

Spring 5-13-2017

Racial Socialization and its Moderating Effects on Microaggressions

Jusiah L. Prowell

Abilene Christian University, jlp15b@acu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.acu.edu/etd>

 Part of the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Prowell, Jusiah L., "Racial Socialization and its Moderating Effects on Microaggressions" (2017). Digital Commons @ ACU, *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. Paper 60.

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at Digital Commons @ ACU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ ACU. For more information, please contact dc@acu.edu.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to examine the relationship between racial socialization, and how it mitigates the distress caused by microaggressions. Although overt racism is no longer socially acceptable, racism still occurs in a covert form called microaggressions. Research has shown that microaggressions causes negative effects on its' victims the same as overt racism. Also, literature has shown microaggressions in the classroom and on college campuses cause feelings of isolation and inferiority in college students. Racial socialization is the process of being immersed in one's culture to strengthen against negative factors. The construct of racial socialization is the idea of creating cultural defenses against discrimination and racism. The target population of this study was African American students at Abilene Christian University. Participants took the Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions scale to assess their level of perceived microaggression. The Teenager Experience of Racial Socialization scale assessed their level of racial socialization. Finally, the participants took the Kessler 10 distress scale, which assessed their level of distress. The participant took the surveys through SurveyMonkey. The data was analyzed using correlational methods. The results showed the frequencies of microaggressions that occurred. The top three microaggressions from each subscale were displayed. Also, the results showed no correlation between microaggressions and distress. As well as, a positive relationship between racial socialization and distress. These findings were counter to expectation. The relationship between racial socialization and microaggressions must be further examined to better understand the factors that create a

positive relationship. The examination of the role perceptions of microaggressions plays in its' effect on the victim should be examined in further studies.

Racial Socialization and its Moderating Effects on Microaggressions

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Graduate School

Abilene Christian University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

Clinical Psychology

By

Jusiah L. Prowell

April 2017

This thesis, directed and approved by the candidate's committee, has been accepted by the Graduate Council of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Science



Assistant Provost of Graduate Programs

Date

5/3/17

Thesis Committee



Dr. Richard Beck Ph.D



Dr. Larry Norsworthy Ph.D



Dr. Robert McKelvain Ph.D

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to take this time acknowledge my family, for without their love and support I would not be here. I also want to thank Dr. Beck for giving me the space to be me.

TABLE OF CONTENT

LIST OF TABLES.....	iii
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Discrimination.....	1
Discrimination in the United States	1
Overt Discrimination	2
Microaggressions	3
Covert Discrimination and Microaggressions	3
Types of Microaggressions	3
Experiences and Effects of Microaggressions	7
Racial Socialization	9
How Racial Socialization is formed	9
Themes of Racial Socialization	9
Racial Socialization in Children	10
Negative Aspects of Racial Socialization	11
Racial Socialization as a Buffer Against Microaggressions?	11
The Present Study	12
II. METHODS	13
Participants	13
Assessment Instruments.....	13

	Procedures	16
III.	RESULTS	17
	The Experience of Microaggressions.....	17
	Microaggressions, Distress and Racial Socialization.....	19
IV.	DISCUSSION.....	24
	Overview of Findings.....	24
	The Experience of Microaggressions.....	26
	Microaggressions and Distress.....	28
	Racial socialization and microaggressions implications.....	29
	Internal vs External Anger.....	30
	Further Study.....	31
	Limitations.....	32
	Conclusion.....	32
	REFERENCES	34
	APPENDIX A: IRB Approval Letter	41
	APPENDIX B: Demographic Questionnaire	42
	APPENDIX C: Racial And Ethnic Microaggressions Scale.....	43
	APPENDIX D: Teenager Experience of Racial Socialization Scale.....	46
	APPENDIX E: K-10 Distress Scale.....	49

LIST OF TABLES

1. Examples of Microaggressions.....	4
2. Most Frequently Reported Assumptions of Inferiority.....	18
3. Most Frequently Reported Second Class Citizenship and Assumptions of Criminality Microaggressions.....	19
4. Most Frequently Reported Microinvalidation.....	19
5. Most Frequently Reported Exoticization and Assumption of Similarity Microaggressions.....	19
6. Most Frequently Reported Environmental Microaggressions.....	20
7. Most Frequently Reported Work and School Microaggressions.....	21
8. Correlations Between Microaggressions and Distress.....	21
9. Correlations Between Microaggressions and Racial Socialization.....	22
10. Correlations Between Racial Socialization and Distress.....	23

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between racial microaggressions and racial socialization to determine if racial socialization among African Americans is a buffer to the distress, caused by the experience of microaggressions.

Discrimination

Discrimination in the United States

Throughout the history of the United States, discrimination has come in all shapes and sizes and has adapted to laws put in place to end it. In the year 1654, the first African person was legally ruled as property (Wood, 1970). From that time to the present day, the African American community has been struggling against discrimination in the United States. In 1864, the Emancipation Proclamation and Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery. However, the enactment of Jim Crow laws relegated the African American community to second class citizenship. This form of discrimination held sway until the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Until recently, publicly expressing discriminatory views towards people of color has been condemned and stigmatized. However, African Americans still perceive discrimination at a higher rate than their Caucasian American counterparts (Kessler, Mickelson, & Williams, 1999). This is problematic, as

discrimination causes negative effects on the mental and physical health of victimized communities (Wallace, Nazroo, & Becares, 2016).

Overt Discrimination

Discrimination can be defined as the actions of the dominant group, done to members of a minority group that causes negative effects (Williams, Neighbors, & Jackson, 2003). Discrimination can manifest itself in many areas, from aggressive policing, to housing segregation, and various forms of unfair treatment (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Feagin, 2006; Wilkes & Iceland, 2004). Overt discrimination involves actions that are publicly observable and socially recognizable. An example of overt discrimination would be asking an African American person to sit at the back of the bus, or using racially charged language.

According to the literature, discrimination can cause negative psychological outcomes. For example, Pascoe and Smart-Richman (2009) found that as perceptions of discrimination increased, negative psychological outcomes increase as well. Likewise, negative outcomes such as depression, suicide, violence, and substance use have been found to be more prevalent among those who experience frequent discriminatory actions against them (Brown et al., 2000; Carter, 2007; Polanco-Roman & Miranda 2013; Sellers & Shelton, 2003). Yet, obvious acts of discrimination are not the only way prejudice can be conveyed. Prejudice can also be conveyed subtly, covertly, and unconsciously. This form of discrimination is referred to as covert discrimination or microaggressions.

Microaggressions

Covert Discrimination and Microaggressions

Racism is more likely to be conveyed through covert forms of discrimination called microaggressions, than blatant outright forms of discrimination (Foster, 2005; Nadal, 2011; Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal, & Torino, 2007). The label “microaggressions” was first coined by Pierce (1970). Microaggressions were first defined as “subtle, stunning, often automatic, and non-verbal exchanges which are ‘put downs’” (Pierce, Carew, Pierce Gonzalez, & Willis, 1978, p. 66). A more recent definition of microaggressions describes covert discrimination as “subtle statements and behaviors that unconsciously communicate denigrating messages to people of color” (Nadal, 2011, p. 470). Nadal goes on to say, microaggressions do not have to be performed on an unconscious level. An example of a microaggression is expressing negative beliefs or feelings toward a group in a way that is not directly demeaning but is still perceived negatively. The difference between overt and covert discrimination is how the discriminatory messages are relayed. Overt discrimination involves blatant actions meant to cause harm to the victim. Microaggressions, are more subtle and are not necessarily intentional in nature.

