 2, 2022). This incident may not classify as a bias, as she noted that it was a safety precaution. However, this uncomfortable situation could have layered with the former two stories and influenced and perpetuated her biases toward Caucasians, males, and tourists. These accumulated experiences somehow overlapped: Caucasian tourists, a Caucasian male, and a multiracial male. As a result, her racial and ethnic biases became solid and deep-rooted.

*Kai*, the other local student, also had a bias toward Caucasian tourists. His bias developed from seeing Caucasian tourists’ disrespectful attitudes in public when he was in high school. These three local students had similar perceived experiences and perceptions. They first wondered if they could conceal the entire story of their racial and ethnic biases. After several pauses and disclosing their biases against Caucasians, they all noted that their biases were against specifically Caucasian tourists. Racial and ethnic biases may not always be explained by a single identification. Like these local students’ perceptions, ethnic biases can be layered.

One of the survey participants, a 32-year-old female who identifies as Hawaiian, also noted, “Caucasians are disrespectful and selfish” and explained her reason as from the “history of Hawai‘i and current COVID [-19] traveling” (Anonymous survey, December 4, 2021). The survey comments did not convey enough background, but some participants from Hawai‘i connect to local nature, culture, history, and the environment. Therefore, when they perceive disrespectful behaviors and attitudes, these become major reasons for forming racial and ethnic biases. The experience could have been previous memories that made them confront their values, customs, and behaviors and prolonged their biases.

*Dana*'s bias was different from those of the local participants. She was not biased toward particular racial and ethnic groups but toward police males. *Dana* cried during the interview; therefore, I was unsuccessful in exploring the deeper roots of her biases. However, after the interview, she shared her written term paper with me, in which she explained the deeper reasons for her biases against police males. *Dana* had experienced a brutal and aggressive incident from police males the previous year in Hawai'i. She revealed that due to a new medication for a depressive episode, she had to deal with the police because she could not calm down. *Dana* described the incident:

They [police males] asked me my name. When I did respond, they began getting aggressive. Then we [*Dana* and her friend] tried to walk away because I had not done anything. They threw me to the concrete face first. I slid about four feet along my face and the whole front of my body, getting the wind knocked out of me. I could not get up before all four men were holding me against the ground as I was still. They pressed my face into the dirt, and one climbed on top of me as he roughly put my hands into cuffs behind me, causing me to lose feeling in my left hand for a few months. (EDU 3XX paper from *Dana*, November 18, 2021)

Although the entire incident would not have been comprehensive enough to understand the causes because a story always has two parties' interpretations, which would have been different, this script explained why *Dana* has a solid and resentful perception of police males. She also noted various racial crimes over the years reported in the media. In her case, racial and ethnic distinctions were not centered. Rather, she questioned the power that the police have. *Dana* said, "Policemen are power hungry, untrained, brutal alpha males" (EDU 3XX paper from *Dana*, November 18, 2021).

In addition, *Dana*'s lawyer was told by the police, "Don't try and fight them [the police] in court. You will lose" (EDU 3XX paper from *Dana*, November 18, 2021). Brutal violence from the police force occurs in Hawai'i, not only in the mainland; however, the incident with *Dana* was not revealed in public. Rohrer (2008) noted, "When incidents of racial violence against *haoles* are reported, they tend to get media and political attention with lots of finger-pointing but little analysis" (p. 1117). Although the full story is unknown, *Dana*'s experience reminds me of Eric Garner's and George Floyd's cases of racial crimes by police forces.

The students' biases came from actual experiences, which make students resentful or intolerant. Those experiences, even just one time or with only one person in the group, affected and perpetuated their perceptions of the entire group. Anger-related emotional experiences are hard to mend easily and even last longer than other emotional experiences.

### ***Privileged Status and Racial and Ethnic Biases***

There was a pattern that participants who acknowledged that they were privileged tended not to recognize their racial and ethnic biases. *Ann* and *Cindy*, from the U.S. mainland, showed similar responses. When asked the reasons for their misconceptions, those two Caucasian females answered the question about roots in the questionnaire similarly: they did not explain the reasons or roots because they had first noted that they were unaware of racial and ethnic biases. Instead of answering the question about roots, they noted that they were from a *white community*. *Cindy* said, "I am originally from a mostly White area but attended school with people of many races and ethnicities" (Survey by *Cindy*, April 3, 2022). Similarly, *Ann* explained, "I grew up in a mostly white community, so I think my lack of experience could contribute to my biases" (Survey by *Ann*, April 5, 2022).

In the interview, *Ann* noted that she has no biases toward particular races and ethnic groups. When I asked her one more time about her specific racial and ethnic biases, she started talking about her positionality: “I’m fortunate enough as a white girl growing up in a white girl’s community that I haven’t had these biases against me” (Interview with *Ann*, April 8, 2022). *Ann* changed the topic of her own biases to the biases against her. She may not have been comfortable disclosing or may not have been aware of her racial and ethnic biases. She knew that she was privileged to live in her hometown because her race dominates it. *Ann* was conscious of race, especially her own race, and described herself as privileged.

In the interview, *Cindy* did not use “privileged” to explain her status, but her comments indicated that she is from a dominant racial group. She first compared her positionality between her previous and current living situations: “I guess being from the mainland and being blonde and looking very different. That was actually my first time being in a place where I wasn’t the norm” (Interview with *Cindy*, April 3, 2022). This explanation refers to her being part of the majority in her hometown. These two participants, who experienced privilege, were not aware of any biases toward any particular racial and ethnic groups. Does a privileged person have bias against other racial and ethnic groups? Were they colorblind? Both recognized the diversity in their hometowns; however, they may not have interacted with other races and ethnicities. Only two of the ten participants answered similarly, but their positionality as privileged and from the mainland was coincidentally similar.

### ***Proximity and Biases***

Based on the findings, proximity did not always influence the students’ biases. Four students, *Jade*, *Jasmine*, *Tara*, and *Ann*, shared stories from parents and friends. Interestingly, none of them clearly stated that those were their biased perceptions. As reported in the previous

section, *Jade* shared her friend's story about Micronesians violently stealing a skateboard from him and beating him up. She explained several times that this story was not her story: "I don't think I personally had any [racial and ethnic bias]. But yeah, I guess the stories that you hear or sometimes when [they're] in the media" (Interview with *Jade*, December 5, 2021). *Jade* also understood that "even though it happened, it doesn't mean everyone is bad" (Interview with *Jade*, December 5, 2021). *Jade* did not describe this incident as an example of her biased perception of Micronesians. I asked about it again, and she pondered a while and finally disclosed, "Um..., I, I [repeated] guess I'm kind of mixed" (Interview with *Jade*, December 5, 2021). *Jade* explained that she has a mixed perception, which means she was not completely biased toward Micronesians.

When *Jasmine* was small, her parents told her not to associate with African Americans and Micronesians. She recalled the reason was that "they [Micronesians] usually tend to misbehave, to be troublemakers. Just in the community" (Interview with *Jasmine*, November 18, 2021). *Jasmine* further explained that her family lived close to Micronesian communities, and her father had worked at McDonald's. She said, "He [her father] was around a lot of those Micronesians. So, that might be he has witnessed what they do in a work environment. So maybe that's how he came to judge that way" (Interview with *Jasmine*, November 18, 2021). However, *Jasmine* stated that she had not met any Micronesians characterized as troublemakers.

In the further discussion, *Jasmine* recalled that when she was young, her school was very diverse. She hung out with a mix of Asians, Chinese, Japanese, Samoans, Hawaiians, Micronesians, and Caucasians. She clearly said, "I already knew that this is not how people are all the time" (Interview with *Jasmine*, November 18, 2021). *Jasmine* noted that she was fortunate

that she had interacted with children of different backgrounds during elementary school and concluded that her parents' biases were not hers. Furthermore, she continued:

Even though my parents had told me not to associate myself with them [African Americans and Micronesians], I am not [obeying them]. So, my nature was to figure out why. Especially if someone tells you, for example, 'Oh, fire is hot.' Oh, is it really? I will put my hand on that kind of thing. So, even though they told me these things [not to associate with the groups], I wanted to know why. (Interview with *Jasmine*, November 18, 2021)

*Jasmine's* inquisitiveness may have come from her young age when she played with children from various backgrounds.

*Tara* also shared her father's experience of bias. Her father is an Indian. When he first saw his wife's family in Taiwan about 20 years ago, *Tara's* cousin was five or six years old. *Tara* explained:

This was the first time [the cousin was] seeing someone so dark in color. She had never seen it before. So, what she did was with her hand [swipe, swipe, motions] to see if there's any color. . . . It's maybe a racial bias, but it's because they [her cousin(s)] don't know; they're not exposed to it [difference] until they get older, until they go to a different country. (Interview with *Tara*, November 24, 2021)

*Tara* thought that unfamiliarity could have led to their biases, but that it was her father's story, not her racial and ethnic biases.

Similar to *Tara*, *Ann* shared her friend's race and ethnic-related story. She first noted that she does not have any racial or ethnic biases. When I asked *Ann* if she felt any differences between Hawai'i and her hometown, she finally shared her friend's experiences with Hawaiians.

*Ann* started talking, with pauses, “Um..., personally, I have not, but my roommate’s boyfriend got jumped a month ago. He was walking home at night, and it was... three big Hawaiian men jumped in and told him to leave the island” (Interview with *Ann*, April 8, 2022). Even though it was not her experience, she explain that “it was a scary experience, and it has changed the way I think; I need to look out for myself because back home, it’s like, it’s like [repeating] a privilege. You know, it’s mostly not white kids that are targeted” (Interview with *Ann*, April 8, 2022). Once again, she noted her race’s positionality in her hometown as *privileged* and that Caucasians are less likely to encounter racial violence.

In summary, four students, *Jade*, *Jasmine*, *Tara*, and *Ann*, shared their parents’ or friends’ experiences or attitudes toward different ethnicities. All of them mentioned that those were not their own experiences; neither did they say that those experiences were linked to their perceptions. As a result, proximity was not influential in developing their biases. *Jasmine* and *Tara*’s cases were their parents’ experiences and perceptions. However, the parents’ attitudes and biases were not always reflected in their child’s perceptions. For example, *Jasmine* noted that she was rebellious regarding her parents’ opinions because she had never experienced working with African Americans. *Jade* and *Ann* shared their close friends’ stories regarding racial mistreatment or violence, but they often reminded me that the stories were from their friends.

### ***Young-age Experiences and Biases***

Participants, who developed their racial and ethnic biases when they were young, tended to explain the reasons less hesitantly, rather straightforwardly. For example, *Bill* and *Kai* noted that their biases came from when they were in high school, whereas *Tara* explained that her bias developed when she was around ten years old.

*Bill* recognized his bias toward African Americans when he was closer to his cousins. As noted in the previous section, *Bill* had two African American cousins. His bias developed from his experiences with his cousins during family dinners with them. He noted, “[I was] just being tired after football practice and not wanting to hear loud conversations/noises. . . . I may have been uncomfortable due to being annoyed or tired of the level of volume/repeated discussion” (Follow-up email by *Bill*, August 15, 2022). *Bill* explained that his cousins had a history of yelling, making loud jokes and arguments, which he may not have experienced prior to this. *Bill* continued, “My specific experience may have led to some biases due to the uniqueness of the situation/family dynamic” (Follow-up email by *Bill*, August 15, 2022). His biases derived from his real experiences that were part of his family life while he was growing up. The factuality of repeated irritations could have made *Bill* form his biases more solidly.

*Kai* also developed his biases in high school. As I explained previously, he hesitated in disclosing his biases, using filler words numerous times, and repeating the same phrases. However, the reasons for his bias toward Caucasian tourists and his tone in explaining them were clear and straightforward. He noted the factors that influenced his bias: “I believe the reasons were being raised in Hawai‘i and seeing tourists taking advantage/disrespecting the land, ocean, and people. I thought they didn’t deserve to be treated nicely” (Survey from *Kai*, November 3, 2021). *Kai* explained that tourists’ unacceptable, ignorant behaviors caused his biases. During the discussion, *Kai* said that he had lived in Santa Rosa, California, while attending a community college:

I feel there it wasn’t as diverse and it was majority White, Caucasian, and Hispanic. . . . I think even though it wasn’t as diverse [as Hawai‘i], that also helped me to realize that even Caucasian people or even Hispanic people are still



very cool, and that people elsewhere still have the same beliefs and morals that I do. (Interview with *Kai*, November 4, 2021)

His extended personal experiences with Caucasians changed his biased perception. More details will be added in the next section.

