HBCUs: The blueprint for success in higher education

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Abstract

There has been an increase over the years in turnover when it comes to Presidents and Chancellors at Universities in the United States. HBCUs in the U.S. are experiencing many issues dealing with state mandates, unfair and declining funding from both the state and federal level, shifts in pedagogical environment, increased accountability and assessment measures, small endowment support, and increased competition (Duderstadt & Womack, 2003; Gasman, 2013; Hirsch & Weber, 2002; Keller, 1983). To remain operational, a focus on effective leadership needs to happen, specifically in the way these leaders communicate across different organizational structures. This thesis used a quantitative approach to understand how the historic missions, structure, and leadership proficiencies of HBCUs shaped member engagement and communication within the institution. This research examined the effects structurational divergence, immediate behaviors, and organizational identity have on the overall organizational culture and perceived immediacy with supervisors (executive leadership) at HBCUs.

Acknowledgments

Who would have ever thought that a black kid from Winston-Salem, North Carolina would travel the world in pursuit of doctoral degree? What started off as a longshot has now developed into a reality thanks to the unwavering support of my village. Without the guidance and encouragement from various friends, family members, mentors, and classmates, I could have easily become another statistic. This journey has tested me in ways that I could have never imagined, but I'm thankful for it all.

I started this journey during the height of one of the most uncertain times in recent history, the COVID-19 pandemic. Enrolling in a doctoral program while the world shut down created feelings of isolation and uncertainty that only increased as I thought about my academic pursuits. There were countless days of stress coupled with thoughts of whether I had the ability to complete such a daunting task. However, through every dark moment, there were glimmers of light in the form of people who never stopped pouring into my cup.

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Article II: Rocker, K., Croucher, S., Kelly, S. (2025). Organizational culture, identification, structurational divergence, perceived immediacy, and organizational citizenship behaviors of HBCU students. *Howard Journal of Communications*. (revise and resubmit)

Article III: Rocker, K., Kelly, S., Croucher, S. (2025). An exploration of HBCU faculty and staff organizational identification and culture. *Communication Reports*. (Under review)

Chapter One Introduction

1.1 The Background of the Study

This research explored how organizational culture, identity, and other organizational communication practices operated within Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). In a time where the overall climate of higher education is changing, I sought to explore the relationship between current executive leadership and their ability to engage in practices that embody traditional missions set forth by their organization. This relationship provided insight on the organizational experiences of faculty, staff, and students to better understand how they interpret and engage with institutional structures, HBCU missions, and their leadership figures. I anticipated these findings would offer practical insights for executive leadership by highlighting disconnects between leadership intentions and member perceptions. This would aid leadership in developing effective communication strategies that can be implemented across all organizational levels. In doing so, leadership could refine their approaches to communication with the intent of satisfying the growing needs and expectations of the HBCU community. Although executive leadership had an important role in managing the direction of their institution, this research argued that many of the outcomes seen at HBCUs were closely tied to deep-rooted cultural traditions and shared institutional identities. It focused on how the historic missions and structure of HBCUs shaped how faculty, staff, and students connected with, participated in, and communicated across the organization. HBCUs provide an important area of inquiry for higher education research due to their limited representation in existing scholarship. When looking at post-secondary research and literature, instances involving executive leadership at HBCUs have often been omitted when studying successful models of college and university leadership (Freeman & Gasman, 2014; Nichols, 2004). HBCUs have experienced many changes over the

years. With these changes, the overall climate and culture of these organizations have been negatively affected (Chenoweth, 1998; Drozdowski, 2005; Fields, 2001). This thesis discussed, identified, and suggested ways HBCUs could continue to operate in the future by focusing on relevant organizational aspects.

1.2 Personal Interest in This Study

As a former student and staff member at North Carolina A&T State University (Greensboro, NC), I have witnessed the "HBCU experience" from many different perspectives ranging from administration, university leadership, and scholarly work. Attending one of the largest HBCUs as an African American created a strong and unique sense of pride that could only be fostered at that type of institution. This pride grew not only from being surrounded by classmates and instructors who shared similar cultural experiences, but also from the university's commitment to promoting and uplifting Black excellence through mission and structuration. From required African American studies courses to my interactions with individuals from similar sociodemographic backgrounds, my experience at North Carolina A&T provided a sense of belonging that I have yet to encounter at a Predominately White Institution (PWI). I've found that, while Black culture may be selectively recognized at PWIs, it is deeply woven into the everyday experience at HBCUs. It is my belief that HBCUs play an important role for students like myself, who thrive in spaces where their cultural roots are both shared and celebrated.

The National Center for Education Statistics (2021) classifies HBCUs as institutions that were founded prior to 1964 with the sole intent of educating Black Americans. During a time where Black Americans sought formal education, yet was denied access to already established PWIs, HBCUs provided a safe space for these individuals to pursue an education without the threat of racial biases (Bettez & Suggs, 2012). Although HBCUs were established originally for Black Americans, over the years they have remained inclusive, seeking to uphold their legacy as

minority-serving institutions while also serving individuals from various ethnic backgrounds (Nahal et al., 2015). Despite welcoming faculty, staff, and students from different ethnic and racial backgrounds, most HBCUs have remained primarily minority-serving institutions (Pew Research Center, 2024). While the inclusive and historical motivated nature of HBCUs remains fundamental to their identity, the effectiveness of upholding the foundational missions in which they were established relies heavily on the strength and capabilities of their executive leadership, mainly presidents and chancellors.

Having personally witnessed the impact HBCU presidents and chancellors had on their institutions, I sought to offer practical strategies that would benefit the long-term sustainability of HBCUs, as I felt that too often, initiatives are designed to gain favor within the Black community rather than to create lasting institutional progress. It's been common over the years to see executive leadership (Presidents and Chancellors) quit, resign, seek retirement, or even be terminated after short tenures. According to the American College President Study conducted by the American Council on Education (ACE), the average tenure of a college or university president was 6.5 years in 2016, 7 years in 2011 and 8.5 years in 2006 (ACE, 2017). This data supports the claim that executive leadership turnover in the U.S. has been steadily increasing over the years. Despite these instances, presidents remained as one of the top figures that could influence the culture and climate of their institutions (Bass & Avolio, 2000). Executive leadership must have the ability to propel their organization forward using effective strategy, management of resources, and alignment with university goals and missions. One of the common features of the HBCU experience throughout literature was having a supportive environment (Allen, 1992; Patton, 2011; Seifert et al., 2006). Fleming (1984) found HBCUs promoted greater development and interpersonal outcomes due to providing a supportive, encouraging, and

nurturing environment for African Americans. This work is heavily cited when looking at HBCUs and the unique experience that is received from attending one (Clayton et al., 2022; Gasman & Esters, 2024; Palmer & Young, 2010). Essentially, having a supportive environment is beneficial when implemented correctly over all organizational levels. The very existence of HBCUs is in jeopardy amid an apparent crisis involving many different organizational structures. Freeman and Gasman (2014) expressed that various HBCUs were in a delicate situation as they faced problems related to "fiscal mismanagement, [poor] leadership [structure], unethical behavior, and governance issues" (p. 2). Given these ongoing challenges, my personal insights have motivated me to hold leadership accountable by exploring various dynamics that impact faculty, staff, and students. Proper management of these organizational functions would allow leaders to make sound decisions that assist HBCUs in operating in both the short and long term.

1.3 Aims of study

- To investigate how organizational culture, organizational identification, and structurational divergence operate within HBCUs to impact the experiences of faculty, staff, and students.
- To analyze how faculty, staff, and students at HBCUs perceive the effectiveness and communication practices of senior leadership, and how these perceptions impact organizational commitment and engagement.
- To fill the gap in existing organizational communication literature by examining the unique cultural, historical, and structural factors influencing HBCUs, providing practical insights for senior leadership in managing these institutions in both the short and long term.

Chapter Two Literature Review

This chapter is comprised of two parts, a comprehensive review of HBCU history and an exploration of the theoretical frameworks guiding this body of work. It aimed to introduce HBCUs and review key challenges including racial struggles and the importance leadership had in achieving desired organizational outcomes. Additionally, key theoretical frameworks including structurational divergence, immediacy, organizational identity, organizational culture, and organizational citizenship behaviors were introduced to examine the impact of leadership practices on HBCU faculty, staff, and students.

2.1 Literature Review

HBCU History

The Higher Education Act of 1965 defines an HBCU as:

> … any historically black college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and is, the education of black Americans, and that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary [of Education] to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered or is, according to such an agency or association, making reasonable progress toward accreditation. (p. 143)

HBCUs were created in the U.S. post-Civil War era with the intention of providing newly freed slaves the opportunity to receive a proper education (Freemark, 2015). Prior to the Civil War, higher education was still a focus for the advancement of the newly colonized nation. In the late 16th and early 17th centuries colonists from England migrated to America in search of new beginnings due to religious persecution. During this period, colonists incorporated many things from western European culture, one of which being the importance of literacy and education.

Initially, the aim of the first colleges was fueled by religious desires, as colonists wanted to educate and train individuals to be members of the clergy (Brubacher & Rudy, 2017). Prior to the Civil War, it was estimated that one-fourth of all college graduates became ministers (Tewksbury, 1932). Training of clergymen wasn't the only motive behind the establishment of early institutions. Charters of the early colleges also wanted to "educate professional men in fields other than the ministry and public officials of various kinds" (Brubacher & Rudy, 2017, p. 6). In the newly built society, this would allow men to be educated whether they decided to have a profession in the church or the public.

HBCUs have been viewed as a major contributor to the development of African American communities in the U.S. since they were established and have continued to be a positive factor in the modern higher educational landscape. HBCUs offered all students, regardless of race, an opportunity to develop their skills and talents. These institutions trained young people who went on to serve domestically and internationally in the professions as entrepreneurs and in the public and private sectors (U.S Commission on Civil Rights, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Primarily located in the southern states of the U.S., HBCUs were established in basements, churches, and abandoned schools with the focus of educating African Americans in teaching and farming (Freemark, 2015). Because the church was one of the few organizations that African Americans were able to lead at the time, early HBCUs often adopted leadership structures modeled after church governance. Southern ministers and philanthropists facilitated these early lessons and overtime areas such as engineering, business, liberal arts, and science became to experience growth within the African American community (Freemark, 2015). In 1837, Cheyney University was founded as the first HBCU followed by Lincoln University (1854), and Wilberforce University (1856). By the year 1890 over 200

institutions were established solely for the purpose of educating African Americans (Brown & Davis, 2001; Gasman, 2007). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2023a), in 2020 there were a total of 101 HBCUs in America spread out amongst 19 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. In total, 52 of these institutions were public institutions while 49 operated as private nonprofit institutions.

Due to the historical culture of HBCUs, it was important to understand the moderating effects structurational divergence had at these institutions in the modern era. This study examined the effects structurational divergence (negative communication cycles that result from incompatible organizational structures), supervisor immediate behaviors, and organizational identity have on organizational culture and perceived immediacy with supervisors (leadership) at HBCUs. As a result of these examinations, a closer look at organizational commitment in the form of obedience, loyalty and participation was discussed. Also, this research proposed suggestions for HBCUs in developing appropriate initiatives that would contribute to the future development of compatible structures in these culturally unique organizations.

Racial struggles

African Americans throughout history have experienced many forms of racial discrimination when it comes to education in general. Peralta (2016) reported that former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy once elaborated on this issue by stating “still, it remains an enduring challenge to our Nations' education system to reconcile the pursuit of diversity with the constitutional promise of equal treatment and dignity”. Although HBCUs have never been segregated so that students of any ethnicity have always been welcome to attend, the unique culture fosters an environment where African American students can learn and develop from an Afrocentric perspective (Schexnider, 2008, p. 501). HBCUs have produced the bulk of black physicians, lawyers, military officers, business executives and doctoral degree in the

United States (Redd, 1998). This trend is still true today, as the U.S. Department of Education reported in 2020 that 75% of all black doctors, 75% of black military officers, and 80% of black federal judges today received their undergraduate degrees from a HBCU.

Challenges of HBCUs

Today, HBCUs have faced many challenges such as inequitable state and federal funding allocations, low retention & graduation rates, and other issues that limited the potential of these institutions (Daniel, 2016; Gasman & Commodore, 2014; Guy-Sheftall & Jackson, 2021; Mutakabbir & Parker, 2021). Graduates from HBCUs are competing in a global economy that includes competition from graduates from Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and even predominantly white institutions located in the same country. Some have argued HBCUs lacked the necessary resources required to compete and excel in comparison to their national and global counterparts. There have been many initiatives aimed to directly benefit HBCUs primarily due to government intervention. Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter signed an executive order (12232) in 1980 that aimed to improve and expand the capacity at HBCUs to promote progress (Schexnider, 2008, 512). To further leverage federal and private sector support for HBCUs, (Reagan, Executive Order 12320; President Bush, Executive Order 12677; President Clinton, Executive Order 12876; President Bush, Executive Order 13256; President Obama 13532, Executive Order 13256; President Trump's Executive Order 13779; and most recently, President Trump's 2025 executive order titled *White House Initiative to Promote Excellence and Innovation at Historically Black Colleges and Universities*) were also implemented following the initial order set by President Carter.

HBCU Leadership

One of the primary purposes of this research was to explore the former and current practices of HBCU executive leadership and the effect it had on the sustainability on HBCUs.

Given the changes taking place in the higher education market, the approaches taken by HBCU leaders are critical in addressing key issues surrounding these institutions. Freeman and Gasman (2014, p. 8) suggested that "strong presidential leadership . . . is partly responsible for the survival and progress of some campuses in a national climate that has often been hostile to the values HBCUs represent." Moreover, any assessment of presidential leadership should consider "the unique missions, context, history, and disadvantages these presidents must operate within and under" (Freeman & Gasman, 2014, p. 8). HBCUs operate in an environment where they constantly get overlooked or compared to PWI's. An argument can be made that HBCUs are at a disadvantage, which means a focus on how executive leadership operates strategically could potentially be beneficial in understanding how to counter these stigmas. There has been limited research on failed HBCU leadership, however researchers (Ezell & Schexnider, 2010; Gasman, 2012; Lomotey & Covington, 2017) have discussed the idea of a "leadership crisis" among the executive leadership of these institutions. HBCUs in the U.S. are experiencing many issues dealing with state mandates, unfair and declining funding from both the state and federal level, shifts in pedagogical environment, increased accountability and assessment measures, small endowment support, and increased competition (Duderstadt & Womack, 2003; Gasman, 2013; Hirsch & Weber, 2002; Keller, 1983). When looking at HBCUs from a traditional standpoint, other factors such as diversity within the student market (Boland & Gasman, 2014; Gasman, 2013; Kelderman, 2010; Keller, 1983), globalization of higher education (Duderstadt & Womack, 2003; Fischer, 2014; Gasman, 2013; Hirsch & Weber, 2002), and fewer barriers to entry by competitors (Duderstadt & Womack, 2003; Hirsch & Weber, 2002) all make it difficult for HBCU leaders to foster the original mission behind their institution. With ongoing changes in the market of higher education, debates around HBCU leadership and their ability to exist in the

new market while retaining traditional HBCU missions have challenged leaders at these institutions (Fischer, 2014; Riley, 2010). Since HBCUs are predominately represented by individuals who are aware of these challenges, it's important for leaders to maintain an environment that has always benefited this community. The support HBCUs provided for the African American community was summarized by a statement from Roebuck and Murty (1993):

> Those enrolled at HBCUs escape the campus conflict between black and white students that is frequently found on white campuses. ... HBCUs emphasize the development of black consciousness and identity, black history, racial pride, and ethnic traditions. They provide an African American culture and ambiance that many students find essential to their social functioning and mental health. ... As a result of racial segregation in the United States ... establishing a meaningful personal identity, cultivating personal relationships, and gaining social acceptance are difficult for black students on white campuses. (p. 16-17).

The conflicts or pressures that African American students continue to face outside of HBCUs can justify a push for the development of executive leadership at HBCUs

Theoretical Framework

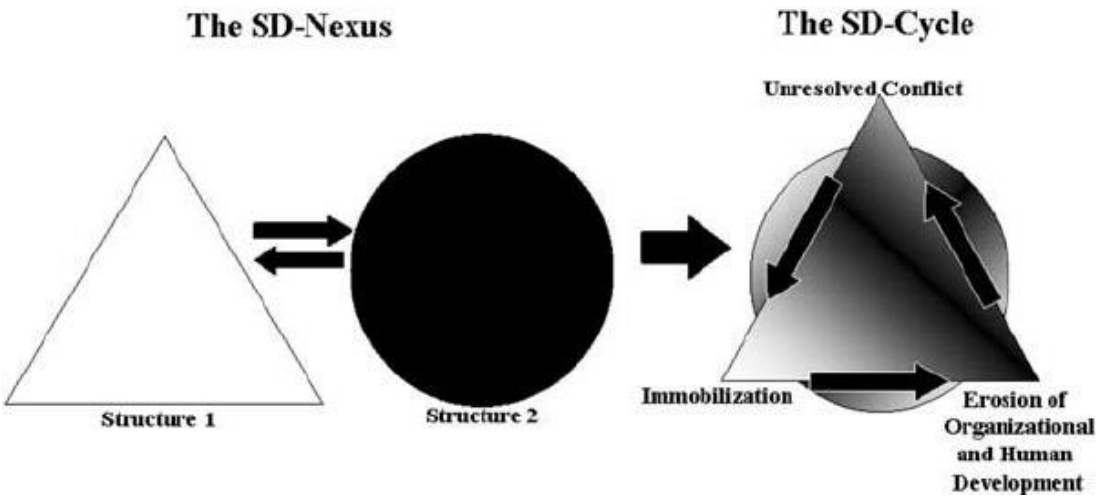
Structurational Divergence

In a sociological context, the idea of "structure" can be described as systems of "rules and resources" that are continuously constructed and utilized as we maneuver throughout society (Giddens, 1984, p. 17). Rules and resources help guide individuals as they navigate various social structures based upon the social norms present at the time (Nicotera et al., 2015). Giddens (1984) explains that for similar systems of social practices to exist across different time spans and environments, a process called "structuring" needs to occur, which binds the time and space.

The creation of new structures is possible through the repetition and implementation of new practices over time (Nicotera et al., 2015). Structuration can be linked with organizational culture and organizational communication patterns. A link can also be made between structuration and the organizational systems in place that rely on apparent symbols, beliefs, and values. Employees develop perceptions and interpretations from within the organization, which is all experienced on an individual basis amongst organizational members. Individuals then go through a process of sensemaking, which will often result in acts of communication and other organizational artifacts that further reproduce social practices and structures (Whiteley et al., 2013).

Structurational divergence (SD) is present "when the rules from different structures are incompatible but equally compelling" (Nicotera et al., 2015, p. 373). This theory focuses on the creation of negative communication cycles that arise from the combination of incompatible structures that make individuals feel "compelled to simultaneously fulfill obligations from multiple systems of social rules, each normatively sanctioned by its own structure" (Nicotera & Clinkscales, 2010, p. 32; Nicotera et al., 2015). When SD is present, subordinates in organizations perceive themselves to be incapable of simultaneously obeying organizational rules and acting appropriately, resulting in unclear communication across interpenetrating structures (Nicotera & Mahon, 2013; Nicotera et al., 2015).

There are two components that form the concept of SD: SD-nexus and SD-cycle (Nicotera & Mahon, 2013, p. 94).



The SD-cycle comes because of the intersection of two equally compelling and contradictory structures, which can be referred to as the SD-Nexus. When these structures compete, a cycle of immobilization, unresolved conflict, and lack of development can occur. This cycle explains the ambiguity behind the competing structures and can often be seen in a literal sense through individuals' inability to achieve goals and interpersonal issues that exist in the structures (Rocker et al., 2021).

The conceptualization of SD first developed from the fields of healthcare and education (Nicotera et al., 2003). These fields aided in the development of the theory due to the large number of nexuses available between institutional, organizational, professional, and cultural structures involved throughout these types of organizations (Nicotera & Mahon, 2013). When considering a higher education institution, there are many structures that could be analyzed to predict structurational divergence outcomes. If SD could be a relevant factor in environments such as business, government, and nonprofit organizations (Nicotera et al., 2014), looking at SD in HBCUs might be beneficial for future advancement. SD has been found to have strong correlations with subordinates' emotional exhaustion (Nicotera et al., 2010), perceived role

conflict, and burnout (Nicotera & Mahon, 2013; Nicotera et al., 2015). SD also impedes organizational change processes and causes employee disengagement, employee perception of dissonance, job dissatisfaction, confusion, and staff turnover (Whiteley et al., 2013).

Immediacy

Immediacy in its early development was conceptualized as behaviors that when referring to distance, closed the gap between the perceived physical or psychological distance between communicators (Mehrabian, 1981). Mehrabian (1981) identified the following as verbal and immediate behaviors: smiling, using paralinguistics, forward lean, making eye contact, relaxed posture, and non-threatening touch. These behaviors influence the way message receivers perceive the degree of closeness between them and message senders, which can be referred to as perceived immediacy (Kelly, 2012). Immediate behaviors can be used to signal approachability, involvement, and liking (Knapp & Hall, 2010; Mehrabian, 1981). This research could be used to persuade executive leadership in the higher education market to use immediate behaviors at their respective institutions. Richmond and McCroskey (2000) found "the more communicators employ immediate behaviors, the more others will like, evaluate highly, and prefer such communicators; and the less communicators employ immediate behaviors, the more others will dislike, evaluate negatively, and reject such communicators" (p. 86). Additionally, their research also suggests attitudes mediate the relationship between immediate behaviors, work motivation, and job satisfaction respectively. When looking at supervisor behaviors and the resulting response to those behaviors by subordinates, perceived immediacy has been found to be a mediator between organizational outcomes in the U.S. including supervisor immediate behaviors and subordinates' burnout (Kelly & Westerman, 2014), loyalty (Kelly et al., 2018), self-censoring (Kelly et al., 2022), and dissent (Kelly et al., 2023).

When looking at these set of behaviors in a cross-cultural context, it's important to note these behaviors may be interpreted in a different way depending on the cultural norms an individual might associate with them. As a result, the development of a measure that could be used cross culturally to express this set of behaviors on a unified level was impossible (Croucher & Kelly, 2019). Despite the lack of a measures that would work cross culturally, assessments of these behaviors have been useful for scholars in the U.S. when examining immediacy as a construct.

Organizational culture

Depending on the organization, the way culture is perceived can vary. Early publications (Pettigrew, 1979; Schein, 1983) even investigated the definitional issues of organizational culture, which helped progress the understanding of the term over time. Although there are various definitions of organizational culture, scholars generally agree that it is socially constructed, occurs at a variety of levels, historically determined, holistic, and establishes itself in a wide range of features of organizational life (Hofstede et al., 1990). According to Hofstede (1980), organizational culture refers to the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one organization from another. This incorporates shared beliefs, values and practices that all assist organizations in differentiating themselves from each other. Prior to this definition, Pettigrew (1979) had already introduced concepts like "symbolism," "myths," and "rituals" that were used in the analysis of organizations. These concepts contributed to the development and understanding of organizational culture definitions over time. The early work of Hofstede (1980) and Schein (1984) was instrumental in providing the basis for organizations in looking at organizational development through the aspect of culture. The set of beliefs, behaviors, norms and values found in organizations assist in making culture more effective (Kotter & Heskett, 1992).

Contemporary organizational culture research has progressively moved away from treating culture as a singular, stable construct, instead positioning it as a multidimensional and context-dependent phenomenon that can be conceptualized and measured in a variety of ways. Recent reviews highlight the absence of scholarly consensus regarding which dimensions most accurately capture organizational culture, with studies emphasizing innovation, teamwork, hierarchy, market orientation, involvement, and masculinity, among others (Baird et al., 2018; Suifan, 2021; Tadesse Bogale & Debela, 2024). This highlights the complexity and subjectivity of organizational culture, suggesting that culture is not fixed, but instead shaped by the theoretical lenses, contexts, and methodological approaches used by scholars.

To develop a more nuanced understanding of how culture operates, organizational culture orientations have been introduced to build on the existing work of cultural dimensions. While organizational culture dimensions refer to specific, internal features of organizational life (Baird et al., 2018; Suifan, 2021), organizational culture orientations reflect broader cultural tendencies that extend beyond internal dynamics and capture more general patterns across organizations, including workplace, business, system, and group orientations (Kim & Kim, 2015; O'Reilly et al., 2014; Tadesse Bogale & Debela, 2024). Workplace orientation emphasizes fairness, tolerance, and professional development opportunities, business orientation reflects innovation and result-driven performance, system orientation captures hierarchical structures and authority relations, and group orientation highlights collaboration, coordination, and mutual dependency (Belias & Koustelios, 2014; Hald et al., 2020; Yaari et al., 2019). The distinction between organizational culture dimensions and orientations is important because it further supports the idea that organizational culture operates simultaneously at multiple levels of analysis.