Types of Microaggressions

Regarding the types of microaggressions, Sue et al. (2007) identified three kinds of microaggressions: microassault, microinsults, and microinvalidations. According to Sue et al. (2007), a microassault is an explicit verbal or nonverbal message or actions meant to hurt the intended victim. Actions such as avoidant behavior, or name calling,

could be considered forms of microassault. Microassaults are the most similar microaggression to overt discrimination.

Microinsults are messages that convey rudeness and demean racial heritages or identities. Microinsults are characterized by subtle jabs that are often unknown to the sender of the message yet are offensive to the victim. An example of microinsults would be questioning the ability of a person because he/she was a racial minority or asking if an individual received admittance into an institution or organization through affirmative action programs. Questions such as, “Did you come to this school to play sports?” or “You got here because they needed a black person, right?” are examples of microinsults. Sue et al. (2007) notes that microinsults are a departure from overt discrimination. Microinsults are communicated in a way that are not directly degrading to the individual but hold negative connotative meaning.

The third type of microaggression described by Sue et al. (2007) are microinvalidations. Microinvalidations are messages that exclude, refute, or invalidate one’s thoughts feelings or experiences. Microinvalidations often communicate a disbelief regarding the experiences of minorities. An example of a microinvalidation would be expressing disbelief that African Americans have different experience with law enforcement than White Americans. Such a statement discounts the concerns raised by African Americans regarding their experiences with police officers.

Beyond the three categories of microaggressions, Sue et al. (2007) also identified nine themes that microaggressions fall into Table 1 describes each of these themes and gives examples.

Table 1

Examples of Racial Microaggressions

Themes:	Microaggressions	Messages
Alien in own land: When Asian Americans and Latino Americans are assumed to be foreign-born	“Where are you from?”	You are not American.
	“Where were you born?”	You are a foreigner.
	“You speak good English.” Someone asking an Asian American to teach them words in their native language.	
Ascription of intelligence: Assigning intelligence to a person of color on the basis of their race.	“You are a credit to your race.”	People of color are generally not as intelligent as Whites.
	“You are so articulate.”	
	Asking an Asian person to help with a math or science problem	It is unusual for someone of your race to be intelligent. All Asians are intelligent and good in math/science.
Color blindness: Statements that indicate that a White person does not want to acknowledge race	“When I look at you, I don’t see color.”	Denying a person of color’s racial/ethnic experience.
	“American is a melting pot.”	Assimilate/acclurate to the dominate culture.
	“There is only one race, the human race.”	Denying the individual as a racial/cultural being.
Criminality/assumption of Criminal status: A person of color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant on the basis of their race	A White person clutching their purse or checking their wallet as a Black or Latino approaches or passes.	You are a criminal You are going to steal/You are poor/you do not belong.
	A store owner following a customer of color around the store.	You are dangerous.
	A White person waits to ride the next elevator when a person of color is on it	

Denial of individual racism:

A statement made when Whites deny their racial biases

“I’m not racist. I have several Black friends.”

I am immune to racism because I have friends of color.

“As a woman, I know what you go through as a racial minority.”

Your racial oppression is no different than my gender oppression. I can’t be a racist. I’m like you.

Myth of meritocracy:

Statements which assert that race does not play a role in life successes

“I believe the most qualified person should get the job.”

People of color are given extra unfair benefits because of their race.

“Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough.”

People of color are lazy and/or incompetent and need to work harder.

Asking a Black person: “Why do you have to be so loud/animated? Just calm down.”

Assimilate to dominant culture.

Pathologizing cultural values/communication styles:

The notion that the values and communication styles of the dominant/White culture are ideal

To an Asian or Latino person: “Why are you so quiet? We want to know what you think. Be more verbal.” “Speak up more.”

Leave your cultural baggage outside.

Second-class citizen:

Occurs when a White person is given preferential treatment as a consumer over a person of color

Dismissing an individual who brings up race/culture in work/school setting
Person of color mistaken for a service worker

People of color are servants to Whites. They couldn’t possibly occupy high-status positions.

Having a taxi cab pass a person of color and pick up a White passenger

You are likely to cause trouble and/or travel to a dangerous neighborhood.

Being ignored at a store counter as attention is given to the White customer behind you.

Whites are more valued customers than people of color.

“You people...”

Environmental microaggressions: Macro-level microaggressions, which are more apparent on systemic and environmental levels	A college or university with building that are all named after White heterosexual upper class males.	You don't belong/You won't succeed here. There is only so far you can go.
	Television shows and movies that feature predominantly White people, without representation of people of color	You are an outsider/You don't exist. People of color don't/shouldn't value education.
	Overcrowding of public schools in communities of color	People of color are deviant.
	Overabundance of liquor stores in communities of color	

(Sue et al., 2007)

Experiences and Effects of Microaggressions

Sue et al. (2007) describes microaggressions as brief, commonplace, daily, verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative insults to people or a group. Because of the subtle nature of microaggressions persons may not be aware that they are doing harm to the receiver of their message. Similarly, it can be difficult to contest this form of covert discrimination. Unlike overt racism, which is more salient, microaggressions are harder to notice and address.

Microaggressions have been found to cause the American college climate of African American students to be unfavorable (Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000). Sue, Lin, Torino, Capodilupo, and Rivera (2009) examined college students and found that microaggressions were prevalent among their participants. The most common microaggressions noted by Sue et al. (2009) were ascriptions of intelligence, being alien in one's own country, denial of racial realities, and assumptions of criminality (see Table

1 for examples). Experience of these microaggressions were associated with negative emotions and feelings of psyche depletion (Sue et al., 2009).

Microaggressions on college campuses are found in residential living as well. Harwood, Hunt, Mendenhall, and Lewis (2012) observed that participants reported negative effects on their residential life and sense of belonging due to the microaggressions that they experienced. Harwood, Hunt, Mendenhall, and Lewis (2012) also found that all three types of microaggressions were reported by their participants.

Microaggressions in the learning environment, as experienced by African American and other minority students, have been associated with various kinds of distress. Experiences of microaggressions have been associated with lower self-esteem (Nadal, Wong, Griffin, Davidoff, & Sirken, 2014), increased risk of higher anxiety, underage binge drinking (Blume, Thyken, Lovato, & Denny 2012), and suicidal ideation associated with depressive symptoms (O'Keefe, Wingate, Cole, Hollingsworth & Tucker, 2014). Correspondingly, Greer and Brown (2011) found that when African American students attempt to deal with the racial and ethnic challenges on American college campuses, they are put at considerable risk for higher levels of stress and other adverse consequences.

Summarizing, it is clear that African American students find themselves in a complex situation in relation to covert discrimination. Specifically, if African American students allow microaggressions to continue unchecked they are likely to suffer negative psychological effects. However, if they try to interpersonally note and challenge microaggressions, their actions will likely be met with negative social consequences. Consequently, considering the negative effects that microaggressions can cause,

researchers must look for new ways to better the American college experience of African American students. A way in which African American students can go into an unwelcome environment and not succumb to the negative outcomes of discrimination. One such mediator that has shown positive results in other areas is racial socialization.

Racial Socialization

How Racial Socialization is formed

Broadly defined, racial socialization is the communications, interactions and behaviors between a person and their guardian regarding their culture (Stevenson, Cameron, Herrero-Taylor, & Davis, 2002). Racial socialization, first studied in the 1980s, initially focused on the communication between parents and their children regarding ethnic identity (Peters & Massey, 1983; Spencer, 1983; Tatum, 1987). Racial socialization can be defined as the implicit, explicit, purposeful, and/or unintended ways that minority families convey ideas about race to their children (Harris-Britt, Valrie, & Kurtz-Costes, 2007). Racial socialization starts in the early, formative years of development and continues throughout one's upbringing; it is derived from the messages families send to their children. The transmission of ideas from guardian to offspring is meant to foster feelings of self-esteem and prepare the child for racial challenges (Peters, 2002; Boykin & Toms, 1985; Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990; Tatum, 1987). Currently, four reoccurring themes emerge from the literature: cultural socialization, preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust, and egalitarianism (Hughes et al., 2006).

