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The *What*, the *Why*, and the *How*: A Review of Racial Microaggressions Research in Psychology

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Abstract

Since the publication of Sue et al. (*Am Psychol* 62:271–286, 2007a, b) seminal article, there has been an enormous scholarly interest in psychology on this construct of racial microaggressions—subtle everyday experiences of racism. In this paper, we provide a review of racial microaggressions research literature in psychology since 2007, following the publication of the first comprehensive taxonomy of racial microaggressions, which provided a conceptual framework and directions for research related to racial microaggressions. However, our review suggests that important conceptual and methodological issues remain to be addressed in the three domains: (1) *what* are racial microaggressions and who do they impact; (2) *why* are racial microaggressions important to examine; and (3) *how* are racial microaggressions currently studied and *how* might we improve the methodologies used to study racial microaggressions. We propose recommendations to further facilitate racial microaggressions research, improve the scientific rigor of racial microaggressions research, and contribute toward a more complete and sophisticated understanding of the concept and consequences of racial microaggressions—a construct that is undoubtedly salient and psychologically relevant among many members of racial minority groups.

Keywords

Microaggressions; Everyday racism; Subtle racism; Racism

Despite the popular discourse that the election of Barack Obama ushered an era of “post-racial America” (Tesler and Sears 2010), race-related stress and racial discrimination are

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still affecting ethnic and racial minorities (Sue et al. 2007a, b). Generally, scholars have agreed that blatant forms of racial discrimination have decreased in frequency and intensity since the 1960s (e.g., Dovidio and Gaertner 2000; McConahay 1986; Steele 1997; Sue and Sue 2007). However, a different and more subtle form of racial discrimination known as racial microaggressions, continue to exist and is experienced by various racial minority groups (Omi and Winant 1994; Sue et al. 2007a, b). The construct of racial microaggressions has gained attention over the past few years, and consequently, the published literature on racial microaggressions in psychology has increased rapidly in just half a decade. For example, prior to 2007, the largest database of psychology-related literature—PsycINFO—identified only one paper (Solorzano et al. 2000) using the search term “racial microaggression.” However, by the date of our review in 2012, PsycINFO produced 58 unique results using “racial microaggression” as a keyword search term. These PsycINFO results include Sue et al. (2007a, b) article that already had been cited 234 times thus far (as of June 6, 2012), attesting to its influence in facilitating research on this topic, and two books (Sue 2010a, b) exclusively dedicated to the concept of microaggressions.

Given the rapid growth, yet relative infancy, as a theoretical and research topic, conceptual and methodological issues remain to be addressed in the following three domains: (1) *what* is the concept of racial microaggressions (e.g., Harris 2008); (2) *why* do racial microaggressions matter (i.e., how do racial microaggressions impact mental health and health; e.g., Okazaki 2009); and (3) *how* can racial microaggressions be best studied (e.g., Lau and Williams 2010). To this end, the purpose of this paper is to provide a review of racial microaggressions research literature in psychology since 2007 in order to elucidate how a clear taxonomy (Sue et al. 2007a, b) has influenced research in psychology, how that research furthers our understanding of racial microaggressions as a psychological phenomenon, and what critical conceptual and methodological issues still remain. This review will highlight the current limitations in how psychology has approached and understood racial microaggressions in order to involve other fields in this dialogue. Following the review, we provide some recommendations for how psychology and other fields can further advance its understanding of racial microaggressions. It is hoped that such a review and proposed recommendations will further facilitate racial microaggressions research, improve the scientific rigor of racial microaggressions research, and contribute toward a more complete and sophisticated understanding of the concept and consequences of racial microaggressions—a construct that is undoubtedly salient and psychologically—relevant among members of racial minority groups. We begin with a brief discussion of Sue et al. (2007a, b) highly influential paper that spurred psychological research on racial microaggressions.

Racial Microaggression in Everyday Life

As early as 2005 during his presidential address to the Society of Counseling Psychology (Division 17) of the American Psychological Association, D. W. Sue urged the field of psychology to consider racial microaggressions. He stated that “insidious, damaging, and harmful forms of racism [that] are...everyday, unintentional, and unconscious are perpetrated by ordinary citizens who believe they are doing right,” (p. 108). However, it was Sue et al. (2007a, b) article in the *American Psychologist* that provided a taxonomy of racial

microaggressions and a clear direction for researchers to follow. The publication of this paper marks the point when racial microaggressions gained widespread psychological research attention. Racial microaggressions were first defined to explain the race-related slights and indignities black Americans experienced on a daily basis. Chester Pierce, a psychiatrist working with black Americans, first coined the term racial microaggression in 1970. According to Pierce:

...the most grievous of offensive mechanisms spewed at victims of racism and sexism are microaggressions. These are subtle, innocuous, preconscious, or unconscious degradations, and putdowns, often kinetic but capable of being verbal and/or kinetic. In and of itself a microaggression may seem harmless, but the cumulative burden of a lifetime of microaggression can theoretically contribute to diminished mortality, augmented morbidity, and flattened confidence. (Pierce 1995, p. 281)

Racial microaggressions are described as “subtle insults (verbal, nonverbal, and/or visual) directed toward racial minorities, often automatically or unconsciously” (Solorzano et al. 2000). They are hidden in everyday interactions and the undetectable tendency helps to widen the gap of racial realities. Most White Americans experience themselves as decent human beings who believe in equality, and thus find it difficult to believe they harbor biased racial attitudes and express discriminatory behaviors. The cumulative nature of these innocuous expressions is detrimental to racial minorities because they sap the energy of recipients which impairs performance in multitude of settings (Omi and Winant 1994; Sue et al. 2007a, b).

Building upon the work of McConahay (1986) who used the term “modern racism,” Sears (1988) who used “symbolic racism,” and Dovidio et al. (2002) who referred to “aversive racism,” Sue et al. (2007a, b) re-introduced the concept of racial microaggressions and defined it as “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group,” (p. 273). In their article, the authors delineated a taxonomy of racial microaggressions: (1) microassaults are often unconscious behaviors (including verbal) that demean a person’s racial heritage such as ascribing a certain degree of intelligence based on the person’s race, being treated as inferior to others of a different race, and assuming that the person is a criminal or deviant in some way because of his/her race; (2) microinsults are often conscious and explicit racist behaviors (including verbal) that are intended to purposefully hurt a person such as name calling, teasing, and avoidant or discriminatory acts; and (3) microinvalidations are often unconscious behaviors (including verbal) that negate or minimize the lived realities of Peoples of Color (POC) such as denying the existence of racial issues, denial of racism, and regarding racial minorities as foreigners. All three types of racial microaggressions can also be perpetrated by macrolevel factors (e.g., laws, policies, etc.), referred to as environmental microaggressions.