Multiple perspectives on how organizational culture is formed and maintained has also been advanced in contemporary research. The functionality perspective suggests that culture is shaped by external environmental conditions such as market changes, regulatory pressures, technological developments, and broader societal influences (Gelfand & Erez, 2017; Hällgren et al., 2018; Kim & Toh, 2019). From this perspective, organizations in high-risk environments often develop more rigid cultures, while those in competitive settings emphasize adaptability and innovation (Tadesse Bogale & Debela, 2024). The leader-trait perspective emphasizes the role of leadership in shaping organizational values and norms, as leaders' experiences and characteristics influence how culture is developed and reinforced within their organization (Cortes et al., 2021; O'Reilly et al., 2014; Tadesse Bogale & Debela, 2024). Additionally, the cultural transfer perspective suggests that culture is shaped across organizational contexts, as leaders bring prior assumptions and practices into new environments, contributing to both continuity and change (Kim & Toh, 2019; Tadesse Bogale & Debela, 2024). Taken together, these perspectives reinforce the idea that organizational culture evolves over time through both internal and external forces.

In the context of colleges and universities, Tierney (1988) identifies leadership, environment, mission, socializations, strategies, and information as important components that need emphasis when considering organizational culture. These elements assist in the decision-making process for leaders by giving them a guide for how to approach certain initiatives based on the already established cultural norms of their institution.

Hatch and Schultz (1997) provide the following definition, which fits well when looking at organizational culture in the context of an HBCU:

> organizational culture involves all organizational members, originates and develops at all hierarchical levels, and is founded on a broad-based history that is realized in the material aspects (artifacts) of the organization (e.g. its name, products, buildings, logos, and other symbols, including its top managers). (p. 359)

Since the inception of these institutions, the material aspects that make up the organization have been tailored to benefit members of the African American community. From a cultural perspective, executive leadership are strategically challenged with retaining elements from the original mission, while also being pressured to transform the organization into one that can survive in the higher education market. Farmer (1990) suggests "failure to understand the way in which an organization's culture will interact with various contemplated change strategies thus may mean the failure of the strategies themselves" (p. 8). For strategic initiatives to be effective, every member of the organization must be aware of the expected cultural norms and implications that are associated with attending an HBCU. When attempting to be strategically transformational, success may depend on the extent to which organizational culture issues can be addressed (Keup et al., 2001).

Organizational culture has also been examined as a context that helps develop the understanding of organizational identity in relation to reputation and organizational influence (Hatch and Schultz, 1997). To retain and develop the identity of an organization, the discussion of culture should be present (Hatch and Schultz, 2000). Higher education institutions typically foster an environment where a large focus is put on getting all organizational members to follow a common culture or “school spirit,” buying into the culture. Organizational culture has been observed and looked at as a “signifier” of organizational identity (Whetten, 2003, p. 30). To

retain and develop the identity of an organization, the discussion of culture should be present (Hatch and Schultz, 2000).

Organizational identity

Organizational identity refers to the central, enduring, and distinctive characteristics that define who an organization is (Albert & Whetten, 1985). Albert and Whetten (1985) described three principal components that explain the concept of organizational identity. The first principal is the ideational component, which correlates organizational identity with members' shared beliefs surrounding the question, "Who are we as an organization?" The second component is definitional and identifies organizational identity as a central and enduring feature of an organization. The third, deals with the phenomenological component that suggests identity-related discourse is frequently observed simultaneously with significant organizational experiences.

Although Albert and Whetten's (1985) framework remains foundational, subsequent scholarship shows that organizational identity is more complex and interpreted in different ways than early conceptualizations suggest. Research has approached organizational identity through multiple perspectives, including functionalist, social constructionist, postmodern, and psychodynamic lenses, each offering distinct interpretations about how identity is formed and maintained (Gioia et al., 1998; Hatch & Schultz, 2002; He & Brown, 2013; Mujib, 2017). The functionalist perspective tends to emphasize identity as relatively stable and rooted in formal organizational attributes, while the social constructionist and postmodern approaches conceptualize identity as fluid, negotiated, and continuously reproduced through interaction and discourse (Alvesson et al., 2008; Brown, 2006; Coupland & Brown, 2012). These perspectives support the idea that the construct is not fixed and requires consideration of both the organization's structure and associated communication processes.

Organizational identity is essential when looking at supervisor-subordinate relationships because it affects different motives, understandings, and decision-making processes. When looking at HBCUs, analyzing organizational identity is important because it's assumed that every member should identify with the unique missions of the institution. By defining the organization's identity, organizational leaders have a fundamental base that acts as a guide for participating in decision making activities (Albert & Whetten, 1985). They also argue that in forming organizational identity, interacting and comparing aspects from different organizations is important. Analyzing the distinctive characteristics associated with HBCUs when it comes to identity is useful when discussing how these institutions operate within the higher education market.

Recently, research has moved away from viewing organizational identity as a static set of attributes and instead conceptualizes it as a dynamic and socially constructed process. Studies emphasize that identity is continuously shaped through organizational practices, narratives, and interactions, particularly during periods of change or disruption (Corley, 2004; Gioia et al., 2000; Ravasi & Phillips, 2011; Ernst & Jensen Schleiter, 2019). Organizational identity developed in HBCUs should contain important elements that aim to incorporate the dynamic history, focused missions for minority education, and the development of minority communities all into one shared vision. Billingsley (1982) found that African American faculty stayed loyal in their employment at HBCUs at the time not only because they wanted to educate a large population of African American students, but because they wanted to develop and build a strong group of black faculty. According to data reported in Forbes, HBCU faculties are comprised of 56% African American or Black, 24% White, 9.5% Asian, 2.5% Hispanic, .7% Indigenous, and .7% two or more races (Gasman, 2021). Faculty at PWI's are 69% White and have low percentages

of Black and Hispanic faculty at 5% (Gasman, 2021). Organizations from various fields have experienced a constant struggle when trying to establish an identify that is clearly distinct, but at the same time generalized with the intent to be "maximally persuasive and effective" (Cheney & Christensen, 2001, p. 233). For HBCUs, this means a focus on preserving a distinct institutional identity while also responding to the changing academic landscape is necessary for leadership.

Organizational identification

Organizational identification is the viewpoint stakeholders in an organization assume when they feel their involvement in the organization defines themselves and their beliefs (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). This construct speaks to a variety of internal and external stakeholders that share expressed interests and key reference points in relation to their organization (Christensen et al., 2008; Dutton et al., 1994). Unlike organizational identity, which reflects what an organization is, identification captures how individuals internalize that identity at the individual level (Edwards, 2005; Pratt, 1998). In this sense, identification represents a perceived sense of oneness or belongingness, where individuals align themselves with the organization and interpret organizational successes and failures as their own (Dutton et al., 1994; Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Tajfel & Turner, 1985).

Drawing from social identity and self-categorization theories, identification develops as individuals view themselves as organizational members and take on group characteristics, which then shapes their attitudes and behaviors to align with collective norms (Turner et al., 1987; Van Knippenberg & Van Schie, 2000; Haslam, 2001). Although early research often treated identification as part of organizational commitment, later work clarified that identification is conceptually distinct, as it's rooted in self-definition rather than emotional attachment or behavioral intention (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Edwards, 2005; Pratt, 1998). Recent scholarship has also begun to view organizational identification as something that is ongoing and shaped

through interaction and experience. Rather than remaining stable, identification evolves as individuals engage in identity work, ultimately leading to members negotiating and redefining their relationship with the organization over time (Ashforth et al., 2008; Kreiner et al., 2006; Scott et al., 1998; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003). This perspective highlights that identification is shaped not only by organizational structures, but also by individual agency and ongoing sensemaking processes (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Brown, 2015).

Although organizational identification can promote alignment between individuals and their organizations, it can also create potential challenges. Because individuals hold multiple, and at times competing identities, identification could result in increased tensions when organizational expectations conflict with personal values or alternative group affiliations (Ashforth & Reingen, 2014; Golden-Biddle & Rao, 1997; Glynn, 2000; Pratt & Rafaeli, 1997). Pratt and Foreman (2000) found that even when multiple organizational identities do not directly conflict, they still require attention and take effort to manage. Individuals may experience forms of disidentification or ambivalent identification, where they distance themselves from certain aspects of the organization while maintaining connection to others (Elsbach, 1999; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Pratt, 1998). Scholars also suggest that identification can become strained during periods of organizational change or instability, where shifts in structure, leadership, or mission disrupt previously held meanings and require individuals to reassess their relationship with the organization (Ashforth et al., 2008; Kreiner et al., 2006; Scott et al., 1998). In these contexts, identification becomes an ongoing process of adjustment, where members continuously evaluate the extent to which the organization remains aligned with their sense of self.

Within the context of HBCUs, these dynamics take on added significance. The term "HBCU experience" has often been used to identify key components of the organization that you

can only “experience” by attending this type of institution. When looking at the environment many of these institutions are faced with, many experiences related to the revocation of accreditation, budget cuts, and decreasing enrollments (Gasman, 2009) were also being recognized by members of the organization. The survival of these institutions in the 21’st century and forward heavily depends on the ability of organizational members to understand how their involvement and personal beliefs impact the organization on a larger scale. This idea helps transition into the next construct of organizational citizenship behaviors, a construct that has limited research in higher education.

Organizational citizenship behaviors

Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) are discretionary actions that employees in organizations take, that are not explicitly rewarded but benefit the organization (Organ, 1997; Podsakoff et al., 2000; Williams & Anderson, 1991). Combining the works of Barnard (1938) on “willingness to cooperate” and Katz (1964) “innovative and spontaneous behaviours,” OCB was defined to allocate these ideas into one set of behaviors. OCB are displayed by individuals in organizations through activities like working longer hours without the expectation of a reward or voluntarily taking on projects based on the desire to feel achievement or belonging (Jahangir et al., 2004). These behaviors can be considered a vital element that contributes to the survival of any organization (Organ, 1988). Organ (1988) discusses five components that directly contribute to OCB: altruism, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, courtesy and civic virtue. Altruism refers to assisting others with tasks or problems that are relevant to the organization. Sportsmanship deals with withholding complaints and grievances when dealing with inconvenient aspects of organizational life. Conscientiousness involves employee behaviors that extend past the minimum requirements when it comes to punctuality, attendance and the utilization of time and resources. Courtesy refers to behavior that displays the avoidance of work-related issues with

others. Lastly, civic virtue includes behaviors related to participation in and contributions to the organizations' day-to-day issues. Although you may expect these behaviors to always contribute to positive outcomes, self-serving motives and personal gains demonstrated by individuals may lead to some negative consequences (Bolino et al., 2004).

Koster and Sanders (2006) suggested supervisors had a role in the creation and sustainability of employee behavior that is cooperative to the organization. Managing employee behavior effectively could be a factor that separates effective leaders from the opposition. Organizational citizenship behavior was shown to have a positive relationship with organizational structure, organizational commitment, and teamwork (Hajirasouliha et al., 2014); employee commitment (Tepper et al., 2004); perceived organizational support and psychological empowerment (Chiang & Hsieh, 2012); work satisfaction (Oplatka, 2009); and positive well-being (Sonnentag & Grant, 2012). OCB could be promoted in the workplace through the motivation of employees, as well as constructing an environment that not only allows for, but is conducive and supportive of these behaviors (Organ et al., 2006).

Chapter Three Research Methods

Framework

This research was grounded within the social scientific paradigm, which primarily seeks to understand, predict, and explain the behavior of humans through empirical observation, hypothesis testing, and the implementation of structured methodologies (Bryman, 2016). As a scholar trained in the paradigm, the researcher was guided primarily by a positivist approach, which is centered around the idea that reality exists independent of the researcher and can be understood by observing and analyzing measurable patterns to better understand how different factors relate to one another (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). While the research uses quantitative methods to identify patterns and understand relationships, it's equally important to consider how the unique context of the study shapes the meaning behind the data. Thus, this research offered a multidimensional lens on how individuals navigate organizational life at HBCUs.

Method

A quantitative research approach was used to assess the populations in this body of work. Kittur, (2023, p. 101) describes this research approach as "a systematic investigation of a research topic under consideration by collecting quantifiable data and performing mathematical and statistical manipulations on the collected data to produce findings that add to the existing body of literature." Surveys were used, which Sukamolson (2007, p. 12) described as "the systematic gathering of information from respondents for the purpose of understanding and/or predicting some aspects of the behavior of the population of interest". Specifically, online surveys were used due to their ability to reach otherwise hard to access populations, along with the advantages they possess in terms of cost and time (Wright, 2005).

To address the research objectives, the author collected data using the online survey platform, SurveyMonkey. After receiving ethical approval, the survey link was distributed via

LinkedIn, Facebook, X, and Instagram using a snowball sampling approach. Previous studies (Castelli et al., 2013; Leonard, 2014) highlighted the benefits of using social media for data collection, noting the ease of collection, speed of responses, and recruitment/retention opportunities. The use of snowball sampling has also been proven effective for recruiting participants (Dusek et al., 2015; Leighton et al., 2021; Ting et al., 2025).

Two surveys were administered to assess two separate populations within HBCUs, faculty and staff, and students. The faculty and staff survey contained demographic items that captured participants age, sex, ethnicity, salary, tenure (i.e., years working at the university), job title, did the participant attend an HBCU at any point for their education, family members that attended an HBCU, years worked at a non-HBCU, most used social media platform for family & friends, most used social media platform for work. The student survey included demographic questions to capture amount of student debt, family members that attended an HBCU, age, sex, tenure (i.e., years studying at the university), ethnicity, classification, most used social media platform for family & friends, most used social media platform to view/receive (messages, announcements, and news) from the university, and did the student attend any non HBCU during their higher education tenure. Both surveys contained questions from the measures: Measure of Organizational Culture (Glaser et al., 1987), Organizational Identification (Cheney, 1983), Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (Podsakoff et al., 1990), Structurational Divergence (Nicotera et al., 2010), and Perceived Immediacy (Kelly et al., 2015). Preliminary analyses of means and standard deviations were conducted to ensure data reliability prior to running the statistical analyses.

To ensure cohesion and clarity across the three included studies, the following research objectives were established to guide the inquiry and structure the overall research design:

- **RO1:** To investigate how organizational culture, organizational identification, and structurational divergence operate within HBCUs to impact the experiences of faculty, staff, and students.
- **RO2:** To analyze how faculty, staff, and students at HBCUs perceive the effectiveness and communication practices of senior leadership, and how these perceptions impact organizational commitment and engagement.
- **RO3:** To fill the gap in existing organizational communication literature by examining the unique cultural, historical, and structural factors influencing HBCUs, providing practical insights for senior leadership in managing these institutions in both the short and long term.

Where applicable, each article is situated within one or more of these research objectives to illustrate its contribution to the overarching research agenda. These objectives inform the structure and analytical direction of each study included in this thesis.

Ethical Considerations

In designing the research, central ethical principles including autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence, justice, and respect for special relationships received careful consideration, following the guidelines set forth by Massey University (2017). Before distributing both surveys, two low-risk applications were submitted to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee. The National Ethics Advisory Committee (2021) refers to low-risk research as research in which the only foreseeable risks to participants involve inconvenience or discomfort. After review, the Massey University Human Ethics Committee issued Ethics Notification Numbers of 4000027100 and 4000027101. Approval from the Research Ethics Committee was obtained to guarantee compliance with established ethical principles for research involving human participants.

Participants in each survey had the opportunity to enter a drawing for a $100 USD Amazon gift card upon the completion of the survey.

The introduction of both surveys contained information that informed participants on the intended use of their responses. Participation was voluntary, and individuals could decline to participate or withdraw from the survey at any point without consequence. This approach ensured full participant autonomy. To ensure beneficence, participants were informed the surveys were designed to collect meaningful insights into their experiences, satisfaction, and attitudes towards different elements at their respective HBCU with the intent of progressing research on HBCU leadership and involved processes. Upon request, participants were permitted to view any publications, reports, or results involved in this body of work. To address non-maleficence, participants were assured that their responses would remain anonymous, encouraging them to share honest feedback. All collected data was securely stored on a password-protected computer device and would be permanently deleted following the completion of the thesis to ensure privacy. Since the surveys were issued exclusively through an online format, which included the researcher's academic, personal, and professional networks, any prior relationship between the researcher and participants that could potentially impact responses were anticipated and appropriately addressed.

Measures

All measures used in this study were adapted from previously validated scales in the literature. Where necessary, minor modifications were made to align item wording with the higher education context and the specific environment of HBCUs. These adaptations involved refining terminology to reflect the institutional structure and participant roles relevant to this setting, while preserving the original intent and conceptual meaning of each item. No substantive changes were made to the underlying constructs being measured.

Structurational Divergence: Nicotera et al.'s (2010) 17-item self-report instrument measures the extent to which an individual experiences structurational divergence in his/her organizational experience. The adapted instrument assessed participants' perceptions of how institutional processes, decision-making structures, and resource allocations align with their expectations and experiences within the HBCU environment. A series of studies conducted by Nicotera and associates demonstrated a consistent and reliable measure of structurational divergence. The single factor generated Cronbach alphas ranging from $\alpha = .87$ to .94 in studies using the measure (Nicotera & Mahon, 2012; Nicotera et al., 2014; Nicotera et al., 2010; Nicotera et al., 2015). Pre- and post-tests also revealed a high comparison reliability ($\alpha = .90$; Nicotera et al., 2014).

Perceived Immediacy: Kelly et al.'s (2015) Perceived Immediacy measure. This is a nine-item semantic differential assessment that uses a seven-point response range. The reliability scores for this measure have been high, ranging from $\alpha = 0.89–0.96$ (Kelly & Autman, 2015; Kelly & Westerman, 2014).

Organizational Identity: The 25-item Organizational Identification Questionnaire (OIQ) by Cheney (1983) was used to assess the outcome or state of identification in organizations. Items are scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from *very strong agreement* (item 7) to *very strong disagreement* (item 1). The internal reliability has been high, including Cronbach alphas of .94 (Cheney, 1983) and .96 (Potvin, 1992).

Organizational culture: Glaser et al.'s (1987) Organizational Culture Survey (OCS) includes 36 items. This survey uses a Likert-type scale that looks at a grouping of items in six subscales: Teamwork (8 items), Morale (7 items), Information flow (4 items), Involvement (4

items), Supervision (8 items), and Meetings (5 items). Cronbach alphas for this subscale ranged from .63 to .91, which falls in the acceptable range (Glaser et al., 1987).

Organizational citizenship behaviors: Podsakoff et al.'s (1990) 24-item organizational citizenship behavior scale was used to measure organizational citizenship. This measure was developed to assess civic virtue (4 items), conscientiousness (5 items), sportsmanship (5 items), altruism (5 items) and courtesy (5 items). These dimensions were adopted from Organ (1988) study where they were originally postulated. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to test the hypothesized five-factor structure (Tucker Lewis Index = .94) (Podasakoff et al., 2000). A discriminant validity test was performed to ascertain the empirical distinctiveness of the items, and it was concluded that all the items were empirically distinct except for altruism, which shared its variance with conscientiousness and courtesy. The instrument has been validated in several countries including Australia, Japan, and Hong Kong (Lam et al., 1999) and China (Hui et al., 2004). Overall, internal consistencies for the OCB dimensions varied from $\alpha = .84$ (civic virtue); $\alpha = .85$ (conscientiousness); $\alpha = .87$ (courtesy); $\alpha = .88$ (altruism); to $\alpha = .88$ (sportsmanship). All coefficients exceeded the recommended threshold of $\alpha \geq .70$ (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Pallant, 2010), indicating acceptable internal consistency.

Participants and Procedure

This research utilized two distinct datasets, one from faculty and staff at HBCUs and the other from HBCU students. Both data sets were collected through online surveys administered using the Survey Monkey platform. Participants were invited to fill out the questionnaires through a combination of direct outreach and snowball sampling, with most responses gathered through social networking sites.

The faculty and staff data set, which was used in both the first and third studies of this thesis, included a total of 190 participants from various occupational roles within HBCUs. From

the data set, 99 identified as male, 90 as female, and 1 participant identified as a third gender. The population included 13 Black/African American, 7 Hispanic/Latinx, 7 Middle Eastern/North African, 6 Native American/Alaskan Native, 1 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 9 individuals identifying with multiple ethnicities, 144 White/Caucasian, and 3 who selected "other". The average age of participants was 29.7 years (*SD* = 8.6). Participants identified their positions and 55 were Assistant Professors, 40 held non-tenure track positions, 35 were staff, 23 were Professors, 16 were Associate Professors, 13 served as Department Chairs, 7 held senior administrative roles, and 1 participant did not specify their position.

The second data set, which was used for the second paper on student behaviors, included 250 student participants from HBCUs. The average age of student respondents was 23.76 years (*SD* = 4.49). On average, students spent 2.27 years at their current HBCU (*SD* = 0.90), and they reported an average of 3.02 family members that had previously attended an HBCU (*SD* = 1.47). For gender, 109 participants (43.6%) identified as male, 140 (56%) as female, and 1 (0.4%) identified as another gender. From an ethnic standpoint, 186 students (74.4%) identified as Black/African American, 43 (17.2%) as White/Caucasian, and 21 (8.4%) selected "Other".

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics: To prepare the data for analysis, descriptive statistics such as the mean, standard deviation, and correlation coefficient were calculated. The mean and standard deviation are commonly used indicators that evaluate whether a dataset follows a normal distribution (Field, 2009). The correlation coefficient is used to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables (Field, 2009; Schober et al., 2018).

Confirmatory factor analysis: Before conducting any statistical analyses, a series of Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) were run using Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) software to assess the validity and reliability of the measurement scales used in this research (Field, 2009; Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991). CFA helps establish consistency across different groups by evaluating whether the relationships between variables in a new dataset match those in previous studies (Kline, 2023).

Stepwise regression analysis: Once the validity of the measurement scales was confirmed, stepwise regression analysis allowed for the identification of the most meaningful variables that contributed most to the outcomes of interest. This method allowed for efficient model development by adding or subtracting predictors based on model fit (Field, 2009). By solely focusing on variables that significantly improve the model, this method ensured the retention of factors with the strongest predictive power (Hair et al., 2018).

Pearson's correlation: To determine the linear relationships between key variables, Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated. This technique looks at how closely two continuous variables are related, producing a value between -1 and +1 that demonstrates the strength and direction of the relationship (Cohen et al., 2013). A positive value indicates the two variables increase together; however, a negative value indicates an inverse relationship. Pearson's r was used due to the ease in measuring how two variables are related, along with its common application in social scientific research (Cohen et al., 2013).

Chapter Four: Articles Included in the Study

Article I: Rocker, K., Kelly, S., & Croucher, S. (2025). An investigation of organizational communication citizenship behaviors of faculty and staff at historically black colleges and universities. *Communication Quarterly*, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/01463373.2025.2455570

Article II: Rocker, K., Croucher, S., Kelly, S. (2025). Organizational culture, identification, structurational divergence, perceived immediacy, and organizational citizenship behaviors of HBCU students. *Howard Journal of Communications*. (Revise & Resubmit)

Article III: Rocker, K., Kelly, S., Croucher, S. (2025). An exploration of HBCU faculty and staff organizational identification and culture. *Communication Reports*. (Under review)

4.1 Article One

Rocker, K., Kelly, S., & Croucher, S. (2025). An investigation of organizational communication citizenship behaviors of faculty and staff at historically black colleges and universities. *Communication Quarterly*, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/01463373.2025.2455570

The first paper of this thesis investigates how faculty and staff at HBCUs display organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) based on their perception of the communication structures at their respective institution. Guided by Organ's (1988) organizational citizenship behaviors and Nicotera et al. (2015) structurational divergence (SD) theories, this paper explores how factors such as salary, organizational tenure, age, HBCU alumni status, and presence of SD influences the likelihood of HBCU faculty and staff engaging in behaviors that aren't formally required yet benefit the institution. These voluntary behaviors can be classified into five dimensions that reflect how organizational members respond to various organizational situations.

Investigating these dynamics allows for better understanding of how to manage contradictions between organizational rules and the lived experiences by organizational members. Observing HBCU faculty and staff provides insight on how a unique culture and organizational structure could encourage or prevent positive behaviors by employees. This research adds to the literature on OCB and SD, while also offering practical insights for HBCU leadership seeking to better understand their subordinates. As HBCUs look to stay efficient in the current academic landscape, understanding how to approach supervisor-subordinate relations can assist in developing and implementing targeted initiatives, as well as promoting positive employee behaviors throughout the organization.

This study directly addresses RO1, by examining how organizational culture and structurational divergence influence the attitudes and behaviors of faculty and staff. It also contributes to RO3, as it helps fill the gap in organizational communication research by

extending established constructs into the underexplored cultural and structural context of HBCUs. This study was submitted to Communication Quarterly, a peer-reviewed academic journal recognized for publishing high-quality research in the field of communication.