Themes of Racial Socialization

Cultural socialization. Cultural socialization is the practice of teaching children about their racial or ethnic heritage and history. This form of socialization promotes

customs, traditions, and racial and ethnic pride. Cultural socialization can be implicit or explicitly taught to the child. (Peters & Massey, 1983) Talking about important cultural figures, eating ethnic foods and encouraging kids to use their native language are examples of cultural socialization.

Preparation for bias. Preparation for bias promotes children's awareness of discrimination and prepares the child to be able to cope with it. It is messages or actions that build the defense of children and make them aware of discrimination. The literature shows the theme of focusing on the existence of discrimination and teaching kids to deal with it, appears regularly in the literature (Peters & Massey, 1983; Tatum, 1987; Hamm, 2001).

Promotion of mistrust. The promotion of mistrust is the practice of emphasizing the need for distrust and suspicion when interacting with groups of a different race (Hughes et al., 2006; Hughes & Chen, 1999). Promotion of mistrust is different from preparation for bias in that there is no advice given to deal with discrimination. The messages sent are solely to increase vigilance of other racial groups (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Hughes & Johnson, 2001).

Egalitarianism. Egalitarianism is emphasizing the value of one's individual qualities, instead of being a part of a racial group. This can occur through emphasis on the individual child, or by not talking about race with children (Spencer, 1983).

Racial Socialization in Children

Racial socialization has been associated with psychological well-being. For example, African American homes that are rich in African American culture have been observed to produce children with better problem solving skills and achievement than

students who did not (Caughy, Campo, Randolph & Nickerson, 2002). McHale et al. (2006) examined racial socialization practices of mothers and fathers. The researchers observed the more racial socialization the father or mother engaged in, the more the child perceived that parent to be engaging and loving towards them.

As noted earlier, negative effects, specifically the lowering of self-esteem, have been associated with perceiving oneself as a victim of discrimination. However, this relationship can be mitigated by racial socialization (Harris-Britt, Valrie, & Kurtz-Costes, 2007). Also, the more frequent racial socialization messages adolescents receive from their parents, the more likely the adolescent is to use effective coping strategies (Scott, 2003).

Negative Aspects of Racial Socialization

It bears mentioning that some literature suggests that there are negative aspects to racial socialization. Specifically, too many racial messages from parents can cause over vigilance among children. Because of racial socialization, a child may be more likely to perceive bias and experience negative emotions that might have been avoided had their vigilance not been so high. (Harris-Britt, Valrie, & Kurtz-Costes 2007; Thompson, Anderson & Bakeman, 2000).

Racial Socialization as a Buffer Against Microaggressions?

As noted above, microaggressions are a subtle and/or unconscious form of discrimination that causes distress in the victims that experience it. The literature shows microaggressions cause a variety of negative outcomes in its victims (Nadal, Wong, Griffin, Davidoff, & Sirken, 2014; Blume, Thyken, Lovato, & Denny, 2012 O'Keefe, Wingate, Cole, Hollingsworth & Tucker, 2014).

In light of the psychological distress caused by microaggressions, racial socialization involves strengthening minorities against the bias and discrimination they face in society (Stevenson, Cameron, Herrero-Taylor, & Davis, 2002). Racial socialization, by definition, is the preparation for discrimination that will occur in the world.

Consequently, it can be hypothesized that the stronger the racial socialization an individual has, the less distressed that person would be from the experience of microaggressions. Theoretically, racial socialization should be a buffer against the distress caused by microaggressions among African American college students. However, to date no study has looked at this particular association.

The Present Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between racial socialization and the distress that is caused by microaggressions experienced by African American college students. Specifically, this study examined if higher levels of racial socialization will lower the amount of microaggressions perceived by the individual and decrease the amount of distress associated with microaggressions. The hypotheses governing this study are 1) experience of microaggressions were predictive of distress, and 2) the amount of distress caused by microaggressions would be less in students with higher levels of racial socialization.

CHAPTER II

METHODS

Participants

Participants were recruited from Abilene Christian University's Black Student Association meetings participated in an online survey. The participants were 36 African American students on the campus of Abilene Christian University. Responses to demographic questions indicated that eighty-four percent of the sample was female, and the average age was 19.5 (SD = 1.03).

Assessment Instruments

Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS). The REMS (Nadal, 2011) is a 45-item instrument that consists of six subscales and is used measure feelings of perceived microaggressions over the past six months. Participants were given a forced choice option of Yes or No. A Yes answer was scored as a 1, and a No was scored as a 0. Items 12, 18, 19, 24, 28, 37 and 41 were reverse scored. All scores were added to generate the total score. Higher scores indicate higher levels of perceived microaggressions.

The six subscales of the REMS are Assumption of Inferiority, Second-class Citizen/Assumptions of Criminality, Microinvalidations, Exoticization/Assumptions of Similarity, Environmental Microaggressions, and Workplace and School Microaggressions. The first subscale, Assumptions of Inferiority, had a reliability of .873

(Nadal, 2011). Example items of this subscale are “Someone assumed that I would have a lower education because of my race,” and “Someone acted surprised at my scholastic or professional success because of my race.” Example items of the next subscale, Second-class Citizen/Assumption of Criminality (Alpha = .821, Nadal, 2011) are “Someone avoided walking near me on the street because of my race.” and “Someone assumed that I would physically hurt them because of my race.” The third subscale Microinvalidations reported an alpha of .841 (Nadal, 2011). Example items for this subscale are “Someone told me that they do not see race,” and “I was told I should not complain about race.” The subscale Exoticization/Assumptions of Similarity generated an Alpha of .783 (Nadal, 2011). Example items include “Someone assumed that I spoke a language other than English,” and “Someone wanted to date me only because of my race.” The Environmental Microaggressions has reported an Alpha of .785 (Nadal, 2011), example items are “I observed people of my race portrayed positively in movies,” and “I observed that someone of my race is a government official in my state.” Lastly, Workplace and School microaggressions is a subscale that had a reliability of .792 (Nadal, 2011). Examples include “My opinion was overlooked in a group discussion because of my race,” and “Someone assumed that my work would be inferior to people of other racial groups,” Overall, the total measure yielded a coefficient alpha of .912 (Nadal, 2011).

The entire REMS can be found in Appendix A.

Teenager Experience of Racial Socialization (TERS). The TERS (Stevenson, Cameron, Herrero-Taylor, & Davis, 2002) is a 40-item scale consisting of five subscales that measure facets of racial socialization. Participants were asked to rate how often they remembered hearing messages from their caregivers with answer choices consisting of 1

= Never, 2 = A few times, and 3 = Lots of times. The TERS was scored by adding the questions to yield a total score. For each subscale, the sum of the questions that make up each subscale is calculated.