*Tara* also had an experience that formed her bias when she was young. *Tara* first noted that she has no biases toward particular races and ethnicities. However, during the discussion, she recognized or decided to reveal her bias. When *Tara* disclosed her bias toward Muslim people, she remembered when she was coming back from an Indian airport, she saw Muslims everywhere: “For the first time, when I was ten or something. I saw this tall, tall [repeating] lady, six feet tall. And then, from head to toe, everything was black. I thought I saw a black ghost. I got really scared” (Interview with *Tara*, November 24, 2021). After explaining the story, *Tara* finalized her bias against Muslims, indicating people from Middle Eastern countries, but she did not specify the ethnicities.

All three students had different racial and ethnic-related experiences associated with their senses and feelings. For example, *Kai* expressed his anger at perceived ignorant attitudes, while *Tara* had experienced scary feelings when she was small. *Bill* also indicated his irritation towards his cousins’ behaviors. When the influential reasons for their biases were directly from their experiences, participants tended to disclose and explain directly and straightforwardly what they saw and how they felt.

**Research sub-question 3: How do students perceive and describe their growth or improvement to overcome their biases, if any?**

After the deeper roots of participants' racial and ethnic biases were examined, the next research sub-question asked about the process of their growth and improvement in their perceptions. Three main themes explain how participants perceived their growth by themselves.

***Describe their Growth as a Gradual Opening***

Four participants, *Kai*, *Bill*, *Kalani*, and *Dana*, described their growth as being open-minded. First, *Kai* perceived the growth and improvement in his bias as coming from his further experiences with Caucasians. When *Kai* attended college and met people, he realized that people from Hawai'i are not the only nice people; people from different areas are also nice. *Kai* disclosed that his fiancé is Caucasian. He hesitated, repeating and laughing, "She is, she is, [repeating] White. . . . I completely changed [compared to when he was in high school], and I am more open minded in the way I deal with tourists or White people now" (Interview with *Kai*, November 4, 2021). Moreover, *Kai* further explained:

I made so many friends and new family in California from that experience. I played basketball over there. So, I made friends with my teammates and met their families, and I got to spend holidays, such as Thanksgiving and Christmas, with them. It was really neat to spend Christmas with them. How loving and caring other people are, even though they're not from Hawai'i. I came to understand that everywhere there's also great people that are not from Hawai'i as well. (Interview with *Kai*, November 4, 2021)

*Bill* also pointed out that he perceived himself as more open and accepting while taking the multicultural education class. He described filling out a bias perception worksheet during the class: “That was one of the hardest worksheets I’ve ever done in my life. I was thinking about understanding where the root [of my bias] came from. I think it was really important to step back in my life to understand my thought processes” (Interview with *Bill*, April 5, 2022). Furthermore, *Bill* explained the lessons that he learned in the class: “I don’t want to say only my knowledge of multicultural education, but more my openness and acceptance of other people” (Interview with *Bill*, April 5, 2022). Open mindedness, in *Bill*’s case, was accepting other people, whereas *Kai* learned not to generalize from his experiences of Caucasians at a young age.

*Kalani* recognized her progress while she was studying abroad in London. She understood the perspectives of both locals and visitors. *Kalani* noted:

I try to be really mindful of the way [as a visitor] that I act and treat things around me. . . . I can understand because that’s how it is in Hawai‘i for me. If I were in their shoes, then I would feel weird about that too, you know. (Interview with *Kalani*, February 12, 2022)

*Kalani* thought that her stereotypes may be true but incomplete. She explained, “It’s okay to have these preconceived notions, but also we want to look beyond them and find out where we can learn more from that pinpoint” (Interview with *Kalani*, February 12, 2022). *Kalani*’s case was that she tried to understand other people’s positions. *Kalani* had her racial bias toward Caucasians; however, after her multicultural education course, she realized that she was a visitor in London. She has gradually understood the meaning of different positionalities by reflecting on herself.

*Dana's* case was slightly different, but her motto was to be an open-minded person. She said that she did not have any racial biases, but she had a bias toward male police officers, which was rooted in her brutal experience last year. She shared a story that she was close to a family who adopted four abandoned children. The father in the family was a police officer. However, *Dana* did not mention the connection of her bias toward the police male. As noted earlier, *Dana* shared her term paper with me and noted how she could reduce her biases:

To be a more well-rounded human and compassionate teacher, I need to grow my mindset, so I can learn from a wider range of people and not judge people for the groups they may be a part of. To help me change this bias [toward police males], I chose to interact with a random man who was not part of the police force, so I can get to know the person beyond how I labeled the group. This [being open-minded] allowed me to look at people as individuals instead of a group. (EDU 3XX paper by *Dana*, November 18, 2021)

Her progress was to remain an open-minded person, as she noted that she generally was. *Dana* wanted to try to change her bias step by step, and she started interacting with males first to lessen her fear-based bias.

Being open-minded could be one of the experiments that leads to the students' changes, which many of them described as their growth. *Kalani* reflected on understanding different positionalities through her experience abroad. Also, after the lessons from the multicultural education course, *Bill* began to understand and accept people. *Kai* has been more open-minded by giving himself more chances to change his perceptions of Caucasians. Although *Dana* had been traumatized by an incident that influenced her bias, she followed her personal belief from

her parents in being open-minded. She tried not to group police officers, instead, look at them more individually by interacting with some males.

### ***Willingness to Understand Self and Others***

*Hana, Tara, and Jasmine* were all from Hawai‘i and showed their growth with their willingness to change their biases by knowing and understanding themselves and others. As noted earlier, *Hana* had biases toward Caucasian tourists and distrust toward Caucasian males. Subsequently, she discussed her future career scenario as a Kamehameha school (K-12) teacher, where students of Hawaiian descent enroll. First, *Hana* explained:

I haven’t really met any *hapa* [people who are White and Hawaiian or other mixed ethnicities]. It would be interesting to see how I would react to them in my profession because not only will I have to be professional toward them, but I would also have to try to get to know them on a personal level. (Interview with *Hana*, April 2, 2022)

In order to achieve her future goal as a teacher in the school, she was aware that she needed to overcome her biases. She wanted to be in a new environment to practice interacting with different people. *Hana* continued, “I do believe that Hawai‘i is a very diverse place, but I’m too comfortable... [a short pause] So if I went to the mainland, I’d be exposed to a lot more White people, black people, and Native American people” (Interview with *Hana*, April 2, 2022). Furthermore, she was unsure if her biases have decreased: “I think just being in a new environment will definitely show me whether or not I am able to get over these biases toward people” (Interview with *Hana*, April 2, 2022). *Hana* showed her progress by her willingness to try to be exposed to different people to verify whether her biases were reduced.

Although *Hana* was unsure about her improvement, *Tara* recognized her growth. *Tara* said that her bias toward Muslim people in the Middle East has been decreasing because “as I grow older, I learn more about the politics of it [Islam] and also what their culture is like” (Interview with *Tara*, November 24, 2021). Being open-minded about knowing more about Muslims and Middle Eastern cultures helped her reduce her biases. She told me that many of her Indian family members live in the Middle East, and she learned about their experiences throughout the years:

Why they’re [Muslim women] fully covered [head to toe by black cloth] because of how strict the religion is to women. Now, I understand compared to when [I was] a ten-year-old in an airport. But I think overall, it just changed because I learned a lot. (Interview with *Tara*, November 24, 2021)

At the same time, *Tara* pointed out the 9/11 terrorist attack was before she was born, which she had learned about from history books. *Tara* expressed her feeling about overcoming or reducing biases: “I feel like ... [a short pause] happier, maybe better. I understand another culture and understand how they live uh.... [a short pause] I’m not that afraid anymore, I guess” (Interview with *Tara*, November 24, 2021).

*Tara* recognized her growth by gradually understanding the background of the Muslim practices. Both *Hana* and *Tana* were willing to understand other cultures and people. *Hana* wanted to put herself in a different area in the U.S. and wanted to see improvement. *Tara* knew that she had not experienced an important historical occurrence; however, she noted that once she understood the cultural and religious backgrounds of Muslim people more, it helped reduce her biases toward them.

*Jasmine* also perceived her own changes in her bias toward Chinese people, but she noted that this bias could be a stereotype. *Jasmine* recognized progress in her perceptions of Chinese people as she visited China frequently because that was where her parents were from. She shared that her biases had shifted in both directions:

I think it [her bias toward Chinese people] shifted to be bad, and then it shifted back to be good because when I started entering a college setting, it became more analytical. . . . So, I did shift, and I did come to understand that Chinese people are that way because they need to make a living, and it's part of the culture. It was being loud as part of the culture, shoving across the street to get someone's attention. It's the culture. So, I've come to understand that there's a reason for why everything is done, and that was what I did not understand. (Interview with *Jasmine*, November 18, 2021)

Biased perceptions do not shift instantly in a positive direction. *Jasmine* was analytical and found reasons from her experiences why Chinese people act the way they do.

### ***Challenge Recognizing Progress by their Unrecognized Biases***

*Cindy* and *Ann* were not aware of any biases for or against particular races and ethnic groups, while *Jade* said that her perception of Micronesians was mixed, but not completely her own ethnic bias because she had not personally experienced it. *Cindy* and *Ann* had not perceived any growth because they had not recognized any racial and ethnic biases yet. On the other hand, *Jade* still questioned whether the friend's incident fueled her biases. Like *Cindy* and *Ann*, *Jade* could not discuss any her growth or improvement; however, she explained that meeting individuals and looking at people's individuality helped people reduce their biases. *Jade* stated:

If you had the view of a race or a certain ethnicity, but when you actually meet individuals, you find everyone is different. It really depends on that individual you meet because you never know; everyone is so different from each other. So, you really have to get to know someone else. (Interview with *Jade*, December 5, 2021)

Again, her idea of progress was not related to her semi-biased perceptions of Micronesians. Instead, *Jade* tried to explain how people generally grow and lessen their biases.

**Research sub-question 4: What helps students make conscious choices to change their biases, if any?**

The fourth question asked for deeper explanations from students who had changed their biases. Three phrases that emerged from the interviews: to understand similarities and differences of others, to see progress throughout multicultural education course, and to examine each person as an individual.

***Examination of Similarities and Differences of others***

*Jasmine* and *Tara* have shifted their biases because of their acceptance and understanding of the ethnic groups analytically and ethically. As noted in the previous section, *Jasmine* explained the change in her biases from understanding and accepting the Chinese people's culture that she experienced when she visited China. *Jasmine* pointed out that Chinese people are loud in their culture, and the reasons are related to making their living. When I asked how she came to accept and understand the Chinese people, she noted her experience in visiting China several times. Moreover, she analyzed herself:



I had a philosophy class. This really delves into thinking and processing. What and why do you think this way? How did you come about to think this way? Is it right or is it ethical? So that [philosophy class] definitely helped me process my thoughts, and then I myself came to an understanding. (Interview with *Jasmine*, November 18, 2021)

*Jasmine*'s experiences with Chinese people helped her accept and understand the culture, while at the same time, the philosophy class made her think about issues and biases more ethically.

*Jasmine* added:

It's definitely hard [changing one's perceptions] because when you develop a certain way of thinking, a fixed mindset from a young age, they [studies] say that your character and ideas are molded by age 18. So, it's hard. You're always conditioned to think this way. And then, you have to catch yourself and say, no, think through this first, or no, this probably is not what it is. (Interview with *Jasmine*, November 18, 2022)

*Jasmine* said that although it is challenging to shift a mindset through the philosophy class lessons, she started to think more ethically. For example, she had mentioned earlier that her parents' attitude toward Micronesians was not logical because she did not have the same experiences as her parents did.

Similarly, *Tara* had noted earlier that she tried to understand Muslims' religious practice, culture, and people in the Middle East. She also explained the background of the area: "I think that Middle East people tend to be violent because Saudi Arabia or Iraq, they keep fighting. So, I think [it's] because they live in a place that's always has violence" (Interview with *Tara*, November 24, 2021). *Tara* gained a cultural understanding of the circumstances that Middle East

people faced. She clarified, “I have several members who live in Kuwait. They’re my family members. I know that they’re not violent. They’re not scary” (Interview with *Tara*, November 24, 2021). She noted the religious conflicts and tensions in the Middle East, and she was aware that conflicts occur as a fact. *Tara* re-examined her bias toward Muslims in the Middle East countries:

I think I’m half biased because of the things we learned from America’s perspective, from all the history books. But, if I looked at my cultural side, the Indian family side, I wouldn’t think I would be biased because it’s just another culture. It’s another country, where you live. (Interview with *Tara*, November 24, 2021)

Both *Jasmine* and *Tara* were analytical about their biases. In *Jasmine*’s case, her philosophy class made her think about things more ethically. *Tara* re-examined her bias from an ethnicity and religious standpoint.

### ***Progress throughout a Multicultural Education Class***

A multicultural education course is where students discuss different multicultural topics and diversity. Five of the ten participants, *Bill*, *Kalani*, *Ann*, *Hana*, and *Cindy*, noted that the course made them aware of the importance of overcoming biases and helped them change.