According to the SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) system, Communication Quarterly holds a Q1 ranking, indicating that it's among the top 25% of journals in its field in terms of citation, impact, and scholarly influence (SCImago, 2024). The journal is known for publishing work related to organizational communication, interpersonal dynamics, and communication theory, making it an appropriate location for this article. This study contributes to the journal's existing literature by extending the theories of organizational citizenship behaviors and structurational divergence into the context of HBCUs.

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STATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTION
DOCTORATE WITH PUBLICATIONS/MANUSCRIPTS

We, the student and the student's main supervisor, certify that all co-authors have consented to their work being included in the thesis and they have accepted the student's contribution as indicated below in the Statement of Originality.

Student name:	Kenneth Rocker
Name and title of main supervisor:	Dr. Debalina Dutta, Senior Lecturer

In which chapter is the manuscript/published work?	Chapter 4 (4.1)

Describe the contribution that the student and members of the supervisory team have made to the manuscript/published work:[1]

The student developed the idea, collected the data and drafted the manuscript.
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Abstract

Drawing on organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) and structurational divergence (SD), this study (n = 190) observes how SD and demographic variables predict OCBs among faculty and staff at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Stepwise regression revealed significant predictors for several OCB factors: salary, age, and tenure for conscientiousness; SD, age, and tenure for sportsmanship; salary for civic virtue; salary and attending an HBCU for courtesy; and salary, age, tenure, and attending an HBCU for altruism. This study highlights the role SD and demographic variables have in promoting OCB at HBCUs during a time where presidents/chancellors are tasked with issues surrounding declining funding, increased competition, and shifts in the pedagogical environment. Understanding these dynamics assists senior leadership in enhancing their approaches to leadership and governing the culturally unique HBCU environment.

Keywords: organizational citizenship behaviors, structurational divergence, HBCU, PWI, organizational culture, organizational identity

An investigation of organizational communication citizenship behaviors of faculty and staff at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) embody the enduring struggle between educational equality, historical adversity, and intellectual achievement for African Americans in the United States higher educational system. HBCUs were created in the U.S. post-Civil War era to provide newly freed slaves the opportunity to receive a proper education (Freemark, 2015). Since then, HBCUs have been committed to addressing issues of systematic racism, where the exclusion of African Americans from predominately White institutions (PWI's) has been prevalent. HBCUs have played an important role in the preservation of culture in the African American community, while fostering academic excellence, activism, and community leadership for African Americans.

Examining the challenges and achievements of HBCUs provides a better understanding of the former and current marginalization taking place at these institutions when it comes to the pursuit of adequate and equal education. There has been an increase over the years in turnover of Presidents and Chancellors at U.S. universities. HBCUs are experiencing many issues dealing with state mandates, declining funding, shifts in pedagogical environment, increased accountability and assessment measures, small endowment support, and increased competition (Gasman, 2013; Hirsch & Weber, 2002). Administration, primarily Presidents and Chancellors of these institutions often assume the responsibility of these outcomes.

The current study examines the organizational communication of HBCUs. Specifically, this study explores the extent to which HBCU organizational structures and divergences from those structures predict organizational behaviors. Focusing on HBCU faculty and staff, this study examines the extent to which faculty and staff experience structurational divergence, and what

link divergence has on levels of voluntary citizenship behaviors. The findings contribute to the overall discourse on the organizational structures of HBCUs, while also offering support for Presidents and Chancellors in achieving an efficient organizational environment backed by their faculty and staff.

HBCUs' Unique Organizational Characteristics

From a cultural perspective, HBCU senior leadership are strategically challenged with retaining elements from the original mission of providing education to African Americans, while also being pressured to transform the organization into one that can survive in a contemporary higher education market. Organizational identity developed in HBCUs contains elements that incorporate the dynamic history, focused missions for minority education, and the development of minority communities all into one shared vision. Billingsley (1982) found African American faculty stayed loyal in their employment at HBCUs because they wanted to educate African American students and develop a strong group of Black faculty. HBCU faculties are comprised of 56% African American or Black, 24% White, 9.5% Asian, 2.5% Hispanic, .7% Indigenous, and .7% two or more races (Gasman, 2021). Faculty at PWI's are 69% White and have low percentages of Black and Hispanic faculty at 5% (Gasman, 2021).

The survival of HBCUs heavily depends on the ability of organizational members to understand how their involvement and personal beliefs are related to the organization on a larger scale. Organizations from various fields experience a constant struggle when trying to establish a distinctive identity, but at the same time generalized with the intent to be "maximally persuasive and effective" (Cheney & Christensen, 2001, p. 233). Many HBCUs are facing the revocation of accreditation, budget cuts, and decreasing enrollments (cf., Gasman, 2009), which is recognized

by members of the organization. Although these are issues that can exist at any higher education institution, the unique structural buildup of HBCUs often magnify these issues.

From a historical context, HBCUs have a unique history among higher education institutions (Brown & Davis, 2001). Evans et al. (2002) highlight that "HBCUs were not designed to succeed, rather they were established to appease black people or to serve as 'holding institutions' so that black students would not matriculate in historically white colleges and universities" (p. 3). This reality represents a time in the U.S. where racial tensions were high, and segregation was common. To further differentiate HBCUs, Garibaldi (1984) asserted, "Black colleges are not monolithic. Although they are similar to predominantly White institutions in many ways, their historical traditions and their levels and types of support make them distinct" (p. 6). The structural makeup and identities of today's HBCUs are highly reflective of the way these institutions were set up.

According to Walters (1991), the goals of HBCUs are to: (a) maintain Black historical and cultural tradition; (b) establish key leadership in the Black community; (c) advance economic stability in the Black community; (d) present Black role models; (e) provide college graduates with a unique competence to address issues within minority and majority populations; and (f) produce Black graduates for specialized research, training, and information in Black and minority communities. To achieve these goals, HBCUs must structure themselves in a way that ensures these objectives are integrated in their organizational processes and initiatives. The challenges associated with this type of structuration places significant pressures on employees, especially considering that funding is limited, and faculty must spread themselves across all duties and goals (Gasman, 2021; Thompson, 1978). It's reasonable to assume the experiences realized by faculty & staff at HBCUs differ considerably from those at PWI's.

Structurational Divergence

The idea of "structure" can be described as systems of "rules and resources" that are continuously constructed and utilized as we maneuver throughout society (Giddens, 1984, p. 17). Rules and resources help guide individuals as they navigate various social structures (Nicotera et al., 2015). The creation of new structures is possible through the repetition and implementation of new practices over time (Nicotera et al., 2015). Employees develop perceptions and interpretations from within the organization, which is experienced on an individual basis amongst organizational members.

Structurational divergence (SD) is present "when the rules from different structures are incompatible but equally compelling" (Nicotera et al., 2015, p. 373). SD focuses on the creation of negative communication cycles that arise from the combination of incompatible structures that make individuals feel "compelled to simultaneously fulfill obligations from multiple systems of social rules, each normatively sanctioned by its own structure" (Nicotera & Clinkscales, 2010, p. 32). When SD is present, subordinates in organizations perceive themselves to be incapable of simultaneously obeying organizational rules and acting appropriately, resulting in unclear communication across structures (Nicotera & Mahon, 2013; Nicotera et al., 2015).

There are two components that form the concept of SD: SD-nexus and SD-cycle (Nicotera & Mahon, 2013). The SD-cycle comes because of the intersection of two equally compelling and contradictory structures, which can be referred to as the SD-nexus. When these structures compete, a cycle of immobilization, unresolved conflict, and lack of development can occur. This cycle explains the ambiguity behind the competing structures and can often be seen in a literal sense through individuals' inability to achieve goals and interpersonal issues that exist in the structures (Rocker et al., 2021).

The conceptualization of SD first developed from the fields of health care and education (Nicotera & Walker, 2003), and has expanded to include fields such as climate change (Eise & Rawat, 2023). These fields aided in the development of the theory due to the large number of nexuses available between institutional, organizational, professional, and cultural structures involved throughout these types of organizations (Nicotera & Mahon, 2013). Consider the structure of higher education institutions. At the top, governance structures typically include entities involved in decision making processes at the highest level. Down one hierarchical level are administrative structures that oversee the day-to-day operations of different academic and administrative units, such as department chairs. Lastly, there are academic units, such as departments, which include faculty and staff and the curriculum they deliver. Aside from these organizational structures, there are other structural aspects. SD would occur if individuals in the governance structure left individuals in the academic units feeling as though they have equally important but incompatible goals (cf., Nicotera et al., 2015). For example, if the governance structures impose financial constraints in support of institutional sustainability, there could be some competing priorities with the academic units, whose job is to deliver the curriculum and provide student support. As a result, there could be competing demands such as the academic units being forced to reduce faculty and staff positions or increase class sizes. While institutional governance may feel these demands are necessary, individuals in the academic units may view these demands as a conflict that effects academic efforts and the ability to provide adequate student support. As these structures compete, individuals will be caught up in the SD-cycle, leading to outcomes typically associated with SD.

HBCUs have not been explored in the context of SD. HBCUs facing financial constraints that limit their ability to support initiatives still have more historical and immediate development

goals than a traditional PWI because of their unique history. This lack of development could cause employees to experience negative organizational outcomes. SD has been found to have strong correlations with subordinates' emotional exhaustion (Nicotera & Clinkscales, 2010), perceived role conflict, and burnout (Nicotera & Mahon, 2013). SD also impedes organizational change processes and causes employee disengagement, employee perception of dissonance, job dissatisfaction, confusion, and staff turnover (Whiteley et al., 2013). This study will explore SD at HBCUs juxtaposed to organizational citizenship behaviors.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) are discretionary actions employees in organizations take, that are not explicitly rewarded but benefit the organization (Organ, 1997; Podsakoff et al., 2000). These behaviors contribute to the survival of any organization (Organ, 1988). Organ (1988) discusses five forms of OCB: altruism, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, courtesy, and civic virtue. Altruism is assisting others with tasks or problems relevant to the organization. Sportsmanship is withholding complaints and grievances when dealing with inconvenient aspects of organizational life. Conscientiousness involves employee behaviors that extend past the minimum requirements when it comes to punctuality, attendance, and the utilization of time and resources. Courtesy refers to behavior that display the avoidance of work-related issues with others. Civic virtue includes behaviors related to participation in and contributions to the organizations' day to day issues. These components are not related to each other and may be predicted by differences in individuals or organizational contexts.

Koster and Sanders (2006) suggest supervisors have a role in the creation and sustainability of cooperative employee behavior. Managing employee behavior effectively could be a factor that separates effective leaders from the opposition, which is important when

comparing leadership between HBCUs and PWIs. OCB has been shown to have a positive relationship with organizational structure, organizational commitment, teamwork (Hajirasouliha et al., 2014); employee commitment (Tepper et al., 2004); perceived organizational support, psychological empowerment (Chiang & Hsieh, 2012); work satisfaction (Oplatka, 2009); and positive well-being (Sonnentag & Grant, 2012). OCB can be promoted in the workplace through the motivation of employees, as well as constructing an environment that allows for and is conducive of these behaviors (Organ et al., 2006).

Insights from previous studies have shown a relationship between OCB and various demographic characteristics. When looking at gender, research suggests men and women show no differences when exhibiting OCB (Chou & Pearson, 2011). Age, however, has been shown to be related to the display of OCB when comparing older and younger employees. Previous research demonstrates older employees display more OCB than their younger counterparts (Ng & Feldman, 2008). This observation could result from the fact that older employees typically have more tenure than younger employees. Longer tenured employees demonstrated higher levels of OCB than younger employees (Hafidz et al., 2012), even when looking at executive positions (Singh & Singh, 2010). When considering the relationship that organizational position or rank has on OCB, Mackenzie et al. (1999) found OCB to be positively correlated with rank. Research has also shown individuals who hold higher positions consider the display of OCB as an integral part of their roles (Bogler & Somech, 2004). In terms of salary, OCB has been shown to be negatively related to salary increases (Mackenzie et al., 1999), while having a positive relationship with compensation (Oetomo et al., 2016).

Structurational Divergence and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

The relationship between SD and OCB remains relatively unexplored despite implications it may have on organizational communication. SD extends structuration theory and addresses the interpenetration between individuals' actions and organizational structures, whereas OCB relates to the discretionary behaviors individuals exhibit that are useful to the organization but not directly recognized by the formal reward system. Understanding this relationship can provide further insights into how university structures and individual behaviors interact. Investigating the presence of SD in organizations provides a clearer picture on not only how organizations are shaped, but also provide insights on the individual behaviors members of organizations participate in that contributes to the cycle of immobilization, unresolved conflict, and lack of development outcomes associated with the SD cycle. Given that OCBs are voluntary and discretionary behaviors, it is critical to see how the presence of SD can affect these behaviors as individuals feel obligated to abide by a specific set of rules dictated by the organizational structures in which they operate. Higher levels of SD could lead to issues that disrupt organizational structures, which could discourage the display of OCB. Understanding the relationship between SD and OCB can assist HBCUs in developing faculty & staff that are better equipped in contributing to the overall success of the organization.

From a practical perspective, executive leadership should be concerned with this relationship, as it may provide rationale in developing or managing their organization more efficiently. Increasing OCB in employees can be beneficial for organizations; therefore, it’s crucial to understand what causes OCB, especially from a structural context. Knowing how much influence their leadership has on the shaping of structures within the university could assist management in identifying potential SD nexus points. If leadership’s approach to governance proves to be a significant factor in how the current structures operate, they can seek to address

those issues directly. Conversely, if nexuses appear to be occurring as the result of the intersection between faculty and staff values and structural issues inherent to the university itself, leaders will be better equipped to identify and address those issues at the source. If SD is found to negatively predict OCB, executive leadership may need to focus on addressing structural issues to promote a more unified organizational culture. It is also helpful to determine how demographic factors such as faculty and staff age, sex, salary, and years of tenure explain OCB. Thus, the following research questions are presented:

RQ1: To what extent does structural divergence explain the variance in organizational citizenship behaviors?

RQ2: To what extent do demographic factors explain organizational citizenship behaviors?

Method

After receiving ethical approval, the researchers collected a nationally representative sample from HBCUs in the U.S. (n = 190) from April to August 2023 using Survey Monkey. The primary researcher, who had previously attended an HBCU for undergraduate and graduate studies reached out to acquaintances and initiated a snowball sampling method. Although a snowball sampling technique was used, several steps were taken to enhance the representativeness of the sample. Participants were instructed to complete the survey only if they were currently employed as a HBCU faculty or staff. Considering the limited number of HBCUs, this method ensured all respondents met the criteria. Additionally, the primary researcher distributed the survey via LinkedIn, Facebook, X, and Instagram during the same period. Participants were given the opportunity to enter a drawing with an opportunity to win a

$100USD Amazon gift card prize after the completion of the online survey. Full demographic information is presented in Table 1.

(Table 1 here)

Measures

The survey included demographic questions and the following measures: Measure of Structurational Divergence (Nicotera et al., 2010), and the Measure of Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (Podsakoff et al., 1990). Demographic items were also included to capture salary, HBCU alumni status, age, tenure (i.e., years working for the institution), and ethnicity. Salary was captured as an ordinal variable while age and tenure were ratio. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for these measures. Note that there was some non-normality in the age variable, so a natural log transformation was used to scale the variable appropriately for analyzing the data.

Measure of structurational divergence is comprised of a 17-item self-report instrument that measures the extent to which an individual experiences structurational divergence in his/her organizational experience. The measure used a 5-level scale ranging from *rarely* (1) to *frequently* (5).

Measure of Organizational Citizenship Behaviors features 24 items that assess five factors (*altruism, courtesy, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, and civic virtue*) to describe specific behaviors. Each behavior is rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7).

Results

Before research questions were addressed, it was important to determine whether the factor structure of each measure was retained. Each time a measure is used, there is a hypothesis,

often unwritten, that the measure retains its factor structure within the new sample (Kelly & Westerman, 2020). When a measure fails to maintain their factor structure, it is not suitable for analysis. Each measure in this dataset was analyzed through confirmatory factor analysis. The fit statistics for each measure can be seen in Table 1 and the descriptive statistics, including reliability scores, can be seen in Table 2. Each of the measures retained factor structure except for SD. Five items in the SD measure caused a statistically significant amount of residual error on other items in the measure. These items were removed to reduce the noise in the analyses, allowing researchers to see the relationships more confidently between variables.

(Table 2 here)

To answer the research questions, stepwise regression was run using structurational divergence and demographic variables (age, sex, salary, years of tenure at the institution, and HBCU attendance as a student) as predictors of each OCB. For conscientiousness, the model contained one statistically significant predictor: salary ($\beta = .50$, $p < .001$) with $R^2 = .25$. For sportsmanship, the model contained two statistically significant predictors: structurational divergence and ($\beta = .54$, $p < .001$), age ($\beta = -.16$, $p = .01$) with $R^2 = .25$. For civic virtue, the model contained only one statistically significant variable: salary ($\beta = .45$, $p < .001$) with $R^2 = .20$. For courtesy, the model contained two statistically significant predictors: salary ($\beta = .48$, $p < .001$) and having attended an HBCU as a student ($\beta = .21$, $p < .001$) with $R^2 = .23$. Finally, for altruism, the model contained two statistically significant predictors: salary ($\beta = .52$, $p < .001$), and having attended an HBCU as a student ($\beta = .17$, $p = .01$) with $R^2 = .29$. (See Table 3 for the correlation matrix.)

(Table 3 here)

Discussion

This study aimed to analyze the relationship between demographic and SD factors on OCB among HBCU faculty. Several observations emerged when looking at the relationships between these factors. When examining conscientiousness behaviors, faculty members with higher salaries were observed to extend themselves beyond the basic requirements of the job. Faculty members earning higher salaries could possess a greater sense of dedication in their roles due to their monetary advantage across the organization. In a meta-analysis of 19 studies looking at earnings in relation to the Big Five personality traits, Roberts et al. (2011) found conscientiousness had a positive relationship with earning. Similarly, Wiersma and Kappe (2017) found that although conscientiousness had no effect on starting salary, the effect was significant in relation to salary growth overtime.

The display of sportsmanship behaviors was also significant in faculty who were older . Additionally, the presence of SD was also a factor that predicted sportsmanship behaviors, indicating faculty experiencing divergences in their respective organizational structures were more likely to refrain from expressing complaints or criticisms in challenging situations. Older faculty may approach organizational issues with more maturity, allowing them to accept any inconveniences that may arise. Not much is known about the relationship between the SD cycle and sportsmanship behaviors; however, the findings of this study provide some insight on the connection.

Displays of civic virtue behaviors in HBCU faculty were only predicted by salary. This finding suggests faculty with higher salaries were more likely to be active in participation and engage in behaviors that contribute to the day-to-day issues of the organization. This relationship between higher financial compensation and the display of civic virtue behaviors implies the financial aspect plays an essential role in shaping faculty members' mindsets and behaviors,

mainly in their willingness to engage in activities that contribute to the overall well-being or betterment of the institution. This finding is consistent with Ali and Miralam (2019), which also found salary to be a dominant predictor of civic virtue behaviors among IT professionals.

Engaging in courtesy behaviors were found to be higher in HBCU faculty who received higher salaries, as well as those who attended an HBCU as a student. These faculty were more likely to be more considerate in their actions when trying to avoid work related issues. The heightened display of courtesy behaviors could stem from the incentive to avoid work related issues due to the potential monetary satisfaction that comes with higher salaries. Previous research has found salary to be a predictor of the display of courtesy behavior in employees (Ali & Miralam, 2019). Having attended an HBCU in the past could also encourage these faculty to avoid issues for the betterment of their institution because they can understand the culture, missions, and objectives from a personal perspective.

Lastly, HBCU faculty who had higher salaries and attended an HBCU as a student were observed to show higher displays of altruism. These individuals were more likely to display voluntary behaviors in an unselfish manner that contributed to their colleagues and the organization. Faculty receiving higher salaries may go out of their way to voluntarily assist their colleagues because they are satisfied with the compensation they receive to do so. When considering age and tenure, experience may play an important role in the willingness to extend themselves. Being able to assist colleagues with organizational tasks they are familiar with may come with ease, especially if it contributes to the organization. Previous research supports this relationship between altruism and salary (Jane et al., 2023). Faculty who can relate to the HBCU experience may possess a unique understanding of the organizational missions and objectives,

which could motivate them to display altruistic behaviors that will benefit their colleagues and organization.

Theoretical and Applied Implications

Understanding the significance OCB and SD in achieving desired organizational outcomes is important to executive leadership. This study provides significant contribution to OCB and SD literature, as it was conducted in HBCUs where organizational culture and identity is unique within the broader context of Western culture. While much of the existing research on OCB and SD have been studied in Western cultures where there are individualistic cultural norms, HBCUs provide an opportunity to investigate a collectivistic subculture that emphasizes the needs and goals of the group. Despite this, there is a lack of research discussing these aspects in HBCUs, making this exploration necessary in filling the gap and contributing to the emerging theoretical explanations of OCB and SD.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

OCB have been studied in various contexts and become an interest to scholars due to their contributions in achieving organizational effectiveness. Since conceptualization, scholars have identified various forms of OCB (Podsakoff et al., 2000), which expands on the initial dimensions Organ (1988) identified. OCB has also been linked to concepts like job satisfaction (Schleicher et al., 2004; Yee et al., 2008), organizational commitment (Wagner & Rush, 2000; Zheng et al., 2012), employee engagement (Rurkkum & Bartlett, 2012; Saks, 2006), and high-performance HR practices (Mukhtar et al., 2012), all of which should be an emphasis of executive leadership when focusing on fostering effective organizational outcomes. When organizations direct more emphasis towards OCB, they demonstrate better performance and

realize greater success than organizations where the display of OCB is non-existent (Podsakoff et al., 2000).

The findings of this research expand the theory of OCB by investigating how the unique aspects of HBCUs predict the expression of OCB. In the past, OCB have been shown to vary across cultures in relation to the dimensions, the actual display of behaviors, and anticipated outcomes (Podsakoff et al., 2000). While previous studies have argued for a reexamination of the theory that would include more culturally derived samples (Cohen, 2007), this study One provided theoretical support for OCB as conceptualized by Organ (1988).

This study also considered the presence of OCB within HBCUs, and factors related to its manifestation. Since HBCUs are experiencing issues that ultimately fall on leadership, knowing how to approach faculty and staff based on their display of their discretionary behaviors provides direction and guidance for executive leadership. When tasked with issues of solving problems and working with limited resources, OCB has been shown to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of academic leaders (Rita et al., 2018). Employees have also been viewed as more receptive to transformation-oriented leaders, a characteristic that has proved to have a positive influence on OCB (Michel & Tews, 2016). To promote OCB, leadership must know the dynamics behind their employees, as well as the type of behaviors their employees are displaying before they can address issues.

From an applied perspective, the findings of the study offer insights for leadership in the evaluation of faculty and staff. Across all five factors of OCB, salary proved to be the most motivating factor in the expression of OCB. Leadership should focus on developing ideal pay structures that foster OCB through a competitive, but incentive-based approach. Achieving employee motivation through the incorporation of financial incentives can attract more dedicated

workers to the organization (Lazear, 1986). Although underfunding and other HBCU specific constraints may limit leadership's ability to offer such incentives, there are non-monetary options that can be used to demonstrate their appreciation until funding allows for salary increases. Non-monetary rewards include formal commendations and awards, favorable mention in university publications, being publicly recognized, letters of appreciation, status indicators such as an enhanced job titles, flexible work schedules, greater job autonomy, paid sabbaticals, and more interesting work responsibilities (Aguinis, 2013). By implementing these strategies, leaders can offer support to faculty and staff in making sure they feel valued and motivated to express OCB despite any structural misalignments.

Age also had a strong contribution to the display of OCB for faculty and staff as it predicted the display of sportsmanship. The relationships between age and OCB have been mixed as previous studies with some identifying negative relationships (Atatsi et al., 2021; Wagner & Rush, 2000) and others positive (Ajlouni et al., 2021; Wanxian & Weiwu, 2007). That older faculty displayed more sportsmanship, indicates that executive leadership may be able to instil sportsmanship in their younger faculty through formal mentoring, pairing older faculty as mentors for younger faculty.

Leadership should also be aware that having faculty and staff who attended an HBCU themselves as students can lead to greater displays of OCB. We advocate for more hiring of professionals at HBCUs that understand what the HBCU experience is. These findings linking associations with HBCUs and OCB advances that claim, suggesting HBCU leaders should not only recognize the value of hiring from within, but also prioritize developing faculty and staff without such background. This approach will assist in creating a culture in which all faculty and staff, regardless of their educational background, can embrace and advance HBCU missions.