The Cultural Coping with Antagonism subscale (Alpha = .85, Stevenson, Cameron, Herrero-Taylor, & Davis, 2002) includes items “Schools should teach Black history,” and “Relatives help parents raise children.” Example items of the Cultural Pride Reinforcement subscale (Alpha = .85, Stevenson, Cameron, Herrero-Taylor, & Davis, 2002) are “Be proud of who you are,” and “Don’t forget who your people are.” The Cultural Appreciation of Legacy subscale (Alpha = .74, Stevenson, Cameron, Herrero-Taylor, & Davis, 2002) includes the items “Racism is real and you have to understand it,” and “Knowing African culture is important.” The Cultural Alertness to Discrimination subscale (Alpha = .76, Stevenson, Cameron, Herrero-Taylor, & Davis, 2002) includes the items “Whites have more opportunities than Blacks,” and “Black children will be harassed for being Black.” The last subscale, Cultural Endorsement of the Mainstream (Alpha = .71, Stevenson, Cameron, Herrero-Taylor, & Davis, 2002), contains the items “Black children feel better in white schools,” and “Society is fair to African Americans.” The overall TERS measure has yielded a Cronbach’s Alpha of .91. (Stevenson, Cameron, Herrero-Taylor, & Davis, 2002). The TERS has also demonstrated good convergent validity with related scales (Stevenson, Cameron, Herrero-Taylor, & Davis, 2002).

The entire TERS can be found in Appendix B.

Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10). The K10 (Andrews & Slade, 2011) is a 10 item unidimensional instrument that measures psychological distress of the participant over the last four weeks. The K10 uses a five-point likert scale, with 1 = All

of the time, 2 = Most of the time, 3 = Some of the time, 4 = A little of the time, and 5 = None of the time. When scored, items were reverse scored, giving a range of scores between 10 and 50, where 50 indicates high levels of psychological stress.

All questions are framed with the prompt: “In the last four weeks how often...” Example items include “Did you feel tired out for no good reason,” and “Did you feel worthless?” The K10 has been found to have a Cronbach’s alpha of .84 (Bougie, Arim, Kohen & Findlay, 2012; Andrews & Slade, 2011).

It was not lost on the researchers that the K10 does not have ideal validity. However, the Kessler comes from a group of distress tests that have shown strong results (Sakurai, Nishi, Kondo, Yanagida, & Kawakami, 2011; O’Connor et al., 2012; Sunderland, Mahoney, Andrews 2012; Kessler et al., 2002; Furukawa et al., 2003). This version of the instrument was used because it was short in length. Length was important because of the size of the other scales and the lack of availability of shorter for the other constructs.

The entire K10 scale can be found in Appendix C.

Procedure

Surveys were collected and correlational analyses was used to assess the relationships between the REMS, TERS and K10 scales.

To test for a relationship between constructs, a correlational analysis was run between the experience of microaggressions and distress. Also, a correlation between microaggressions and racial socialization was run to examine their relationship as well.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

The Experience of Microaggressions

A frequency analysis was used to assess the most commonly reported microaggressions among the participants. The results were sorted by type of microaggression. The top three microaggressions for each subtype are displayed below in Tables 2-7.

Assumption of Inferiority is the first subscale of the TERS. The subscale assesses the participant's perceptions of being viewed as inferior because of their race. Table 2 presents the most frequently experienced Assumption of Inferiority microaggressions by the participants.

Table 3 presents the most frequently experienced Second Class Citizenship and Assumption of Criminality microaggressions. This subscale assessed a person's perception of being treated worse or not as fairly as a member of another racial group. Also, this subscale assessed the perception that one has engaged in criminal activity with no evidence except for one's race.

Table 4 presents the most frequently experienced Microinvalidation. This subscale assessed the participants experience of having their race, ethnicity, or culture mitigated. Microinvalidations sends the message, one's racial experience did not occur, or is not as important as the racial experience of the majority race group.

Table 5 presents the most frequently experienced Exoticization and Assumption of Similarity microaggressions, which are perceptions of being viewed as unusual or a novel object.

Table 6 presents the most frequently experienced Environmental microaggressions. In this subscale, perceptions of the availability and frequency of positive cultural images in the environment was assessed. Every question in this subscale was reverse scored for ease of interpretation.

Lastly, Table 7 shows the most frequently reported microaggressions that occur in work or school settings. This subscale assessed perceptions of unfair or inadequate treatment by co-workers, classmates, or supervisors that do not occur to members of the majority racial group.

Table 2

Most Frequently Reported Assumptions of Inferiority

Assumption of Inferiority Microaggression	Percent Reported
Someone assumed that I grew up in a particular neighborhood because of my race.	60.9%
Someone told me that I was “articulate” after she/he assumed I wouldn’t be.	56.5%
Someone acted surprised at my scholastic or professional success because of my race.	54.3%

N=36

Microaggressions, Distress and Racial Socialization

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between distress as a function of microaggressions and racial socialization.

First, it was predicted that microaggressions would have a positive correlation with distress: the more microaggressions one perceived, the higher the amounts of

Table 3

*Most Frequently Reported Second Class Citizenship and Assumption of Criminality
Microaggressions*

Second Class Citizenship, Assumption of Criminality Microaggression	Percent Reported
Someone's body language showed they were scared of me.	52.2%
Someone avoided walking near me on the street because of my race.	45.7%
I received substandard service in stores compared to customers of other racial groups.	45.7%

N=36

Table 4

Most Frequently Reported Microinvalidation

Microinvalidation Microaggression	Percent Reported
Someone of a different racial group stated that there is no difference between the two of us.	63.0%
Someone told me that they "don't see color."	56.5%
I was told that people of all racial groups experience the same obstacles	54.3%

N=36

Table 5

Most Frequently Reported Exoticization and Assumption of Similarity

Exoticization and Criminality Microaggressions Microaggression	Percent Reported
Someone objectified one of my physical features because of my race.	63.0%
Someone told me that all people in my racial group look alike.	63.0%
Someone told me that all people in my racial group are all the same.	60.9%

N=36

Table 6

Most Frequently Reported Environmental Microaggressions

Environmental Microaggressions Microaggression	Percent Reported
I did not observe people of my race portrayed positively in magazines.	63.0%
I have not observed people of my race portrayed positively in movies.	52.2%
I have not observed someone of my race as a government official in my state.	43.5%

N=36

distress one would report. To test this prediction, a correlational analysis was used to assess the relationships between microaggressions and distress. Table 8 displays the correlations of the microaggression subscales with distress ratings.

Counter to expectations, none of the microaggression subscales, or the overall microaggression score, was significantly correlated with distress.

The second hypothesis that governed this study was, racial socialization and microaggressions would be negatively correlated. Again, a correlational analysis was used to examine the relationship between racial socialization and microaggressions. Table 9 contains the correlations between the racial socialization and microaggression subscales, as well as their overall scores.

The analysis yielded significant results in multiple correlations. However, the results were contrary to prediction. Overall, the correlations between racial socialization and microaggressions were positive, suggesting that as racial socialization increased so did reported experiences of microaggressions.

Finally, racial socialization scores were correlated with distress. These correlations can be found in table 10. As can be seen in table 10, distress and racial

socialization did not have any significant correlations. It can be noted that although none of the relationships were strong or significant most did show a negative relationship.