In addition to presenting a taxonomy of racial microaggressions, Sue et al. (2007a, b) paper also called for and outlined the direction of future racial microaggressions research. Although noting that racial microaggressions are difficult to document empirically due to

their subtle and often subconscious nature, D. W. Sue and his team nevertheless argued for the importance of racial microaggressions research in order to document that these indignities do exist and that they have health consequences. Specifically, they called for more research on cross-racial microaggressions in therapy, long-term impact of microaggressions on POC, adaptive ways of coping with experiences of racial microaggressions, and increasing awareness of and sensitivity to microaggressions among perpetrators. They also highlighted the need for developing assessment tools to measure racial microaggressions.

The Aftermath: The Rapid Growth of Racial Microaggressions Literature

Guided by the racial microaggression taxonomy and research program proposed by Sue et al. (2007a, b), researchers began to build tools to investigate the construct (e.g., creation of self-report scales) and to examine the relationship between the construct and outcomes (e.g., health, relationship between therapist and client, etc.). The work of such researchers contributed to this swiftly burgeoning area in ethnic minority psychology, with exponential increase in the number of scholarly publications. As previously mentioned, using “racial microaggressions” as a keyword search term, PsycINFO produced 59 total results since Sue et al. (2007a, b) article was published. When using the more general search term of “microaggressions,” PsycINFO returned 112 total results since Sue et al. (2007a, b) article 5 years ago. In comparison, using the search term “aversive racism”—an earlier and also a highly popular psychological concept that “is central to our understanding of microaggressions” (Sue 2010b, p. 13)—PsycINFO generated 109 total results since the publication of Gaertner and Dovidio’s (1986) work that popularized the construct 27 years ago (as of June 12, 2012). Indeed, racial microaggressions research (and microaggressions research more generally)¹ has grown rapidly in such a short period of time, garnering plenty of research attention and suggesting that it is a meaningful psychological construct that highly reflects the lived realities of many racial minority individuals.

Given the rapid pace of progress in racial microaggression research and the substantive body of work that has already accumulated, a review of the first 5 years of racial microaggressions literature facilitates the field’s self-reflective evaluation of current approaches studying racial microaggressions. It should be noted that Lau and Williams (2010) conducted a review of microaggressions research as part of Sue’s (2010b) edited book. Although useful, Lau and Williams’ chapter reviewed only 20 published papers (including the other 12 chapters in the book besides the introduction) despite their focus on microaggressions more generally. Thus, a more comprehensive review, and one that specifically focuses on racial microaggressions, is necessary to evaluate progress and facilitate the growth of the literature on racial microaggressions.

¹Although microaggressions research, in general, has grown tremendously since Sue et al.’s (2007a, b) paper, a review of such a body of literature is beyond the scope of this article. A thorough review of microaggressions literature will go beyond race or ethnicity and will also include international/cultural, sexual orientation and gender, disability, class, and religious forms of microaggressions. This article focuses only on a specific type of microaggressions—racial microaggressions.

A Review and Critique of Racial Microaggressions Literature

To conduct such a review, our team searched for the keyword “racial microaggression” in the PsycINFO, PsycArticles, and Behavioral Sciences Collection databases, which yielded a total of 65 results. Of these 65 results, we chose not to review one clarification notice, two articles related to other forms of microaggressions, and one article which predated Sue et al. (2007a, b). In addition, one result—a book chapter—was included in a different search, described below, and therefore was not included in the count of papers reviewed from these databases. As a result, we reviewed a total of 60 papers from these databases. In addition, we also searched the ProQuest LLC Dissertations and Theses database, and this yielded 79 results. However, after reading the abstracts of the dissertations and theses, we determined only 16 of them were specifically about racial microaggressions (the rest addressed other types of microaggressions or other issues related to racism which were not the focus of the current paper). Of these 16, the team was only able to obtain 13 through interlibrary loans and other sources. Combined with the 65 sources obtained from the former databases, these 13 sources raise the total number of works we reviewed to 73. See Fig. 1 for a summary of our search process. Next, we read all 73 papers and wrote an annotated bibliography for each of them. Using the annotated bibliography, we organized them into several categories—Nature of Article (e.g., conceptual, data-driven), Type of Study (e.g., qualitative, quantitative), Sample Racial/Ethnic Demographics, Setting/Context (e.g., university, community), and Rationale/Purpose/Consequences (e.g., to address depression, therapeutic relationship). Such descriptive information regarding the body of existing racial microaggressions research is presented in Table 1.

Although organizing and summarizing the body of published literature allowed our team to identify specific areas in which racial microaggressions research is blossoming, Table 1 also helped us evaluate areas yet to be addressed in this body of research. Based on this examination of the findings in Table 1, we organized the narrative review and critique into the *what*, the *why*, and the *how* themes of racial microaggressions: (1) *what* are racial microaggressions; and who do they impact; (2) *why* do racial microaggressions matter (e.g., What are possible mental health and health consequences of racial microaggressions? How do racial microaggressions differentially impact members of subpopulations of racial minorities?); and (3) *how* are racial microaggressions currently studied and how might we improve the methodologies used to study racial microaggressions.

Most of the studies we reviewed utilized Sue et al. (2007a, b) taxonomy of racial microaggressions as the framework for interpreting their data, attesting to the influence this conceptualization has had in such a short time period. In fact, only one study (Smith et al. 2011) did not incorporate the taxonomy into their research design or methodology. Despite the breadth of its application, however, the conceptualization of racial microaggressions proposed by Sue et al. (2007a, b) is not without limitations in theory and application (Table 2).

What are Racial Microaggressions? And who do Racial Microaggressions Impact?