Structurational Divergence

The finding that higher levels of SD are associated with increased levels of sportsmanship behaviors among HBCU faculty and staff provides practical implications for leadership. Leaders play a large role in fostering sportsmanship behaviors from their subordinates, however a focus on the management of these behaviors can be beneficial in preventing divergences before they occur. Malterud and Nicotera (2020) suggest a nonconfrontational conflict management style and taking conflict personally may escalate SD. Scholars are continuously making efforts to conceptualize SD with hopes it may bring stronger insights on how and why individuals resist organizational structures. As our study found faculty and staff were reluctant to express complaints or criticisms in challenging situations where SD was present, incorporating collaborative spaces where employees can express their frustrations could lead to better SD management. The goal for leaders should be to minimize or eliminate the presence of SD altogether.

Supporting faculty and staff autonomy and encouraging constructive criticisms across organizational structures could help leadership better understand the varying concerns of their workers, as each structure may express different complaints and criticisms, ultimately resulting in different organizational outcomes. Establishing policies that unify organizational structures when it comes to expressive communication could be a viable strategy that encourages healthy and meaningful dialog from a top-down approach. The cycle of SD is influenced by both cultural and institutional restraints (Nicotera et al., 2014); therefore, examining HBCUs offers valuable insights on how a nuanced understanding of cultural diversity predicts divergences in organizations. An examination of the concept across other professions and organizational settings that also operate within multiple structures has been recommended (Malterud &

Nicotera, 2020). Aside from the fact that universities offer scholars an opportunity to examine organizations with a long history of non-static structures, HBCUs introduce a variety of cultural perspectives that can enhance the development of SD research. Particularly, HBCUs offer new insights that are more inclusive and representative of a community that is often overlooked in organizational research. Addressing the knowledge gaps in SD was one aim of this study as this is one of the few studies examining SD in a HBCU context.

HBCUs vs. PWIs

This study also contributes to the discourse surrounding HBCUs vs. PWIs. These institutions face the same challenges, however HBCUs operate with a smaller margin of error (Oshikanlu, 2023). PWIs are at an advantage when it comes to additional funding and access to institutional resources (Upton & Tanenbaum, 2014). Individual states, backed by the federal government, have failed in the disbursement of equal funding and general support to HBCUs (Wheatle, 2019). If HBCUs aren't realizing adequate funding, this may explain why salary proved to be the most motivating factor in the expression of OCB by faculty and staff. These individuals may view salary as a motiving factor due to the fact that they are employed by an institution that is plagued by funding issues. During the 2018-2019 academic year, the salaries of HBCU faculty were $18,000-$24,000 lower than the national average for all professorial ranks at comparable institutions (Clery, 2021). It is reasonable to believe these disparities in compensation promotes greater expressions of OCB among HBCU faculty and staff who place significant value on salary or salary increases. Research has also shown increased commitments in teaching loads, advising responsibilities, and service commitments for faculty and staff at HBCUs (Golden et al., 2017). Not only are they receiving lower salaries, but there are increased expectations when it comes to commitment to the organization. These issues create uncertainty

for the institution, but faculty and staff may also question their job security as opposed to faculty and staff at PWI's who encounter less issues of funding. This may also explain why tenure proved to be a key element in the display of certain OCB. HBCUs have seen a decrease in the hiring of tenure-track faculty and a rise in adjunct faculty (Escobar et al., 2021). As HBCUs strive to survive in today's climate, faculty and staff who obtained tenure may feel more secure in their roles, allowing them to focus on more expressions of OCB.

While the findings of this study may not be assumed to be applicable to all institutional types, results could offer significant insights for decision makers at HBCUs. SD is only present "when the rules from different structures are incompatible but equally compelling" (Nicotera et al., 2015, p. 373). Historically, one of the main missions of HBCUs was to preserve black culture (Albritton, 2012). The missions and strategic goals between HBCUs and PWI's are different, which implies the rules and structures will also be different. This suggests faculty and staff at HBCUs will realize SD in a different manner than they would at any other institutional type. This also applies to the expression of OCB, as despite any consideration of institutional performance, OCB levels have been shown to vary across discipline and institution type (Rose, 2012). The findings of this study should only be considered in the context of HBCUs and their unique cultural environment.

Limitations and Conclusion

This study contained some measurement noise in the SD measure. The source of this noise is uncertain and could stem from the discrepancies in the chosen demographic or the fact that the SD measure was developed to be utilized in a healthcare setting, whereas in this study it was utilized in an educational setting. Further research is needed to understand why some of the measurement items didn't perform well in this study.

It's important for leadership at HBCUs to not only understand how their organizational structures function, but also the relationships that potential divergences from those structures have on organizational citizenship behaviors. The findings of this study discuss the relationship between SD, demographic variables, and organizational citizenship behaviors for faculty at HBCUs. Analyzing these relationships can provide senior leadership insights on how to foster behaviors that contribute to the overall success of HBCUs when it comes to faculty engagement and commitment. Senior leadership should also be mindful of retaining a healthy balance between the changing dynamics in modern day academia and the unique cultural heritage that has always been present at HBCUs.

This study recognized SD and demographic factors such as such as salary, age, tenure, and having attended an HBCU as a student, as significant factors predicting faculty behaviors. Senior leadership should be conscious of these factors, as they have been shown to shape the conscientiousness, sportsmanship, civic virtue, courtesy, and altruism behaviors displayed by HBCU faculty. The significance of these relationships can shed light on the necessary practices that need to take place at HBCUs when it comes to achieving desired organizational outcomes, whether it be from a cultural or strategic standpoint. Future studies should compare faculty and staff who have worked at both HBCUs and PWIs to determine if the difference in environment predicts the displayed levels of these variables. It would also be interesting to see how the differences in organizational culture between the two institution types predicts SD and other forms of workplace behaviors. Since SD is a new concept, it would also be interesting to see if executive leadership at both institutional types are aware of potential divergences and analyze any current policies, they have in place to promote OCB and prevent or minimize the SD cycle. This will benefit the advancement of the construct as not much SD research is conducted in

university settings. Despite the difficulties HBCUs face in the modern landscape including state mandates, funding, shifts in the pedagogical environment, increased accountability and assessment measures, small endowment support, and increased competition (Gasman, 2013), understanding the relationship between SD, faculty demographics, and organizational citizenship behaviors should be a valuable factor in creating and implementing strategies to navigate the troubling environment. The findings of this study can assist leadership in understanding the dynamics of their faculty, which in turn will allow them to enhance the effectiveness of their leadership. Ultimately, this will benefit HBCUs in achieving sustainable and long-term success in the higher education market.

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Table 1

Fit Statistics

	GFI	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA
Structurational Divergence Original	0.76	0.73	0.11	0.13
Structurational Divergence Modified	0.90	0.92	0.05	0.09
Conscientiousness	0.95	0.92	0.05	0.17
Sportsmanship	0.99	1.00	0.02	0.04
Civic Virtue	0.98	0.97	0.03	0.13
Courtesy	0.98	0.99	0.02	0.08
Altruism	0.94	0.94	0.04	0.17

Table 2

Descriptive statistics

	ω	**Range**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Skew**	**Kurtosis**
Structurational Divergence	0.90	1.00-4.41	2.52	0.84	-0.05	-0.90
Conscientiousness	0.83	1.00-7.00	4.55	1.38	-0.58	-0.16
Sportsmanship	0.84	1.00-6.40	3.22	1.29	0.33	-0.98
Civic Virtue	0.81	1.00-7.00	4.46	1.32	-0.49	-0.53
Courtesy	0.91	1.00-7.00	4.57	1.48	-0.49	-0.69
Altruism	0.87	1.00-7.00	4.54	1.34	-0.47	-0.39
Age		18.00-67.00	29.68	8.57	2.16	5.72
Age Transformed		2.94-4.22	3.39	0.24	1.22	2.00
Salary		2.00-7.00	4.21	1.50	0.00	-1.29
Tenure		1.00-6.00	2.76	1.37	0.80	-0.07

Table 3

Correlation Matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Altruism	-					
2. Conscientiousness	0.82**	-				
3. Sportsmanship	-0.23**	-0.22**	-			
4. Civic Virtue	0.62**	0.62**	-0.01	-		
5. Courtesy	0.84**	0.77**	-0.24**	0.71**	-	
6. Structurational Divergence	-0.05	-0.08	0.40**	-0.11*	-0.05	-

*$p < 0.05$ level (2-tailed)
**$p < 0.01$ level (2-tailed)

4.2 Article Two

Rocker, K., Croucher, S., Kelly, S. (2025). Organizational culture, identification, structurational divergence, perceived immediacy, and organizational citizenship behaviors of HBCU students. *Howard Journal of Communications*. (Revise & Resubmit)

Following the investigation of faculty and staff in the first study, the second paper extends the research to the student population by examining the relationships between organizational culture, organizational identification, structurational divergence, perceived immediacy, and organizational citizenship behaviors for HBCU students. This study explores how HBCU culture, structure, and perceptions of university leadership influences the way students can identify with their institution and engage in behaviors that surpass formal expectations. Emphasis on organizational culture and the supervisor-subordinate relationship between university leadership and students guides this research in illustrating ways students develop identification and navigate structural challenges such as housing issues.

For HBCU leaders, effective management of the student population along with preservation of culture should be a top priority. This research aimed to assist HBCU leadership in navigating the changing communication dynamics that make up today's educational climate. The findings contribute to HBCU literature by expanding on existing theories that are more common with studies involving predominantly white institutions (PWIs).

This study directly addresses RO1 by exploring how organizational culture, identification, and structurational divergence influences student experiences at HBCUs. It also supports RO2 by examining how students perceive the communication and effectiveness of senior leadership, and how these perceptions influence the way they engage with their institution. This study received a revise and resubmit from the Howard Journal of Communications, a peer-reviewed journal recognized for publishing critical work on race, culture, and identity.

According to the SCImago Journal Rank (SJR), the Howard Journal of Communications holds a Q2 ranking in the field of Communication, indicating its relevance within the academic community as a journal that publishes impactful work (SCImago, 2024). The journal's focus on issues of race, culture, and underrepresented populations makes it a suitable location for the submitted article, as the study explores student experiences and leadership perceptions within HBCUs. Given the journal's history of publishing work surrounding cultural dynamics, especially within marginalized communities, this study aligns well with its thematic scope and extends the ongoing dialogue in that area. A revise and resubmit decision was received, further confirming the article's readership and relevance to the journal's intended direction.

252999388 (The Howard Journal of Communications) A reject and resubmit decision has been made on your submission

From: The Howard Journal of Communications <onbehalfof@manuscriptcentral.com>
Sent: Monday, 19 May 2025 5:22 AM
To: Stephen Michael Croucher <smcrouc@clemson.edu>
Cc: eguchis@wfu.edu <eguchis@wfu.edu>
Subject: 252999388 (The Howard Journal of Communications) A reject and resubmit decision has been made on your submission

This Message Is From An External Sender: Use caution when opening links or attachments if you do not recognize the sender.

18-May-2025

Dear Dr Stephen Croucher:

Your manuscript entitled "Organizational culture, identification, structurational divergence, perceived immediacy, and organizational citizenship behaviors of HBCU students" which you submitted to The Howard Journal of Communications, has been reviewed. The reviewer comments are included at the bottom of this letter.

I would like to inform you that the reviewers have raised concerns, and therefore your paper cannot be accepted as it is for publication in The Howard Journal of Communications. However since the reviewers do find some merit in the paper, I would like to invite you to revise and resubmit your essay, addressing the reviewers' concerns. For the HJC, this is considered as "major revision." And I hope you are going to resubmit your essay to us.

Please note that resubmitting your manuscript does not guarantee eventual acceptance, and that your resubmission will be subject to re-review before a decision is rendered.

You will be unable to make your revisions on the originally submitted version of your manuscript. Instead, revise your manuscript using a word processing program and save it on your computer.

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STATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTION
DOCTORATE WITH PUBLICATIONS/MANUSCRIPTS

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In which chapter is the manuscript/published work?	Chapter 4 (4.2)

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationships between organizational culture, organizational identification, structurational divergence, perceived immediacy, and organizational citizenship behaviors for students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Survey data from 250 HBCU students revealed that the teamwork and morale dimension of organizational culture positively predicted altruistic organizational citizenship behaviors for students, while negatively correlating with structurational divergence. Additionally, perceived immediacy demonstrated a positive relationship with the teamwork and morale dimension of organizational culture. Organizational identification demonstrated inverse relationships between altruistic organizational citizenship behaviors, structurational divergence, and perceived immediacy. This study stresses the role of HBCU senior leadership in creating supportive environments that align with student expectations, while also mitigating structural challenges. We offer actionable insights for leadership to effectively navigate the evolving landscape of HBCUs and their student populations, while preserving the cultural heritage and unique identity upon which these institutions were established.

Keywords: organizational culture, organizational identification, structurational divergence, perceived immediacy, organizational citizenship behaviors, HBCU, PWI

Organizational culture, identification, structurational divergence, perceived immediacy, and organizational citizenship behaviors of HBCU students.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have been a driver for advancing educational equality within higher educational institutions in the United States since the 19th century. These culturally centered institutions have gained relevancy both historically and in today's climate, stemming from various triumphs and failures throughout the years. The Higher Education Act of 1965 recognized HBCUs as "a school of higher learning that was accredited and established before 1964, and whose principal mission was the education of African Americans" (Thurgood Marshall College Fund, n.d.). Despite their historical significance and impact for minority communities, HBCUs face unique organizational challenges that potentially influence their student populations. HBCUs have been recognized for having environments that specifically tailor to Black students from a cultural and pedological aspect (Fleming, 1985). Despite the importance of HBCUs for educating Black students, HBCUs are represented in scant research (Kelly et al., 2023). One of the most notable deficits for studying HBCUs is their inclusion in measurement development studies, which has led to measurements that capture the experiences and perspectives of predominantly white institutions (PWIs) but fail to capture the unique experiences of Black students and faculty (James & Kelly, 2024). This paper answers the calls of Kelly et al. (2023) to better represent HBCUs in research and to explore the extent to which constructs developed within predominantly White institutions are applicable to HBCUs. This study specifically examines how organizational culture and identity influence two constructs at HBCUs: structurational divergence (SD) and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB).

HBCU student population

Today's HBCUs still function as a place where education and culture combine to benefit Black communities. Often praised for being a welcoming environment for Black students (Johnson & McGowan, 2017), HBCUs remain instrumental in providing people of color opportunities to advance their educational needs while also serving as a foundation of support for minority communities as they navigate cultural challenges commonly encountered in academia. In 2022, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2023a) reported a total of 99 HBCUs in the United States. These institutions are distributed among 19 states, Washington, D.C., and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Of these, 50 institutions were public, while the remaining 49 were private, nonprofit institutions.

According to data from the NCES, the enrollment of Black students at HBCUs varied from 1976 through 2020, peaking with 266,000 students in 2010. Similarly, HBCU student populations saw a 47% increase during the same period, peaking at around 327,000 students. Total enrollment however fell 11% between 2010 and 2022, but numbers stabilized in 2022 at around 289,000 for total enrollment and 219,00 for Black students. Although HBCUs represent only 3% of all colleges and universities in the U.S., they are responsible for nearly 20% of all Black American graduates and produce 25% of Black graduates in the STEM fields (United Negro College Fund, 2023). There is also evidence that Black students who attend HBCUs have higher success rates in completing their degrees within four years compared to those at other institutional types (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Although Black students represent the majority at HBCUs, the demographic makeup is gradually shifting to include a broader range of ethnicities. The NCES reported that in 2022, non-Black students accounted for 24% of the enrollment at HBCU's, an increase from 15% in 1976 (National Center for Education

Statistics, 2023b). As diversity within HBCUs continues to grow, along with the need to maintain a commitment in supporting Black students, senior leadership must navigate and maintain a certain organizational culture and identity that supports the entire student body.

Organizational culture

Organizational culture (OC) has been shown to have significant implications for the success and performance of organizations (Carvalho et al., 2023). OC is the foundational set of beliefs shaped by organizational members through external adaption or internal integration (Schein, 1992). Similarly, OC has been defined by the shared meanings present through patterns of beliefs, symbols, rituals, and myths, which develop over time to assist organizations in becoming more cohesive (Glaser et al., 1987; Pettigrew, 1979). The culture of organizations is crucial for success, as it allows leaders to manage subordinates in not only achieving high motivation levels, but adhering to organizational goals (Schein, 2004). Schein explains that exploring cultural issues allows individuals to better understand what's going on in organizations, as well as what it takes to run them efficiently.

For HBCUs, the idea of culture is often reflected in familial or community centered approaches. Davis (2006) describes HBCUs as an "extended family" for their student populations (p. 43) and goes on to provide a basis for how HBCU culture influences successful outcomes. He states:

At HBCUs, it takes the entire institutional family to produce competent graduates. The administration, faculty, staff, alumni, and community people who take a personal interest in the individual student is that extended family. They provide encouragement and emotional support and, in many cases, financial assistance. Physicians, attorneys, educators, government officials, military officers, etc., who are graduates of HBCUs can attest that, at critical junctures in their

lives, the extended family provided the support that enabled them to persist to graduation. (p. 43-44)

Aside from the personal interest and individual support provided by HBCU stakeholders, culture can also be seen through the lens of a "culture specific pedagogy" (Brown et al., 2001, p. 599). Curriculum is still expected to meet the standards of other institutional types; however, the integration of culturally responsive teaching practices that reflect the values and experiences of Black Americans is present. This is one factor that distinguishes HBCUs from other institutional types, specifically predominately White institutions (PWIs) where race wasn't a motivating factor is initial establishments. Schexnider (2008) notes that "enrollment at a Black college or university is perceived by some to be more likely to provide a well-rounded set of experiences including academic and personal development, mutual support and confidence-building in an environment conducive to a healthy psyche" (p. 501). This psyche is largely due to the culture that HBCUs embody, and many "African American students are seeking knowledge about their history and culture in ways that they feel only a Black college experience can accommodate" (Schexnider, 2008, p. 501). This unique cultural environment is something HBCU presidents/chancellors need to consider as university dynamics continue to evolve. They must remain aware of their students' intentions to attend an HBCU, ensuring that they actively work towards preserving the HBCU culture as student's expectations change over time. The shared meanings that make up OC helps organizational members make sense of their involvement, which ends up being used in developing identities at the individual level (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006). For HBCU students, developing a strong sense of identity is important, as it contributes to the collective missions of these institutions, and allows them to feel a sense of belonging within an environment that's culturally unique.

Organizational Identification

Organizational identification (OI) is a type of social identification (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) where individuals define themselves based on their affiliation and membership within an organization (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Mael and Ashforth (1992) describe it as a "perception of oneness with or belongingness to an organization" (p. 104), which exists when individuals feel their organization has distinctive traits that reflect who they are, connects with their sense of self, and enhances their social identity. Numerous studies (Cheney, 1983; Cheney & Christensen, 2001; Dutton et al., 1994; Hall et al., 1970) have examined OI, making it a meaningful area of study for scholars within the organizational communication and social psychology disciplines. From initial conceptualizations, scholars have looked at the role OI plays in university settings (Croucher et al., 2009; Myers et al., 2016; Stensaker, 2015), as understanding individual and institutional relationships can provide implications for areas such as student satisfaction (Wilkins et al., 2016), student trust (Heffernan et al., 2018), organizational prestige (Mael & Ashforth, 1992) and organizational innovativeness (Khorshid & Mehdiabadi, 2021).

HBCUs possess unique characteristics that shape their organizational identity, a concept described by Albert and Whetten (1985), as the collective understanding among members of an organization's central, distinctive, and enduring traits, which ultimately influences how the organization defines and presents itself to stakeholders. Organizational members of HBCUs share a collective identity often referred to as the "HBCU experience", which Crewe (2017) refers to as "education with intent" (p. 364). This intent comes from the commitment to embracing the cultural heritage of Black Americans, while at the same time allowing culture to fuel academic initiatives and university governance. The HBCU experience plays an important role in sustaining HBCU organizational culture. As students identify, primarily through the

cultural heritage and missions of their institution, a sense of belonging is developed. Research has shown Black students are motivated to attend HBCUs based upon this cultural and racial identity (Allen et al., 2018; Davis et al., 2018; Nguyen & Gasman, 2024). This identification not only strengthens the relationship students have with the university, but should be encouraged by senior leadership, as OI in students has been shown to contribute to institutional growth (Chawla & Srivastava, 2016). This growth is guided by the actions and behaviors organizational members contribute back to the institution. Research indicates the stronger the identification members have with their organization, the more often a member will exhibit behaviors that benefit the organization (Dutton et al., 1994). For HBCUs, attaining increased efforts from the student population could significantly benefit the overall institutional image and serve as the motivation for other stakeholders to demonstrate these types of behaviors.

Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB)

Organ (1988) defines OCB as voluntary behaviors individuals in organizations perform that are not explicitly rewarded but benefit the organization in overall performance. These behaviors are often personal choices, meaning the organization doesn't penalize individuals who decide not to participate in these actions that usually fall outside the formal reward systems in place. Organ (1988) identifies five dimensions of OCB: altruism, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, courtesy, and civic virtue. Altruism involves helping others with tasks or problems related to the organization. For students, this might involve helping newly oriented students assimilate into the university culture without being asked to do so. Sportsmanship involves refraining from complaints and grievances when faced with organizational inconveniences. This study highlights issues related to housing, which has become an important concern for many HBCUs (Dahl et al., 2022). Students demonstrating sportsmanship behaviors might adapt or remain patient when

dealing with housing related inconveniences, instead of voicing their complaints. Conscientiousness involves behaviors that extend past the minimum requirements when it comes to punctuality, attendance, and the effective use of time and resources. Students can demonstrate conscientiousness behaviors by consistently attending classes on time, even when attendance isn't mandatory, as well as making full use of campus resources such as the library and other facilities directed at student success. Courtesy refers to behaviors that demonstrate an effort to avoid organizational conflicts with others. For students, this would involve taking actions such as being respectful in handling disagreements with peers and adhering to the rules and regulations when using shared spaces. Civic virtue involves actively participating in and contributing to the day-to-day activities and concerns of the organization. Getting involved on campus without being pushed to do so by the institution is a way students can demonstrate this type of behavior. These behaviors that constitute OCB are independent of each other and may be predicted by specific organizational contexts and differences in individuals.

Existing research on OCB has traditionally focused on examining these behaviors among employees within organizational settings and how managers can benefit from these behaviors in achieving positive outcomes (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1994; Organ, 1988; Ehrhart, 2004). In a university setting, the relationship between senior leadership and students could be looked at in a similar way. Leaders should be concerned about ways in which they can encourage students to engage in more OCB. Allison et al. (2010) linked OCB to business students on the verge of entering the business world by finding students who engaged in OCB displayed higher levels of academic performance, as measured by their productivity and GPA. This research also suggests the OCB developed in the classroom could serve as a predictor of career success in future business settings, making an argument that educators need to be aware of OCB in their students

because it can potentially increase their students' success and readiness for the workforce. OC has also been linked to OCB. Laihad and Pasande (2023) discuss how "as the organizational culture becomes more favorable or aligned with certain values and behaviors, OCB tends to increase" in a university context (p. 4284). Building on previous research that highlights the positive relationship between OI, OC, and OCB (Aldrin, 2019; Laihad & Retnowati, 2018), this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Students who perceive their HBCU as having a strong organizational culture will participate in more organizational citizenship behaviors.

H2: Students who have strong organizational identification with their HBCU will participate in more organizational citizenship behaviors.

Structurational divergence (SD)

Structurational divergence (SD) as a concept builds on Giddens' structuration theory, where structure is described as systems of "rules and resources" that are continuously constructed and utilized as individuals navigate within society (Giddens, 1984, p. 17). Nicotera et al. (2015) extends this theory by looking at the negative outcomes that could occur when "the rules from different structures are incompatible but equally compelling" (p. 373). SD was originally conceptualized in the health care field (Nicotera et al., 2003), by examining how nurses dealt with conflicts between what was expected of them and competing demands from existing organizational rules and policies. Nicotera and Clinkscales (2010) suggest that as individuals feel "compelled to simultaneously fulfill obligations from multiple systems of social rules, each normatively sanctioned by its own structure" a cycle of negative communication can arise from incompatibilities within the structures (p. 32).