Table 7

Most Frequently Reported Work and School Microaggressions

Work and School Microaggressions	Percent Reported
Microaggressions	
My opinion was overlooked in a group discussion because of my race.	45.7%
Someone assumed that my work would be inferior to people of other racial groups.	39.1%
An employer or co-worker treated me differently than a White co-worker.	37.0%

N=36

Table 8

Correlations Between Microaggressions and Distress

Microaggressions and Distress Correlates	
Subscale	Distress
Assumptions of Inferiority	-.18
Second Class Citizenship and Assumption of Criminality	.22
Microinvalidation	-.02
Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity	.07
Environmental Microaggressions	-.08
Work and School Microaggressions	.27
Overall Microaggression Score	-.01

N=36

Table 9

Correlations Between Racial Socialization and Microaggressions

	Microaggressions and Racial Socialization Correlates					
Correlates	Cultural Coping with Antagonism	Cultural Pride Reinforcement	Cultural Appreciation of Legacy	Cultural Alertness to Discrimination	Cultural Endorsement of Mainstream	Racial Socialization Overall
Assumptions of Inferiority	.56**	.08	.16	.26	.31	.56**
Second Class						
Citizenship and Assumptions of Criminality	.52*	.47*	.43	.41	.52*	.53*
Microinvalidation	.42*	.14	.10	.19	.29	.25
Exoticization/Assumption of Similarity	.30	.25	.10	.22	.03	.19
Environmental Work & School	.17	-.06	.12	-.07	.05	.14
	.33	.12	.15	.09	.39	.27
Microaggressions Overall	.61**	.08	.16	.12	.45*	.58*

N=36

Table 10

Correlations Between Racial Socialization and Distress

Microaggressions and Distress Correlates	
<u>Subscale</u>	<u>Distress</u>
Cultural Coping with Antagonism	-.21
Cultural Pride Reinforcement	.05
Cultural Appreciation of Legacy	-.22
Cultural Alertness to Discrimination	-.13
Cultural Endorsement of the Mainstream	.23
Overall Racial Socialization score	-.12

N=36

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

Overview of Findings

Discrimination against African Americans has been occurring since the seventeenth century up to the present day in America. Throughout history, discrimination has taken on different forms to adjust to attempts to extinguish it. In recent history, discrimination is no longer overtly stated due to negative social consequences. In the place of overt discrimination, microaggressions have emerged. Microaggressions are covert racial messages that convey negative or derogatory ideas towards a person of a minority group (Williams, Neighbors, & Jackson, 2003). Discrimination in any form, causes negative outcomes on the psychological well-being of groups that experience it (Brown et al., 2000; Carter, 2007; Greene, Way, & Pahl, 2006; Polanco-Roman & Miranda 2013; Sellers & Shelton, 2003). Because of the subtle and possibly unconscious nature of covert discrimination, microaggressions are harder to confront. Microaggressions have also been found to permeate college campuses as well (Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000; Sue, Lin, Torino, Capodilupo, & Rivera 2009; Harwood, Huntt, Mendenhall, and Lewis 2012). On college campuses, negative psychological outcomes occur in the minority students that are victimized by microaggressions (Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000; Sue, Lin, Torino, Capodilupo, and Rivera, 2009).

African American students must learn to navigate a complex society that is not only created without them in mind but is constantly attacking them with images and ideas that

generate feelings of irrelevance, unimportance, and distress. Not wanting to forgo their education, but unable to circumvent the culture on campus, minority students are in need of a way to endure the hostile climate and strengthen themselves against the negative psychological outcomes that accompany discrimination.

The purpose of this study was to identify a mediating factor that could strengthen the defenses of African American students when dealing with microaggressions. This study purposed the construct of racial socialization as a possible mediating factor. Racial socialization was chosen because of its positive affects in other areas of African American mental health (Harris-Britt, Valrie, & Kurtz-Costes, 2007; Caughy, Campo, Randolph & Nickerson, 2002; McHale et al., 2006). Racial socialization is the strengthening of minority children, so they are better prepared to deal with differences in cultures. Racial socialization starts in the beginning of one's development. It is the transfer of cultural messages from caregiver to child. Racial socialization can also be described as the acknowledgement and communion with one's own culture. An example of this would be ideas of cultural pride.

The present study predicted that microaggressions and distress would have a positive relationship with one another. The study also predicts microaggressions and racial socialization would have a negative relationship. These relationships were tested using a correlational analysis. The analyses identified the most prevalent microaggressions among the reported participants. The correlational analysis yielded no significant relationship between microaggressions and distress. And, contrary to predictions, a positive relationship was observed between microaggressions and racial socialization.

The Experience of Microaggressions

The frequency data showed the most experienced microaggressions. The top experienced microaggressions were: “I did not observe people of my race portrayed positively,” “Someone objectified me for my physical feature,” “Someone told me all people in my racial group look alike,” and “Someone of a different group stated there was no difference between them.” Each of these microaggressions had a 61% report rate. When examining this list, the common thread seems to be lack of exposure of African American culture among the majority, leading to misunderstandings and novelty. It is possible that the geographic location and demographic makeup of the University where this data was collected played a large role in the microaggressions reported, as well as the frequency of their occurrence. With that in mind, this researcher theorizes that the specific microaggressions may differ campus to campus, but the lack of exposure and understanding would still be prevalent. Ideally, with more exposure to African American culture, some of these microaggressions would occur less often. The implications of this data suggest that institutions of higher education must continue to improve on increasing knowledge and understanding of different cultures to create a more inclusive environment.

From the results, it is clear that institutions of higher learning are still need to develop more hospitable campuses in and outside of the classroom. Schools can use this data to justify investing more resources into creating more cultural experiences, culturally sensitive curriculum and hiring in a more diverse manner.

Inside the classroom, teachers must be on the forefront of inclusion to set the tone of the social climate in the class. Educators must be better educated in sensitivity. They must learn that good intentions but uneducated comments and questions do more harm than good. For example,

asking the black student in class, “What does the African American community think about this?” Such a question says that African American culture is simplistic and can be summed up in a few sentences. Also, the assumption of the question is that “you people” all think the same way. At the same time, this question puts pressure on the student to now speak for his or her entire race.

In short, it is imperative to the learning experience that students feel understood and accepted by their professors and feel comfortable in class. Working on these misunderstandings would foster a stronger relationship between student and teacher.

Also, curriculum should be assessed as to whether it has racial bias. If a student only hears of African Americans during black history month or just in the slavery unit, one would think that is the only history that African American culture has worth mentioning. Obviously, this is not the case. Inclusion in course content would be another strong step in exposing students and creating a more culturally aware student body.

Outside of class, more attention and the use of resources is needed to help create and cultivate organizations that foster awareness and inclusion. Events that are appealing to those other than the majority group fosters inclusive feelings and gives African American and other minority groups the sense that they are given a space to exist on campus. Another productive use of resources is the creation of cultural experiences closer to home. It is important that the majority understand how important cultural understanding is right here in America. One does not need to leave the country to have a culturally rich experience.

Finally, in regards to hiring, it is not enough to have a black person working in the office of multicultural affairs or one black professor. Having more diversity in positions that have actual power and can cause actual change to campus culture is necessary to foster inclusion.

For clinical purposes, this data gives a snapshot of how African American students perceive their environment around them. In a one on one clinical setting, therapists must be aware that actions and ideas that may seem benign can be harmful and cause stress. By being more aware of this, a counselor can better work with their clients to understand what is truly bothering them. Also, understanding that such high levels of discrimination is occurring on campus could be motivation to start a support group, with the mission of creating a safe place for African American students to come and vent about their struggles and frustrations.

Microaggressions and Distress

The findings that microaggressions and distress did not have a relationship with one another was contrary to the literature. It is possible that these findings occurred due to lack of consistency in how the research literature has assessed distress. For example, when examining microaggressions Sue et al. (2009) measured negative emotions and feelings of psychological depletion. Harwood, Huntt, Mendenhall, and Lewis (2012) assessed sense of belonging when looking at the effects of microaggressions. These different assessments of distress may be causing ambiguity in the research literature.

Likewise, other factors could affect the feelings that arose after sustaining a microaggression. For example, if a participant experiences a microaggression while having a good time with friends, one would assume when recalling the event, he would have less negative views in retrospect. Whereas, if a participant experiences a microaggressions when he is already upset, one would assume he is more likely to report more distress from the episode. This muddling of the experience, in conjunction with asking participants to think back on their experiences a period of time after, can lead to inaccurate reporting that could be convoluted

enough to affect the outcome. In short, retrospective assessment of microaggressions and distress may be ineffective.