Of the three types of racial microaggressions that Sue et al. (2007a, b) presented, microinsults and microinvalidations are most researched in the literature. Indeed, almost all

of the articles we reviewed identified these two types of racial microaggressions in their data. Microassaults, however, were less frequently studied by researchers. According to Sue et al. (2007a, b) taxonomy, this type of racial microaggression can be classified either as a microinsult (i.e., it conveys rudeness and insensitivity) as well as microassault (i.e., it is overt discrimination). In addition, Sue et al. (2007a, b) were careful to note that microassaults are similar to overt forms of racism in that they are conscious and deliberate. How then do racial microaggressions differ from overt forms of racism, especially given that one type of racial microaggression—microassaults—seems to overlap substantially with overt racism? Perhaps, microassaults is included in the taxonomy in order to compare the definition of blatant and subtle forms of racism. It is important to note that the psychological studies reviewed on racial microaggressions addressed microinsults and microinvalidations. Therefore, these two forms—not microassaults— capture the true definition of racial microaggressions.

Sue et al. (2007a, b) also identified nine common themes of racial microaggressions that fall in one of the three major categories—alien one’s own land, ascription of intelligence, color blindness, assumption of criminality, denial of racism, myth of meritocracy, pathologizing cultural norms, second-class citizenship, and environmental invalidation. Whereas several of the original themes appear and reappear in the literature (e. g., denial of racism, assumption of criminality), most of the studies reviewed here identified at least one theme not present in D. W. Sue and colleagues’ original conceptualization. This suggests there may be other possible manifestations of racial microaggressions not identified by D. W. Sue et al., which may pertain to specific racial or ethnic groups. Some of the more prominent examples of this include experiences of African Americans alternating between invisibility and hypervisibility (Allen 2010; Cartwright et al. 2009; Constantine 2007; Michael-Makri 2010) and exoticization and objectification of racial and ethnic minorities, particularly women (e. g., De Oliveira Braga Lopez 2011; McCabe 2009; Michael-Makri 2010). By exploring both similar and varied experiences of racial microaggressions, researchers would be able to further define the overarching taxonomy of racial microaggressions for all people of color as well as develop different taxonomies for specific racial minority groups. As an example, based on their findings that multiracial individuals experience the unique racial microaggression “exclusion and isolation from family,” Johnston and Nadal (2010) proposed a unique taxonomy of racial microaggressions perpetrated against multiracial individuals. Their taxonomy has similarities to, yet expands on, that of Sue et al. (2007a, b).

Although Sue et al. (2008a, b, c) and Sue (2009) provided some conceptual clarification to answer the question “Who do racial microaggressions impact?” some lingering conceptual issues remain. For instance, Harris (2008; 2009) questioned whether visible racial and ethnic minorities’ (VREMs) experience racial microaggressions differently from those who may self-identify as a member of a VREM group but nevertheless “pass” as a member of the dominant group. Indeed, Nadal (2008a), Nadal et al. (2011a, b), and Watkins et al. (2010) have each suggested the relationship between phenotype and racial microaggressions as a possible point of explication on the variations of racial microaggression experiences between and within VREM individuals and groups. Also, how does historical oppression (in the cases of African Americans and American Indians, for example) influence the recognition and experience of racial microaggressions? Moreover, how are those

experiences different from the experiences of immigrants who may not have encountered racial oppression prior to migration and are experiencing oppression for the first time in a new setting? Relatedly, as Huber (2011) noted, there might be varying experiences of racial microaggressions between documented and undocumented immigrants. Further, in the case of some immigrant groups with histories of colonialism and, thus, histories of subtle, overt, interpersonal, and institutional oppression in their native countries (e. g., Filipinos, West Africans), what is their experiences of racial microaggressions in their new societal context that has a different history of race relations? Other yet unexplored questions include the possibly differential experiences of racial microaggressions between native English speakers and those who speak English as a second language, and differences attributable to degrees of acculturation and racial/ ethnic identity. Finally, given that racial microaggressions are a specific form of oppression and that racial minority groups have experienced historical and contemporary forms of oppression that some of them may have internalized (e. g., David 2008), how does internalized oppression play a role in the recognition, experience, and impact of racial microaggressions?

Inter- and intra-racial (or ethnic) experiences of racial microaggressions among different minority groups also need more research attention. Nadal (2008a) demonstrated that individuals within ethnic and racial groups often experience racial microaggressions in different ways. In addition, Allen (2010) suggested that racial microaggressions occur between ethnic and racial minority groups, but to date, no study has explored this particular manifestation exclusively nor has any study investigated the impact of inter- and intra-racial microaggressions on individuals. Further, Johnston and Nadal (2010) and Nadal (2008a, 2011a, b) have also suggested the exploration of phenotype as a mediating or moderating variable in the frequency and effects of racial microaggression experiences. In addition, Barnes (2011) suggested that racial/ethnic identity may mediate the impact of racial microaggressions on self-esteem and other mental health variables. These findings suggest that more research on racial microaggressions and their consequences—with an emphasis on identifying potential mediator or moderator variables—between and within minority groups is needed.

Why Study Racial Microaggressions?

After the 44th presidential inauguration, only 26 % of Americans believed that racism was a major social problem (Fletcher and Cohen 2009) while 77 % of Americans believed the current state of race relations were good (New York Times/Times/CBS News, 2008). A 2009 national survey, however, revealed that racism was still a reality for majority of racial minorities (Fletcher and Cohen 2009). The different perceptions of racial realities are the major reasons for race-related tension and conflict (Jones 1997). So alongside answering the questions of *what* are racial microaggressions and who are impacted by them, additional questions pertaining to the “why” racial microaggressions (i. e., specific mechanisms through which racial microaggressions impact mental health and health) may open important dialogue on differences in racial realities and help to minimize race-related tension. There are many aspects of racial microaggressions that remain unanswered which opens this construct to exciting and promising scholarship. We understand there are limitless factors to consider in terms of “why” study microaggressions. Given our expertise in psychology, we

primarily highlight the importance of examining the impact on the targets of racial microaggressions. We present an in-depth discussion on the effects of racial microaggressions and provide models and mechanisms that may aide in understanding how racial minorities are negatively affected at the individual level. We conclude by briefly discussing other aspects of racial microaggressions that are left unexplored, such as factors pertaining to the perpetrators and social context.