SD is comprised of two components, the SD-nexus and SD-cycle (Nicotera & Mahon, 2013). The SD-nexus is present when "interactants are compelled by simultaneous and incompatible obligations from contradictory systems of social rules, each normatively sanctioned by its own logic and/ or ideology" (Nicotera, 2025, p. 188). This intersection leads to the SD-cycle, which is often seen through individuals getting caught up in a cycle of immobilization, unresolved conflict issues, and lack of development. This study specifically examines SD as it relates to housing issues for students at HBCUs. Housing functions as a site where students' realization of an organizational structure, and their resulting contradictions about the management of that structure can be immediately examined. SD-nexuses may emerge from the discrepancies between students' expectations for adequate housing and the university's ability to meet those demands. Students often enroll with the expectation of accessible and well-maintained housing, but issues such as underfunding (Commodore & Njoku, 2020) and aging infrastructures (Matthews, 2011) can result in competing priorities that create structural misalignments for both students and senior leadership. This misalignment could potentially create SD-cycles, resulting in a loop immobilization and lack of development when it comes to addressing these housing concerns. Students may feel immobilized by the lack of initiative being taken in resolving their housing concerns, while senior leadership may be compelled to address other institutional issues, making them unable to provide an adequate or effective solution to students. These possibilities make housing an appropriate context to observe SD, as students and senior leadership may find themselves tasked with competing obligations.

The possibility of an SD-cycle developing between students and senior leadership on housing issues brings forth an interesting question: could a strong OC or OI at HBCUs lessen the effects of SD on housing issues? Following the COVID-19 pandemic, housing insecurities have

become a significant concern for HBCUs, which can be seen through challenges such as maintaining consistent living conditions and providing access to affordable housing (Dahl et al., 2022). Considering many HBCUs are underfunded (Douglas-Gabriel, 2023), HBCUs often face financial constraints that don't allow them to address key areas such as student housing. A 2021 protest by Howard University students sheds light on the challenges many HBCU students face with inadequate housing conditions. Recognized as the longest sit-in protest in Howard history, students mobilized to address the subpar living conditions, which included issues of flooding, mold, mice, and defective air conditioning (Richardson, 2021). With Howard being considered the wealthiest HBCU (Cain at al., 2018), the presence of such severe housing issues emphasizes the challenges faced by these institutions, even among those with access to greater resources. Having a strong OC that embraces the essence of HBCUs may create a sense of belonging and shared purpose among students, potentially influencing their ability to navigate these issues or direct their focus to issues they deem more important. Likewise, a strong OI reflecting the unique history and missions of HBCUs could temper student expectations with institutional realities, potentially reducing the likelihood of a housing related SD-cycle. To investigate these possibilities, this study poses two hypotheses:

H3: Students who perceive their HBCU as having a strong organizational culture will experience lower levels of structurational divergence regarding housing issues.

H4: Students who have strong organizational identification with their HBCU will experience lower levels of structurational divergence regarding housing issues.

Perceived Immediacy (PI)

Perceived immediacy has been studied in a variety of communication contexts including organizational, instructional, and interpersonal (Kelly & Westerman, 2016). When examining the

communication between a message sender and receiver, PI deals with the perceived psychological closeness between these groups (Kelly et al., 2015). PI extends the work of Mehrabian (1981), who identified nonverbal behaviors such as smiling, forward lean, making eye contact, relaxed posture, non-threatening touch, and using paralinguistics as immediate behaviors communicators use to encourage openness and likeness among each other.

PI has been applied to supervisor-subordinate relationships, which provides a basis for exploring the impact PI has with senior leadership and students at HBCUs. When looking at behavior's supervisors displayed to their subordinates, and the resulting responses they received in return, PI was found to be a mediator in various organizational outcomes including subordinate burnout (Kelly & Westerman, 2014), dissent (Kelly et al., 2023), and self-censoring (Kelly et al., 2022). Positive relationships have also been found between supervisor immediate behaviors and subordinate perceived immediacy in relation to the expression of certain OCB by subordinates (Kelly et al., 2018). For HBCUs, where senior leadership essentially serves as a supervisor figure in the organizational hierarchy, a strategic approach in increasing immediate behaviors in the pursuit of achieving favorable levels of PI could significantly influence students' perceptions of their institutions culture and identity. This leads us to believe:

H5: There is a positive relationship between the perceived immediacy between Presidents/Chancellors and students and organizational culture.

H6: There is a positive relationship between perceived immediacy between Presidents/Chancellors and students' organizational identification.

Method

After receiving ethical approval, the researchers collected a nationally representative sample from HBCUs in the U.S. (n = 250) from April to August 2023 using Survey Monkey. The

primary researcher, who had previously attended an HBCU for undergraduate and graduate studies reached out to acquaintances and initiated a snowball sampling method. Although a snowball sampling technique was used, several steps were taken to enhance the representativeness of the sample. Participants were instructed to complete the survey only if they were currently enrolled as a student at an HBCU. Considering the limited number of HBCUs, this method ensured all respondents met the criteria. Additionally, the primary researcher distributed the survey via LinkedIn, Facebook, X, and Instagram during the same period. Participants were given the opportunity to enter a drawing with an opportunity to win a $100USD Amazon gift card prize after the completion of the online survey. Full demographic information is presented in Table 1.

(Insert Table 1 here)

Measures

The survey included demographic questions and the following measures: Measure of Organizational Culture (Glaser et al., 1987), Organizational Identification (Cheney, 1983), Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (Podsakoff et al., 1990), Structurational Divergence (Nicotera et al., 2010), and Perceived Immediacy (Kelly et al., 2015). Demographic items were also included to capture amount of student debt, family members that attended an HBCU, age, sex, tenure (i.e., years studying at the university), ethnicity, classification, most used social media platform for family & friends, most used social media platform to view/receive (messages, announcements, and news) from the university, and did the student attend any non HBCU during their higher education tenure. Before hypothesis testing, all measures were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), following criteria set by Hu and Bentler (1999). Each

measure was assessed for validity, and as needed, items causing statistically significant residual error were removed. All the retained items can be found in Appendix 1.

Measure of Organizational Culture is a survey that includes 36 items. This survey uses a Likert-type scale that looks at a grouping of items in six subscales: Teamwork, Morale, Information flow, Involvement, supervision, and meetings. The measure used a 5-level scale ranging from *"To a very little extent*" (1) to "*To a very great extent*" (5). Based on CFA, eight items were deleted (2, 12, 18, 21, 25, 30, 31, and 33) to achieve a valid multi-dimensional factor structure: $\chi^2(35) = 409.14$, $p = .003$, CFI = .96, SRMR = .05, RMSEA = .03. Based on re-specification, only two factors of six remained: teamwork ($\omega = .74$, $M = 3.23$, $SD = .63$) and morale ($\omega = .76$, $M = 3.25$, $SD = .69$).

Measure of Organizational Identification contains a 25-item Organizational Identification Questionnaire (OIQ) that was used to assess the outcome or state of identification in organizations. Two items were removed due to inconsistencies in assessing a student population. Items were score on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from *very strong agreement* (7) to *very strong disagreement* (1). Based on CFA, three items were deleted (8, 16, and 20) to achieve a uni-dimensional factor structure: $\chi^2(170) = 222.88$, $p = .004$, CFI = .94, SRMR = .08, RMSEA = .04, ($\omega = .85$, $M = 3.36$, $SD = .52$).

Measure of Organizational Citizenship Behaviors features 24 items that assess five factors (*altruism, courtesy, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, and civic virtue*) to describe specific behaviors. Each behavior is rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7). Based on CFA, four items were deleted (5, 10, 12, and 20) to achieve a valid multi-dimensional factor structure: $\chi^2(94) = 79.62$, $p = .86$, CFI = 1, SRMR = .10, RMSEA = .01.

Based on re-specification, only one of five factors remained: altruism (ω = .70, *M* = 4.53, *SD* = 1.23).

Measure of structurational divergence is comprised of a 17-item self-report instrument that measures the extent to which an individual experiences structurational divergence in his/her organizational experience. The measure used a 5-level scale ranging from *rarely* (1) to *frequently* (5). Based on CFA, two items were deleted (4, 11, and 16) to achieve a valid measure: $\chi^2(77) = 134.89$, $p < .0001$, CFI = .91, SRMR = .07, RMSEA = .05. The descriptive statistics for the measure were ω = .83 (*M* = 2.88, *SD* = .56).

Measure of Perceived Immediacy features a nine-item semantic differential assessment that uses a seven-point response range to indicate how students felt about their President/Chancellor (i.e., warm/cold, welcoming/unwelcoming, sociable/unsociable). CFA showed the measure to be valid: $\chi^2(27) = 64.85$, $p < .0001$, CFI = .98, SRMR = .05, RMSEA = .08. The descriptive statistics for the measure were ω = .96 (*M* = 3.75, *SD* = 1.40).

Results

To confirm the hypotheses, Pearson's correlations were conducted. The correlations are in Table 2. Analysis of the correlations reveals support for some of the hypothesis. *H1* proposed a positive relationship between organizational culture (teamwork and morale) and organizational citizenship behaviors (altruism). This hypothesis was supported: teamwork and altruism ($r = .56$, $p < .001$), and morale and altruism ($r = .48$, $p < .001$). *H2* proposed a positive relationship between organizational identification and organizational citizenship behaviors (altruism). This hypothesis was not supported, as an inverse relationship was found: ($r = -.61$, $p < .001$). *H3* proposed a negative relationship between organizational culture (teamwork and morale) and structurational divergence. This hypothesis was supported: teamwork and structurational

divergence (r = -.16, p < .001), and morale and structurational divergence (r = -.23, p < .001). *H4* proposed a negative relationship between organizational identification and structurational divergence. This hypothesis was not supported, as an inverse relationship was found: (r = .40, p < .001). *H5* proposed a positive relationship between perceived immediacy and organizational culture (teamwork and morale). This hypothesis was supported: perceived immediacy and teamwork (r = .62, p < .001), and perceived immediacy and morale (r = .62, p < .001). Lastly, *H6* proposed a positive relationship between perceived immediacy and organizational identification. This hypothesis was not supported, as an inverse relationship was found: (r = -.72, p < .001).

(Insert Table 2 here)

Discussion

This study produced some interesting findings, as three of the proposed hypotheses showed inverse relationships. It's reasonable to hypothesize that students with strong OI would naturally engage in more OCB and experience less cycles of SD, given their deeper connection to the institution. It could also be assumed that a positive relationship would exist between PI with senior leadership and students' OI, as closer relational dynamics are often associated with stronger institutional ties (Schuemann, 2014); however, these results all revealed inverse relationships. In contrast, the results point to organizational culture as a positive influence on these outcomes, rather than identification. Students who perceived their HBCU as having a strong organizational culture were more likely to engage in organizational citizenship behaviors and reported lower levels of structurational divergence related to housing issues. Positive relationship also existed between the perceived immediacy between senior leadership and students and the strength of the organizational culture.

As expected, students would be more willing to help others with tasks or problems related to the institution when they felt they could work well with other students while also being able trust the university is providing the necessary support when it comes to their interests. Senior leadership needs to focus on creating outlets for students to collaborate and build natural relationships with other students, while also investing in morale boosting initiatives. If leadership can nurture altruistic behaviors from students, this will increase the amount of teamwork and morale present, hence strengthening the overall OC. HBCUs typically have smaller student populations compared to PWIs (Boland & Gasman, 2014). This gives leadership an opportunity to establish more meaningful relationships with students, a task that may be less practical at larger institutions due to numbers alone. Senior leadership should increase the phycological closeness they have with students, which could be as simple as being more visible and assessable on campus. In doing so, they can create an OC where their approachability can be leveraged to get students to buy into different organizational initiatives, especially through the aspect of teamwork, which could be seen in forms like student groups working together for the greater good of the institution. This increased sense of connection between senior leadership and students can also lay the foundation for addressing broader structural challenges within the institution.

Housing issues are one of many structural concerns for HBCUs but remains as a key concern for both students and senior leadership, as HBCUs have been dealing with housing issues following decades of unjust funding (Lu, 2022). One way to keep SD at a manageable level is for senior leadership to be more transparent with students. Using housing as an example, there's a possibility that HBCU students can better cope with these issues because they know resources haven't always been systematically available to HBCUs. In this case, transparency

from senior leadership could boost student morale, while also encouraging students to lessen their grievances by essentially working with their institution to demand HBCUs get adequate treatment, instead of blaming the institution themselves. In preserving such a historically influenced OC (Cantey et al., 2013), HBCU leaders need to better understand their student populations and know how to effectively engage them to decrease internal conflicts, such as the housing crisis.

Some findings require further exploration, as the way students identified with their HBCU didn't align with our anticipated outcomes. While you might expect students to be more altruistic, experience less divergences on issues like housing, and have more PI with senior leadership when they have stronger identification with the institution, there may be some underlying forces that shifts their attitudes and behaviors. One factor that could impact these relationships is burnout (Neumann, Finaly-Neumann, & Reichel, 1990). At HBCU's where students may identify with HBCUs for who they are rather than how they operate, students who strongly identify might be involved in activities that limit their ability to demonstrate these types of behavioral outcomes. As HBCUs continue to address inequalities at the institutional level, students may feel overwhelmed by the demands placed upon them. This could limit their capacity to engage in voluntary behaviors, increase their experience of SD, or cause an overall disconnect, which may affect how they perceive senior leadership. Although strong OI typically leads to positive outcomes (Al Hassani & Wilkins, 2022; Cindrakasih & Hartono, 2024; Wilkins et al., 2016), these unexpected correlations may reflect the unique pressures students at HBCUs face as they balance their personal expectations with institutional challenges. These pressures might force students to balance high levels of involvement with limited institutional resources,

deal with unmet expectations from university administration, or feel the weight of the systemic barriers that often plague HBCUs both internally and externally.

Limitations and Future Research

This research was not without limitations. First, SD theory focuses on causation. Cross-sectional research, such as this study, cannot confirm causation, thus inferences are limited to relational patterns. Second, there was measurement noise in the study. The organizational culture, organizational identification, organizational citizenship behaviors, and structurational divergence measures all lost items through the CFA process due to misfit.

Notably, this was the first time these measures were used in an HBCU sample. Given the neglect of HBCUs and minority voices in general in measurement development work (Kelly et al., 2023), it may be that the items lost were not representative of the viewpoints of this population. Else, it may be that age is an issue with these measures. As new generations of survey takers read the words that compose items, the items can lose utility because new generation of survey takers put different meaning behind the words (Autman & Kelly, 2017; Croucher et al., 2024). It is notable that only the perceived immediacy measure (Kelly et al., 2015), the newest measure, maintained factor structure. Only through replication work can nuances in the ways diverse populations respond to measures or consistent item misfit be identified (McEwan, 2020; McEwan et al., 2018). Thus, this study calls for replication of this paper in HBCU populations and other educational settings to identify if the measurement issues were unique to this study, unique to HBCUs, or prevalent across samples in with these aging measures.

Conclusion

As HBCUs continue to evolve while addressing these issues, students may develop different perceptions or attitudes in the way they see themselves in the grand scheme of things.

Understanding these dynamics and supporting students should be a priority for senior leadership as they work to convert stronger identification into more positive student outcomes. Future research should focus on how burnout and other factors such as limited resources impact students at the HBCU level. As new approaches to leadership are taking place with the turnover of various HBCU presidents and chancellors, along with increased student enrollments, a longitudinal research approach may be beneficial in assessing how leadership approaches continue to influence student perceptions, behaviors, and overall engagement over time. This will provide a better understanding of how to create environments where students can thrive individually but also contribute collectively to the future success of HBCUs.

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Table 1

Participant Demographics

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Age		23.76	4.49
Years at HBCU		2.27	.90
Family members who have attended an HBCU		3.02	1.47
Sex			
Male	109 (43.6%)		
Female	140 (56%)		
Other	1 (.4%)		
Race			
Black/African American	186 (74.4%)		
White/Caucasian	43 (17.2%)		
Other	21 (8.4%)		

Table 2

Correlations for Study Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
(1) Teamwork	-					
(2) Morale	.71**	-				
(3) Org Identification	.57**	-.59**	-			
(4) Altruism	.56**	.48**	-.61**	-		
(5) Perceived Immediacy	.62**	.62**	-.72**	.60**	-	
(6) Structurational Divergence	-.16*	-.23**	.40**	-.20**	-.39**	-

Note: * $p < .05$, $p < .001$.

Appendix 1- Retained Items

Measure of Organizational Culture

1: People I study with are direct and honest with each other.

3: People I study with resolve disagreements cooperatively.

4: People I study with function as a team.

5: People I study with are cooperative and considerate.

6: People I study with constructively confront problems.

7: People I study with are good listeners.

8: People I study with are concerned about each other.

9: Students and faculty have a productive working relationship.

10: This university motivates me to put out my best efforts.

11: This university respects its students.

13: Studying here feels like being part of a family.

14: There is an atmosphere of trust in this university.

15: This university motivates students to be efficient and productive.

16: I get enough information to understand the big picture here.

17: When changes are made the reasons why are made clear.

19: I get the information I need to do my studies well.

20: I have a say in decisions that affect my studies.

22: This university values the ideas of students at every level.

23: My opinions count in this university.

24: Study requirements are made clear by my President/Chancellor.

26: My President/Chancellor takes criticism well.

27: My President/Chancellor delegates responsibility.

28: My President/Chancellor is approachable.

29: My President/Chancellor gives me criticism in a positive manner.

32: Decisions made at meetings get put into action.

34: Our discussions in meetings stay on track.

35: Time in meetings is time well spent.

36: Meetings tap the creative potential of the people present.

Measure of Organizational Identification

1: In general, the people employed by the university are working toward the same goals.

2: I am very proud to be a student at the university.

3: The university's image in the community represents me as well.

4: I often describe myself to others by saying, "I study for this university" or "I am from this university."

5: We at this university are different from other HBCUs.

6: I am glad I chose to study for this university rather than another university.

7: I talk up the university to my friends as a great university to study for.

9: I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help the university be successful.

10: I become irritated when I hear others outside the university criticize the university.

11: I have warm feelings toward the university as a place to study.

12: I would be quite willing to spend the rest of my studies with the university.

13: I feel that the university cares about me.

14: The record of the university is an example of what dedicated people can achieve.

15: I have a lot in common with others studying at the university.

17: My association with the university is only a small part of who I am.

18: I like to tell others about projects that the university is working on.

19: I find that my values and the values of the university are very similar.

21: I would describe the university as a large "family" in which most members feel a sense of belonging.

22: I find it easy to identify with the university.

23: I really care about the fate of the university.

Measure of Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

1: My attendance at the university is above the norm.

2: I do not take extra breaks.

3: I obey the university's rules and regulations even when no one is watching.

4: I am one of the university's most conscientious students.

6: I always focus on what's wrong, rather than the positive side.

7: I tend to make "mountains out of molehills."

8: I always find fault with what the university is doing.

9: I am the classic "squeaky wheel" that always needs greasing.

11: I attend functions that are not required but help the university's image.

13: I read and keep up with university announcements, memos, and so on.

14: I take steps to try to prevent problems with other students.

15: I am mindful of how my behavior affects other people's studies.

16: I do not abuse the rights of others.

17: I try to avoid creating problems for other students.

18: I consider the impact of my actions on other students.

19: I help others who have been absent.

21: I help orient new students even though it is not required.

22: I willingly help others who have study related problems.

23: I am always ready to lend a helping hand to those around me.

Measure of Structurational Divergence

1: I feel like I am fighting unnecessary fires at the university when it comes to housing.

2: People are caught in a cycle undermining one another over housing concerns.

3: I feel obligated to fulfill opposing demands at the same time over housing concerns.

4: I am treated with respect by the university when I raise housing concerns.

5: I experience unnecessary stress at the university because of people playing games over housing.

6: The politics of the university prevent students from having their housing needs addressed.

7: Faculty & Staff in my university are team players in resolving housing issues.

8: The concerns of the university surpass the needs of the student.

9: People at my university sabotage one another over housing issues.

10: I am damned if I do, damned if I don't when it comes to voicing housing concerns.

11: University administrators will help me out if I tell them I am feeling overwhelmed about housing issues.

12: Administrators at my university hold personal vendettas.

13: Administrators view students differently, and this causes conflict.

14: Backstabbing is a problem at my university.

15: Administrative procedures get in the way of what's best for the student and their housing

concerns.

16: I can't go to the housing office or similar office for help resolving conflicts because she/he won't do anything to help.

17: I feel like I am between a rock and a hard place.

Measure of Perceived Immediacy

Warm								Cold
Comforting								Uncomforting
Responsive								Unresponsive
Personable								Disagreeable
Reassuring								Disheartening
Welcoming								Unwelcoming
Favorable								Unfavorable
Involved								Aloof
Sociable								Unsociable

4.3 Article Three

Rocker, K., Kelly, S., Croucher, S. (2025). An exploration of HBCU faculty and staff organizational identification and culture. *Communication Reports*. (Under review)

The third and final paper in this research explores how organizational culture predicts organizational identification among faculty and staff at HBCUs. A key area of interest was exploring how the unique history and culture found at HBCUs could potentially impact the way faculty and staff develop identification or attachment to their institution. There exists a gap the literature concerning HBCUs, where organizational communication research has neglected the potential impact that a unique organizational structure might have on traditional norms (Rocker et al., 2025). To add to this growing body of research, this paper explores whether commonly studied dimensions of organizational culture (Glaser et al., 1987), function as meaningful predictors of organizational identification for HBCU faculty and staff.

Understanding the relationship between culture and identification in this context can provide practical insights for HBCU leaders as they look to implement efficient strategies that benefit employees and the overall organization. Gaining a deeper understanding of how faculty and staff identify with their HBCU, and how organizational culture influences their commitment are factors leaders need to consider when managing their engagement with employees. At institutions that operate based off historical foundations and culture, ensuring that these factors align with the values and experiences of their faculty and staff is essential for employee commitment and engagement. This paper explores feelings and behaviors of HBCU faculty and staff and provides recommendations for senior leadership.

This study satisfies RO1 by assessing the impact of organizational culture on faculty and staff identification. It also contributes meaningfully to RO3 by providing practical understanding into the historical and cultural functions of organizational identification at HBCUs, a context that

requires more scholarly attention. The study is currently under review, and was submitted to Communication Reports, a peer-reviewed journal that publishes studies focused on advancing theoretical and practical understandings of communication processes (SCImago, 2024).

According to the SCImago Journal Rank (SJR), Communication Reports holds a Q1 classification, solidifying its reputation within the communication discipline. The decision to submit this article to Communication Reports was strategic, as the journal is known for publishing empirical research that looks at organizational processes. This makes Communication Reports an appropriate location for this study, as the function of organizational identification and morale within the context of HBCUs was examined. The study supplements existing literature by presenting a culturally grounded exploration of faculty and staff dynamics within HBCUs, adding future support for understanding the processes that occur at these unique institutions.

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In which chapter is the manuscript/published work?	Chapter 4 (4.3)

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Abstract

Drawing on organizational culture and identification theories, this study (n = 190) explores how organizational culture predicts organizational identification among faculty and staff at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). A stepwise regression analysis revealed morale was the only significant predictor of organizational identification, with higher morale unexpectedly leading to lower identification. These findings highlight a disconnect between morale and identification, suggesting faculty and staff at HBCUs may derive their institutional attachment from sources beyond their immediate work environment. As HBCUs strive to uphold their historical missions, understanding how organizational culture shapes identification can provide insights for HBCU leadership. By leveraging this knowledge, leaders can develop strategic initiatives that strengthen employee commitment, ultimately contributing to the success of these institutions.

Keywords: Organizational culture, organizational identification, HBCU, instructional communication

An Exploration of HBCU Faculty and Staff Organizational Identification and Culture

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were created in response to systemic educational exclusion, providing higher educational opportunities to African Americans (Upton & Tanenbaum, 2014). HBCUs have played a major role in preserving culture and providing educational opportunities for Black communities since their creation. HBCUs are unique in campus culture, and this can be seen in the family-like environment where faculty members nurture a strong sense of support and belonging for students (Hirt et al., 2006). The most recent demographic breakdown indicates HBCU are made up of 56% African American or Black faculty members, whereas their counterparts, Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs), have contrastingly lower numbers of Black and Hispanic faculty at 5% (Gasman, 2021). This representation of Black faculty creates an inclusive organizational culture at HBCUs facilitating the environment that many refer to as the "HBCU experience" (Crewe, 2017). This environment provides comfort for Black students in higher education, who often feel alienated at PWIs (Hunn, 2014; Rankin & Reason, 2005).

There is a gap in literature regarding HBCUs, where norms of organizational communication research may not apply to this unique culture (Rocker et al., 2025). This gap of HBCU representation in research can also be seen in studies that focus on classroom and instructional communication (Kelly et al., 2023). This study seeks to address this gap by better understanding the unique cultural aspects of HBCUs and how that culture influences employees, specifically faculty and staff. As HBCUs continue to evolve and adapt to changes in the higher educational space, understanding how faculty and staff identify with their institution and the

impact organizational culture has on their commitment is essential for ensuring long term survivability and institutional effectiveness.