For research in the future, it may be helpful to develop more precise and standardized assessments of distress. For example, if a participant experienced a microaggression in a laboratory setting, and his feelings about the experience was assessed directly after, better data would be collected. A more scientific design would be useful in the collection of more conclusive data.

Racial socialization and microaggressions implications

The most unanticipated finding was the positive correlation between racial socialization and microaggressions. Harwood, Hunt, Mendenhall, and Lewis (2012) discussed that one's level of racial socialization could be so high that he is hypersensitive to microaggressions, allowing for increased detection as well as identifying acts as discrimination but were not. The current study may support that hypothesis. These findings suggest that as one's awareness of herself and her culture increase, they perceive the microaggressions that occur around her more often. The purpose of this research was to find ways to strengthen African American students against microaggressions. The present study suggests that if one was not racially socialized then this would decrease experience of microaggressions.

It would be inappropriate to advocate that African Americans should lower their level of racial socialization so that they may become ignorant to discrimination around them. Likewise, it seems impossible to alleviate individuals from the harm of discrimination without first exposing them to the occurrence of the discrimination that is happening around them. Consequently, future research must be done to assess the baseline level of distress caused by unperceived microaggressions then compare it to the distress caused by an increase of racial socialization.

The level of distress would initially rise due to the increased perception of microaggressions. The study should observe if the amount of distress continues to increase with racial socialization and if, at a certain point, racial socialization begins to create a buffering effect. The study should answer the question if the short-term distress caused by awareness of microaggressions is worth the longer-term benefits of higher levels of racial socialization.

From this study, it is unclear if high levels of racial socialization and high levels of microaggression perception would be less damaging than low levels of socialization and low levels of microaggression perception. Further research is necessary on the perceptions of microaggressions and how perception influences the harm microaggressions inflicts. This researcher believes that a higher level of racial socialization would cause the negative outcomes from microaggressions to be at a lower, more manageable level. This is believed in part due to the complexity of distress.

Internal vs external anger

One can react to distress differently, depending on the direction that one's distress is aimed. One can direct his distress inward towards himself; which can be assumed would cause a person to believe their distress is due to an internal deficit. One can assume such feelings would lead to self-blame, self-doubt, and voluntary isolation. Which would yield negative feelings such as depression, and low self-worth to name a few. However, if a person pointed her distress outward toward her aggressor, one could argue, feelings of anger, mistrust, and frustration would occur. But this anger and frustration would not be pointed internally, thus sparing one's psychological well-being. It can be theorized that it is far better for one's psychological well-being if a person believes she is being perceived as a second-class citizen; than to believe that

she is a second-class citizen. The relationship between microaggressions and externalized and internalized distress should be subject to further study.

Further Study

This study raises many interesting questions. The interactions between racial socialization and microaggressions appear to be very complex. Therefore, more in depth research is necessary. For further research, a longitudinal study could be conducted examining the longitudinal effects of microaggressions on African American students. Examining how their racial socialization impacts their psychological health in the face of microaggressions. Ideally, experimental designs would be used. For example, microaggressions can be encountered in a laboratory setting to groups of participants characterized by high and low levels of racial socialization. Their reactions would then be compared. Such designs would better analyze how racial socialization could relieve the negative psychological outcomes caused by microaggressions.

This study did not touch on how college age students could create higher levels of racial socialization. Racial socialization is a process that research has shown occurs during childhood and is knowledge that is passed from one generation to the next. It would be discouraging to find a construct that has positive effects on microaggressions but is not applicable to parts of the population. This is not the case. Racial socialization is mainly instilled in children by their caregivers. But one can still increase their socialization independently and throughout the lifespan. Socialization is the consciousness of one's culture and all the things that go into it. It can be theorized that learning one's history and immersing oneself in culture would lead to increased racial socialization. By discovering and identifying with cultural music, literature, art, and other enriching experiences, one can create feelings of belonging. Research should be done

to greater understand the acculturation process and how one goes about properly exposing oneself without the hazards of absorbing false cultural ideas that are not productive in nature.

Limitations

This study was subjected to certain limitations. Because it was correlational in nature, one can only make inferences about relationships and cannot establish causation. Also, the study depended on retrospective reporting which can be inaccurate.

Distress could have been measured with a more accurate measure. Also, the instruments for microaggressions and racial socialization were lengthy, which caused participants to terminate the survey prematurely. Shorter instruments with the same level of reliability and validity could have kept the dropout rate lower, which would raise the power of the findings.

Another limitation of this study is the low number of participants used in the study. The study is lacking in power. Also, the sample was localized to one specific school population. Although institutions of higher education boast they are diverse, schools tend to attract similar types of people with similar backgrounds. This point is especially true because Abilene has the distinction of being a private, Christian school located in West Texas. It is possible a sample with a greater level of diversity would yield different results. Likewise, one must be cautious with extrapolating the results to the whole population.

Conclusion

The research examining ways to better the experience of African American and other minorities on college campuses is imperative. Without higher education, one's odds are longer to generate sustained economic and social success. This study is a step in the proper direction of creating ways to protect minority students in an unforgiving environment. Through higher education, individuals are able to better themselves, their families, and the African American

community. One day discrimination will be a relic of the past, only talked about in history books. Until we get to that time, we must continue to strengthen the resolve of those who encounter microaggressions, so they may continue on and do the great things they were meant to do.

REFERENCES

- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2001). *White supremacy & racism in the post-civil rights era*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Brown, T. N., Williams, D. R., Jackson, J. S., Neighbors, H. W., Torres, M., Sellers, S. L., & Brown, K. T. (2000). Being black and feeling blue: The mental health consequences of racial discrimination. *Race and Society*, 2(2), 117–131.
- Blume, A. W., Lovato, L. V., Thyken, B. N., & Denny, N. (2012). The relationship of microaggressions with alcohol use and anxiety among ethnic minority college students in a historically White institution. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 18(1), 45-54.
- Bougie Evelyne, Arim G. Rubab, Kohen E. Dafina, Findlay C. Leanne. (2012) Validation of the 10- item Kessler Psychology Distress Scale (K10) in the 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey. *Health Reports* 27(1), 3-10.
- Boykin, A.W., & Toms, F. D. (1985). Black child socialization: A conceptual framework. In H.P. McAdoo & J.L. McAdoo (Eds.) *Black children: Social, educational, and parental environments* (pp. 33-51). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Carter, R. T. (2007). Racism and psychological and emotional injury recognizing and assessing race-based traumatic stress. *Counseling Psychologist*, 35(1), 13–105.

- Caughy, M. O., O'Campo, P. J., Randolph, S. M., & Nickerson, K. (2002). The influence of racial socialization practices on the cognitive and behavioral competence of African American preschoolers. *Child Development, 73*(5), 1611-1625.
- Feagin, J. (2006). *Systemic racism: A theory of oppression*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Foster, K. M. (2005). Diet of disparagement: the racial experiences of Black students in a predominantly White University. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 18*(4), 489-505.
- Furukawa T.A., Kessler R.C., Slade T. & Andrews G. (2003) The performance of the K6 and K10 screening scales for psychological distress in the Australian National Survey of Mental Health and Well-Being. *Psychological Medicine, 33*(2), 357–362.
- Hamm, J. V. (2001). Barriers and bridges to positive cross-ethnic relations: African American and White parent socialization beliefs and practices. *Youth and Society, 33*(1), 62–98.
- Harris-Britt, A., Valrie, C. R., Kurtz-Costes, B.(2007). Perceived racial discrimination and self-esteem in African American youth: racial socialization as a protective factor. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 17*(4), 669-682.
- Harwood, S. A., Huntt, M. B., Mendenhall, R., & Lewis, J. A. (2012). Racial microaggressions in the residence halls: experiences of students of color at a predominantly White university. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 5*(3), 159-173.
- Hughes, D., Bachman, M. Ruble, D., & Fuligni, A. (2006). Tuned in or tuned out: Children's interpretations of parents' racial socialization messages. In L. Balter & C. Tamis-Lemonda (Eds.), *Child psychology: A handbook of contemporary issues* (2nd ed., pp. 591–610). Philadelphia: Psychology Press.