Impact of Racial Microaggressions

The effects of overt forms of discrimination on the health of stigmatized individuals has been well documented in psychology (Clark et al. 1999; Hatzenbuehler 2009; Herek 2009). When minorities perceive discrimination, they also exhibit poorer health and mental health outcomes. Reviews of existing research by Carter (2007), Clark et al. (1999), Harrell et al. (2003), Herek (2009), and Mays et al. (2007) suggest that perceived stigmatization pertaining to gender, race, and sexual orientation is associated with depression and anxiety symptoms, decreased psychological wellbeing, lower self-regard, and physical health issues (e.g., higher blood pressure). Among Asian Americans, for example, Gee and his colleagues documented associations between self-reported discrimination and the following outcomes: (1) chronic health conditions, including cardiovascular conditions, respiratory conditions, and pain conditions (Gee et al. 2007b); (2) 12-month mental disorder diagnoses according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV; American Psychiatric Association 2000; Gee et al. 2007a); and (3) physical health-related quality of life, including self-rated health, days of limited activity, and unhealthy days (Gee and Ponce 2010). Gee et al. (2007a, b) found that the association between racial discrimination and negative health outcomes hold even after controlling for other stressors (e.g., poverty).

The impact of experiencing more ambiguous, subtle forms of racial microaggressions is less known, even as researchers suggest that these may be more common than blatant discriminatory events (Sue et al. 2009). Crocker and Major (1989) suggest that attributional ambiguity, where a racial minority individual may be unsure whether they are being judged based on stereotypes or prejudices about their race or ethnicity, can negatively impact psychological well-being. Our review found that perceived psychological distress in ethnic and racial minority groups (e.g., anxiety, diminished self-esteem, diminished self-efficacy, etc.) as the result of experiencing racial microaggressions has been documented in several settings, namely therapy (Constantine 2007; Crawford 2011; Morton 2011; Owen et al. 2011; Schoulte et al. 2011; Sue et al. 2008a, b, c), clinical supervision (Barnes 2011; Beaumont 2010; Constantine and Sue 2007), academia (Cartwright et al. 2009; Constantine et al. 2008; Sue et al. 2008, 2009, 2011), university classrooms and environment (Blume et al. 2012; Gomez et al. 2011; Granger 2011; Grier-Reed 2010; Robinson 2011; Saucedo 2010; Smith et al. 2011; Sue and Constantine 2007; Sue et al. 2009, 2010; Torres et al. 2010; Yasso et al. 2009), and the community (Burdsey 2011; De Oliveira Braga Lopez 2011; Huber 2011; Nadal 2008a; Nadal et al. 2011b; Rivera et al. 2010; Sue et al. 2009; Wang et al. 2011). However, only one study to date has explicitly explored the long-term effects of experiencing racial microaggressions (Torres et al. 2010), and questions still remain regarding the cumulative effect of racial microaggressions across the lifespan.

Based on the literature we reviewed, the negative impact of racial microaggressions on psychological and physical health is beginning to be documented; however, these studies have been largely correlational and based on recall and self-report, making it difficult to determine whether racial microaggressions actually cause negative health outcomes and, if so, through what mechanisms (Okazaki 2009). Research focusing on the immediate psychological, physiological, and behavioral reactions to experiences of racial microaggressions may improve our understanding of the mechanisms through which racial microaggressions influence mental and physical health, and examining the entire process model will help shed light on how subtle forms of discrimination actually affect the daily well-being of racial and ethnic minorities.

The literature on other marginalized groups may also inform how we may better understand the immediate consequences of racial microaggressions. For instance, Meyer (2003) proposed a minority stress model which examined stress as a mediator for the effect of stigma on health outcomes among lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals. Expanding on the model, Hatzenbeuhler (2009) proposed a mediation framework for LGB populations that is theoretically grounded in transactional definitions of stress (Monroe 2008), which posits that both environmental and response (i.e., appraisals) components of stress are critical in determining physiological and psychological health outcomes. The goal of this model was to map out potential psychological pathways linking stigma-related stressors to adverse psychological and physiological outcomes. This framework takes stress as the initial starting point, whereas the minority stress model takes the minority status as the initial starting point. According to the psychological mediation framework, stress comes first in the causal chain leading to physiological and psychological health outcomes (i.e., stress → psychological mediators → psychopathology). Furthermore, Hatzenbuehler et al. (2009a, b) argue that distal stigma-related stressors affect psychopathology through cognitive, social/interpersonal, and emotional channels. In particular, he and his colleagues have shown through a series of experimental and longitudinal studies that stigma-related stress increases emotion dysregulation (e.g., increased rumination, engagement in impulsive behaviors), which in turn can lead to risk for depression, anxiety, and substance abuse problems among sexual minority individuals (e.g., Hatzenbuehler et al. 2009a, b). Applying this model to microaggressions, racial microaggression may be conceptualized as a stressor that mediates the effects of the racial minority status on physical and psychological health outcomes (see Fig. 2).

There are also factors that likely moderate the effects of racial microaggression stress on psychological outcomes, such as coping strategies. In most of the studies reviewed here, the researchers explored the types of coping strategies utilized by the victims of racial microaggressions; however, we still know little about the degree to which, and the mechanism(s) by which, these coping strategies are successful. In addition, the impact of racial microaggressions on coping strategies has received little attention. For example, spirituality has been identified in several studies (e.g., Granger 2011; Hernández et al. 2010; Robinson 2011) as a preferred coping mechanism, but the inverse relationship (i.e., the impact of racial microaggressions on an individual's spirituality) has not been explored.

Other Aspects of Racial Microaggressions to Consider

The role of perpetrators is an important factor to consider when addressing the dynamics of racial microaggressions. Oftentimes, racism is perceived as a problem among racial minorities, and in order to fix racism, it is up to the targets to overcome their perceived discrimination rather than examining the role of the perpetrators. The invisibility of power and privilege creates difficulty for dialogue about racial microaggressions (Sue 2010a, b), reflecting the gap in racial realities. It is difficult for the empowered to become aware of their biased attitudes and behaviors. Perpetrators of microinsults and microinvalidations are often minimally aware that they are demeaning or denigrating racial minorities. They are socialized into Eurocentric values, beliefs, standards, and norms, which makes the perception of their power and privilege normative, and therefore invisible. Sue and Constantine (2007) reviewed the literature on psychological self-examination of whiteness and concluded four distinct layers of fears: fear of appearing racist, realizing one's own racism, acknowledging white privilege, and accepting the consequences of action or inaction. These layers of fears may help in understanding the resistance to acknowledge and addressing microaggressions, especially from the well-intentioned. Other fields, such as sociology, are needed to expand on these societal-level considerations of racial microaggressions.