As explained earlier, when *Bill* filled out a bias worksheet during the class, he analyzed himself and his biased roots more deeply. He recalled that the worksheet and the class helped him accept other people. *Bill* did not note a specific example. However, he expressed that the bias perception worksheet was one of the most challenging assignments throughout his college years, suggesting that he confronted his biases and roots profoundly. Though he said his racial

bias developed in high school, he may not have thought about the details until recently. His positive change occurred during a deliberate educational activity.

*Kalani* and *Ann* noted that working with diverse peers helped them see various multicultural issues and biases. When they interacted with other students in the multicultural education course, it was “a significant experience and time for my life” (Interview with *Kalani*, February 12, 2022), and “very eye-opening in many different stances of biases” (Interview with *Ann*, April 8, 2022). Their multicultural awareness could differ from those who have not taken the course.

Both students seemed to expand their perspectives by working with other students from different backgrounds. *Ann* questioned when many of her classmates noted that they were open-minded and accepting overall, “but then, when you really dive into it, it makes you question, is there something more I could be doing?” (Interview with *Ann*, April 8, 2022). *Kalani* also recalled:

We talked about a lot of controversial topics, and we talked about really important, real-life situations in her [the instructor’s] classroom and also a lot of personal things, . . . just in general, getting to know people on a more personal level, and realizing that there’s so much more than what we think when we first see people. There’s a lot to learn beneath the surface of what we see. (Interview with *Kalani*, February 12, 2022)

*Kalani* perceived the value of real life and authentic interactions. She shared her feelings when she heard different perspectives from different students in class:

It was really interesting to hear a lot of the Caucasian students or students from the mainland who were saying that they knew they’re privileged. They know

[Hawaii's] negative history that many people associate them with. So, it was really interesting to hear that, because they're [Caucasian classmates were] acknowledging that they haven't been reasonable, or they understand why people might feel this way [negatively] towards this race [Caucasian] or whatnot.

(Interview with *Kalani*, February 12, 2022)

The other participant, *Ann*, a Caucasian female, acknowledged that she was privileged in her small hometown in Washington. *Kalani* and *Ann* had taken the multicultural education course in different semesters, which indicates that different Caucasian students acknowledged that they were privileged in classes. Privilege or other race- and ethnic-focused educational discussions may become controversial because students may have different perspectives or become emotional; however, these interactions help students to think more deeply.

*Hana* shared an experience with the IAT test in a multicultural education class. The test results disagreed with her preference; however, she accepted that the results could reflect her unconscious state:

I think my test [result] was a little weird. It said that when we're looking at the color of the skin [that] I've preferred light over dark-skinned people, but in my eyes, I'm dating someone that's darker skinned. I don't have a lot of friends that are white skinned. I'm definitely trying to work on it because I do have some lighter skinned kids in my program for A+ [K-5 afterschool program]. Because it's not something I can do subconsciously, it's something that I have to constantly think about to make sure that I am treating them fairly. So, I'm trying to be more sensitive toward treating everyone fairly. (Interview with *Hana*, April 2, 2022)

*Hana* had a non-essentialist mindset. She was confused because the test results did not match her conscious preference. However, she acknowledged that the results might be related to her unconscious bias. In addition, *Hana* noted that she wanted to overcome her biases eventually:

I'm gonna [going to] have to get over this [bias] in the future. I think starting now would be a good point. I think Professor AA's class really opened my eyes as well. I didn't really see it [bias] as a problem before. I don't like that person because she's Asian, and they [classmates] makes all these assumptions about me. Professor AA's class was not forcing me to open my eyes, but it's just a big realization. Especially with the journal assignments, asking other people what they think and how they perceive other people. So, I think being open-minded is the step that a lot of us have to take and go for it. (Interview with *Hana*, April 2, 2022)

The class discussions and assignments could be life lessons in how humans can interact with others openly. Many interview participants noted that their perceived growth was being open-minded. The conversation with those participants made me recognize that students' growth developed through the lessons and interactions with their peers in the course.

One of the participants, *Cindy*, who was not aware of her racial biases, also showed growth through the course. When I asked if she had experienced any biases toward her, she shared a situation during a group discussion in a multicultural education class:

It kind of pointed me out in the group a little bit, and, . . . [a short pause] just their whole interaction with me. They were mocking me. When I told him [her peer] 'I don't talk like that,' he got upset and he just. . . . [a short pause]. I don't

know, it was just a very. . . [a short pause]. I still don't really understand the situation. (Interview with *Cindy*, April 3, 2022)

Group interactions are challenging because different people have different perspectives. *Cindy*'s experience could have been a disagreement or slight bullying during group interaction since the person mocked *Cindy*'s speaking habit. Furthermore, she felt upset and confused; it was the "kind of a battle you can't win because you can't change someone's perception" (Interview with *Cindy*, April 3, 2022). She shared her thoughts about the incident:

Oh, no, maybe I was the one who said something offensive. I don't know. I definitely had a moment, and I wanted to go home and hide where I blend in with everyone. But I'm also in the situation. You have to understand that the bias is coming from a place of oppression; it's not coming from an oppressed group. I feel there's a difference when there's power involved. Sometimes if I'm in Hawai'i, and this isn't my homeland, and someone has a problem with that, then I have to respect that. (Interview with *Cindy*, April 3, 2022)

*Cindy* recalled her feelings and reflected on whether she had done something to the person. The situation was not clear enough, and it was hard for her to conclude that the incident was related to her racial background.

Based on her experience, I asked whether changing a biased perception is important. *Cindy* first thought about having biases objectively and then reflected on the situation that she encountered in class:

I would say, in general, it's [having a bias] a part of being human. You know, we're not perfect. I don't think we think it's something always to be working on. I

think with this person's bias towards me, where they maybe just thought me as a person was annoying. (Interview with *Cindy*, April 3, 2022)

*Cindy* accepted the incident and shared a different perspective: "I think sometimes biases can be used to protect ourselves. I think we should work on it, but also, I understand where they come from" (Interview with *Cindy*, April 3, 2022). Regrettably, I was not able to ask *Cindy* the reasons that she noted that "bias can be used to protect ourselves" during the interview.

After the conversation, she realized, "I honestly thought I didn't think about biases very much. Except for my personal ones for this class, so I do think about them [racial and ethnic biases] more now" (Interview with *Cindy*, April 3, 2022). Reflecting on the group discussion experience in the class helped *Cindy* become aware that she had not thought about her biases deeply enough. This reflection was her growth process after interacting with diverse peers in the multicultural education class, even though she had experienced an uncomfortable situation.

The progress and growth levels of the five students were varied; however, at least they realized the importance of bias topics and increased their understanding of themselves and others.

### ***Viewing Each Person as an Individual instead of a Stereotype***

*Kai*, *Jade*, and *Dana* tried to focus on individuals, not generalizing as a group characteristic. Some key phrases came out of the interviews: not to bundle people by their races and ethnicities, to speak to people, to build up new experiences, and to give people a chance.

In the previous section, *Kai* shared his progress in realizing that not all Caucasians are disrespectful from his experiences with Caucasian friends and their families. When I asked him what elements helped him change, he explained: "I would say the more and more I get to talk to

different kinds of people, it makes me more understanding from their perspective and not just my own” (Interview with *Kai*, November 4, 2021).

Unlike *Kai*, *Jade* had challenges describing how to change her semi-biased perception toward Micronesians. She explained some of her thoughts that may help her in the future: “If I had a negative view, I think talking to people from that particular group could help to change my negative view into a positive one” (Interview with *Jade*, December 5, 2022). Her case is about people in a particular group, meaning Micronesian; however, she did not specify the ethnic group. It could have been a general comment about what could be useful for her future application.

*Dana* shared her term paper and disclosed her growth as being open-minded to working with males. She separated her gender and institutional/occupational biases to work on one of them first. She further noted, “If I teach myself to look past their gender or group that they are a part of and focus on the individual, I may not like every male or policeman, but it would be based on who they are, not a stereotype” (EDU 3XX paper from *Dana*, November 18, 2021).

All three participants had a similar approach: getting to know people more as individuals before generalizing as a group. *Jade*’s idea was to make new experiences by talking and learning from people’s perspectives in a particular group, which would change her perceptions. *Kai* changed his perceptions just like *Jade*. At the same time, *Kai*’s willingness to look at and understand Caucasians more openly made his biases progressive. *Dana* was trying to move forward by looking at the group members more individually.

#### **Research sub-question 5: How would students see the application beyond the course?**

The last research sub-question focused on the possible application of the participants’ multicultural competency in their future lives.



### ***Future Improvement Ideas from Participants who Denied their Biases***

As reported earlier, *Ann* denied having any biases toward particular racial and ethnic groups. During the conversation, she shared that her friend's boyfriend was jumped by Hawaiians, but she confirmed that this story did not relate to her racial bias. When I asked her how she would deal with the incident if she were a teacher, she explained:

We should embrace our differences. I think if it's happened in front of a whole class, it'd be a great opportunity to talk to the whole class about it and give a lesson about 'hey, everyone's a little different.' We all have unique things about ourselves. Some of us have short hair, some of us have long hair, some are tall, some are short, and some have light skin, so there's dark skin, but we all need to be friends. (Interview with *Ann*, April 8, 2022)

Explaining physical differences may be an initial point for students in understanding the differences regarding other races and ethnicities. At the same time, the tension between Caucasians and Hawaiians has a long history, which would need further interventions and lessons.

When I asked *Cindy* about her future application, she explained her future swimwear business career and her business plans for inclusiveness: "I was thinking of making it [swimsuits] one size only. There are a lot of people who are my size, but there's so many more people who aren't" (Interview with *Cindy*, April 3, 2022). She was still figuring out whether this is a part of her biased perception of different people: "I don't think that was me being biased. But having to challenge that because if I want to make a business, I can't have a bias, so I think I'm actually thinking about it more" (Interview with *Cindy*, April 3, 2022).

I observed that *Cindy* made quite a bit of progress during the interview, from denial of biases to pondering and questioning her own biases. I was hearing from her that she thought that limited perception, which could be narrow-mindedness, was a part of her biases, which made her consider having inclusiveness in her future swimwear business.

*Dana* was aware of her negative feelings toward police officers. However, she noted, “I think it’s definitely something that time is needed and maybe more experiences personally or through family and friends like trusted people” (Interview with *Dana*, January 11, 2022). I asked her how she would work as a teacher with children in the future. She explained the importance:

I think it’s really important to be open to all the different families that come in and all those parents, guardians, careers, lifestyles, cultures, and everything. So, the kids can feel supported all the way around while they’re learning. If they feel supported in themselves, they are more likely to support others, especially if other kids are willing to be in a space where they’re comfortable to share about themselves. If kids are sharing with each other, they become less biased because it’s like... oh, that’s my friend. (Interview with *Dana*, January 11, 2022)

Openness to different people will eventually create mutual understanding. *Ann*, *Cindy*, and *Dana* denied that they had any biases toward particular racial and ethnic groups; however, they had ideas about how they could make their classrooms and business healthy for everyone.

### ***Continuity in Working on their own Biases***

*Hana*, *Kalani*, *Kai*, and *Bill* wanted to continue to work on their personal biases. Once people are aware and admit their racial biases, they can move to the next step to work on their perceptions. For example, *Hana* and *Kalani* are both multiracial local females who noted several

times that they want to reduce their biases which they are still working on. *Hana* shared her uncomfortable feelings when people judged her based on her skin color, race, and ethnicity:

I've also been in a position of being the minority or just being treated differently because of my skin color. So, it does get frustrating at times when people do point out blatant racism or like treat me differently, and it gets frustrating. So, I definitely see how my actions could make somebody get frustrated or whatnot.

(Interview with *Hana*, April 2, 2022)

She understood both sides of frustration and feelings; therefore, she clearly noted that she wanted to overcome her biases. One of the class assignments in the multicultural education class was to ask other people what they think and how they perceive other people. She realized that we all have the same general idea of wanting to get along with others but not being able to.

*Hana* explained her plan to overcome her biases. She initially had planned to move to the mainland, where Caucasians are the majority. However, COVID-19 changed her plan. She realized, "Being in a new environment will show me whether or not I am able to get over these biasness [biases] toward people. If I were exposed more [to different people], then I'd be able to say my progress is where it is" (Interview with *Hana*, April 2, 2022).