Hughes, D., & Chen, L. (1997). When and what parents tell children about

race: An examination of race-related socialization among African American families. *Applied Developmental Science, 1*, 200–214.

Hughes, D., & Chen, L. (1999). The nature of parents' race-related communications

to children: A developmental perspective. In L. Balter & C. S. Tamis-Lemonda (Eds.), *Child psychology: A handbook of contemporary issues* (pp. 467–490). Philadelphia: Psychology Press.

Hughes, D., & Johnson, D. J. (2001). Correlates in children's experiences of parents' racial socialization behaviors. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 63*, 981–995.

Hughes, D., Smith, E. P., Stevenson, H. C., Rodriguez, J., Johnson, D. J., & Spicer, P. (2006). Parents' ethnic–racial socialization practices: a review of research and directions for future study. *Developmental Psychology, 42*(5), 747–770.

Andrews, G & Slade, T (2011). Kessler Psychological Distress Scale: normative data from the 2007 Australian National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, 45*(4), 308–316.

Greene, M. L., Way, N., & Pahl, K. (2006). Trajectories of perceived adult and peer discrimination among Black, Latino, and Asian American adolescents: Patterns and Psychological correlates. *Developmental Psychology, 42*(2), 218–236.

Kessler R.C., Andrews G., Colpe L.J., Hiripi E., Mroczek D.K., Normand S.-L.T., Walters E. E., & Zaslavsky A.M. (2002) Short screening scales to monitor population Prevalence and trends in non-specific psychological distress. *Psychological Medicine, 32*(6), 959–967,

- McHale, S. M., Crouter, A. C., Kim, J., Burton, L. M., Davis, K. D., Dotterer, A. M., & Swanson, D. P. (2006). Mothers' and Fathers' racial socialization in African American families: implications for youth. *Child Development, 77*(5), 1387-1402.
- Nadal, K. L. (2011). The Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS): Construction, reliability, and validity. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 58*(4), 470-480.
- Nadal, K. L., Wong, Y., Griffin, K., Sriken, J., Vargas, V., Wideman, M., & Kolawole, A. (2011). Microaggressions and the multiracial experience. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 1*(7), 36-44.
- Nadal, K. L., Griffin, K. E., Wong, Y., Hamit, S., & Rasmus, M. (2014). The impact of racial microaggressions on mental health: counseling implications for clients of color. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 92*(1), 57-66.
- Nadal, K. L., Wong, Y., Griffin, K. E., Davidoff, K., & Sriken, J. (2014). The Adverse Impact of Racial Microaggressions on College Students' Self-Esteem. *Journal of College Student Development, 55*(5), 461-474.
- O'Connor S.S., Beebe T.J., Lineberry T.W., Jobes D.A., Conrad A.K. (2012) The association between the Kessler 10 and suicidality: a cross-sectional analysis. *Comprehensive Psychiatry, 53*(1), 48-53,
- O'Keefe, V. M., Wingate, L. R., Cole, A. B., Hollingsworth, D. W., & Tucker, R. P. (2014). Seemingly harmless racial communications are not so harmless: racial microaggressions lead to suicidal ideation by way of depression symptoms. *Suicide and Life Threatening Behavior 45*(5), 567-576.
- Pascoe, E. A., & Smart Richman, L. (2009). Perceived discrimination and health: A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin, 135*(4), 531-554.

- Peters, M. F., & Massey, G. (1983). Mundane extreme environmental stress in family stress theories: The case of Black families in White America. *Marriage and Family Review*, 6, 193–218.
- Peters, M. F. (2002). Racial socialization of young Black children. In H.P. McAdoo(ed.), *Black children: Social, educational, and parental environments* (2nd ed., pp.57-72). Thousand Oaks, CA Sage.
- Pierce, C., Carew, J., Pierce-Gonzalez, D., & Willis, D. (1978). An experiment in racism: TV commercials. *Television and education* 272–284. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Polanco-Roman, L., & Miranda, R. (2013). Culturally related stress, hopelessness, and vulnerability to depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation in emerging adulthood. *Behavior Therapy*, 44(1), 75–87.
- Sakurai K., Nishi A., Kondo K., Yanagida K., Kawakami N. (2011) Screening Performance of K6/K10 and other screening instruments for mood and anxiety disorders in Japan. *Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences*, 65(5), 434–441,
- Scott, L. D. (2003). The relation of racial identity and racial socialization to coping with discrimination among African American adolescents. *Journal of Black Studies*, 33(4), 520-538.
- Sellers, R. M., & Shelton, J. N. (2003). The role of racial identity in perceived racial discrimination. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(5), 1079–1092.
- Solorzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yoaao, T. (2000). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate: the experiences of African American college students. *Journal of Negro Education*, 69(1-2), 60-73.

- Spencer, M. B. (1983). Children's cultural values and parental child rearing strategies. *Developmental Review, 3*, 351–370.
- Spencer, M. B., & Markstrom-Adams, C. (1990). Identity processes among racial and ethnic minority children in America. *Child Development 61* 290-310.
- Stevenson, H. C., Cameron, R., Herrero-Taylor, T., & Davis, G. Y. (2002). Development of the Teenager Experience of Racial Socialization Scale: correlates of race-related socialization frequency from the perspective of Black youth. *Journal of Black Psychology, 28*(2), 84-106.
- Sue, D. W., Bucciari, J., Lin, A. I., Nadal, K. L., & Torino, G. C. (2007). Racial microaggressions and the Asian American experience. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 13*(1), 72-81.
- Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucciari, J. M., Holder, A. M., Nadal, K. L., & Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice. *American Psychologist, 62*(4), 271-286.
- Sue, D. W., Lin, A. I., Torino, G. C., Capodilupo, C. M., & Rivera, D. P. (2009). Racial microaggressions and difficult dialogues on race in the classroom. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 15*(2), 183-190.
- Sunderland M., Mahoney A., Andrews G. (2012) Investigating the factor structure of the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale in community and clinical samples of the Australian population. *Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment, 34*(2), 253–259,
- Tatum, B. D. (1987). *Assimilation blues: Black families in a White community*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

- Thompson Patricia C., Anderson Louis P., Bakeman Roger A. (2000). Effects of Racial Socialization and Racial Identity on Acculturative Stress in African American College Students. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 6(2), 196-210.
- Kessler, R. C., Mickelson, K., & Williams, D. (1999). The prevalence, distribution, and mental health correlates of perceived discrimination in the United States. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 40(3), 208 –230.
- Wallace, S., Nazroo, J., & Bécarea, L. (2016). Cumulative Effect of Racial Discrimination on the Mental Health of Ethnic Minorities in the United Kingdom. *Am J Public Health American Journal of Public Health*, 106(7), 1294-
- Wilkes, R., & Iceland, J. (2004). Hypersegregation in the twenty-first century. *Demography*, 41(1), 23–36.
- Williams, D. R., Neighbors, H. W., & Jackson, J. S. (2003). Racial/ethnic discrimination and health: Findings from community studies. *American Journal of Public Health*, 93(2), 200–208.
- Wood, J. W. (1970) The Illegal Beginning of American Negro Slavery. *American Bar Association Journal*, 56(1), 45-4

APPENDIX A

IRB Approval Letter

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
320 Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103
325-674-2885

June 7, 2016



Mr. Jusiah Prowell
Department of Psychology
ACU Box 28011
Abilene Christian University

Dear Mr. Prowell,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled *Microaggressions and distress: Racial socialization as a mediator*

was approved by expedited review (46.110(b)(1) category 7) on 6/6/2016 for a period of one year (IRB # 16-052). The expiration date for this study is 6/6/2017. If you intend to continue the study beyond this date, please submit the [Continuing Review Form](#) at least 30 days, but no more than 45 days, prior to the expiration date. Upon completion of this study, please submit the [Inactivation Request Form](#) within 30 days of study completion.