Finally, the current body of racial microaggressions literature also indicates a need to explore consequences of racial microaggressions that are perpetrated between and within racial and ethnic minority groups. All of the studies reviewed for this article in which the race of the offender was documented explored racial microaggressions perpetrated by whites. Some studies indicated that racial microaggressions were perpetrated by racial and ethnic minorities as well as whites (e.g., Allen 2010; Michael-Makri 2010). Expanding on this line of racial microaggression, research would help parse out the specific mechanisms in which racial microaggressions are processed and carried out. In addition, a few studies have explored racial microaggressions from the perspective of the offender (Doucette 2011; Henfield 2011; Sue and Constantine 2007; Sue et al. 2009, 2010), each of which have indicated that offenders of racial microaggressions also experience psychological distress to some degree. This warrants explicit investigation of the type and degree of distress as well as other consequences of perpetrating racial microaggressions.

How to Study Racial Microaggressions? Methodological Issues

The first approach of racial microaggressions research (e. g., Constantine 2007; Constantine and Sue 2007; Shah 2008; Cartwright et al. 2009) used focus groups to understand how the construct is commonly experienced by various racial groups (e. g., Asian Americans, African Americans), ethnic groups (e. g., Filipino Americans), and other marginalized groups (e. g., LGBT). Focus groups were also used to explore the potential mental health consequences of racial microaggressions (as discussed in the previous section). These qualitative studies have added to our understanding of racial microaggressions by allowing participants to describe their experiences in their own words, which allows for rich data and a depth of interpretation. This is particularly important when the construct of interest is sensitive and complex; as Marshall (1996) states, "qualitative studies aim to provide illumination and understanding of complex psychosocial issues," (p. 522). Most of the

existing literature on racial microaggressions has focused on the experiences of individuals from African, Asian, and Latino origin (e. g., Blume et al. 2012; Owen et al. 2011; Nadal 2011a, b), although researchers are beginning to expand their focus to include other ethnic and racial minority groups, including American Indians (Clark et al. 2011) and individuals of multiracial heritage (Johnston and Nadal 2010; Nadal et al. 2011a, b). New studies even include ethnic and racial minority groups from countries outside of the US (Burdsey 2011; De Oliveira Braga Lopez 2011). In addition, several studies have indicated that specific racial and ethnic groups experience racial microaggressions uniquely (Johnston and Nadal 2010; Nadal 2008a; Nadal et al. (2011a, b; Rivera et al. 2010). For example, Nadal et al. (2011a, b) found that individuals from multiracial heritage often experience isolation and exclusion from their families; this experience has not previously been noted in studies of monoracial individuals. As the body of literature continues to expand, it will be important to continue to explore and document the ways in which different populations experience racial microaggressions.

Despite the fact that the initial approach of racial microaggressions research has dramatically improved our understanding of this construct, however, it is important to note the limitations of this type of methodology to the study of racial microaggressions in order to evaluate the current body of literature and to direct the future course of research in this area. Of the studies reviewed which collected qualitative data for at least a portion of the study, sample sizes for qualitative portions ranged from 5 (Allen 2010; Henfield 2011; Robinson 2011) to 97 (Torres et al. 2010), with an average sample size across studies of about 19 participants (SD = 20). Furthermore, half of the reviewed studies were conducted in university settings, and 21 have focused exclusively on the experiences of students and faculty. Moreover, the students and faculty sampled in the majority of the studies were from psychology and related disciplines. In several instances (e.g., Constantine 2007), purposive sampling criteria included preexisting knowledge of the concept of racial microaggressions and their impact. The degree, types, and responses to racial microaggressions as described by these samples may differ qualitatively from the ways in which the general population experiences this phenomenon. We also still know relatively little about how racial microaggressions are experienced by children and adolescents. Indeed, only four of the studies reviewed focused exclusively on this age group. These methodological limitations make it difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the experiences of racial microaggressions across the US, in multiple populations, and from varying contexts.

The second approach of racial microaggressions research is focused on constructing quantitative measures that are generally intended for various racial groups (e. g., REMS, Nadal 2011a, b; RMAS, Torres-Harding et al. 2012) or for specific marginalized groups (i.e., transgender microaggression scale, sexual orientation microaggression scale, etc.) (Sue 2010a, b). Sue et al. (2007a, b) honed the definitions of microaggressions using focus groups, as qualitative approaches are often suited to building theories and exploring new constructs (Watkins et al. 2010; Yasso et al. 2009). Researchers constructing quantitative measures discuss the importance of examining the effects of microaggressions on a larger scale (Nadal 2008a; Nadal 2011a, b). However, these scales rely on self-report and recall, which makes it difficult to determine the immediate and proximal effects of microaggressions. There may be bias effects when participants are asked to recall past

experiences. For example, respondents' current psychological state may influence how they recall their past experiences (Sechrist et al. 2003).

As previously discussed, knowing specifically how racial microaggressions affect daily well-being will help elucidate the impact on the targets and inform researchers and practitioners about how racial microaggressions are fully processed by the targets (Burke 1984; Harrell 2000; Outlaw 1993). Clearly parsing out the proximal consequences will help generate informed pathways of the mental and physical impact of racial microaggressions. Understanding the source of psychopathology from racial microaggressions is an invaluable tool in helping targets learn to cope with the everyday wear and tear of racial microaggressions. The use of experimental, longitudinal, and naturalistic designs will help fulfill this gap in racial microaggressions research. Experimental paradigms will allow researchers to examine the mechanisms by which racial microaggressions confers risk for psychopathology. Using this paradigm, researchers will be able to examine the proximal and indirect impact of this race-related stressor and further tease apart the uniqueness of racial microaggressions from other general stressors. Manipulating exposures to racial microaggressions and other general stressors will disentangle the differential impacts of stressors on psychopathology.

Longitudinal and naturalistic research designs will allow for a more in depth consideration of the cumulative impact of racial microaggressions. Researchers using longitudinal designs will be able to track the developmental trends of racial microaggressions within the same sample. This allows for more accurate assessment of the effects of racial microaggressions on physiological and psychological health outcomes. Naturalistic observations will allow a more realistic and natural assessment of racial microaggressions. Given that racial microaggressions are theorized to have a negative impact on physiological and psychological health, ethical concerns arise from laboratory manipulations. Therefore, researchers can gather immediate reactions and responses from racial microaggressions in a natural setting without actually inducing racial microaggressions on participants. Furthermore, external validity of racial microaggressions research will be further strengthened through naturalistic designs.