*Kalani*, who disclosed biases toward Caucasian visitors, is still working on that. Furthermore, when I asked her if the level of her biases was still the same, she slowly and hesitantly revealed:

I'm at the point where it's the same thing. But, at the same time, my thinking doesn't stop there, whereas before. I would like, okay, this... [a short pause] and that was all I would think about it, but now I'm more open-minded to learn more

about another person or, like, thinking beyond. (Interview with *Kalani*, February 11, 2022)

*Bill* is also working on his biases and perceived a larger picture regarding people's biases:

Although I've noticed I have certain biases now, new biases can also grow. No matter what, you can still become biased, even no matter how open you are. I think constantly re-evaluating or thinking about your misconceptions is important, just like making this a lifelong thought process is important. (Interview with *Bill*, April 5, 2022)

People's biases appear and change over their life span. One bias is reduced, but another one comes up. An ongoing process of re-evaluation of oneself may be necessary for everyone. Likewise, teachers and students re-examining and discussing racial and ethnic issues and exchanging ideas for solutions may be crucial.

### ***Acceptance of Diversity and Getting to Know People on a Personal Level***

The other application that participants explained was to get to know people even though starting from negative perceptions. *Kalani* stated, "I guess a big thing for me is just to get to know people better, really, and hear from people personally rather than first impression judgments" (Interview with *Kalani*, February 11, 2022).

*Tara* had explained earlier that her biased perception of Muslims in the Middle East came from unfamiliarity with their religious practice. Her application was to continue to learn and understand other people: "If I meet someone one on one, then maybe that's even more helpful or more and more helpful towards learning and getting rid of the biases" (Interview with *Tara*, November 24, 2021). She explained that personal-level interaction reduced her biased perspectives. At the beginning of the interview, *Tara* did not recognize her biases because she

did not interact much with people of various races. She was not very familiar with Hawaiian people or Pacific Islanders: “If I was biased about something, it’s because I clearly don’t know. I’m not exposed to that much race” (Interview with *Tara*, November 24, 2021).

*Kai* perceived his growth as understanding Caucasians and changing his perspectives. When asked about his future goal, *Kai* shared with me that his passion was helping people and children, and he said he really enjoyed being around them. I also asked *Kai* how to apply his experience to his future. He shared:

Personally, I think it’s [changing his perceptions toward Caucasians] helped me to be a little more calm and not act out quickly anymore. Professionally, I think it’ll be good for me just because I know I’m not gonna [going to] have the same students. They’re gonna [going to] be all different kinds of racial and cultural backgrounds. To understand them I have to be able to connect with them on a different level, not just my personal experiences but their experiences. (Interview with *Kai*, November 4, 2021)

In addition, *Kai* pointed out, “It’s a better way just to relieve any negativity because it takes more energy to be negative than positive” (Interview with *Kai*, November 4, 2021). *Kai* had gained meaningful lessons throughout the years, and he felt healthier, since he had been strongly biased against Caucasians and Caucasian tourists.

*Jade* shared a similar approach, which includes being willing to meet and talk with people in a particular group. She explained that it might help reduce her negative, semi-biased perception toward Micronesians: “If I got to meet people from that group [maybe Micronesians] ... [I] got to talk to them or learn about them or have them share” (Interview with *Jade*, December 5, 2021). She pointed out that this process could help to change her

negative view into a positive one. Her application was being open-minded and willing to know different ethnic groups.

These four participants emphasized personal level interactions with people in other groups, such as talking, listening, and understanding, which can be applied to classrooms, meetings, and human relationships.

### Summary

The written answers to the survey were slightly more straightforward but brief. I inferred one reason—that the form was anonymous, so the survey participants could not see others and my face. Additionally, there was no interaction in the survey; therefore, the participants may have more freely noted their biases. Although obtaining their true biased perceptions helped achieve data validity, the survey results did not deeply explore the research questions. Therefore, those data results were used supplementally. In the in-depth interviews, some participants seemed challenged in describing and disclosing their thoughts and racial and ethnic biases, while others still did not recognize any.

Moreover, some participants were open to sharing their experiences and stories, whereas others showed obvious hesitation and uncertainty; however, they eventually revealed their perceptions deliberately. Interestingly, all interview participants used filler words, such as *like*, *just*, *you know*, and *kind of*. This use could be one of the communication characteristics of Millennials to Generation Z. Another reason could be that all participants were somewhat nervous about disclosing their racial and ethnic biases even though the interview platform was online using Zoom. In addition, they may have realized that racial and ethnic topics are controversial and speaking out was a challenge.

Based on the data from the ten diverse student participants' interviews and some valuable survey results, I was able to explore the answers to all research sub-questions. The list below is organized by the sub-questions and common themes.

Research sub-question #1 explored the students' awareness of their racial and ethnic biases. They were hesitant to disclose race and ethnic biases. I found three common themes:

1. Conceal first, but then disclose with hesitation
2. Denial or being unaware of racial and ethnic biases
3. Awareness from experiences

All participants thought carefully about how to discuss their perceptions, shown by their pauses, repeated words and phrases, and repeated filler words. The patterns among the ten interviewees reflected either recognized or unrecognized biases. Also, a few of them took time to disclose their biases.

Research sub-question #2 examined the deeper roots and reasons for students' biases. Four themes were developed:

1. Deep-rooted biases developed from others' disrespectful attitudes
2. Privileged status and racial and ethnic biases
3. Proximity and biases
4. Young-age experiences and biases

Students from Hawai'i tended to be sensitive toward tourists because they perceived those visitors as showing disrespectful attitudes toward the environment and cultures in Hawai'i. However, all three of the ten local participants noted that their bias regarding tourists referred only to Caucasians. This result indicates that racial and ethnic biases may sometimes relate to

other group identities, such as occupation, positionality, and gender. For example, the data showed identities as tourists, males, and police.

Another interesting pattern was that two participants who had similar responses: they acknowledged they were from the American majority and privileged, and they were unaware of their biases. Two of the four (50%) Caucasians from the U.S. mainland who had a similar positionality reacted similarly. Three of these four (75%) denied having racial and ethnic biases.

Research sub-question #3 examined the participants' perspectives on their growth or improvement to overcome their biases. Three themes emerged:

1. Described their growth as a gradual opening
2. Willingness to understand self and others
3. Challenge recognizing progress by their unrecognized biases

Four students perceived their growth as becoming more open minded to their biased perceptions and a particular ethnic group. Three students were willing to understand the people or group's cultures and characteristics. Unlike these seven students, the three students who denied having biases or had a semi-bias had difficulty describing their growth and changes.

Research sub-question #4 asked participants to examine students' deeper reasonings and factors in their progress. Three themes were set:

1. Examination of similarities and differences of others
2. Progress throughout a multicultural education class
3. Viewing each person as an individual instead of a stereotype

Participants analyzed other racial and ethnic groups and people when they perceived their changes. Five students explained that the assignments, discussions, and interaction in the multicultural education class helped their transformation.



Finally, sub-question #5 analyzed the participants' application plans and goals. Three themes were found:

1. Future improvement ideas from participants who denied their biases
2. Continuity in working on their own biases
3. Acceptance of diversity and getting to know people on a personal level

The student's application plans and suggestions were diverse. Two students clearly noted that they wanted to overcome their racial and ethnic biases. Five students suggested not generalizing a group of people; rather, it is essential to look at people more individually and personally.

In the analysis process, I recognized the ongoing sequential process from students' awareness of their racial and ethnic biases, roots and reasons, through their growth and improvement, transformation factors, and future applications. As I reflected, I could have encouraged the participants to discuss some topics more deeply. My personal reflections and research recommendations are detailed in the next chapter. Also, I elaborate on the results and the main research questions using the literature.

## CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATION, & CONCLUSION

In this research, I examined undergraduate students' racial and ethnic biases and their learning sequences to see their awareness, learning, and changes, if any. Living in multicultural societies, interacting with different people is inevitable, sometimes leading to tensions and conflicts. Therefore, the main objective of this study was to explore undergraduate students' racial and ethnic biases to improve multicultural communities and schools by having fewer racial and ethnic-related conflicts. As noted in Chapter 2, many educational theories have focused on people's biases to create a safe environment for students and teachers because racial and ethnic biases are inclined to produce misunderstanding and conflicts leading to racism (Banks, 2007; Gollnick & Chinn, 2013). Thus, studying racial biases is urgently needed because racial violence is reported weekly or monthly throughout the nation and the world.

Moreover, biases are lively topics that scholars and educators have debated and researched because biases are sensitive and complex and are connected to people's minds, beliefs, and social norms. Thus, theoretical interventions or textbooks are not enough to reduce students and teachers' biases. Examining undergraduate students' real voices and perspectives helps fill a gap between theories and practices.

From the rich descriptions of the participants' perspectives and stories on the open-ended questionnaire and in the in-depth interviews, five common themes emerged, organized by each sub-research question. I synthesized those five themes and further developed three major theoretical concepts. The following question is the central research question for this empirical study: *How do undergraduate students in a college of education in a Hawai'i university examine their personal racial and ethnic biases?*

## **Highlights of Key Findings**

The five common themes and patterns from Chapter 4 help to explain undergraduate students' learning experiences and the changes in their racial and ethnic biases. These participants will become future schoolteachers and educators. Therefore, studying their biased perceptions and evolution from this empirical research can yield practical suggestions for teacher education and multicultural education for the future. Moreover, the feasibility and practicability of the study findings may provide future learning and practices for students and teachers in multicultural classrooms, communities, and beyond. Three major theoretical concepts emerged from the findings:

1. Challenges in confronting one's own racial and ethnic biases
2. Ingroup and outgroup relations and biases
3. Growth and transformation through a multicultural education class

### **Challenges in Confronting One's own Racial and Ethnic Biases**

For all participants, confronting their personal biases was challenging, as shown by different levels of hesitation regarding their explicit racial and ethnic biases. Based on the implications in the literature, I anticipated some hesitation or concealing of racial biases because bias and prejudice are classified as personal matters (Allport, 1954; Marlowe & Crowne, 1961). The patterns of hesitation were exhibited by participants' using a general word to describe their biases, manipulating various filler words, repeating the same words and phrases, and pausing and pondering during the interviews.

As explained in Chapter 2, biases are classified generally as explicit (self-report) or implicit (unaware) (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005; Schimchowitsch & Rohmer, 2016). As Warikoo

et al. (2016) stated, “Explicit attitudes are beliefs and evaluations about people and things that individuals knowingly endorse and have complete discretion over whether they disclose” (p. 508). In this dissertation, self-disclosure was a focal point in investigating the depth of their conceptions and any changes.

First, some participants were less likely to discuss race and ethnicity openly and reluctantly told further stories of their personal biases. Many participants used the word *people* in describing their biases and bias-related stories. This reaction may indicate that bias-related experiences, especially race and ethnic biases, were sensitive topics and included emotional challenges.

Likewise, in school, preservice teachers tend to avoid controversial topics, especially race and ethnicity issues and marginalized groups (Wyatt, 2017), because some teachers do not want to disclose their personal views (Murray-Everett & Harrison, 2021). As a result, “When teachers avoid the subject [race], pretending that it does not exist as an issue, or when they portray its existence as merely a fringe issue, they are sending a very strong message” (Polite & Saenger, 2003, p. 475), which signifies that no bias exists in the class.

Secondly, all participants used various filler words repeatedly. *Bill*, *Kai*, *Kalani*, and *Hana* explicitly recognized and disclosed their biases. Nevertheless, they all showed some hesitation. For example, *Kalani* and *Hana* used various filler words and repeated short pauses when they disclosed their stories. *Bill* also used some filler words, while *Kai* repeated the same phrases several times and laughed at some of his phrases. Their using various filler words countless times could be a signal of hesitation in revealing their awareness and attitudes toward their personal biases. During the process, they may have realized that their biases were not positive; therefore, they hesitated to disclose their perceptions.

In a different pattern, *Jade*, *Tara*, and *Jasmine* first hesitated and did not discuss their biases but eventually revealed their experiences. *Jade* began with compliments for different ethnicities and finally disclosed that she was semi-biased toward Micronesians.

Likewise, *Tara* first noted that she had no racial bias; however, during the interview, she shared her childhood experiences and recognized or decided to disclose that she was biased toward Muslims and people in the Middle East. The process was educational and experiential because topics related to religion may not always be openly discussed in class or with others even though “religion is often of profound importance to people’s lives, and religious groups are among the more salient buttresses of identity” (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007, p. 1449). People within the group support the group members; however, it is difficult to discuss and understand their cultures and practices from an outgroup standing.

The data showed the different types of disclosure. Pederson and McLaren (2016) explained disclosure characteristics that people with hurtful experiences have different disclosure timings: immediate, gradual, or co-presence. These timing differences are associated with a relationship with the listeners: immediate disclosure is linked to people’s emotional distress, whereas gradual disclosure occurs after a series of interactions (Pederson & McLaren, 2016). Furthermore, when a hurtful moment is shared with others, people tend to disclose the information at the time. Disclosure timings were not examined in this study because some participants have changed or reduced their biased perceptions.