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture refers to the foundational set of beliefs and assumptions that organizational members develop as they respond to issues of external adaptation and internal integration (Keyton, 2014; Schein, 1992). Schein (1992) explains that when these beliefs and assumptions prove to be effective, they become the norm for new organizational members in the way they interpret, think about, and feel in response to those issues. As culture begins to take shape, members develop shared meanings that help them navigate the norms and expectations that make up their organization's structure (Keyton, 2014). Scholars have defined organizational culture in terms of these shared meanings, explaining that they are reflected through patterns of beliefs, symbols, rituals, and myths that evolve over time to help the organization become more cohesive (Glaser et al., 1987).

Sporn's (1996) seminal work applying organizational culture research to higher education institutions classified organizational culture as being strong or weak in the university context. In a strong university culture, members adhere to strong behavioral norms, embrace shared values, and demonstrate a willingness to maintain these standards. A weak culture is characterized by the presence of subcultures, along with differing views in values, violations of written and unwritten behavioral norms, and an overall absence of norms altogether. For example, faculty in a strong culture actively participate across departments to work towards shared institutional goals and initiatives, whereas in a weak culture, faculty are reluctant to collaborate and disengage from university-wide initiatives altogether. Outside the university, research on organizational culture suggests that developing strong cultures contributes to the success of organizations, while

neglecting cultural development leads to negative consequences for organizations, their employees, and stakeholders (Warrick, 2017).

Glaser et al. (1987) categorized organizational culture into six dimensions: teamwork, morale, information flow, involvement, supervision, and meetings. Teamwork is primarily concerned with the way organizational members function as a team. This dimension assesses the way members communicate about and confront potential issues that arise in a group setting. Morale refers to the way members feel about their working conditions. This includes their assessment of the general work atmosphere along with their motivation and feelings towards the character of the organization. Information flow deals with the way members perceive the flow of communication between individuals and groups in their organization, particularly the free flow of downward communication. This dimension reflects individuals' isolation and whether they feel disconnected from organizational processes. Involvement refers to the extent to which individuals feel their input in decision-making processes is valued, and whether top management encourages them to share opinions and suggestions that contribute to discussions happening in the organization. Supervision reflects employees' perspectives on their immediate supervisor, including how effectively expectations are communicated, and the extent to which they receive positive and negative feedback on their work performance. Lastly, meetings refer to members' perceptions of the frequency and productivity of meetings. These six dimensions collectively make up the culture in organizations and influence how employees interact with their work environment. Understanding the role of culture in shaping an organizational environment is key to recognize how individuals internalize these values and develop a sense of attachment due to the structure of their organization.

Organizational Identification

Organizational identification deals with the way individuals perceive themselves in their organization (Weisman et al., 2023). When organizational members develop an attachment or a sense of belonging within their organization, they can better identify with the organization because they perceive it as having traits that reflect who they are (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Organizational identification is often linked to social identity theory, which refers to how aware individuals are in their membership to a particular social group or multiple groups, along with the associated value and emotional significance they attach to their membership (Tajfel, 1978). This perspective has allowed scholars to conceptualize organizational identification, linking this ideology to the way individuals align their identity with the collective values and norms of their organization (Cheney, 1983; Cheney & Christensen, 2001). Prior research has examined organizational identification and found positive outcomes in relation to job performance (Walumbwa et al., 2008), organizational citizenship behaviors (Shen et al., 2014), and willingness to engage in behaviors for the benefit of the organization (Dutton et al., 1994). Organizational identification has also been looked at in university settings (Croucher et al., 2009; Myers et al., 2016), but only in the context of PWIs.

Organizational culture serves as the foundation in establishing identity for workplace citizens, meaning culture should be strongly tied to the experience. HBCU's approach to incorporating historical missions and having intentional approaches to education for the target population (Crewe, 2017) should influence the way faculty are expected to approach their duties, particularly in their pedagogical approach, shaping culture, unless the unexamined HBCU culture is unique from other organizations. Given that organizational identification is the collective understanding of an organizations' collective and enduring traits (Albert & Whetten, 1985), and the uniqueness of these characteristics in HBCUs (Crewe, 2017), organizational

identity must be studied as a potentially unique environment to understand how to better serve organizational members. This study seeks to explore how organizational culture functions within the unique HBCU experience to influence the process of identification among HBCU faculty and staff, hence the following research question:

RQ: How does organizational culture explain organizational identification for HBCU faculty and staff?

Method

Participants

In total, 190 faculty and staff participated in this study.[1] There were 99 participants who identified as male, 90 who identified as female, and one who identified with a third gender. Ethnic breakdown of the sample was as follows: 13 Black/African American, 7 Hispanic/Latinx, 7 Middle Eastern/North African, 6 Native American/Alaskan Native, 1 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 9 multiple ethnic identities, 144 White/Caucasian, and 3 other. Average age of participants was 29.7 (SD = 8.6). Participants' positions broke down as follows: 55 Assistant Professor, 40 non-tenure track, 35 staff, 23 Professor, 16 Association Professor, 13 Department Chair, 7 senior administration, and 1 unidentified.

Procedure

After receiving ethics approval, the researchers collected a nationally representative sample from HBCUs in the U.S. using Survey Monkey. The primary researcher had previously attended an HBCU for undergraduate and graduate work. Therefore, he reached out to acquaintances at HBCUs to initiate a snowball sampling method in addition to posting the study call on LinkedIn, Facebook, X, and Instagram. Participants were instructed to complete the

[1] Although none of the measures in this study were published in Author (2025), the sample came from the same data collection.

survey only if they currently worked at an HBCU. Participants were incentivized to participate by being given an opportunity to enter a drawing for a $100USD Amazon gift card after the completion of the online survey.

Instrumentation

Organizational Culture was measured with Glaser et al.'s (1987) assessment. The measure included 36 items that used a 7-point Likert-type scale with six subscales: teamwork, morale, information flow, involvement, supervision, and meetings. Organizational identification was assessed with Cheney's (1983) measure, which was composed of 25-item Likert-type items with a 7-point response range. All measures were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis to confirm that predicted factor structures aligned with observed factor structures. Descriptive statistics for all measures, including reliability scores, are shown in Table 1 and fit statistics from the confirmatory factor analyses are shown in Table 2. All measures were sound.

Results

To test the research question, a backwards method was applied for a linear regression with organizational identification as the dependent variable and organizational culture as the independent variable. In the final model of the backward regression analysis, the Durbin-Watson statistic was 1.50, suggesting no concern for autocorrelation in the residuals. Multicollinearity diagnostics indicated the variance inflation factor (VIF) values ranged from 2.20 to 4.16 in the initial model, with the highest VIF associated with Morale (VIF = 4.16), indicating no concerns for multicollinearity. As variables were removed, the VIF values decreased, with morale remaining the only predictor in the final model, where its VIF was 3.41. In the end, only morale was a statistically significant predictor of organizational identity (β = -.45, p < .001, R^2 = .22). Beta weights and p-values for the non-significant effects from Model 1 include teamwork (β = -

.02, p =.83), information flow (β = -.03, p = .79), involvement (β = -.04, p = .69), supervision (β = -.09, p = .36), and meeting (β = .15, p = .20).

Discussion

The results of this study showed that among the six organizational culture dimensions, only morale emerged as a significant predictor of organizational identification among HBCU faculty and staff. The remaining dimensions of supervision, teamwork, information flow, involvement, and meetings had effects close to zero. This suggests that within HBCUs, morale plays a more substantial role in predicting identification compared to other dimensions of organizational culture.

Higher morale didn't lead to stronger identification for HBCU faculty and staff. Instead, the higher the morale, the lower the identification with the HBCU organization. This finding highlights a critical vulnerability at HBCUs, where faculty and staff, despite experiencing high morale, may struggle to develop a strong sense of identification with their institution's organizational culture. Indeed, the fact that higher morale was related to lower organizational identification suggests that high morale may come from a disassociation with the organization, with joy coming from outside of the HBCU. Results revealed morale alone accounted for almost a quarter of the variance in organizational identification for HBCU faculty and staff, making it a substantive predictor.

The lack of statistical significance for the other five dimensions suggests that these aspects of organizational culture are not as important to the way faculty and staff at HBCUs identify as they are in other institutional contexts. This is an unexpected finding, diverging from what has been seen at other organizations (Schrodt, 2002). One possible explanation is that HBCUs pride themselves on creating identity from a historical standpoint (Crewe, 2017). This

emphasis of culture and identity wrapped in a historic mission may overshadow the effects of these organizational culture dimensions for HBCU employees. For example, while attachment to organizations may historically relate to identification (Mael & Ashforth, 1992), at HBCUs the attachment may be more to the ideal and historical meaning than the present workspace. This would mean teamwork, meeting, and supervision, critical communication opportunities for developing connection to the current work of the school (cf., Keyton et al., 2014) may instead be developed connection to the historic role of the organization, separating it from the current workplace. Additionally, information flow and supervision may not significantly impact identification due to faculty and staff perceptions of administrative leaderships instability in addressing HBCU specific challenges, which has been shown to decrease trust levels (Brocato, 2023). Faculty and staff may not trust administrative decision making, making supervision and the flow of information between organizational structures less meaningful in developing an attachment to their institution.

This study highlights a notably unexamined discrepancy within HBCU faculty and staff's organizational identification. While morale emerged as the strongest predictor of organizational identification, the inverse relationship suggests faculty and staff may feel fulfilled in their roles yet remain disconnected from their institution’s organizational identity. This finding is important in the HBCU context, where organizational culture and history play a key role in shaping faculty and staff experiences (Sloss, 2024). If faculty and staff morale is driven more by external sources rather than the intended organizational identification outcomes, it raises concerns about long-term faculty and staff retention, commitment, and support. Given the role HBCUs play for Black communities, understanding and implementing factors that strengthen faculty and staff support is essential. If morale alone cannot sustain identification, then HBCUs must explore other ways to

reinforce institutional attachment. By addressing these concerns, HBCUs can ensure their faculty and staff develop the necessary connections to their institutions. In doing so, it is likely HBCU faculty and staff will be able to buy into the culture, ultimately leading to better organizational outcomes that support the sustainability and success of HBCUs.

Limitations and Future Research

Future research should focus on the role of burnout among HBCU faculty and staff, particularly in the context of how burnout influences the way faculty and staff identify based on institutional culture. In this study, burnout may explain the relationship between morale and identification. Faculty and staff who feel overworked may struggle to develop and maintain a strong connection to their institution. There is limited research on how faculty and staff at HBCUs allocate their time in the workplace, whereas a substantial body of literature exists examining these dynamics within PWIs (Dahm et al., 2015; Misra et al., 2012). Further, there is no focused research that parses the cultures of individual HBCUs. Future research should strive for larger, targeted samples of HBCUs with ample power for comparison across institutions, which this sample does not provide. Understanding how faculty and staff at HBCUs navigate their professional responsibilities may provide insight on specific factors that contribute to burnout and ultimately affect their ability to form a strong organizational identity.

HBCUs have a unique culture but also face unique external pressures (Parker, 2022). HBCUs across the U.S. continue to face concerning state mandates, unfair and declining funding from state and federal levels, shifts in pedagogical environments, increased accountability and assessment measures, small endowment support, increased competition, and financial instabilities due to federal and state policies (Gasman, 2013; Hirsch & Weber, 2002; Payne, 2013). It is possible these pressures have diminished HBCU faculty and staff morale, but they

stay at their institution because they identify with the culture. The data from this study show that only morale predicts organizational identification, with higher morale leading to lower identification.

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

	Range	*M*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis	ω
Teamwork	1.50-4.50	3.19	0.71	0.05	-0.80	0.91
Morale	1.00-4.86	3.26	0.92	-0.14	-0.68	0.85
Info Flow	1.00-5.00	3.02	0.89	-0.26	-0.50	0.72
Involvement	1.00-4.75	2.93	0.87	-0.49	-0.37	0.76
Meeting	1.00-5.00	3.32	0.87	-0.22	-0.80	0.79
Supervision	1.00-5.00	3.12	0.81	-0.18	-0.37	0.84
ORGID	1.00-6.64	2.78	0.89	0.73	1.11	0.91

Table 2

Fit Statistics

	GFI	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA
Teamwork	0.93	0.9	0.06	0.10
Morale	0.97	0.99	0.03	0.04
Info Flow	0.98	0.95	0.04	0.14
Involvement	1.00	1.00	0.02	0.00
Meeting	0.98	0.98	0.03	0.07
Supervision	0.92	0.92	0.06	0.10
Org ID	0.9	0.92	0.05	0.09

Chapter Five Discussion

The three articles that make up this thesis examined key organizational aspects of HBCUs pertaining to the perceptions faculty, staff, and students develop throughout their organizational tenure. HBCUs were used in this context, due to the opportunities that they provide from both a structural and cultural perspective (Freemark, 2015). As a former HBCU graduate, my attachment to the HBCU experience (Crewe, 2017) made me question whether organizational members developed their identification because of HBCU culture, or through other aspects that are typically found in any university structure. With culture being an important aspect for HBCUs, it also led me to question whether the management of culture from HBCU presidents and chancellors influenced the overall communication effectiveness throughout the whole institution. This research addressed critical gaps in literature by applying notable organizational communication theories to the HBCU framework. This chapter discusses key insights from each study and offers suggestions for future research and practice.

The first study investigated how demographic variables and structurational divergence (SD) played a role in the display of organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) for HBCU faculty and staff. Faculty and staff members with higher salaries demonstrated higher displays of conscientiousness, civic virtue, courtesy, and altruistic citizenship behaviors. This suggests that although salary may serve as a reward or motivator, it could also encourage employees to willingly express behaviors that benefit the organization based on the monetary advantage. Employees were motivated through an economic benefit; however, to sustain motivation for these behaviors, senior leadership needs to complement higher pay with adequate support. When considering sportsmanship behaviors, older faculty were more reluctant to express their criticisms in the face of conflict. Prior research suggests that these patterns may reflect broader age-related communication tendencies, as older individuals are generally less likely to engage in

direct conflict and more likely to regulate negative emotional expression (Carstensen et al., 1999; Fingerman, 2001). Additionally, SD emerged as a predictor of sportsmanship behaviors, with no other dimension of the OCB scale showing this association. This finding is noteworthy, as it implies employees experiencing the presence of SD may decide to internalize their conflicts instead of being seen as critical. This finding may be better understood when contextualized within the historical establishment of HBCU organizational culture, which was deeply rooted in the Black church. As discussed in chapter two, many early HBCUs adopted leadership models that mimicked Black church hierarchies, where authoritative respect and sense of community were stressed over expressing criticisms that could potentially disrupt the group dynamic (Freemark, 2015). This culturally embedded norm may explain why modern HBCU faculty and staff internalize their conflicts, however further research is needed to examine this relationship. Minimizing conflict or the presence of SD could also be a way employees maintain a functional work environment, despite their concerns. Lastly, faculty and staff who previously attended an HBCU for their personal education were more likely to demonstrate courtesy and altruistic behaviors. Employees with personal ties to the HBCU experience may be motivated to perform beyond their roles based on their lived experiences with HBCU culture and history. The tendency to suppress conflict could also be a result of a deeper commitment to upholding the institution's reputation. With HBCUs facing challenges including limited resources and competition (Gasman, 2013), investigating the dynamics that shape these institutions could provide insights for leaders to implement strategies that benefit employees and the overall organizational climate.

The second study explored how organizational culture, organizational identification, perceived immediacy, and structurational divergence (SD) played a role in shaping the behaviors

of HBCU students. It was expected that the more students identified with their HBCU, they would participate in more OCB and experience less SD; however inverse relationships were found. Students who had higher levels or organizational identification experienced more SD, suggesting that identification alone might not solve issues with the SD that exists at their institution. Organizational culture had a more significant impact in this study, as students who perceived their HBCU as having a strong organizational culture were more likely to engage in OCB and experienced less SD as it related to housing issues. Similarly, students developed stronger organizational culture when they had favorable perceptions of their senior leadership. Despite the cultural commitment to HBCUs, structural issues and unmet expectations could be a factor that complicates how students are able to translate their identification into OCB. As students simultaneously balance their personal commitments along with encountering structural factors that the institution is responsible for, they may feel burnout despite high identification levels. Senior leadership should look to alleviate structural issues and engage students through being more visible and accessible.

The third study explored the relationship between organizational identification and culture among faculty and staff at HBCUs. This research used Glaser et al.'s (1987) dimensions of organizational culture to see how culture predicted employees' attachment to their HBCU. Morale emerged as the only significant predictor of identification, accounting for roughly a quarter of the variance. In this case, higher morale was associated with lower levels of organizational identification for faculty and staff. This finding suggests that while faculty and staff may report high morale, it may be influenced by factors external to the institution. This potentially explains the inverse relationship between morale and identification. The lack of significance for all the other organizational culture dimensions also provides additional insight

on how identification is established for faculty and staff. In many organizations, these factors have been shown to have the opposite effect (Schrodt, 2002). The way employees at HBCUs develop attachment to their institution could vary based on HBCU contextual factors like unique values and missions, as opposed to conventional organizational culture dynamics that are seen in other institutional types. Overall, this study raises questions about how identification is formed for HBCU employees. Senior leaders need to explore alternative ways in fostering meaningful attachment for employees that incorporates HBCU culture yet extends beyond typical workplace structures. In doing so, leaders can better support faculty and staff, while also upholding the historical norms that are present in the organizational structures of these institutions.

Although all three studies provided results that could benefit HBCUs from an organizational standpoint, several measurement related concerns were found that warrant discussion. These concerns not only highlight various complexities when studying underrepresented or minority communities like HBCUs, but also sheds light on the broader implications for the use and validity of reputable instruments and measures across diverse populations. The first study contained limitations related to the use of the structurational divergence measure, which was originally designed and used in a healthcare setting (Nicotera et al., 2015). Adapting this measure for use in an academic environment could potentially explain why inconsistencies were found. While the source of measurement noise was not definitively known, its presence elevates concerns about the construct's validity within the HBCU context. Inconsistencies in item performance may also reflect either contextual inappropriateness or interpretive disparities among HBCU faculty. In this case, future validation development is needed, especially when repurposing a measure that was intended for a different organizational context.

Compared to the other studies, study two faced the most substantial measurement difficulties. After conducting confirmatory factor analyses, various items were removed across multiple scales, including organizational culture, organizational identification, organizational citizenship behaviors, and structurational divergence. Perceived immediacy retained structural validity, however the other scales failed to maintain factor integrity. It is worth noting that these scales were developed in earlier scholarly contexts, which may limit relevancy in the modern day HBCU landscape. This reinforces the need to develop these instruments to enhance construct validity, while at the same time considering the structural and cultural realities that are found in this type of context. Additionally, because this study utilized a cross-sectional design, the ability to assess how the measured constructs might vary or develop over time wasn't possible. This further contributes to the uncertainty behind the relevancy and reliability of these scales as they exist in this context.

While the first two studies raised concerns with model fit and reliability, the measurement considerations in the third study were more conceptual in nature. The largest consideration was understanding the inverse relationship between morale and organizational identification, as the findings were contradictory of what was expected. One possible explanation was the underlying impact of variables not captured in the study, such as burnout and emotional exhaustion. These factors, along with other unconsidered variables may have influenced how participants experienced morale in relation to their identification. Despite morale accounting for a significant portion of the variance in organizational identification, the inverse relationship supports this notion. The lack of support across the other five organizational culture dimensions (e.g., supervision, teamwork, meetings, information flow, involvement) raises concerns about the applicability of this scale in the HBCU context. Although the scale captured some meaningful

variance, it may not fully reflect how organizational identification is cultivated in culturally distinct organizations like HBCUs. The limited predictive power of the subscales outside of morale could signal for the revalidation of the measure. Accordingly, a more nuanced assessment of the measure's applicability within contextually sensitive environments is recommended.

5.1 Organizational Culture

Across all three studies, organizational culture influenced the attitudes and behaviors of the studied population. While all six of Glaser et al.'s (1987) dimensions were tested, teamwork and morale consistently held the most significance across HBCU faculty, staff, and students. Although culture wasn't directly measured in the first study, faculty and staff reported that attending an HBCU as a student was a significant factor in the display of courtesy and altruistic citizenship behaviors. Study two had similar results, as teamwork and morale predicted altruistic citizenship behaviors for the HBCU student sample. In study three, morale reemerged again as a significant predictor, proving to be the sole predictor of organizational identification for faculty and staff despite the unexpected inverse relationship.

These findings indicate that while the use of these organizational culture constructs continue to hold importance in an HBCU setting, their functionality may vary. For example, morale may not always be derived from the way employees align with organizational values, but instead be influenced by external sources or the presence of alternative cultures. The likelihood of this happening at HBCUs is high, considering organizational members may seek fulfilment from various sources. Members could carry deep attachments based off historical legacies or look at culture in a broader sense based off the structure and purpose of higher education institutions. Additionally, members with strong identification with their HBCU may also be the ones most vulnerable to discouragements or burnout due to their infatuation with seeing these institutions excel in the current climate. This discouragement and potential for burnout may not

stem from indifferences toward the institution, but rather from the frustration of caring deeply while witnessing slow or stagnant institutional progress.

Collectively, these studies are important in observing culture in higher education and understanding the role it plays in an HBCU environment. The positive outcomes associated with a strong organizational culture (Keyton, 2014; Schein, 1992), should not be assumed to be valid in an HBCU context. HBCUs embody a culture that takes into consideration racial inequalities, where committing to governance is mission driven. This extends traditional structures of higher education and organizational members can buy into an environment where the advancement of the African American community is prioritized.

5.2 Organizational Identification

Organizational identification was important throughout these studies, as it allowed the researcher to examine the psychological and personal attachment faculty, staff, and students either developed or failed to develop with their HBCU. Guided by Tajfel's (1978) social identity theory, along with the work of Mael & Ashforth (1992), identification was used to see if the HBCU environment had any influence on the way organizational members developed an attachment to their institution. Across the included studies, identification was seen in somewhat contradictory ways, further emphasizing the complexity of how attachment is created and sustained within HBCU settings.

The second study, which dealt with HBCU students found inverse relationships between organizational identification and both the altruistic dimension of OCB and SD. Contradictory to the expectations, stronger identification did not lead to the expression of citizenship behaviors or prevent issues of structurational divergence. This finding could be influenced by the measurement approach used in this study. Although the Organizational Identification Questionnaire (OIQ) is widely used, it has been critiqued for capturing affective commitment

rather than identification as a self-definitional process (Miller et al., 2000). Because many of its items reflect loyalty, pride, and attachment, the measure may not fully distinguish identification from related constructs, which could contribute to attenuated or inconsistent relationships. In this context, participants' responses may reflect general attachment to their institution rather than a deeper integration of organizational identity into their sense of self. Students with strong identification lacked engagement with OCB and reported increased sensitivity to structural inadequacies, which in this case dealt with issues related to the housing process. Inverse relationships were also found between perceived immediacy with senior leadership and identification, raising more questions on how students developed identification, and how senior leaders could encourage identification within the student population. The third study also challenged the researcher's assumptions, as only the morale dimension of organizational culture proved to be significant in predicting identification. Employees with higher morale reported lower levels of identification, contradicting previous findings (Schrodt, 2002).

Although each study was conducted independently, findings suggest organizational identification for HBCU members might be derived from a specific set of values. Literature has previously supported a linear relationship between positive organizational experiences and the ability for members to develop identification (Collins et al., 2018; Mael & Ashforth, 1992). The findings throughout the studies included in this thesis challenge that notion, suggesting that at HBCUs, identification may not be influenced solely by typical organizational work environments. Faculty and staff may feel fulfilled by their roles, but experience disconnect from the overall systems in place. Students may also be able to buy into the idea of the HBCU structure, yet still experience dissatisfaction from a functional standpoint. The idea that HBCU members can individually identify with the with history and purpose yet feel disconnected from

an operational standpoint has implications for senior leadership. Leaders must find ways to lessen the gap between structure and culture, ensuring that during the process the organizational environment supports the values it seeks to promote. These findings indicate organizational identification at HBCUs should not be taken for granted solely off the premise of history or racial biases alone. Although culture creates the foundation, culture alone should not be seen as the force behind adequate member engagement when there's an absence of leadership or structuration. Senior leadership needs to be intentional in developing strategies and protocols that promote identification through transparent communication that reinforces the need for proper participation. In doing so, organizational members should feel that their personal values are mirrored not only in the HBCU mission, but also reflected in the leadership and organizational processes in which they participate in.

5.3 Structurational Divergence

Structurational divergence was of interest to the researcher, as it represents a newer theoretical approach that extends traditional structuration theory by focusing on how individuals experience and react to contradictory organizational expectations. Examining structurational divergence at HBCUs allowed for new insight on how faculty, staff, and students react when institutional structures are incompatible with their expectations. At HBCUs, where there are various constraints across many institutional structures, understanding the impact structurational divergence has on organizational members can offer insights to senior leaders in how they can better engage and prevent negative communication cycles at their institutions. The researcher also aimed to contribute to the growing body of structurational divergence research by extending the theory to HBCUs, a context that is notably absent from existing literature.