Because of the sample size and recruitment concerns in many of the studies we reviewed, it is recommended that future researchers expand on the existing body of literature by replicating existing studies with larger, more representative, and perhaps even random samples. In addition, the existing literature would be greatly enhanced by research conducted outside of the university. Several recent studies have documented the presence of racial microaggressions in a variety of community settings including domestic violence shelters (Nnawulezi 2011) work environments (Hunter 2011), and sports (Burdsey 2011), and we recommend expanding to other settings of everyday life. Some suggestions include examining racial microaggressions in the media, centers of worship, and governmental policies and laws (environmental microaggressions). Indeed, Sue et al. (2007a, b) noted that racial microaggressions take place beyond the interpersonal level, but existing racial microaggressions research has yet to satisfactorily investigate the experiences and processes of systemic-level or environmental-level racial microaggressions, as well as their consequences.

Also in clinical settings, more racial microaggressions research is also needed with clinical samples (inpatient and outpatient). While the total number of research remains small, the increasing availability of quantitative measures of racial microaggressions can be utilized to explore the relationship between racial microaggressions and specific forms of psychopathology. Blume et al. (2012) documented a positive relationship between racial microaggressions and binge drinking, but to our knowledge, no other studies exist which investigate the relationship between racial microaggressions and disorders that meet the diagnostic criteria of the DSM-IV. To further our understanding of the exact ways in which racial microaggressions impact mental health, it is recommended that future psychological researchers further evaluate existing measures of microaggressions, develop new measures, and explore their implications in the clinical setting.

As aforementioned, the need for experimental, longitudinal, and naturalistic research designs is serving as an impetus for the third approach of microaggressions research. These paradigms will not only improve scientific rigor, but also help investigate the proximal and indirect mechanisms by which racial microaggressions affect psychopathology. In the current work examining microaggressive stress, researchers have suggested four areas of study: (1) biological; (2) emotional; (3) cognitive; and (4) behavioral effects. Theories on biological health effects of microaggressive stressors postulate that the stress depresses the immune system, increases blood pressure and heart rate, and heightens risk for hypertension (Lau and Williams 2010). Experimental, longitudinal, and naturalistic paradigms will allow researchers to reveal the link between these biological reactions to psychopathology and other health outcomes. Researchers examining the emotional effects of microaggressive stressors speculate that emotional dysregulation brings about mental health disorders. In terms of the cognitive effects of microaggressive stress, researchers have revealed that the microaggression incident sets off a chain of cognitive processes aimed at understanding and making sense of the incident. Energy may be spent both appraising the situation and deliberating whether or not to respond. Furthermore, energy may be spent in evaluating the consequences of making a response. This may divert the target's attention and energies away from task, and problem-solving and learning ability. Research on the behavioral effects of microaggressive stressors addresses hypervigilance and skepticism, rage and anger, fatigue and hopelessness, and strength through adversity.

Summary and Conclusions

Sue et al. (2007a, b) conceptualization of racial microaggressions provided researchers with a framework to explore these subtle everyday forms of racism. Following the publication of that landmark article, racial microaggressions research has increased exponentially. Consequently, we know more about racial microaggressions than ever before; qualitative and quantitative studies have explicated the types of, responses to, and consequences of racial microaggressions in a variety of settings with multiple racial and ethnic groups. However, as our review of the racial microaggressions literature demonstrate, there remain conceptual and methodological issues that would advance our understanding of the *what*, *why*, and *how* of microaggressions.

In reviewing the current state of the art in racial microaggressions research, we have offered recommendations for future research, both potential research questions and some methodological improvements to strengthen the current body of literature. Particularly needed is research with larger, more representative, and randomly obtained samples which go “beyond questionnaires” (Okazaki 2002), and research that (1) further clarifies the concept of racial microaggressions and how it fits with other models of stress; (2) explores the ways in which different racial and ethnic groups experience racial microaggressions; (3) elucidates the perspectives of the perpetrators; and (4) identifies long-term mental and physical health effects of experiencing racial microaggressions. We hope that such a review, critique, and proposed recommendations will further facilitate racial microaggressions research, improve the scientific rigor of racial microaggressions research, and contribute toward a more complete and sophisticated understanding of the concept of racial microaggressions and its potential consequences.