Self-disclosure can lead to positive results. For example, in a study of people’s implicit and explicit biases toward stutterers, Roche et al. (2020) found that self-disclosure from stutterers, who openly reveal their speech habits, reduces but does not completely eradicate biases. This case implies that self-disclosure cannot happen without knowing our biases.

Unlike the participants above, who recognized and revealed biases, *Dana*, *Cindy*, and *Ann* were unaware and denied having racial and ethnic biases. Hillard (2020) explained that “self-report measurements assume that participants are aware of and willing to report their attitudes” (p. 29). Although their denial of biases could have been anticipated, I presumed they had had a chance to confront their biased perceptions because they had discussed related topics in a multicultural education class.

Though these participants denied the presence of racial and ethnic biases, denial may not be fully classified as implicit bias. The main characteristic of implicit bias is that people tend not to recognize their biases. An implicit bias, also called an unconscious bias, (Glas & Faloye, 2021; Lawrence, 2015), is an “automatic, spontaneously activated mental association of a target concept with feelings (positive or negative) or traits” (Marvel, 2016, p. 144). However, as noted in Chapter 2, implicit bias has an aversive form in which people deny that they have biases because they believe they are not prejudiced and support an egalitarian principle, but they unconsciously act out toward a certain group (Fredman, 2018; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005). Therefore, the fact that participants denied having biases might lead to misunderstanding them. Based on the literature, their denials could be analyzed into three scenarios. First, they might have pretended they were unaware of their biases—concealing. Second, they may lack an epistemological assumption of their perceptions—unexplored or unmindful. Third, they may have aversive implicit biases.

I used a self-reported explicit measure to examine students’ racial and ethnic biases. In the explicit measure, participants who reluctantly admitted or noted that they were unaware of biases could not merely be classified as having implicit bias (Fazio & Olson, 2003). Furthermore, Fazio and Olson (2003) “encouraged researchers not to equate an implicitly

measured construct with an unconscious one” (p. 303). Implicit biases usually focus on people’s behaviors (Hillard, 2020). Therefore, people with implicit biases are difficult to label, especially those with the aversive type; the participants denied the presence of racial biases.

### ***Relationship between Privilege and Bias Awareness***

The three Caucasian females who denied having racial and ethnic biases were from the U.S. mainland. They noted that they were open-minded and did not recognize racial biases. Naturalistic qualitative work cannot be generalized (Cohen et al., 2011); however, it was a unique pattern that students of similar backgrounds responded similarly. Two of them noted that they were a racially privileged group in their hometowns. Also, they had lived in Hawai‘i for eight months, which is a relatively short time.

First, I thought that *Cindy* and *Ann* hesitated to disclose their biases. I asked several times in order to verify their positions; however, they were unaware of racial and ethnic biases. Furthermore, these students explained that they were privileged and had lived in a Caucasian-dominated community their entire lives. This condition could imply that they were colorblind. As explained in Chapter 2, being colorblind can be interpreted positively and negatively. Gollnick and Chinn (2013) explained that colorblindness and white privilege are linked. When *Cindy* described her hometown and school, she noted that she had experienced different ethnicities, but it was unclear to what extent she had experienced them. The circumstances around denial of their biases may have impeded them from analytically examining race- and ethnic-related subjects and issues. A further assumption is that they could have focused on the privileged people and did not confront their biases far enough while taking the multicultural education class.

Kerrison (2017) explained, “White dominance is universal and natural, a reflection of ‘White individuals’ assumed superiority; those who are constructed as White are permitted to believe that their realities constitute an ontological baseline” (p.4). This insight could apply to many areas in the mainland. However, it may not apply to Hawai‘i. Ohnuma (2002) explained Caucasians’ positionality:

White has never been invisible or normative in Hawai‘i. It was superior, dominant, and then it was overthrown. It is this overthrow— at first social then political and cultural—usually not expressed as such, that represents not only a resistance to colonization and external forces, but that has been fully incorporated into the hegemonic. (p. 274)

The positionalities of Caucasians in the mainland and in Hawai‘i may differ. For example, *Ann* shared her friend’s [Caucasian] boyfriend’s experience of racial violence from Hawaiians who told him to leave the island. This incident could be an example of a historical connection, as Ohnuura (2002) mentioned.

Moreover, *Kalani* noted her Caucasian classmates’ awareness that they were racially privileged. She ironically asked whether those peers’ ancestors had done it to Hawai‘i and Hawaiians. *Kalani* was a local female who had lived in Oahu her entire life. The substantially negative history of Hawai‘i and Hawaiians, the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom, makes some people, especially people of Hawai‘i origin, emotional and resentful.

Furthermore, people’s knowledge and beliefs about race and ethnicity may differ from one area to another. In a study regarding monoracial and multiracial college students’ experiences in a public four-year institution located in a small town in the Midwest region of the U.S., Harris (2017) pointed out that students were easier and more comfortable with people



viewing them as monoracial individuals “because white ideologies of racial purity are embedded in society, through monoracist structures”(p. 440). Privileged or monoracial groups in the mainland may be different from those in Hawai‘i. Hawai‘i does not have any dominant race (U.S. Census, 2020a); however, Asian Americans, especially many second or third generations of Japanese Americans, who took political roles or were middle class, were classified as the dominant ethnicity in the 1970s (Miyares, 2008; Okamura, 2014). Harris (2017) explained that “monoracial communities of color are subordinated by this white supremacist racial hierarchy” (p. 440). This perspective may not always be seen in the Hawai‘i’s context. Like *Kalani* and *Hana*, multiracial local females, did not hesitate to identify their ethnic backgrounds.

Historically, people in America have understood that Anglo-Saxon people are mainstream and perceived as symbolic Americans. However, currently America consists of various groups of immigrants that came throughout the centuries and created further generations. Bellovary, Armenta, and Reyna (2020) explained, “Although America is a country founded by immigrants, stoking prejudice and fear toward immigrants has been a hallmark of our history” (p. 157). All people in the U.S., except for Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, originated as immigrants or families of immigrants. If having similar roots does not cause biases, people’s differences, including appearances, norms, values, and cultures, may cause others to develop racial and ethnic biases.

### **Ingroup and Outgroup Relations and Biases**

The interview data showed a pattern of ingroup and outgroup relations to racial and ethnic biases. For example, the three local participants from Hawai‘i, *Hana*, *Kai*, and *Kalani*, noted their biases toward Caucasians and Caucasian tourists in Hawai‘i. Interestingly, tourists are

not limited to Caucasians. According to the 2019 annual visitor report from the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, many visitors were from the U.S. west (n=4,595,319) and Japan (n=1,576,205). Also, people from other Asian countries, such as China (n=92,082), Korea (n=229,056), and Taiwan (n=24,242), made up the diverse Asian tourists visiting Hawai‘i. Unfortunately, the report did not contain a race-based description of the visitors from the western U.S., which may not have been only Caucasians.

In 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau (2020a) reported that Hawai‘i had the lowest percentage (22.9 %) of Caucasians compared to west coast states, such as Oregon (74 %), Washington (66%), and California (41.2%). Furthermore, in the diversity index in 2020 (U.S. Census 2020b), Hawai‘i had the most race and ethnic diversity (76%) nationwide; California was second at 69.7 percent. Based on these official reports, the participants’ perceptions of Caucasian visitors as misbehaving might not be the only reason for their biases. *Hana* and *Kalani*, could tolerate Asian tourists, even if they were from the U.S. mainland but not Caucasians. *Hana* perceived Asian visitors more as international tourists who might not know the U.S. rules. At the same time, she explained that Caucasians from the mainland share the norms and customs of the people in Hawai‘i because they all live in America. *Hana*’s explanation was not completely logical, which may indicate that biases are not always rational.

The participants’ biases toward Caucasian tourists labeled as outsiders or mainlanders may be interrelated with media coverage or historical knowledge and discourses they had learned. Before the plantation era, “Hawai‘i was an independent nation ruled by a native Hawaiian constitutional monarchy until 1893, when a group of westerners including missionaries overthrew the government with the assistance of the U.S. military” (Rohrer, 2008, p. 1111). Schoolchildren and college students in Hawai‘i are supposed to learn the political and racial

history of Hawai‘i. When perceiving Caucasians, students and people may automatically distinguish them as an outgroup even if some of them are from Hawai‘i.

Although colonization and annexation are the historical facts, historians and teachers may deliver the historical information with various intensities to students. Additionally, students may interpret history and the information differently. The participants’ biased perceptions toward tourists, particularly Caucasian tourists, were formed by their experiences of those visitors’ disrespectful behaviors against Hawai‘i, which could have been combined with their prior knowledge and experiences.

Various participants perceived *locals* and Caucasians or other ethnicities and Caucasians as ingroups and outgroups in Hawai‘i. *Kalani*’s and *Hana*’s explanation regarding their biases only toward Caucasian tourists from the mainland suggests that they perceived Caucasians as outsiders based on Hawai‘i’s history. On the other hand, *Cindy*, who originated from the mainland, was upset, confused, and felt left out during the multicultural education class discussion, indicating that she was aware that she was an outsider in Hawai‘i.

The findings showed racial and ethnic biases in the relationship between ingroup and outgroup; this dichotomous view may also connect to other multicultural variables. Merriam, Johnson-Bailey, Lee, Kee, Ntseane, and Muhamad (2001) explained that the same languages or similar cultural norms, other statuses, such as gender, socioeconomic status, or religious preferences can become powerful drivers for determining insider and outsider positions. For example, Caucasians and *Hana* both use the same language and have similar standards as Americans; however, when *Hana* perceived that Caucasians were not following simple rules and were harming Hawai‘i’s nature, these facts made her hate Caucasian visitors, even though not all of them were violating the rules. In addition to the insider and outsider relationship for

understanding her perception, young people have their own local territories, which “are the symbolic representations of entitlement; it is not surprising that such contestations typically occur in and over public places, such as train stations, beaches, clubs, street corners and school yards” (Harris, 2009, p. 200).

In a similar notion, intercultural groups can be positioned as both ingroups and outgroups. *Jasmine* may distinguish Chinese in China as an outgroup. She was raised by her immigrant parents from China in Hawai‘i, which is not the same experience as those who live in China have. In the study regarding Asian and Asian American college students’ racial and ethnic identities, Iwamoto and Liu (2010) found that Asian Americans and Asian international students may have similar or relevant cultural values but that “Asians growing up in California, with a majority of Asian American peers in a university, were inclined to have different experiences compared to Asians growing up in other states with a small percentage of Asian Americans” (p. 89). The research indicates that depending on the situation, condition, and environment, people have different experiences.

A further example comes from a study by Merriam et al. (2001), who examined several pairs of intercultural groups but with different positionalities. One of the examples was an African American woman who interviewed African American women with similar values regarding gender and race issues but with different opinions regarding Colorism. In their findings, depending on their positionalities, people in the same ethnic group can become insiders or outsiders. Thus, Caucasians from the mainland and Caucasians from Hawai‘i could have insider or outsider positions. These Caucasians may recognize their different positionalities as insiders and outsiders, but others may not identify the salient differences without further interactions.

Furthermore, when I interviewed *Kalani*, who was studying in London, she acknowledged that she was an outsider and visitor at that moment and reflected on how she felt about Caucasian visitors to Hawai‘i. Her new experience in London provided new perspectives regarding her original biases and views. *Kalani* noted that she tried to be mindful and to not act the same way as she had perceived the Caucasian visitors had acted. Although she had a positive attitude toward her future improvement, *Kalani* also noted that her biased perceptions of her Caucasian classmates were not yet malleable. However, *Kalani*’s honest disclosure might be an indicator of her increased awareness of her biases and openness to acknowledging her own current position.

One of the challenges is having a fixed mindset. Merriam et al. (2001) suggested, “The views of both insider and outsider must be accepted as legitimate attempts to understand the nature of culture” (p.415). An example of a non-essentialist mindset is that not all Caucasian students are from the mainland. Even though some of them are from there, it does not mean they all misbehave or disrespect Hawai‘i and its culture. Moreover, although the historical overthrow was done by a group of Caucasian businessmen and missionaries, the Caucasian participants were not directly involved. It can be challenging to change one’s mindset; however, continuing resentment will not resolve the racial and ethnic issues and will create further biased perceptions.

### ***Own and Others’ Experiences***

The findings illustrate that the participants’ biases developed differently. Many of their racial biases were from their own race-based experiences, from childhood to school experiences. Implicit bias can be found in children as young as seven years old, and the same characteristics are found in adults (Elashi & Mills, 2015). The participants may have had implicit biases from

their childhood experiences and could have recognized them. Consequently, they self-disclosed their biases in the interviews.