If you wish to make **any** changes to this study, including but not limited to changes in study personnel, number of participants recruited, changes to the consent form or process, and/or changes in overall methodology, please complete the [Study Amendment Request Form](#).

If any problems develop with the study, including any unanticipated events that may change the risk profile of your study or if there were any unapproved changes in your protocol, please inform the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and the IRB promptly using the [Unanticipated Events/Noncompliance Form](#).

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

Megan Roth

Megan Roth, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Sponsored Programs

APPENDIX B

Demographic Questionnaire

What is your ethnicity?

How old are you?

What is your gender?

What University do you attend?

APPENDIX C

Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale

Instructions: Think about your experiences with race. Please read each item and think of how many times this event has happened to you in the **PAST SIX MONTHS**.

0 = I did not experience this event.

1 = I experienced this event at least once in the past six months.

1. I was ignored at school or at work because of my race.
2. Someone's body language showed they were scared of me, because of my race.
3. Someone assumed that I spoke a language other than English.
4. I was told that I should not complain about race.
5. Someone assumed that I grew up in a particular neighborhood because of my race.
6. Someone avoided walking near me on the street because of my race.
7. Someone told me that she or he was colorblind.
8. Someone avoided sitting next to me in a public space (e.g., restaurants, movie theaters, subways, buses) because of my race.
9. Someone assumed that I would not be intelligent because of my race.
10. I was told that I complain about race too much.
11. I received substandard service in stores compared to customers of other racial groups.
12. I observed people of my race in prominent positions at my workplace or school.
13. Someone wanted to date me only because of my race

14. I was told that people of all racial groups experience the same obstacles.
15. My opinion was overlooked in a group discussion because of my race.
16. Someone assumed that my work would be inferior to people of other racial groups.
17. Someone acted surprised at my scholastic or professional success because of my race.
18. I observed that people of my race were the CEOs of major corporations.
19. I observed people of my race portrayed positively on television.
20. Someone did not believe me when I told them I was born in the US.
21. Someone assumed that I would not be educated because of my race.
22. Someone told me that I was “articulate” after she/he assumed I wouldn’t be.
23. Someone told me that all people in my racial group are all the same.
24. I observed people of my race portrayed positively in magazines.
25. An employer or co-worker was unfriendly or unwelcoming toward me because of my race.
26. I was told that people of color do not experience racism anymore.
27. Someone told me that they “don’t see color.”
28. I read popular books or magazines in which a majority of contributions featured people
from my racial group.
29. Someone asked me to teach them words in my “native language.”
30. Someone told me that they do not see race.
31. Someone clenched her/his purse or wallet upon seeing me because of my race.
32. Someone assumed that I would have a lower education because of my race.
33. Someone of a different racial group has stated that there is no difference between the two of
us.

34. Someone assumed that I would physically hurt them because of my race.
35. Someone assumed that I ate foods associated with my race/culture every day.
36. Someone assumed that I held a lower paying job because of my race.
37. I observed people of my race portrayed positively in movies.
38. Someone assumed that I was poor because of my race.
39. Someone told me that people should not think about race anymore.
40. Someone avoided eye contact with me because of my race.
41. I observed that someone of my race is a government official in my state
42. Someone told me that all people in my racial group look alike.
43. Someone objectified one of my physical features because of my race.
44. An employer or co-worker treated me differently than White co-workers.
45. Someone assumed that I speak similar languages to other people in my race.

APPENDIX D

Teenager Experience of Racial Socialization Scale

Do your parents or any of your caregivers say to you any of the following statements now or when you were younger? Circle the number on the line depending on how often you remember hearing any of these messages: 1 = never, 2 = a few times, 3 = lots of times.

Circle only one number per question. Thank you.

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| 1. American society is fair toward Black people. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2. Black children will feel better about themselves if they go to a school with mostly White children. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3. Families who go to church or mosque will be close and stay together. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4. Black slavery is important never forget. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 5. Relatives can help Black parents raise their children. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 6. Religion is an important part of a person's life. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 7. Racism and discrimination are the hardest things a Black child has to face. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8. Having large families can help many Black families survive life struggles. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 9. You should be proud to be Black. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 10. All races are equal. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 11. If you work hard then you can overcome barriers in life. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 12. A belief in God can help a person deal with tough life struggles. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 13. Black children will learn more if they go to a mostly White school. | 1 | 2 | 3 |

14. Knowing your African heritage is important for your survival. 1 2 3
15. Racism is real, and you have to understand it or it will hurt you. 1 2 3
16. You are connected to a history that goes back to African royalty. 1 2 3
17. Too much talk about racism will keep you from reaching your goals in life. 1 2 3
18. Schools should be required to teach all children about Black history. 1 2 3
19. Depending on religion and God will help you live a good life. 1 2 3
20. Families who talk openly about religion or God will help each other to grow. 1 2 3
21. Teachers can help Black children grow by showing signs of Black culture in the
Classroom. 1 2 3
22. Only people who are blood-related to you should be called your “family.” 1 2 3
23. Getting a good education is still the best way for you to get ahead. 1 2 3
24. “Don’t forget who your people are because you may need them someday.” 1 2 3
25. Spiritual battles that people fight are more important than the physical battles. 1 2 3
26. You should know about Black history so that you will be a better person. 1 2 3
27. “Train up a child in the way he should go, and he will not turn away from it.” 1 2 3
28. You have to work twice as hard as Whites in order to get ahead in this world. 1 2 3
29. Whites make it hard for people to get ahead in this world. 1 2 3
30. Be proud of who you are. 1 2 3
31. Going to a Black school will help Black children feel better about themselves. 1 2 3
32. You need to learn how to live in a White world and a Black world. 1 2 3
33. Never be ashamed of your color. 1 2 3
34. Whites have more opportunities than Blacks. 1 2 3
35. A Black child or teenager will be harassed just because s/he is Black. 1 2 3

36. More job opportunities would be open to African American people we're not racist 1 2 3
37. Black children should be taught early that God can protect them from racial hatred 1 2 3
38. Blacks don't always have the same opportunities as Whites. 1 2 3
39. Black children don't have to know about African in order to survive life in America 1 2 3
40. Racism is not as bad today as it used to be before the 1960s. 1 2 3

APPENDIX E

K-10 Distress Scale

The K10 consists of 10 questions, which all have the same response categories.

In the last four weeks, about how often ...

1. Did you feel tired out for no good reasons?
2. Did you feel nervous?
3. Did you feel so nervous that nothing could calm you down?
4. Did you feel hopeless?
5. Did you feel restless or fidgety?
6. Did you feel so restless that you could not sit still?
7. Did you feel depressed?
8. Did you feel that everything was an effort?
9. Did you feel so sad that nothing could cheer you up?
10. Did you feel worthless?