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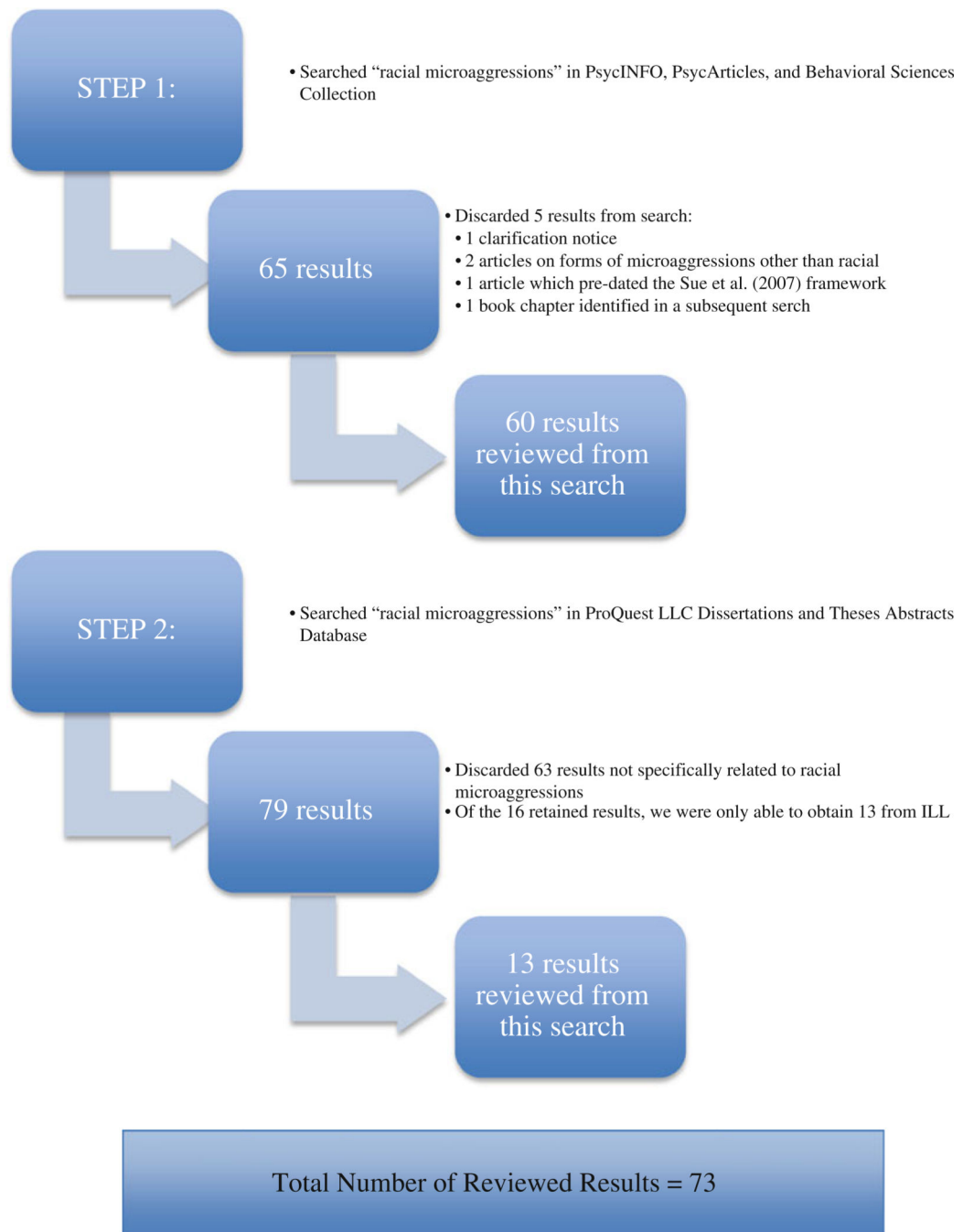


Fig. 1.
A summary of the search process

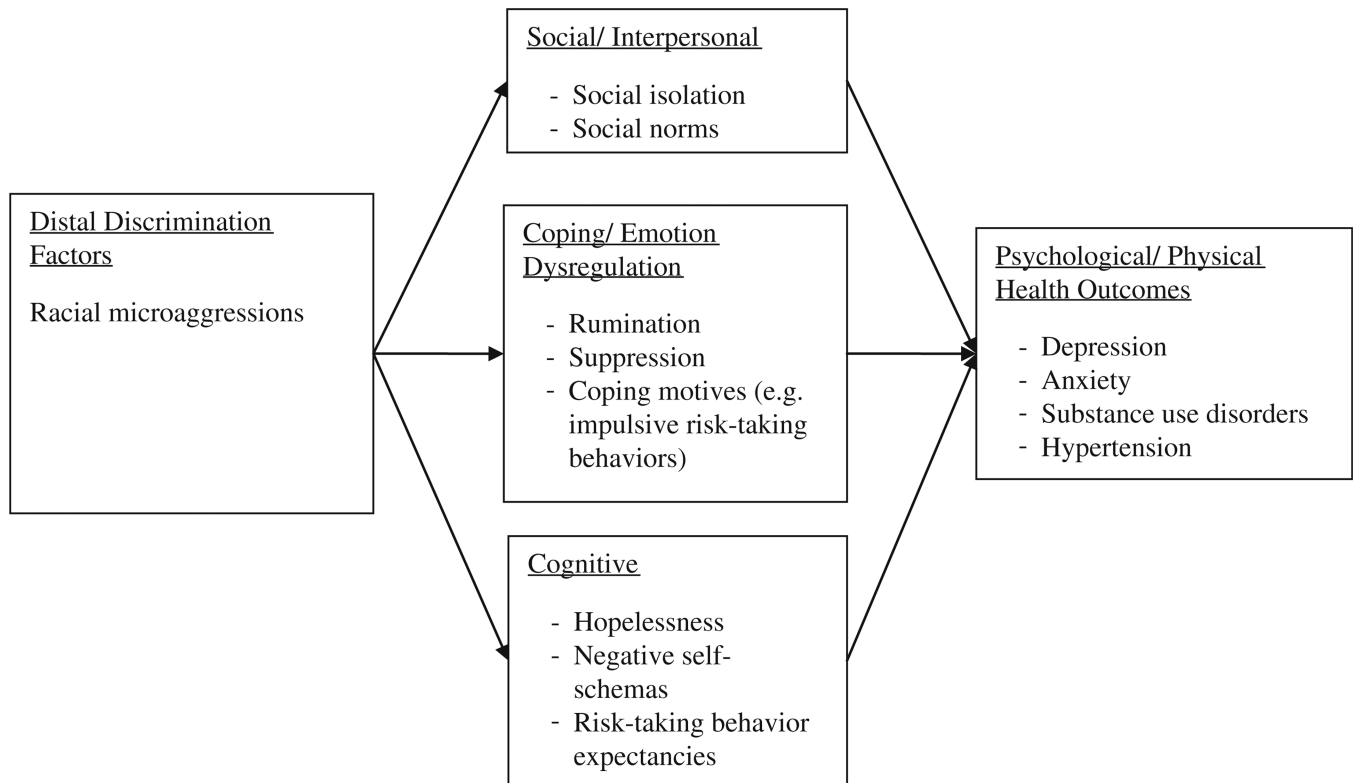


Fig. 2. Psychological mediation model (adapted from Hatzenbuehler 2009)