*Ann's* and *Jade's* cases were different. They discussed their friends' experiences and attitudes toward Hawaiians and Micronesians. Those friends' experiences could be classified as racial microaggressions. In research regarding racial and gender microaggression, Midgette and Mulvey (2021) reported that college students were more likely to hear or see racial microaggressions, which refers to discriminatory behaviors both verbally and nonverbally, than they were to perform or experience racial microaggressions. Moreover, when compared across racial and ethnic groups, Caucasians and racial-ethnic minority participants were equally likely to have exposures to racial microaggressions. *Ann* and *Jade* heard racial microaggressions from their friends. These overheard, second-hand stories did not directly influence their biases; however, they led to negative impressions of the race and ethnic groups. Nevertheless, *Ann* and *Jade* did not state their biases toward those ethnic groups.

In a similar vein, *Jasmine's* case was parents' input. However, she was not influenced; rather, she wanted to experience Micronesians and African Americans and conclude for herself. *Jasmine* had not experienced the ethnic group as her parents had, and she concluded that her bias did not form from her parents' input. Sources of biases were different. Experiences could layer new sources over the original one. This process made students examine their biases more deeply and led to their revelation.

### **Growth and Transformation through a Multicultural Education Class**

During the interviews, I perceived that the participants had improved and changed their biased perceptions but to different degrees. *Ann, Bill, Cindy, Dana, Hana, Kai, and Kalani* used

the wording *open-mindedness* to discuss their growth and future applications. But what open-minded attitudes are they referring to?

As explained in Chapter 2, Gordon Allport (1897-1963), a pioneer in studying people's personalities, prejudice, and discrimination, explained that prejudice can be explained by people's personalities (Allport, 1954). Based on his theory, Ekehammar and Akrami (2003) used *a big five personality factor* scale to explore people's prejudiced relations. They found that "the more open and agreeable the person is, the less generalized and specific prejudice does he or she display" (p. 455). If people are willing to be open-minded, their personality can be changed by their desire or willingness. Johnson and Johnson (2002) said, "Expansiveness and openness mean that anyone who is willing can find an entry point" to their multicultural issues and concerns, which includes their biased perceptions (p. 266). For example, *Tara* was willing to understand Muslim culture and the practice that women wear *hijabs* and noted that her openness helped reduce her biases toward the group. Likewise, *Hana* disclosed that she feared Caucasian males from the mainland, but she wanted to overcome her biases by exposing herself to more diverse people in the future. *Hana's* willingness to face up to her biases is courageous since she feared working with Caucasian males. In addition, *Tara's* willingness to be open-minded to understand the group practice could be classified as a positive venture.

The factor scale mentioned above is one of the most popular frameworks for measuring people's personalities, especially in Europe (Ekehammar & Akrami, 2003; Simha & Parboteeah, 2019). Another study using the same instrument found that "three personality variables [conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to experience] are more relevant to ethical outcomes" (Simha & Parboteeah, 2019, p. 453). However, Simha and Parboteeah (2019) found that individuals with high openness to new experiences are not always associated with ethical

behaviors. The researchers inferred from the literature that creativity could be connected to seeking out risky ventures, which did not correlate with unethical activity in their study; therefore, the study did not support the connection between openness and experience. In other words, *experience* could refer to exploring new ideas or methods; therefore, people's openness and their new experiences were not always positively linked in their study because not many participants ventured to share their new experiences.

*Kai* explained his open-minded attitude as having more openness toward tourists or Caucasians. He changed his mindset gradually after experiencing living in California and having a Caucasian girlfriend. *Bill* realized that while he was learning in the multicultural education course, he had perceived his openness to acceptance of peers and other people. Further, *Ann* pointed out that many of her classmates in the multicultural education class noted that they were all open-minded and accepting overall; however, she questioned whether she could do something more. Open-mindedness and accepting others are important keys, but at the same time, because people tend to use the action terms widely and easily, they can become general steps. Therefore, *Ann* may have questioned whether being open-minded would be enough to overcome biases or change situations.

Similarly, *Dana* said that she has been open-minded since she was young by being exposed to multicultural individuals. I inferred that her open-minded attitude was accepting of different people. A study by Hourigan, Leavy, and Carroll (2016) about attitudes toward mathematics lessons found that an *open-mind* attitude starts from a blank and clear mind with no pre-existing attitudes toward the subject. When the participants in this study noted about being open-minded to race and ethnicity issues, they were referring to the group that they had been biased against. Hourigan et al. (2016) concluded that negatively prejudiced, or prejudging minds



damage open-mindedness. If so, how can the participants who had negative biases become open-minded? The participants had negative racial and ethnic biases; however, they had re-examined their perceptions and had strived to improve them.

In addition, *Ann* explained that in her future classroom, she did not want any of her students to ever feel out of place, unaccepted, or unloved. Although she was unaware of racial and ethnic biases, she had a general picture of her ideal classroom. She intended to be inclusive; however, some scholars critique the early stage of multicultural education concepts as being mere cultural recognition and pluralism and avoidance of discussing racism and social class differences (May, 2009; Ramsey et al., 2003).

The participants, who had been unaware of their own racial and ethnic biases, either hesitated to reveal, opted not to reveal, or did not recognize their own behaviors. However, they noted that discussions and interactions in the multicultural education class helped them think more and more deeply about racial and ethnic biases that related to multicultural issues. This step could be the initial step and crucial for their progress. Similar to *Cindy's* uncomfortable experience in class group discussions, working with diverse people and students can create disagreement or other conflicts. However, an important key is to interact and discuss the bias-related issues even though they are sensitive topics (Brantmeier, 2011; Ravitch, 2014). When students can acknowledge their biases and consciously work on them, it is the first step to changing their stance (Johnson & Johnson, 2002; Moule, 2009). As for a feasible process, each student's and teacher's evolution and transformation is a meaningful approach and treatment for racial biases that damage human relations and continue racial violence.

## Implications of Racial and Ethnic Biases in Hawai‘i’s Contexts

Many researchers and scholars from different fields and disciplines have studied people’s biases and prejudices for nearly a century. For example, in Hawai‘i, some scholars examined pre-service teacher students’ views, attitudes, and experiences related to their biases (Halagao, 2006; Wyatt, 2017), while others investigated racial discourses and biases (Grace et al., 2001; Talmy, 2010; Rohrer, 2008). Levinson et al. (2015) conducted a study regarding implicit biases in different races in Hawai‘i’s contexts. These studies are important because people’s bias attributes are connected to their unique, diverse elements and surroundings; however, the numbers of studies in Hawai‘i are limited.

People from Hawai‘i have their own local identity, which developed from a mixture of immigrant cultures and identities over generations of interracial marriage (Miyares, 2008). Hawai‘i’s local culture can be seen as cultural pluralism. However, local culture may create some confusion. People “being local or becoming local is a rational identity choice, for it makes one an insider in the majority culture” in Hawai‘i (Miyares, 2008, p. 530). However, can anyone become *local* if they have lived in a location for more than decades? *Local* can also be a racial and ethnic category in Hawai‘i, which implies that Caucasians are usually not considered *local* even if they grow up in Hawai‘i.

The term *local* first appeared in 1931 during Thalia Massie’s trial to distinguish people in Hawai‘i from those in the U.S. mainland (Miyares, 2008; Yamamoto, 1979). The usage changed during World War II; *local* referred to people in Hawai‘i in the military, distinguished from those from the mainland (Miyares, 2008). During the middle of the 1960s, people carried conflicting feelings “They want[ed] to resist the trend towards total Americanization, and yet the obvious alternative to total Americanization that they perceive[d], a return to traditional ethnic

communities, [was] not viable in a rapidly evolving Hawaiian society” (Yamamoto, 1979, p.115).

The initial definition of *local* could have changed based on social circumstances. People may have intentionally not passed the initial meaning on to current generations. Trask (2000) stated, “Calling themselves *local*, the children of Asian settlers greatly outnumber us [Native Hawaiians]. They claim Hawai‘i as their own, denying indigenous history, their long collaboration in our continued dispossession” (p. 1). Although it is understandable from the Native Hawaiian point of view, the word *local* does not contain any denial of indigenous history. This misconception may lead to the stigmatization of the group called *local* from the Native Hawaiian point of view.

“Local Asians also know, as we do, that they are not First Nations people. But ideologically, Asians cannot abide categorization with *haole*” (Trask, 2000, p. 6). Local Asians clearly distinguish themselves from Natives and *haoles*. As noted earlier, *haoles* refer to “originally, all foreigners, now only white people” in Hawai‘i (Trask, 2000, p. 21). However, based on Yamamoto’s (1979) explanation, it may signify Caucasians from the mainland, which is a similar distinction between people from Hawai‘i and the mainland. If this notion is valid today, what can we call Caucasians who have lived in Hawai‘i for generations?

Another scholar explained that newcomers who are from the U.S. mainland, or Asians who have assimilated into Hawaiian society are called *malehini*; “Many *malehini* learn the behaviors of more than one group, thus developing a flexible ethnic identity constructed such that one can be an insider in more than one group” (Miyares, 2008, p 521). *Malehini* developed as a non-essentialized compound ethnic identity based on mobility and assimilating into society.

As for the complexity of grouping and labeling citizens in Hawai‘i, how can we classify newcomers? How can we call Caucasians’ descendants who have lived in Hawai‘i as long as their Asian counterparts from the plantation era: *haole*, *local*, or *malehini*? These labels create further confusion, struggles, and stigma and may create people’s biases and lead to further conflicts among people in Hawai‘i.

## **Reverse Racism**

Caucasians are a mainstream race in most areas of America but not in Hawai‘i. Reverse racism may occur and threaten the race. For example, reverse racism gained public attention during the trial of George Zimmerman for the murder of Trayvon Martin (Bax, 2018). Although Zimmerman was not Caucasian, his complexion was described as Caucasian by the media. During the trial, Martin was described as being a reverse-racist, and Zimmerman showed his victimhood; he justified the shooting, which is known as reverse racism.

A traditional dictionary defined reverse racism as “intolerance or prejudice directed at members of historically dominant racial groups” (Dictionary.com, n.d.). Although race and ethnicity are not noted, the concept appears to include Caucasians: “Many Americans—including some people of color—staunchly believe in the existence of reverse racism, or racism against whites” (Bax, 2018, p. 117).

In a study of students’ transformative learning process in a multicultural education class, Ukpokodu (2009) explained that two students were discouraged from reading the assigned book because the first three chapters “made them feel guilty and ashamed of being White” (p. 7). I found similar voices in the pilot study. For example, a Caucasian participant noted, “People automatically assumed I would be another rude white person” (Anonymous pilot study survey,

February 11, 2020). Another Caucasian female disclosed that “because I am white, they assume I am racist” (Anonymous pilot study survey, February 11, 2020).

In Hawai‘i, the Caucasian population has not been the largest proportion; however, Rohrer (2006) wrote, “One of the dominant contemporary productions of *haole* (white people, whiteness) is that of a victim, unfairly discriminated against by state policies that benefit Native Hawaiians (Kanaka Maoli) and by a local culture characterized as *anti-haole*” (p.1). It is the belief that there is “reverse racism.” This example is for Caucasians in Hawai‘i; however, based on the dictionary definition of reverse racism, any dominant and non-dominant racial and ethnic groups may become victims or assailants in different ingroup and outgroup circumstances.

The finding indicated a pattern of privilege and racial and ethnic biases; however, it suggests that teachers and students should be mindful and not create racism toward racial groups and Caucasians in Hawai‘i. Reverse racism has become a critical issue (Moxley-Rouse, 2019). Rohrer (2008) pointed out in a discussion between *haoles* and *locals* that “individual *haoles* feel emboldened to make sweeping generalizations about their mistreatment and their lack of safety”(p. 1117). Caucasians in Hawai‘i face extensive racial discourse and feel their poor racial safety level in Hawai‘i. Therefore, their voices may be an example of reverse racism. In addition, their voices could have been attributed to Massie’s case in 1931, which was about the two discourses between Caucasians and *locals* regarding racial conflicts and politics in Hawai‘i. This case signifies two dimensions of racial violence Caucasians against *locals* and vice versa.

### **Contributions to Racial and Ethnic Biases in Hawai‘i’s Contexts**

The findings of this dissertation contributed new evidence to support the existing literature on Hawai‘i. Since the research took place in the most racially and ethnically diverse state nationwide, Hawai‘i (U.S. Census, 2022b), participants’ experiences and stories consisted

of distinctive insider and outsider positionalities and identities associated with social discourses and history. For example, multiracial local students who were born and raised in Hawai‘i were strongly attached to Hawai‘i and sustained the Hawai‘i culture, nature, and people, which had developed from Hawai‘i’s colonial history and were influenced by their unique local identities and positionalities. Hawai‘i’s *local* identity was formed by its socio-cultural context back in the 1930s and has changed from the historical context and become a new socially, culturally, and historically constructed identity (Miyares, 2008; Yamamoto, 1979). However, at the same time, from the Native Hawaiian’s point of view, *locals* in Hawai‘i are non-natives who want to be Americans but distinguished from the mainlanders (Trask, 2000). Since local identities that influence people’s biases may change based on the different times and generations, the significant contribution is that the research findings can update students’ racial biases in the Hawai‘i’s context.