When looking at the faculty and staff population in relation to the display of citizenship behaviors, structurational divergence was only significant with the display of sportsmanship

behaviors. Essentially, when employees experienced issues of structurational divergence, they were more likely to avoid complaints to maintain peace within the institution. In a way, employees prioritized stability over expressing their grievances, which can be characterized as a conflict management tactic. For students, housing issues were used as a lens to examine the presence of SD. Not only is obtaining adequate housing an issue for students, but looking at potential divergences on this matter can assist senior leadership with a problem that seems to have become a priority. Students who experienced more SD concerning housing issues reported lower levels of organizational identification, highlighting discrepancies between student expectations and institutional responses to the matter. Students who attend HBCUs expect their housing environment to meet certain standards, however those caught in the SD-cycle (Nicotera & Mahon, 2013) are becoming more immobilized by the unresolved conflicts. In respect to the impact of organizational culture on SD, results revealed that students who reported higher levels of teamwork and morale experienced lower levels of SD. This finding implies that a strong organizational culture, particularly one characterized by collaborative teamwork and shared morale, can ultimately assist in being a buffer to the negative effects of SD.

Structurational divergence is an important construct for HBCU senior leadership as they are typically the face behind a lot of structural changes that may occur within the institution. Understanding potential divergences will allow leaders to mitigate issues by implementing strategies that directly address specific structural concerns. The presence of SD can indicate communication irregularities between key institutional dynamics such as policies, procedures, and resource allocation. When these factors are left unresolved or neglected, organizational member can become disengaged and potentially lose trust with senior leadership. This can further complicate the day-to-day operations at HBCUs, who are already at a disadvantage when

it comes to dealing with systematic inequalities. For faculty, the ability to exhibit sportsmanship behaviors even in the presence of potential divergences may imply that they care about upholding the reputation of their institution as opposed to making matters worse. Consequently, choosing to avoid conflict could also mean structural issues may continue to be neglected if they don't receive the necessary criticism. Students also felt the effects of structurational divergences. Although housing was the only examined structure, students' ability to build identification could potentially be affected by other incompatible structures. Further research is needed to explore this explanation; however, the positive effects of teamwork and morale opens a potential pathway to address this concern. By supporting a collaborative environment that encourages morale building practices, HBCU senior leadership can support operations by reducing the effect of structurational divergence. The collective insights from these studies can assist senior leaders in better aligning the lived experiences of HBCU members along with the efficient management of the structures they operate in. Leaders must be proactive and transparent as they address these conflicts for both their employees and students.

5.4 Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

The concept of organizational citizenship behaviors was used throughout this collection of work to examine the behaviors of HBCU faculty, staff, and students. From an organizational standpoint these behaviors, although voluntary and discretionary, contribute to the overall wellbeing of the organization (Organ, 1988). This construct was of interest to the researcher due to the cultural significance of the HBCU population. Organizational citizenship behaviors were explored within this population to see if the culture had an influence on the way faculty, staff, and students engaged in these types of behaviors.

Within the faculty and staff population, salary was a significant predictor of multiple organization citizenship behaviors, including conscientiousness, civic virtue, courtesy, and

altruism. Additionally, faculty and staff who attended an HBCU for their education exhibited higher levels of courtesy and altruistic behaviors. This implies that the influence of an HBCU had some effect on the display of courtesy and altruistic behaviors due to affiliation alone. Sportsmanship behaviors were linked with older faculty and staff, and those who experienced increased levels of SD. In the face of structural misalignments, employees could refrain from expressing criticisms, especially older employees who may be more mature and willing to adapt to familiar conflicts. For the student sample, altruism was the only organizational citizenship behavior that was retained based off factor structure. Results revealed that the teamwork and morale dimension of organizational culture had a positive relationship with the altruistic behaviors of HBCU students. Organizational identification had an inverse relationship with these altruistic behaviors, suggesting that students who felt a deep connection with their HBCU may still be less willing to participate in voluntary citizenship behaviors. One key takeaway from the student population was that culture, as opposed to the way students identified, proved to be more influential in encouraging citizenship behaviors.

The findings from both populations shed light on what senior leadership can do to promote more citizenship behaviors from all organizational members. Instead of looking at systematic approaches that may apply to any higher education institution, incorporating more community-based strategies may be beneficial for member engagement. The factors that encourage citizenship behaviors at other institutional types may not apply to the culture that HBCUs provide its members. HBCU alumni who return as employees may display citizenship behaviors due to mission rather than the formal requirements that come with their roles. Students with the perception of a culture that prioritizes a supportive and collaborative environment that emphasizes traditional HBCU values may also be more voluntary in the display of these

behaviors. Senior leadership can incorporate recognition systems that reward organizational members for participating in citizenship behaviors. For faculty and staff, the monetary reward attached with their role was enough to promote citizenship behaviors. Understanding how to reward members without making it transactional can potentially strengthen current expressions of citizenship behaviors, while also promoting the other dimensions that didn't retain factor structure.

5.5 Perceived Immediacy

Theoretically, perceived immediacy was used in this body of work to assess how senior leadership is perceived within the culture specific environment of HBCUs. This relational dynamic between leadership and institutional members not only allowed for better understanding on how members engage with and build trust with their leaders, but also how the relationship influences the ability for organizational members to navigate structural misalignments. Findings related to perceived immediacy aimed to extend conceptual understandings, moving discourse from conventional application in the classroom and organizational space to understanding how leadership dynamics are influenced by a culture specific environment.

For the student sample, perceived immediacy showed positive correlations with the teamwork and morale dimension of organizational culture. This suggests that when students felt close with their senior leaders, they were more likely to experience a strong culture that utilizes effective collaboration. However, inverse correlations were also found between perceived immediacy and organizational identification, indicating that students who felt closer to their leaders experienced lower levels of organizational identification. When faced with structural issues, which in this case was housing disparities, students reporting lower identification may result from their overall expectations from senior leadership. For example, when students feel closer to their leaders, they may assume leaders will be prompt in addressing and resolving

structural concerns. When expectations are left unmet students may feel discouraged, leading to decreased levels of identification despite their perceived closeness with leadership.

Although perceived immediacy wasn't measured in the faculty and staff studies, results suggest that it may be a variable that deserves consideration in future research. Faculty and staff who experienced structurational divergences displayed increased sportsmanship behaviors, which suggests employees may experience an underlying sense of commitment or cultural attachment despite misalignments between their expectations and organizational structures. This invites speculation about whether if faculty and staff who feel connected to the institution, perhaps because of their shared historical and cultural ties to HBCUs, may continue to display organizational citizenship behaviors even without the perception of being close with their senior leaders. In this context, it may be worth exploring how perceived immediacy might function within faculty and staff, particularly in HBCUs where specific missions and organizational values are deeply embedded in institutional culture. Understanding how perceived immediacy might function across all organizational structures provides a basis for thinking about how senior leadership can influence immediacy perceptions through their engagement and structural responsiveness.

For HBCUs, maximizing the perceived immediacy between senior leadership and organizational members relies on leaderships ability to manage institutional structures and build trust in areas that members experience daily. The inverse relationship between perceived immediacy and identification for students implies that visibility isn't sufficient by itself. If perceived immediacy with senior leaders isn't met with adequate responsiveness or meaningful structural changes, it may hinder member engagement rather than build it. Senior leadership should approach their governance by incorporating a dual approach. Not only should they strive

to reduce the phycological gap from an interpersonal standpoint, holding themselves structurally accountable could prove to be beneficial in creating deeper membership engagement. The presence of leadership should extend beyond visibility. By working directly with faculty, staff, and students, especially on key issues like student housing, leadership can bolster an organizational culture where perceived immediacy is enhanced and commitment to institutional success and sustainability is encouraged.

Theoretical Implications

From a theoretical standpoint, the aim of this thesis was to advance the applications of some of the more notable organizational communication constructs by embedding them within a context that has distinct structural and cultural dynamics. Reinterpreting key frameworks in the context of HBCUs allows for greater understanding of potential measurement issues, as many of these theories were developed in predominantly white organizational structures. As HBCUs continue to fight for equality in today's academic landscape, having applicable measures that work in these contexts are important because they grant researchers the ability to effectively assess organizational functioning. The ability to produce data-informed decisions can assist HBCUs not only in identifying the source of various institutional challenges, but also guide decision makers in understanding how to successfully address them. Rather than reaffirming established theoretical expectations, this thesis challenges traditional assumptions by demonstrating how constructs can behave in different ways based on the context.

On a broader level, this thesis emphasizes the importance of building theory from within. Despite the need for continued inquiry into some of the observed ambiguities, the results clearly demonstrate that these frameworks operated differently within the HBCU context. Theoretical progress in organizational communication research depends not just on refining existing frameworks, but also questioning their foundational assumptions. This work demonstrates that

context is not merely a setting, but an influential force that shapes how organizational values are communicated and behaviors are understood. By grounding theory in the daily lives of HBCU members, this thesis advances organizational research by inviting scholars to adopt greater contextual sensitivity into how institutions are studied and understood.

The relationships found in this work provide theoretical insight into understanding how other organizational constructs may fare when applied to an HBCU context. For example, organizational dissent, when organizational members express disagreement or develop contradictory opinions towards workplace policies and practices (Kassing, 1998), and assimilation, “the processes by which individuals become integrated into the culture of an organization" (Jablin, 2001, p. 755), offer valuable opportunities for scholars in exploring how organizational members communicate and navigate workplace challenges. Considering the lack of scholarship exploring how these constructs function within the HBCU context, there’s an opportunity to further explore how a culturally motivated organizational structure can lead to distinct behavioral patterns for members.

Building on these insights, this work can be the basis for a theoretical reframing of how organizational constructs such as dissent, assimilation, identification, and culture are discussed within institutional contexts. The finding that structurational divergence significantly predicted both organizational culture and perceived immediacy shows how contradictions between organizational members and the institutional structures in which they operate can interfere with achieving effective organizational communication. Under these conditions, dissent may not manifest through direct confrontation, but rather through culturally situated forms of restraint such as silence or the display of increased sportsmanship behaviors like we saw in the faculty and staff sample. For students, this restraint was reflected in lower perceptions of organizational

culture and perceived immediacy, indicating that dissent may also take the form of quiet withdrawal from organizational engagement, rather than open critiques. Developing a culturally specific model of dissent would allow scholars the ability to make stronger interpretations of the role culture plays in the expression of dissent.

The findings from this study also provide implications for understanding how assimilation may operate differently within the context of an HBCU. Across both student and faculty samples, structurational divergence emerged as a predictor of reduced levels of organizational culture and perceived immediacy. This implies that when HBCU members experience misalignments between their expectations and institutional norms, the likelihood of them being able to fully assimilate may be impacted. For students, lower perceptions of immediacy and organizational culture could reflect their inability to connect with institutional values, ultimately disrupting the way they adjust and assimilate to the overall campus climate. For faculty and staff, the presence of increased sportsmanship behaviors despite experiencing structurational divergences may indicate a deliberate effort to project collegiality, potentially masking unresolved tensions that may complicate their ability to fully assimilate into the institutional culture. In both cases, assimilation may not follow a linear path. Instead, members may engage in selective forms of affiliation, adapting just enough to navigate the institution while safeguarding their personal identity.

Collectively, the relationships between the variables in this thesis suggests that in culturally structured organizational contexts like HBCUs, constructs such as dissent and assimilation can’t be understood without the application of identity and culture. These findings invite scholars to reevaluate the measurement and theoretical applications of the constructs used

to account for cultural variability. This should not only consider the structural aspects, but also account for the everyday experiences that organization members encounter.

Chapter Six Conclusion

This thesis examined how key organizational theories along with demographic variables influenced faculty, staff, and student engagement and attitudes at HBCUs. This research contributes to current literature on higher education and organizational communication by examining the included theories in a largely underrepresented context. The researcher's goal was to challenge the application of the included theories to determine if the organizational environment at HBCUs had any effect of the lived experiences of its members. Empirical evidence is offered to emphasize the need for the inclusion of more organizational research that considers unique historical and cultural traditions. Support is also provided for reexamining leadership practices and communication structures at minority serving institutions like HBCUs.

This body of work revealed that while leadership and culture can influence organizational members, contradictions within the organizational environment coupled with historical structuration can control the way members identify and behave within HBCUs. Understanding HBCU faculty, staff, and students needs to simultaneously account for the culture, history, and structural realities that form the HBCU experience. Prior research in higher education tends to focus on PWIs (Rocker et al., 2025), which makes this thesis a critical contribution in reframing how organizational communication is understood within culturally distinct institutions.

Methodological Considerations

While this research sought to apply established organizational communication frameworks to the HBCU context, there were some challenges that raised some key concerns from a methodological perspective. Despite their established use in prior organizational communication research, the measurement tools used across all three studies demonstrated noteworthy limitations when applied within the HBCU context. Specifically, several constructs produced weak predictive outcomes, and structural issues with model fit were observed throughout the

research. These contradictions across the three studies implies that there may be more than just standard measurement errors occurring. They also exceed what would typically result from sampling errors, highlighting potential flaws in how the instruments accounted for cultural disparities. With HBCUs being organizations that operate from a different structural and cultural standpoint, the assumption that constructs developed in predominantly white organizations or institutions will maintain their validity and reliability must be reevaluated at a critical level.

As Kelly, Croucher, and James (2023) argue, measurement development in instructional and organizational communication often reflects the perspectives of predominantly white samples. Under this assumption, underrepresented groups like those found at HBCUs are often excluded during this process. “When sampling diversity is limited in representing the intended population, the findings of such studies lack generalizability” (McEwan, 2020, as cited in Kelly et al., 2023). This critique is highly applicable to the instruments used in this research. For instance, Glaser et al.’s (1987) scale didn’t perform well within the sample population, as dimensions such as information flow and involvement failed to show meaningful relationships with key outcome variables such as organizational identification or organizational citizenship behaviors. Other dimensions including supervision and meetings also failed to demonstrate the necessary predictive and statistical relevance. These findings suggest that the scale may need to be revisited to assess whether the items are contextually appropriate.

Similar connections can be made when considering the performance of Cheney’s (1983) Organizational Identification Questionnaire. Despite being theoretically sound, it underperformed when applied to the collected samples. Across all three studies, organizational identification demonstrated limited predictive ability, and often failed to function in ways established by previous literature. While the construct remains important to this research, the

way it was measured along with the expected behavioral outcomes didn't necessarily translate to the HBCU context. The items included in the questionnaire, which primarily underlines an individual's attachment to an organization, displayed weak associations with key dependent variables such as sportsmanship behaviors, civic virtue behaviors, and structurational divergence. One might assume that these variables would be associated with higher levels of identification, yet Cheney's instrument failed to capture these relationships with consistency. Considering the instrument was established to examine identification in a different organizational context, the items included in the questionnaire may overlook how identification at HBCUs is actually built. Additionally, identification in the HBCU context may originate from sources not captured in the instrument. This highlights the necessity of revisiting the instrument to ensure it reflects the way HBCU members actually build identification with their institution. As Kelly et al. (2023) note, "failure to fully understand how instructional communication constructs affect ethnic minority students may fail to remedy, or even perpetuate, existing educational inequities" (p. 193). While their work is applied in an instructional setting, the same concern can be understood in a broader sense. Without culturally responsive tools, the experiences of HBCU members may be inaccurately or incompletely represented.

In addition to issues with established instruments, this research also raised important questions around the measurement of structurational divergence. As a relatively underdeveloped construct, the scale used in this research was adapted to capture the realization of divergences for HBCU members. While conceptually grounded, the scale's mixed statistical performance suggests that additional development is needed to refine its dimensional structure and improve construct validity to account for diverse organizational environments. This includes reexamining item phrasing and exploring how divergence is interpreted by different subgroups. These

findings point to a need for continued development of the measure to ensure it reflects how divergence is actually experienced and understood within the HBCU context.

These methodological concerns are important when considering how communication constructs are applied across different contexts. This is especially true for constructs like argumentativeness and organizational dissent, whose underlying frameworks may not accurately capture the essence of an HBCU environment. Although these were not central variables in this thesis, they offer a useful lens through which to examine broader issues with applying communication measures developed in predominantly white settings to other contexts. For example, the argumentativeness scale by Infante and Rancer (1982) has been critiqued for reflecting a limited conceptual scope. Dowling and Flint (1990) argue that the scale fails to account for findings that fall outside its original conceptualization of argumentativeness. Their analysis questions the scale's ability to meaningfully capture variation across groups, noting its weak conceptual grounding and problems with operationalization. This critique supports the idea that the scale was developed with a specific communicative culture in mind, one that was largely tailored for white samples. The same could be said for a construct like organizational dissent, as the scales commonly used to measure it have been shown to lack cultural variability. For instance, Croucher et al. (2020) conducted a longitudinal study on the Organizational Dissent Scale in France and found significant issues with its construct validity and temporal stability. The study demonstrated that dissent was interpreted and expressed differently in the French organizational context, raising concerns about the scale's ability to generalize beyond its original cultural framework in the U.S. context. These findings support the larger concern that dissent, like argumentativeness, is often measured using instruments developed within predominantly white or western samples that fail to account for cultural variability.

Across all constructs, the disconnect between the scales and the organizational experiences of HBCU members suggests that theoretical relevance does not always guarantee empirical performance. The constructs themselves may remain conceptually valid, but their functionality must evolve. Moving forward, researchers must prioritize the development of these measurement tools to ensure they also account for underrepresented organizational environments. In doing so, organizational communication research can begin to fully capture the complexity of organizations like HBCUs.

Practical Implications

This thesis offers practical insights into how HBCU members from the top down can successfully navigate organizational challenges that develop from the intersection of organizational culture, identification, and organizational structures. Rather than classifying the HBCU environment as a uniform system, where members experience culture and structure in consistent ways, findings suggest that organizational members interpret and respond to organizational dynamics through a variety of lived experiences. These experiences consider the historical missions that are present in the structural makeup, as well as the personal affiliations and expectations that members develop over time. This leads to varied levels of engagement and attachment that require leadership to adopt contextually responsive strategies grounded in both institutional missions and the everyday realities that their members face.

One key implication is that HBCU leadership must make efforts to move beyond conventional leadership practices and incorporate organizational approaches that are both culturally informed and responsive to their members. HBCU senior leadership should rethink how they evaluate and manage institutional life, not just through performance or administrative metrics, but through a more grounded understanding of the emotional, structural, and cultural dimensions that promote faculty, staff, and student engagement. What emerged across these

studies was not a series of isolated organizational problems, but rather a recurring tension between cultural identity and structural execution. Essentially, members often demonstrated the ability to buy into the HBCU mission and structure, however their ability to sustain that belief was mediated by structural misalignments and unmet support.

This dynamic stresses the importance of reducing structural divergences for organizational members. Findings show that when members experienced structurational divergences, they often defaulted from expressing their grievances. This presents an opportunity for HBCU leadership to better understand how their members perceive institutional structures, and how those perceptions cause them to be silent or disengage in the midst of controversy. If leaders can recognize these patterns and meet issues of structurational divergence head on, they can implement strategies that promote trust and encourage upward feedback.

Another key implication relies in the ability for leaders to be cautious in interpreting behaviors such as high morale or engagement at face value. These indicators, as shown in this work, may actually discourage meaningful communication. In some cases, what appears to be a mutual agreement or understanding from organizational members, may actually reflect a desire to avoid conflict or protect the institution, rather than genuine satisfaction with how things are working. Communication processes that allow for honest dissent are crucial in identifying and addressing issues. Organizational members need to be heard, not only as employees or students, but as stakeholders in an institution that's tailored to a specific culture. Practical leadership, therefore, must create conditions that invite transparent feedback and ensure that conflict avoidance disguised as agreement doesn't undermine institutional challenges.

Overall, the practical implications drawn from this thesis call for a more complex understanding of what effective leadership looks like in the HBCU context. Effective leadership

must engage with the deeper and often unspoken dynamics that shape member experience. The way culture, identification, and structure interact can either empower or alienate organizational members depending on how effective leadership is in managing their populations. Addressing these intersections with care and cultural awareness is essential for building institutions that are both reflective of their legacy and responsive to the future they seek to create.

Future Research

This body of work presents several opportunities for future research, primarily in theoretical and methodological development that advances organizational communication research within the HBCU context. First, future research should consider the development of organizational communication scales that account for the unique aspects that make up HBCUs and other minority-serving institutions. Revising the instruments tied to these constructs is essential for improving their validity, particularly by addressing aspects such as language and structure that may not reflect the cultural and structural realities of current HBCUs. Future researchers could involve HBCU faculty, staff, and students in the development process to ensure they are achieving the desired contextual relevance.

Future research would also benefit from the use of comparative studies involving HBCUs, PWIs, HSIs (Hispanic-Serving Institutions), and other ethnically affiliated institutions to identify how key organizational constructs function across culturally distinct educational environments. These comparisons would allow for better understandings on the role historical legacies and diverse institutional missions play in influencing specific organizational communication constructs, such as those used in this thesis. Observations from these cross-institutional analyses would invite scholars to reconsider the assumed universality of existing frameworks, and instead acknowledge the contextual variables that uniquely inform the communication practices specific to these institutional environments.

Future research should also seek to extend beyond quantitative methods to include qualitative approaches that allow for better interpretations. Despite using validated scales to explore the constructs included in this thesis, the incorporation of qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and focus groups could assist in understanding the lived experiences that feed into these constructs. For example, the processes through which HBCU members develop identification with their institutions may not be adequately captured solely through the use of a standard Likert-type scale. Incorporating qualitative approaches can be beneficial in uncovering insights that may be obscured when only using statistical analyses. In addressing unexpected or contradictory results, such as those found in this body of work, the use of qualitative methods can uncover the underlying contextual and cultural dynamics that quantitative tools may overlook.

Lastly, future research should implement longitudinal approaches to better capture how the constructs examined in this thesis evolve over time within the HBCU context. Initiating a longitudinal research approach could examine how repeated exposure to organizational inefficiencies influences the behaviors of organizational members. For example, theoretical development is needed to more fully understand how structurational divergence functions over time. Tracking these divergences longitudinally would allow scholars to explore how members develop coping mechanics overtime such as burnout and disengagement. Tracking these patterns longitudinally is particularly valuable for understanding how organizational dynamics are perceived and internalized by distinct subgroups (e.g., early-career faculty, first-generation students, long-tenured staff), whose experiences may vary significantly based on their positionality within the institution.

Limitations

Despite the value this research brings to higher education and organizational communication literature, it is not without limitations. First, the studies used a cross-sectional approach, which limits the ability to track changes or determine causality over time. Additionally, while the research specifically focused on HBCUs, the institutions included in this research may not reflect the full scope of HBCUs across the United States. Differences in campus culture and administrative procedures may influence how the findings apply universally. The use of self-reported data also introduces the risk of bias, and some of the measurement tools may lack cultural significance, as they were developed outside the HBCU context. Future research would also benefit from the use of mixed method designs and longitudinal approaches that capture a more dynamic understanding of member experiences. Scholars should also consider comparative studies between HBCUs, PWIs, and other minority-serving institutions to better determine what aspects make HBCUs culturally distinct. As HBCUs continue to face challenges and opportunities within the modern educational climate, ongoing research is needed to ensure their structures, leadership, and cultural strengths are well understood and effectively supported. Overall, this thesis offers a foundation for reimagining how organizational identity, culture, and leadership overlap within historically and culturally significant academic contexts.

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Appendices

Appendix 1(A)

Faculty & Staff Survey Questions

Structurational Divergence

The following is a series of statements regarding staff experiences at the university. Please respond to each statement based on the frequency at which you experience the issue at the university: 1 = "Rarely", 2 = "Sometimes", 3 = "moderately often", 4 = "usually" and 5 = "frequently".

1. I feel like I am fighting unnecessary fires at work.
2. People are caught in a cycle undermining one another.
3. I feel obligated to fulfill opposing demands at the same time.
4. I am treated with respect by management.
5. I experience unnecessary stress at work because of people playing games.
6. The politics of the university prevent students from having their needs addressed.
7. People in my university are team players.
8. The concerns of the university surpass the needs of the student.
9. People at my university sabotage one another.
10. I am damned if I do, damned if I don't.
11. My supervisor will help me out if I tell her/him I am feeling overwhelmed.
12. People at my university hold personal vendettas.
13. Staff and managers view students differently, and this causes conflict.
14. Backstabbing is a problem at my university.
15. Administrative procedures get in the way of what's best for the student.
16. I can't go to my department head for help resolving conflicts because she/he won't do anything to help.
17. I feel like I am between a rock and a hard place.

Perceived Immediacy

Please select the appropriate dots below to indicate how you feel about your supervisor.