### **Implications of Racial and Ethnic Implicit Biases**

Recent research regarding people’s biases has noted people’s implicit biases. Implicit bias is problematic because it negatively impacts diverse groups of students in school (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005; Warikoo et al., 2016). The findings in this study showed that all participants faced challenges confronting their biased perceptions to some extent during their improvement processes. The findings implied that hesitation is a hopeful indicator for revealing their perceptions and further facts. At the same time, students’ hesitation to discuss racial and ethnic matters and disclose their biases indicates that they are at one stage of progress. Moule (2009) explained, “Acknowledging biases often open doors for learning and allows people to consciously work for harmony in classrooms and communities” (p. 322). Therefore, students’

recognizing the importance of individual awareness and acknowledgment may signify a reduction in their own biases and others.

Studying racial and ethnic biases, especially implicit biases, has become crucial because of the brutal crimes by the police forces in recent years. Implicit biases are challenging to identify and negatively impact a classroom and schools (Jacoby-Senghor et al., 2016). For example, teachers and students in an implicit bias construct endorse affirmative action, but they behave adversely, either intentionally or unintentionally (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005; Haney-Lopez, 2007). Moreover, unconscious biases are problematic because they “lead to intentional racism, the racism that is usually invisible even and especially to those who perpetuate it” (Moule, 2009, p. 321).

Even though teachers understand that labeling students by their racial component tends to create conflicts, they may still discriminate, which results in the students’ struggles. Most participants’ goals were to become educators or schoolteachers. When teachers have implicit biases, it will be challenging to work with diverse children unless they are aware of and acknowledge their biases. *Kalani* and *Hana* were already aware of this issue. Therefore, they wanted to work on their biases and create a safe classroom for future schoolchildren and students.

Once more, implicit biases are difficult to measure because people are unaware of them. The Harvard IAT, has been widely used to identify people’s racial biases and prejudicial perceptions (Amodio & Devine, 2006; Hillard, 2020). The instrument measures response latency to examine people’s automatic responses: faster responses are associated with a stronger implicit measure toward the testing categories and vice versa (Hillard, 2020). It is important to show an

accurate measurement of biases. Otherwise, it will create further stereotypes, stigmatization, and discrimination.

Although the IAT has been used widely, some scholars have pointed out the limitations as producing only positive and negative associations between two racial groups' pictures (Warikoo et al., 2016). Another researcher explained that the IAT has low reliability, less consistent results over time when the same person is tested twice (Hillard, 2020). *Hana* also pointed out that her IAT test results did not match her real-life experience. For example, her results showed that she preferred light-skinned people, but she said her friends, including her boyfriend, are all dark-skinned. *Hana* was startled by the results because they could reveal an implicit bias that she was not aware of, but she understood and accepted the results as her implicit bias.

Measuring implicit biases is complex. An explicit bias in many situations can be workable because people recognize it and may be able to control themselves and not act out: "Explicit measures of prejudice and stereotyping may be better predictors of behavior" (Amodio & Devine, 2006, p. 660). However, this case is only for people willing to disclose their biased perceptions and desire to overcome or reduce their biases. Although an individual may control a conscious bias, some people may hide their biases and behave unfavorably. This situation is more complicated and their biases cannot be labeled as explicit or implicit in aversive form. Regardless, either type of bias may lead to tensions between different racial and ethnic groups (Bennett, 2007; Jacoby-Senhor et al., 2016).

The significant implication is that students' biases are complex, and the characteristics partially resemble those of implicit biases even by the explicit measures used to examine them. This finding highlighted Fazio and Olson's (2003) stance and updated it.



## **Implications, Recommendation, and Contribution to Theory and Practice**

The topics of biases and prejudice have had central roles in a multicultural society because, as noted in the previous chapters, overcoming or lessening people's biases can alleviate tense situations. However, various researchers have pointed out a gap between multicultural education and its practice. For example, multicultural curricula and programs have endorsed transformative approaches, which have the potential to bring authentic changes by critical examination; however, implementation of these approaches has been slow (Johnson & Johnson, 2002, Ramsey et al., 2003). In teacher education, multicultural education highlights practices for improving students' educational achievement and intergroup relations (Jacoby-Senghor et al., 2016; Zirkel, 2008). However, there was not enough empirical evidence that these practices do improve students' achievement (Zirkel, 2008). Moreover, Johnson and Johnson (2002) pointed out that many suggestions for multicultural programs and curriculum evaluation have been provided throughout multicultural research; however, "relatively little research has been done of the effectiveness of various models" (p. 235).

As noted in Chapter 2, various scholars have developed multicultural education approaches to support its practice: *Relevant education*, *culturally responsible learning*, *equity pedagogy*, and *student-centered pedagogy*. These effective approaches focus on students discussing and "confronting issues of diversity, inequality, and social justice" (Ravitch, 2014, p. 6) to create safe learning spaces. However, scholars and teachers have explained the shortcomings: merely celebrating diversity and discussing ethnic and cultural contents (Halagao, 2006; Hoffman, 1995). Harris (2009) argued that multiculturalism recognizes and endorses cultural diversity, "but [it] can work against cultural mixing up or the fundamental hybridity that diversity may produce, by instead attempting to consolidate difference" (p.190). Banks (2007)

explained that a multicultural curriculum is a dynamic process, which indicates that there are no manual-like implementation steps. This is understandable because students have different characteristics, learning styles, and backgrounds.

Based on the dissertation findings, one of the major implications for theory and practice is that having a deeper examination of oneself and one's own biases increases a student's awareness, which may lead to further examination. However, having a deeper examination can be challenging because most people think they are less biased than others (Pronin et al., 2002). After all, "individuals are reluctant to examine their personal and professional values and actions for bias" (Pang, 2013, p. 53). Therefore, I recommend that teachers consider having a one-on-one dialogue with a student to listen to his or her bias-related stories and perceptions. This finding implies that such conversations may be an effective approach to multicultural educational practice.

During the interviews, some participants were unsure about their biases. At the same time, others recognized their biases and their background reasons to explain the importance of overcoming biases and ideas for their future applications. These findings imply that using interviews to study biases and close interaction can help students recognize the importance of multicultural education classes and principles. In addition, in the one-on-one dialogue approach, it may take some time for students to relate their perceptions. Also, from a teacher's perspective, this method is time-consuming for a large classroom; however, it can be part of an education that potentially helps students with their bias awareness and progress, which helps reduce bullying and other conflicts.

Ukpokodu (2009) noted the importance of transformative learning in a multicultural education course. Her study found that reflection, narrative, and autobiographical representation

were valid and “powerful ways of knowing and improving self and practice” (p.6). If students recognize their biases, they can examine the deeper roots and change. Multicultural education seeks to “help individuals gain greater self-understanding by viewing themselves from the perspectives of other cultures” (Banks, 2007, p. 2). Zirkel (2008) explained, "Multicultural educational practice has a benefit for the academic outcomes of all students, not just students of color” (p. 1147). The findings suggest to educators, teachers, and students to be open to themselves and others to examine their biases profoundly and to envision their future goals as transformations for their personal and professional lives.

A specific recommendation for the theory is that one of the dimensions of multicultural education, prejudice reduction, refers to helping students “develop positive attitudes about different groups” (Banks, 1994, p.5). Banks (2007) recommended that future multicultural curricula be implemented with teaching strategies that are “*involving, interacting, personalized, and cooperative*” (Italics in original, p. 118). I recognized that all four elements are important and needed; however, these strategies can not only be for teaching practice. Therefore, I recommend that teachers emphasize these four elements to connect to their biased perceptions and examine the deeper meanings. Based on the dissertation findings, self-awareness is one of the significant keys to undergraduate students’ bias learning process. One of Banks’s strategies, *personalized*, perhaps overlap with prejudice reduction; however, it is worthwhile to include details in the item. Being *personalized* indicates that teachers and students continually examine their identities and intersectionality because identities and perceptions are malleable. Also, more importantly, they need to reflect on themselves and understand themselves on a deeper level.

The dissertation findings showed that many participants recognized their changes in reducing their biases; however, they had different levels of progress. Some had subtle changes, whereas others had changed their perceptions throughout the years. Moreover, the findings demonstrated a pattern that students who were racially privileged from the mainland denied their racial and ethnic biases. The conclusion cannot merely be that they have implicit biases. Denial but measurement by an explicit measure may not be conclusive as to their bias types (Fazio & Olson, 2003). Furthermore, these two participants had lived in Hawai'i only about eight months. This fact may be another indicator that people's acculturation affects their bias awareness and disclosure. Therefore, I recommend that future researchers investigate the characteristics of students' awareness and acknowledged biases.

The findings of studies that have examined ingroup and outgroup relations in Hawai'i's contexts (Miyares, 2008; Rohrer, 2008) have suggested that students' racial and ethnic biases can explain these relations. In detail, the empirical findings explained that racial and ethnic biases of multiethnic students from Hawai'i, were connected to ingroup and outgroup relations and can also be explained by other elements, such as multicultural variables: their intersectionality, identities, and experiences. The empirical data findings contribute to the multicultural educational practice and theoretical approach.

### **Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research**

One of the limitations in this research was the procedure for recruiting participants. Students and professors were always supportive and welcoming when I conducted my pilot study. I supposed that people understand that biases are important topics and need to be worked with urgently because much racial violence has been seen throughout the nation, especially in recent years. Unlike my positive anticipation from the pilot study experiences, I learned that not every

professor in the field is comfortable having my recruitment in the classroom. One positive thing was that one of the six professors was extremely supportive, resulting in my ability to complete my dissertation. For future research, I should predict other scenarios and prepare differently. This limitation is also my reflection that can be used for future recommendations. In addition, this limitation itself may illustrate the challenges of multicultural education and where it is in higher education.

Moreover, recruiting interview participants was challenging. I grasped that sending a mere email was less likely to capture participants' interests and support. Therefore, having an active interaction with potential participants and instructors is recommended. However, as noted, the reality is that only one of the six professors allowed me to attend the class to announce and explain my study. For future data collection, expanding the target demographics to any undergraduate students in education courses would be a solution since other courses also learn about and discuss social injustice and race and ethnic issues. Studying graduate students' biased perceptions would also provide more in-depth data. The other suggestion is to prepare a small reward, such as a gift card or monetary payment, which would have attracted more participants.

Another limitation is the interview duration and frequency. One 30-45-minute interview could be the maximum of the spare time volunteer participants have. However, if more students are willing to support the study in the future, I recommend conducting two interviews. The first interview should cover the five sub-questions, while the second interview would investigate more deeply by asking about the background stories of participants' racial biases.

Another limitation of the methods was the observation chart, which needed to be more simplified. Although five different observation factors were noted in the chart, I did not successfully write down all the factors during the interviews because I had to focus on their

speaking and interaction. I jotted down their facial expressions and pauses during the interview and followed their hesitations with the recorded data. At the same time, as a researcher, I must improve my interview skills by having more experience—particularly with students who deny racial biases. In *Tara*'s and *Ann*'s cases, they eventually shared some stories. However, with *Dana*, I was not successful in asking for more background information about whether she was biased against police males but not racially biased. Fortunately, *Dana* shared her term paper with me, and I understood the background of her bias and her future application. The recommendation for a similar study is to anticipate that participants may get very emotional.

Although I collected rich contextual data from the ten diverse students, ten students is a relatively small sample, but reasonable under COVID-19 restrictions. However, having more participants and diversity would validate the research more concretely. In the details, I gathered both males and females and people from the U.S. mainland and Hawai'i. However, there were no international participants. Comparing Asians and Asian Americans would be interesting because their surrounding cultures are different. In addition, while seven monoracial and three multiracial students participated, with a racially diverse profile, I could not find any African American, Mexican, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander interview participants. These racial groups were less populated than other groups in Hawai'i. For example, in the Fall of 2020, in the university system, Latinos and African Americans were only two percent each of the enrollment. In contrast, Asians were 36.9 %, and Caucasians were 25.7 %. In this case, it would be worthwhile to conduct the research in areas where different ethnic groups reside.

Although the research methodology had a few shortcomings, distributing the questionnaire before the interviews was successful, which and made the interviews move smoothly. However, the survey was unsuccessful in recruiting interview participants—fewer

than half of the questionnaire participants participated in the interviews. Therefore, I recommend keeping the questionnaire, but it can be a part of an interview procedure as a pre-interview questionnaire instead of being used as a separate tool for seeking interview participants.