Warm	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Cold
Comforting	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Uncomforting
Responsive	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Unresponsive
Personable	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Disagreeable
Reassuring	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Disheartening
Welcoming	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Unwelcoming
Favorable	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Unfavorable
Involved	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Aloof
Sociable	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Unsociable

Organizational Identity

Instructions: Think of your role as an employee of your university. For each item below select the answer that best represents your belief about or attitude toward your university. Please respond to all items. The alternative responses are:

YES!	I agree *very strongly* with the statement.
YES	I agree *strongly* with the statement.
yes	I agree with the statement.
?	I neither agree nor disagree with the statement.
no	I disagree with the statement.
NO	I disagree *strongly* with the statement.
NO!	I disagree *very strongly* with the statement.

After reading each item carefully, please circle your response.

1. I would probably continue working for the university even if I didn't need the money.
2. In general, the people employed by the university are working toward the same goals.
3. I am very proud to be an employee of the university.
4. The university's image in the community represents me as well.
5. I often describe myself to others by saying, "I work for this university" or "I am from this university."
6. I try to make on-the-job decisions by considering the consequences of my actions for the university.
7. We at the university are different from others in our field.
8. I am glad I chose to work for this university rather than another university.
9. I talk up the university to my friends as a great university to work for.
10. In general, I view the university's problems as my own.
11. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help the university be successful.
12. I become irritated when I hear others outside the university criticize the university.
13. I have warm feelings toward the university as a place to work.
14. I would be quite willing to spend the rest of my career with the university.
15. I feel that the university cares about me.
16. The record of the university is an example of what dedicated people can achieve.
17. I have a lot in common with others employed by the university.
18. I find it difficult to agree with the university's policies on important matters relating to me.
19. My association with the university is only a small part of who I am.
20. I like to tell others about projects that the university is working on.
21. I find that my values and the values of the university are very similar.
22. I feel very little loyalty to the university.
23. I would describe the university as a large "family" in which most members feel a sense of belonging.
24. I find it easy to identify with the university.
25. I really care about the fate of the university.

Note. Items 18, 19, and 22 are reverse-scored.

Organizational Culture

Instructions: Circle the number that represents the extent to which the following statements apply to you:

To a very little extent	To a little extent	To some extent	To a great extent	To a very great extent
1	2	3	4	5

1. People I work with are direct and honest with each other.
2. People I work with accept criticism without becoming defensive.
3. People I work with resolve disagreements cooperatively.
4. People I work with function as a team.
5. People I work with are cooperative and considerate.
6. People I work with constructively confront problems.
7. People I work with are good listeners.
8. People I work with are concerned about each other.
9. Labor and management have a productive working relationship.
10. This university motivates me to put out my best efforts.
11. This university respects its staff.
12. This university treats people in a consistent and fair manner.
13. Working here feels like being part of a family.
14. There is an atmosphere of trust in this university.
15. This university motivates people to be efficient and productive.
16. I get enough information to understand the big picture here.
17. When changes are made the reasons why are made clear.
18. I know what's happening in work sections outside of my own.
19. I get the information I need to do my job well.
20. I have a say in decisions that affect my work.
21. I am asked to make suggestions about how to do my job better.
22. This university values the ideas of workers at every level.
23. My opinions count in this university.
24. Job requirements are made clear by my supervisor.
25. When I do a good job my supervisor tells me.
26. My supervisor takes criticism well.
27. My supervisor delegates responsibility.
28. My supervisor is approachable.
29. My supervisor gives me criticism in a positive manner.
30. My supervisor is a good listener.
31. My supervisor tells me how I'm doing.
32. Decisions made at meetings get put into action.
33. Everyone takes part in discussions at meetings.
34. Our discussions in meetings stay on track.
35. Time in meetings is time well spent.
36. Meetings tap the creative potential of the people present.

Note. Items for the six dimensions are summed: Teamwork, 1-8; Morale, 9-15; Information Flow, 16-19; Involvement, 20-23; Supervision, 24-31; Meetings, 32-36.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

Seven-point Likert scales ranging from (1) “Strongly Disagree” to (7) “Strongly Agree”

1. My attendance at work is above the norm.
2. I do not take extra breaks.
3. I obey the university’s rules and regulations even when no one is watching.
4. I am one of the university’s most conscientious employees.
5. I believe in giving an honest day's work for an honest day's pay.
6. I consume a lot of time complaining about trivial matters.
7. I always focus on what's wrong, rather than the positive side.
8. I tend to make "mountains out of molehills".
9. I always find fault with what the university is doing.
10. I am the classic "squeaky wheel" that always needs greasing.
11. I attend meetings that are not mandatory, but considered important.
12. I attend functions that are not required, but help the university’s image.
13. I keep abreast of changes in the university.
14. I read and keep up with university announcements, memos and so on.
15. I take steps to try to prevent problems with other workers.
16. I am mindful of how my behavior affects other people's jobs.
17. I do not abuse the rights of others.
18. I try to avoid creating problems for co-workers.
19. I consider the impact of my actions on co-workers.
20. I help others who have been absent.
21. I help others who have heavy work loads.
22. I help orient new people even though it is not required.
23. I willingly to help others who have work related problems.
24. I am always ready to lend a helping hand to those around me.

Demographic Questions (Staff)

- Age (open ended)
- Sex (closed)
- Racial/Ethnic background (open-ended)
- Salary/pay (Closed)
- Organizational Tenure (How many years have you worked at the university?) (Closed)
- Job Title (open ended)
- Did you attend an HBCU at any point for your education? (Closed)
- How many members of your family members have attended an HBCU? (Closed)
- Have you worked at a non-HBCU? If so how many? (open)
- Most used social media platform for family & friends? (open)
- Most used social media for work? (open)

Demographic Questions

HBCU Staff Survey

Demographics

* 112. What is your age?

* 113. What is your sex?

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female
- ◯ Other

Other (please specify)

* 114. What is your race or ethnicity?

- ◯ Asian
- ◯ Black or African American
- ◯ Hispanic or Latino
- ◯ Middle Eastern or North African
- ◯ Multiracial or Multiethnic
- ◯ Native American or Alaska Native
- ◯ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- ◯ White
- ◯ Another race or ethnicity, please describe below

Self-describe below:

* 115. What is your salary/pay?

- ◯ Under $15,000
- ◯ Between $15,000 and $29,999
- ◯ Between $30,000 and $49,999
- ◯ Between $50,000 and $74,999
- ◯ Between $75,000 and $99,999
- ◯ Between $100,000 and $150,000
- ◯ Over $150,000

* 116. How many years have you worked at the university?

- ◯ 0-1
- ◯ 1-3
- ◯ 3-5
- ◯ 5-7
- ◯ 7-10
- ◯ 10+

* 117. What is your job title?

* 118. What is your position?

- ◯ Staff
- ◯ Non-Tenure Track Faculty
- ◯ Assistant Professor
- ◯ Associate Professor
- ◯ Professor
- ◯ Department Chair
- ◯ Senior Administration
- ◯ Other

Other (please specify)

* 119. Did you attend an HBCU at any point for your education?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

* 120. How many members of your family members have attended an HBCU?

- ◯ 0
- ◯ 1
- ◯ 2
- ◯ 3
- ◯ 4
- ◯ 5+

* 121. Have you worked at a non-HBCU? If so how many?

* 122. Most used social media platform for family & friends?

* 123. Most used social media for work?

Title Page

HBCU Staff Survey

Introduction:

Hello, I'm a doctoral student at Massey University in Wellington, New Zealand. I am conducting my thesis on HBCU leadership and I would like to know your experiences, satisfaction, and attitudes towards different elements at your HBCU. As a two-time graduate from a HBCU, I intend to use this data to progress my research on HBCU leadership and the involved processes. Please complete this survey. All responses are recorded anonymously so feel free to provide honest feedback. You will have the opportunity to enter a drawing at the end for a $100 Amazon gift card. Thank you for your participation!

*If you are not a current faculty/staff at an HBCU **DO NOT** complete this survey.*

OK

Next

Acknowledgment Page

HBCU Staff Survey

124. Would you like to enter the drawing for the $100 Amazon gift card? If so, please enter your email address below. Your information will not be shared and only serves as a point of contact if you are selected. The draw will take place once the data collection phase is completed. Thank you for completing the survey!

Appendix 1(B)

Student Survey Questions

Structurational Divergence

The following is a series of statements regarding Student experiences of housing at the university. Please respond to each statement based on the frequency at which you experience the issue at the university: 1 = "Rarely", 2 = "Sometimes", 3 = "moderately often", 4 = "usually" and 5 = "frequently".

1. I feel like I am fighting unnecessary fires at the university when it comes to housing.
2. People are caught in a cycle undermining one another over housing concerns.
3. I feel obligated to fulfill opposing demands at the same time over housing concerns.
4. I am treated with respect by the University when I raise housing concerns.
5. I experience unnecessary stress at the university because of people playing games over housing.
6. The politics of the university prevent students from having their housing needs addressed.
7. Faculty & Staff in my university are team players in resolving housing issues.
8. The concerns of the university surpass the needs of the student.
9. People at my university sabotage one another over housing issues.
10. I am damned if I do, damned if I don't when it comes to voicing housing concerns.
11. University administrators will help me out if I tell them I am feeling overwhelmed about housing issues.
12. Administrators at my university hold personal vendettas.
13. Administrators view students differently, and this causes conflict.
14. Backstabbing is a problem at my university.
15. Administrative procedures get in the way of what's best for the student and their housing concerns.
16. I can't go to the housing office or similar office for help resolving conflicts because she/he won't do anything to help.
17. I feel like I am between a rock and a hard place.

Perceived Immediacy

Please select the appropriate dots below to indicate how you feel about your President/Chancellor.

Warm	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Cold
Comforting	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Uncomforting
Responsive	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Unresponsive
Personable	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Disagreeable
Reassuring	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Disheartening
Welcoming	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Unwelcoming
Favorable	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Unfavorable
Involved	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Aloof
Sociable	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Unsociable

Organizational Identity

Instructions: Think of your role as a student of your University. For each item below select the answer that best represents your belief about or attitude toward your university. Please respond to all items. The alternative responses are:

YES! I agree *very strongly* with the statement.
YES I agree *strongly* with the statement.
yes I agree with the statement.
? I neither agree nor disagree with the statement.
no I disagree with the statement.
NO I disagree *strongly* with the statement.
NO! I disagree *very strongly* with the statement.

After reading each item carefully, please circle your response.

1. In general, the people employed by the university are working toward the same goals.
2. I am very proud to be a student at the university.
3. The university's image in the community represents me as well.
4. I often describe myself to others by saying, "I study for this university" or "I am from this university."
5. We at this university are different from other HBCUs.
6. I am glad I chose to study for this university rather than another university.
7. I talk up the university to my friends as a great university to study for.
8. In general, I view the university's problems as my own.
9. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help the university be successful.
10. I become irritated when I hear others outside the university criticize the university.
11. I have warm feelings toward the university as a place to study.
12. I would be quite willing to spend the rest of my studies with the university.
13. I feel that the university cares about me.
14. The record of the university is an example of what dedicated people can achieve.
15. I have a lot in common with others studying at the university.
16. I find it difficult to agree with the university's policies on important matters relating to me.
17. My association with the university is only a small part of who I am.
18. I like to tell others about projects that the university is working on.
19. I find that my values and the values of the university are very similar.
20. I feel very little loyalty to the university.
21. I would describe the university as a large "family" in which most members feel a sense of belonging.
22. I find it easy to identify with the university.
23. I really care about the fate of the university.

Note. Items 18, 19, and 22 are reverse-scored.

Organizational Culture

Instructions: Circle the number that represents the extent to which the following statements apply to you:

To a very little extent	To a little extent	To some extent	To a great extent	To a very great extent
1	2	3	4	5

1. People I study with are direct and honest with each other.
2. People I study with accept criticism without becoming defensive.
3. People I study with resolve disagreements cooperatively.
4. People I study with function as a team.
5. People I study with are cooperative and considerate.
6. People I study with constructively confront problems.
7. People I study with are good listeners.
8. People I study with are concerned about each other.
9. Students and faculty have a productive working relationship.
10. This university motivates me to put out my best efforts.
11. This university respects its students.
12. This university treats students in a consistent and fair manner.
13. Studying here feels like being part of a family.
14. There is an atmosphere of trust in this university.
15. This university motivates students to be efficient and productive.
16. I get enough information to understand the big picture here.
17. When changes are made the reasons why are made clear.
18. I know what's happening in departments sections outside of my own.
19. I get the information I need to do my studies well.
20. I have a say in decisions that affect my studies.
21. I am asked to make suggestions about how to do my studies better.
22. This university values the ideas of students at every level.
23. My opinions count in this university.
24. Study requirements are made clear by my President/Chancellor.
25. When I do a good job my teacher tells me.
26. My President/Chancellor takes criticism well.
27. My President/Chancellor delegates responsibility.
28. My President/Chancellor is approachable.
29. My President/Chancellor gives me criticism in a positive manner.
30. My President/Chancellor is a good listener.
31. My President/Chancellor tells me how I'm doing.
32. Decisions made at meetings get put into action.
33. Everyone takes part in discussions at meetings.
34. Our discussions in meetings stay on track.
35. Time in meetings is time well spent.
36. Meetings tap the creative potential of the people present.

Note. Items for the six dimensions are summed: Teamwork, 1-8; Morale, 9-15; Information Flow, 16-19; Involvement, 20-23; Supervision, 24-31; Meetings, 32-36.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

Seven-point Likert scales ranging from (1) "Strongly Disagree" to (7) "Strongly Agree"

1. My attendance at the university is above the norm.
2. I do not take extra breaks.
3. I obey the university's rules and regulations even when no one is watching.
4. I am one of the university's most conscientious students.
5. I consume a lot of time complaining about trivial matters.
6. I always focus on what's wrong, rather than the positive side.
7. I tend to make "mountains out of molehills".
8. I always find fault with what the university is doing.
9. I am the classic "squeaky wheel" that always needs greasing.
10. I attend meetings that are not mandatory, but considered important.
11. I attend functions that are not required, but help the university's image.
12. I keep abreast of changes in the university.
13. I read and keep up with university announcements, memos and so on.
14. I take steps to try to prevent problems with other students.
15. I am mindful of how my behavior affects other people's studies.
16. I do not abuse the rights of others.
17. I try to avoid creating problems for other students.
18. I consider the impact of my actions on other students.
19. I help others who have been absent.
20. I help others who have heavy work loads.
21. I help orient new students even though it is not required.
22. I willingly help others who have study related problems.
23. I am always ready to lend a helping hand to those around me.

Demographic Questions (Students)

- Age (open ended)
- Sex (closed)
- Racial/Ethnic background (open-ended)
- Amount of student debt (Closed)
- Organizational Tenure (How many years have you studied at the university?) (Closed)
- Classification (closed)
- Did you attend an institution that wasn't a HBCU at any point for your education? (Closed)
- How many of your family members have attended an HBCU? (Closed)
- Most used social media platform for family & friends? (open)
- Most used social media to view/receive university messages, announcements, and news? (open)

Title Page

HBCU Student Survey

Introduction:

Hello, I'm a doctoral student at Massey University in Wellington, New Zealand. I am conducting my thesis on HBCU leadership and I would like to know your experiences, satisfaction, and attitudes towards different elements at your HBCU. As a two-time graduate from a HBCU, I intend to use this data to progress my research on HBCU leadership and the involved processes. Please complete this survey. All responses are recorded anonymously so feel free to provide honest feedback. You will have the opportunity to enter a drawing at the end for a $100 Amazon gift card. Thank you for your participation!

*If you are not a current student at an HBCU **DO NOT** complete this survey.*

OK

NEXT

Acknowledgment Page

HBCU Student Survey

120. Would you like to enter the drawing for the $100 Amazon gift card? If so, please enter your email address below. Your information will not be shared and only serves as a point of contact if you are selected. The draw will take place once the data collection phase is completed. Thank you for completing the survey!

Appendix 1(C)

Supplementary Procedures for Article Two

Revisions to Analytical Framework

During the peer-review process prior to the publication of study two, additional analyses were conducted to further examine the relationships between organizational culture, organizational identification, perceived immediacy, structurational divergence, and organizational citizenship behaviors among HBCU students. These revisions expanded the analytical framework originally presented in the thesis by incorporating moderated mediation analyses. Specifically, the revised analyses examined whether ethnicity moderated the relationships among key variables and whether perceived immediacy functioned as an indirect pathway through which organizational culture and organizational identification influenced student outcomes. These supplementary analyses are presented here to provide additional methodological clarity while preserving the original version of article two presented in Chapter Four.

Moderated Regression Analyses

A regression model predicting perceived immediacy from organizational identification, morale, teamwork, and their interactions with ethnicity was statistically significant:

$R^2 = .63$
$F(7, 242) = 59.27$
$p < .001$

Organizational identification was a significant negative predictor of perceived immediacy:

$B = -1.32$
$t(242) = -6.37$
$p < .001$

Neither morale ($p = .991$) nor teamwork ($p = .147$) were significant predictors of perceived immediacy in this model. However, the interaction between morale and ethnicity approached statistical significance:

$B = 0.48$

t(242) = 1.93
p = .054

The joint Wald test for the interaction terms was significant:

F(3, 242) = 3.21
p = .024

indicating that the combined effects of the predictor variables on perceived immediacy differed across ethnic groups.

Structurational Divergence Model

A regression model predicting structurational divergence from perceived immediacy, organizational identification, morale, teamwork, and their interactions with ethnicity was also significant:

R^2 = .36
F(9, 240) = 15.08
p < .001

Teamwork emerged as a significant positive predictor of structurational divergence:

B = 0.66
t(240) = 4.62
p < .001

The interaction between teamwork and ethnicity was also statistically significant:

B = −0.59
t(240) = −3.48
p = .001

The joint Wald test for all interaction terms was significant:

F(4, 240) = 10.11
p < .001

indicating that the relationship between teamwork and structurational divergence varied across ethnic groups.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviors Model

The regression model predicting altruism, the organizational citizenship behavior dimension retained in the measurement model, was statistically significant:

$R^2 = .47$
$F(9, 240) = 23.79$
$p < .001$

Teamwork was a significant positive predictor of altruism:

$B = 0.63$
$t(240) = 2.17$
$p = .031$

Additionally, Black students reported significantly lower altruism scores than students of other ethnicities:

$B = -0.43$
$t(240) = -2.77$
$p = .006$

The interaction between perceived immediacy and ethnicity approached statistical significance:

$B = 0.27$
$t(240) = 1.87$
$p = .063$

However, the joint Wald test for the interaction terms was not significant:

$F(4, 240) = 1.57$
$p = .183$

suggesting that moderation effects were not supported for the altruism model overall.

Indirect Effects Analysis

Bootstrapped mediation analyses using 2,000 resamples were conducted to examine indirect relationships among the study variables.

Among Black students, several significant indirect effects were observed:

Organizational Identification → Structurational Divergence

$B = 0.12$
95% CI [0.01, 0.25]

Morale → Structurational Divergence

$B = -0.06$
95% CI [−0.15, −0.01]

Teamwork → Structurational Divergence

B = −0.08
95% CI [−0.18, −0.01]

Organizational Identification → Altruism

B = −0.40
95% CI [−0.63, −0.23]

Morale → Altruism

B = 0.21
95% CI [0.07, 0.40]

Teamwork → Altruism

B = 0.25
95% CI [0.10, 0.42]

None of the corresponding indirect effects were statistically significant for students identifying with ethnicities other than Black. These findings indicate that several mediation pathways through perceived immediacy were significant only among Black students, suggesting that ethnicity moderated the strength of the indirect relationships among organizational culture, organizational identification, structurational divergence, and organizational citizenship behaviors.

Appendix 1(D)

Statement of Contribution

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA
UNIVERSITY OF NEW ZEALAND

GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL

STATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTION
DOCTORATE WITH PUBLICATIONS/MANUSCRIPTS

We, the student and the student's main supervisor, certify that all co-authors have consented to their work being included in the thesis and they have accepted the student's contribution as indicated below in the Statement of Originality.

Student name:	Kenneth Rocker
Name and title of main supervisor:	Dr. Debalina Dutta, Senior Lecturer

In which chapter is the manuscript/published work?	Chapter 4 (4.1)

Describe the contribution that the student and members of the supervisory team have made to the manuscript/published work:[1]
The student developed the idea, collected the data and drafted the manuscript.
The second author assisted in writing and editing.
The third author provided feedback throughout the drafting process.

Please select one of the following three options:

- (●) The manuscript/published work is published or in press
  Please provide the full reference of the research output:
  Rocker, K., Kelly, S., & Croucher, S. (2025). An investigation of organizational communication citizenship behaviors of faculty and staff at historically black colleges and universities. Communication Quarterly, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/01463373.2025.2455570
- ( ) The manuscript is currently under review for publication
  Please provide the name of the journal:
- ( ) It is intended that the manuscript will be published, but it has not yet been submitted to a journal

Student's signature:	Kenneth T. Rocker Jr.	Main supervisor's signature:	Debalina Dutta — Digitally signed by Debalina Dutta, DN: cn=Debalina Dutta, c=NZ, email=D.Dutta@massey.ac.nz, Date: 2025.04.25 14:25:51 +12'00'

This form should be placed at the beginning of each relevant thesis chapter.

[1] Refer to the Massey University Publishing and Authorship guidelines (OneMassey for staff, Stream for students) and/ or Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT) guidelines for guidance.

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
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GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL

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DOCTORATE WITH PUBLICATIONS/MANUSCRIPTS

We, the student and the student's main supervisor, certify that all co-authors have consented to their work being included in the thesis and they have accepted the student's contribution as indicated below in the Statement of Originality.

Student name:	Kenneth Rocker
Name and title of main supervisor:	Dr. Debalina Dutta, Senior Lecturer

In which chapter is the manuscript/published work?	Chapter 4 (4.2)

Describe the contribution that the student and members of the supervisory team have made to the manuscript/published work:[1]

The student developed the idea, collected the data and drafted the manuscript.
The second author assisted in writing and editing.
The third author provided feedback throughout the drafting process.

Please select one of the following three options:

- ○ The manuscript/published work is published or in press
  Please provide the full reference of the research output:
- ◉ The manuscript is currently under review for publication
  Please provide the name of the journal:
  Howard Journal of Communications
- ○ It is intended that the manuscript will be published, but it has not yet been submitted to a journal

Student's signature:	Kenneth T. Rocker Jr.	Main supervisor's signature:	Debalina Dutta — Digitally signed by Debalina Dutta, DN: cn=Debalina Dutta, c=NZ, email=D.Dutta@massey.ac.nz, Date: 2025.04.25 14:26:13 +12'00'

This form should be placed at the beginning of each relevant thesis chapter.

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STATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTION
DOCTORATE WITH PUBLICATIONS/MANUSCRIPTS

We, the student and the student's main supervisor, certify that all co-authors have consented to their work being included in the thesis and they have accepted the student's contribution as indicated below in the Statement of Originality.

Student name:	Kenneth Rocker
Name and title of main supervisor:	Dr. Debalina Dutta, Senior Lecturer

In which chapter is the manuscript/published work?	Chapter 4 (4.3)

Describe the contribution that the student and members of the supervisory team have made to the manuscript/published work:[1]

The student developed the idea, collected the data and drafted the manuscript.
The second author assisted in writing and editing.
The third author provided feedback throughout the drafting process.

Please select one of the following three options:

- ○ The manuscript/published work is published or in press
  Please provide the full reference of the research output:
- ◉ The manuscript is currently under review for publication
  Please provide the name of the journal:
  Communication Reports.
- ○ It is intended that the manuscript will be published, but it has not yet been submitted to a journal

Student's signature:	Kenneth T. Rocker Jr.	Main supervisor's signature:	Debalina Dutta Digitally signed by Debalina Dutta DN: cn=Debalina Dutta, c=NZ, email=D.Dutta@massey.ac.nz Date: 2025.04.25 14:26:46 +12'00'

This form should be placed at the beginning of each relevant thesis chapter.

[1] Refer to the Massey University Publishing and Authorship guidelines (OneMassey for staff, Stream for students) and/ or Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT) guidelines for guidance.

Tables

Table 1: Faculty & Staff Demographics

Participant Demographics

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Age		29.70	8.60
Tenured years at HBCU		2.76	1.37
Salary		4.21	1.50
Sex			
Male	99 (52.1%)		
Female	90 (47.4%)		
Other	1 (.5%)		
Race			
Black/African American	13 (74.4%)		
White/Caucasian	144 (17.2%)		
Other	33 (17.4%)		

Table 2: Student Demographics

Participant Demographics

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Age		23.76	4.49
Years at HBCU		2.27	.90
Family members who have attended an HBCU		3.02	1.47
Sex			
Male	109 (43.6%)		
Female	140 (56%)		
Other	1 (.4%)		
Race			
Black/African American	186 (74.4%)		
White/Caucasian	43 (17.2%)		
Other	21 (8.4%)		