### **Reflection**

I learned various lessons throughout the dissertation process. First, I recognized that setting up solid research questions is most important because the research methodology and all other aspects align with them. I also learned that selecting a clear, logical, and feasible methodology helps the research to proceed smoothly. Based on the committee's recommendations and feedback, I took the time to reexamine and rewrite my research questions and explored the methodology thoroughly. For example, the participants were intentionally selected as students who had taken or were taking the multicultural education course because they learned about multicultural issues, including various biases and social injustice. Therefore, the survey and interview processes were a continuation of discussing issues learned in the course. As a result, the narratives portrayed the rich and complex contents of students' stories, successfully exploring a deeper examination of the topics as the data analysis processes moved without difficulty.

Secondly, as noted in the previous section, it is crucial for me to improve my interview skills. *Dana* was emotional and cried during the interview, which made me hesitate to ask further. I underestimated how firmly some students would deny their racial and ethnic biases. I expected students who were taking a multicultural education class to understand various race and ethnic issues and have a chance to examine their own biases. I will use these experiences to prepare and improve my interview skills for future research.

Finally, I understand the vigorous and multifaceted characteristics of explicit and implicit biases more comprehensively since investigating students' biases. In particular, the process of collecting data and analyzing it helped me be aware of the importance of each. I also recognized that racial and ethnic biases are intertwined with various elements: identities and intersectionality, positionalities, social connection, and family and friend interconnections. This could be why Allport (1954) explained that bias is a part of people's personalities because their biased perceptions and the roots, as well as how biases evolve, further differ from one another, just like people's personalities. However, biases may not simply be characterized only by one's personality.

### **Conclusion**

Living in a multicultural, mobile society and world, people inevitably live with different racial and ethnic groups. They belong to multiple groups, such as family, friends, school, work, church, or social clubs, and connect with others. Likewise, when students interact with other racial and ethnic groups in school, disagreements, misunderstandings, misjudgments, and other conflicts may occur. Extreme cases may lead to bullying and violence. These incidents may be derived from people's biased perceptions.

Throughout the dissertation process, it was implied that students' racial and ethnic biases are sensitive topics and complex. Theoretically, if all were willing to know or understand other students and group differences and openly accept others, their prejudicial perceptions and beliefs would change. Consequently, they could focus on their lessons, and the conflicts would decrease. This scenario is an ideal process conceptually. But unfortunately, students may conceal or not recognize their biases, and periodically behave negatively toward other groups. "This dilemma [aversive racism] reflects the tension between central principles of equality and fairness in the



society and the daily operation of systematic prejudice and discrimination, at an individual and societal level, which produces racial inequality and reinforces racial disparities” (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005, p. 617).

### **Next Steps for Students and Teachers in Multicultural Education**

When we question and evaluate whether the evidence of biases is rational, a common trajectory is that individuals can change from “potentially equally valid opinions toward the stance of evaluativism, in which competing knowledge claims can be adjudicated and supported with evidence” epistemologically (Hofer & Sinatra, 2010, p. 117). If we are aware of our racial biases, we can change positively, negatively, or in both directions interchangeably.

Banks (2017) explained the importance of becoming transformative citizens. People “take actions to actualize values and moral principles that transcend the nation states and national boundaries, such as the values that are articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights” (p. 369). Human rights, including social justice, are fundamental human living principles. Various studies have explained that people’s racial and ethnic biases fuel racial conflicts and violence (Gollnick & Chinn, 2013; Park, 2017); therefore, we as people should attempt to know ourselves and not be afraid of our further transformations and changes.

The findings indicated some hints for micro-level steps to resolving personal biases. Individual consciousness sounds simple and general but could be challenging based on people’s willingness to lessen their biases. Sartre (2004) explained the idea of an object in consciousness:

My current idea of a chair refers only externally to an existing chair. It is not the chair in the external world, the chair that I perceived earlier. . . . To have an idea of [a] chair is to have a chair in consciousness. If the object must have a

determinate quality and quantity, the idea must also possess this determination.

(p.6)

People's biases are not objects but psychological entities. Some recognize their biases and the roots, while others do not. "Phenomena of consciousness, however, do not simply arise, for they are phenomena of which we are conscious" (Nishida, 1990, p. 98). Therefore, if we are not willing to examine ourselves, we will essentially stay in the same place, which will not reduce racial conflicts.

As teachers and students, we suppose that we want to make our classrooms and societies have fewer racial and ethnic conflicts and inhumane incidents. We can confront and re-examine our reflective consciousness: "To determine the characteristics of the image as image, it is necessary to turn to a new act of consciousness: it is necessary to reflect" (Sartre, 2004, p. 5). Sartre's explanation of consciousness and image is a complex idea that can be interpreted as meaning that consciousness and image are separate but strongly tied to our minds, wills, and existence. We must know ourselves for the deeper meanings of our existence, which are associated with our consciousness, to reduce our biases and improve situations for our bright future.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### *Survey Questionnaire*

##### Understanding Our Perceptions and Biases of Self and Others

Perception has often been described as a process of observing and interpreting information from our environment. With this short survey, I am trying to understand the range of adult students' perceptions about interacting with individuals of diverse backgrounds, values/beliefs, and physical appearance in multicultural, postsecondary educational settings. Please take a few minutes to answer the questions below. Your responses are important for understanding different perceptions that will ultimately help improve classroom interactions among diverse students and also teachers. The survey is confidential and will be used anonymously.

Please answer the questions shown below.

1. How would you describe your major racial and ethnic misconceptions or prejudged beliefs (positive or negative), if you have any?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What do you believe are the reasons for any such misconceptions or biases you have?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. How did you feel when you encountered any racial and ethnic biases toward you?

Finally, a few background questions to help us classify your answers. Please circle the MOST applicable for you or write your answer in the blank.

- ? **Gender:** Male, Female, Other description\_\_\_\_\_, Decline to state.
- ? **Geographic Origin:** Mainland U.S. \_\_\_\_\_ Hawaii\_\_\_\_\_ International  
\_\_\_\_\_ (please specify where you are from)
- ? **Class level:** Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, Other
- ? **Age:** Please specify your age if you don't mind \_\_\_\_\_
- ? **Ethnicity:** How do you identify yourself? \_\_\_\_\_
- ? **Major:** \_\_\_\_\_
- ? **First Language you speak:** \_\_\_\_\_

Would you participate in a further interview for this study? The interview will take approximately 30 to 45 minutes at your convenience (Please circle one response).

Yes      No

If you answered, "Yes", please write your name and email address

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Thank you so much for your participation.



I appreciate your time in answering all these questions.

## Appendix B

### *Interview Questions*

1. How long have you been in Hawaii? Or where were you born and raised? Or where are you from? (to build rapport and to know participants' background)

Could you tell me more about your

- Family and friends
- Interests & hobbies

2. Racial and ethnic bias is a complex matter, and sometimes it is hard to disclose. We can also explain biases as misconceptions or misjudged beliefs towards any racial or ethnic group. If you have any experiences, could you share your story with me? (**awareness & roots**)

- a. When did you realize that you have misconceptions (biases) towards the group?
- b. Or when someone was reacting to you in a biased manner?

3. How did you feel about your misconceptions (biases)? (**growth**)

- a. How would you like to deal with your biases?

4. How would you perceive your change or shift in your racial or ethnic biases? (**growth or change**)

- a. Any influential events, people, a class, an instructor, or other reasons for changes in your perceptions or behaviors?
- b. How did you feel about it?
- c.

5. What was the importance of your change or growth?

6. How would you apply your experiences related to your personal biases to your future learning and life beyond a Multicultural Education course? (**Application**)



## Appendix C

### *Survey and Interview Consent*



#### **University of Hawai'i Consent to Participate in a Research Project Minako McCarthy, Investigator**

*Project Title: Perception of Self and Others--- A Study of College of Education Undergraduate students' Racial and Ethnic Biases in Multicultural Education Classrooms in Hawai'i*

Aloha! My name is Minako McCarthy. You are invited to take part in a research study. I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in the Department of Educational Foundations. As part of the requirements for earning my graduate degree, I am doing a research project.

#### ***What am I being asked to do?***

If you participate in this project, you will be asked to fill out a survey.

#### ***Taking part in this study is your choice.***

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any time. If you stop being in the study, there will be no penalty or loss to you.

#### ***Why is this study being done?***

The purpose of my project is to explore college students' racial and ethnic biases and their perceptions in the Multicultural Education course at UHM. I am asking you to participate because you enroll in the multicultural education course.

#### ***What will happen if I decide to take part in this study?***

The survey will consist of three open-ended questions. It will take 10 to 15 minutes. The survey questions will include questions like, "*How would you describe your major racial and ethnic misconceptions or prejudged beliefs (positive or negative) if you have?*" The survey is accessed on a website to which I will provide you a link.

#### ***What are the risks and benefits of taking part in this study?***

I believe there is little risk to you for participating in this research project. You may become stressed or uncomfortable answering any of the survey questions. If you do become stressed or uncomfortable, you can skip the question or take a break. You can also stop taking the survey or you can withdraw from the project altogether.

There will be no direct benefit to you for participating in this survey. The results of this project may help improve multicultural education practices to benefit future students and educators.

***Confidentiality and Privacy:***

I will not ask you for any personal information, such as your name or address. Please do not include any personal information in your survey responses. I will keep all study data secure in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office/encrypted on a password-protected computer. Only my University of Hawai'i advisor and I will have access to the information. Other agencies that have legal permission have the right to review research records. The University of Hawai'i Human Studies Program has the right to review research records for this study.

***Compensation:***

There is no compensation for this this research project.

***Future Research Studies:***

Identifiers will be removed from your identifiable private information, the data may be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies, and we will not seek further approval from you for these future studies.

***Questions:***

If you have any questions about this study, please call or email me, at [808-561-4040 & minako@hawaii.edu]. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Xu Di, at [808-956-0480 & xudi@hawaii.edu]. You may contact the UH Human Studies Program at 808.956.5007 or uhirb@hawaii.edu to discuss problems, concerns, and questions, obtain information, or offer input with an informed individual who is unaffiliated with the specific research protocol. Please visit <http://go.hawaii.edu/jRd> for more information on your rights as a research participant.

***To Access the Survey:***

Please go to the following web page: (<https://forms.gle/A16xtVX3U3FM9aSUA>). You should find a link and instructions for completing the survey. Going to the first section of the survey implies your consent to participate in this study.

Please print or save a copy of this page for your reference.

Mahalo!

## Appendix D

### *IRB Research Approval Letter*



UNIVERSITY  
of HAWAII®  
MĀNOA

Office of Research Compliance  
Human Studies Program

**DATE:** April 21, 2021  
**TO:** Di, Xu, PhD, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Educational Foundations  
McCarthy, Minako, MEd, Educational Foundations, University of Hawaii at Manoa  
**FROM:** Rivera, Victoria, Dir, Ofc of Rsch Compliance, Social&Behav Exempt  
**PROTOCOL TITLE:** PERCEPTION OF SELF AND OTHERS --- A STUDY OF COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS ' RACIAL AND ETHNIC BIASES IN MULTICULTURAL  
EDUCATION CLASSROOMS IN HAWAII  
**FUNDING SOURCE:** None  
**PROTOCOL NUMBER:** 2021-00277  
**APPROVAL DATE:** April 21, 2021

#### NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

This letter is your record of the Human Studies Program approval of this study as exempt.

On April 21, 2021, the University of Hawaii (UH) Human Studies Program approved this study as exempt from federal regulations pertaining to the protection of human research participants. The authority for the exemption applicable to your study is documented in the Code of Federal Regulations at 45 CFR 46.104(d) 1, 2.

Exempt studies are subject to the ethical principles articulated in The Belmont Report, found at the OHRP Website [www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.html](http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.html).

Exempt studies do not require regular continuing review by the Human Studies Program. However, if you propose to modify your study, you must receive approval from the Human Studies Program prior to implementing any changes. You can submit your proposed changes via the UH eProtocol application. The Human Studies Program may review the exempt status at that time and request an application for approval as non-exempt research.

In order to protect the confidentiality of research participants, we encourage you to destroy private information which can be linked to the identities of individuals as soon as it is reasonable to do so. Signed consent forms, as applicable to your study, should be maintained for at least the duration of your project.

This approval does not expire. However, please notify the Human Studies Program when your study is complete. Upon notification, we will close our files pertaining to your study.

If you have any questions relating to the protection of human research participants, please contact the Human Studies Program by phone at 956-5007 or email [uhirb@hawaii.edu](mailto:uhirb@hawaii.edu). We wish you success in carrying out your research project.

## Appendix E

### *Observation Chart*

	facial expressions	number of pauses	any movements	tones	hesitations
Q1					
Q2					
Q3					
Q4					
Q5					
Notes					