Table 1

Descriptive information about existing racial microaggressions literature

References	Nature of article		Methods		Sample characteristics		Setting/ context	Contributions
	Theory/ conceptual	Data driven	Qualitative	Quantitative	N ^a	Demographics ^b		
Sue et al. (2007a, b)	X						University	Taxonomy of Microaggressions; call for research
Constantine (2007)		X	X		24	Black clients, white therapists	University	A negative relationship between perceived racial MAs by the client therapy and working alliance as well as treatment satisfaction was found.
Constantine and Sue (2007)		X	X		10	White supervisors, black supervisees	University	7 themes were identified: invalidating racial-cultural issues, stereotypical assumptions about supervisees and clients, blaming clients, suggesting culturally inappropriate interventions.
Ruiz-Mesa (2007)		X		X	439		University	The stronger sense of cultural identity a student has, the more likely he or she is to interpret a negative learning environment, and the more negatively the student perceives the environment, the more likely he or she will perceive racial MAs.
Sue and Constantine(2007)	X					White students	University	Some of the fears of white students related to race are discussed: appearing racist, realizing they are racist, recognizing culpability, and acknowledging white privilege.
Constantine et al. (2008)		X	X		12	Black faculty	University	7 themes were identified: invisibility-hypervisibility, questioning credentials, lack of mentorship, extra service work, attributional ambiguity, constant cognizance of appearance.
Goodstein (2008)	X							In this response to Sue et al. (2007a, b), the author argues that the concept of "racial" MAs is limited and should be expanded to "cultural" MAs.
Harris (2008)	X							In this response to Sue et al. (2007a, b), the author offers alternative explanations other than race for the types of MAs discussed in Sue et al.
Nadal (2008a)		X		X	448	Chinese and Filipino	Community	Both groups reported unique experiences of racial MAs based on phenotype.
Nadal (2008b)	X							Offers suggestions for learning about and dealing with MAs in personal and professional contexts.
Schacht (2008)	X							In a response to Sue et al. (2007a, b), the author asserts that not all microinteractions are negative and that when a relationship is detrimental, both parties are to blame.
Shah (2008)		X	X		10	Visible minorities female students	University	The most common form of racism reported was microaggressions, particularly invisibility.

References	Nature of article		Methods		Sample characteristics		Setting/ context	Contributions
	Theory/ conceptual	Data driven	Qualitative	Quantitative	N ^a	Demographics ^b		
Sue et al. (2008a, b)		X	X		13	Black	University	minimization of the importance of race, stereotypes, being asked to reproduce minimization of the importance of race, stereotypes, being asked to reproduce minimization of the importance of race, stereotypes, being asked to reproduce 5 domains related to the experience of MAs are identified: incident, perception, reaction, interpretation, and consequence.
Sue et al. (2008a, b)	X							The authors argue that the most incidents of MAs are likely to occur when the perpetrator occupies a position of power over the victim.
Sue et al. (2008c)		X	X		13	Black	University	Sue et al.'s (2007a, b) taxonomy is appropriate for this population. Identified themes include: assumption of intellectual inferiority and inferior status, criminality, assumption of the universality of black Americans, and the assumption of the superiority of white race and culture.
Thomas (2008)	X							In response to Sue et al. (2007a, b), the author expresses concern for the focus on the negative aspects of race, rather than the positive. He also argues that the concept of racial MAs be broadened to include cultural considerations.
Cartwright et al. (2009)		X	X			Black faculty	University	6 of the 7 themes identified by Constantine et al. (2008) were validated and elucidated a new theme: "unequal or different treatment."
Harris (2009)	X							Argues that Sue et al. (2007a, b) place too much importance on race.
McCabe (2009)		X	X		82	Black, Latina/o, white students	University	Explored intersection of racial and gender MAs. Unique themes include: Black men are threatening. Latinas are exoticized, black women experience racial MAs in the classroom, white women experience MAs in male-dominated majors.
Sue (2009)	X							The author differentiates between externally labeled POC and subjectively labeled POC and suggests the racial reality of the two groups is different.
Sue et al. (2009)		X	X		10	Asian American	University	Sue et al.'s (2007a, b) taxonomy is appropriate for this population. Specific themes identified include: attributional ambiguity, uncertainty about when and how to respond, and disappointment when the MA is perpetrated by someone whom the victim respects.
Sue (2009)	X							The author differentiates between externally labeled POC and subjectively labeled POC and

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References	Nature of article		Methods		Sample characteristics		Setting/ context	Contributions
	Theory/ conceptual	Data driven	Qualitative	Quantitative	N ^a	Demographics ^b		
Sue et al. (2009)		X	X		10	Asian American	University	suggests the racial reality of the two groups is different. suggests the racial reality of the two groups is different. Sue et al.'s (2007a, b) taxonomy is appropriate for this population. Specific themes identified include: attributional ambiguity, uncertainty about when and how to respond, and disappointment when the MA is perpetrated by someone whom the victim respects.
Sue et al. (2009b)		X	X		14	POC students	University	Racial MAs often precipitate difficult dialogues on race in the classroom.
Sue et al. (2009a)	X							Argues that most of the discrimination that occurs in the workplace is the result of racial MAs and not overt forms of racism.
Sue et al. (2009)		X	X		8	White faculty	University	There was a general lack of training on dealing with difficult dialogues on race in the classroom.
Yasso et al. (2009)		X	X		37	Latina/o students	University	Participants most frequently experienced interpersonal racial MAs in the form of racist jokes.
Allen (2010)		X	X		5	Black middle class students	Community	Parents providing opportunities for social and cultural experiences for children may mitigate negative psychological effects of racial MAs. Also documented are interracial MAs between minority groups
Beaumont (2010)				X	180	White POC	Community	A negative correlation was found between perception of racial MAs by the clinician in supervision and working alliance as well as disclosure by the clinician.
Grier-Reed (2010)	X							Asserts that counterspace may serve as protective factors.
Hernández et al. (2010)		X	X		23	African, Asian, Hispanic and Kurdish decent mental health workers		Sue et al.'s (2007a, b) taxonomy is appropriate for these groups. Identified themes include: self-reflection and consultation, self-care, spirituality, challenging MAs, support from white allies, documenting MAs, and mentoring.
Hill et al. (2010)		X				Alaska native		Sue et al.'s (2007a, b) taxonomy is applied conceptually to Alaska Native populations in the context of historical trauma and colonial mentality.
Johnston and Nada(2010)	X					Multiracial		Propose a taxonomy of MAs toward multiracial individuals based on Sue et al. (2007a, b). Themes unique to this population: exclusion/inclusion, exoticization/objectification, assumption of

References	Nature of article		Methods		Sample characteristics		Setting/ context	Contributions
	Theory/ conceptual	Data driven	Qualitative	Quantitative	N ^a	Demographics ^b		
Michael-Makri(2010)		X		X	187	POC students	University	monoracial identity or mistaken identity, denial of multiracial reality, and monoracial identity or mistaken identity, denial of multiracial reality, and There is no difference in the rate of racial MAs between racial and ethnic groups. The most common types include: being asked to represent one's entire group, being treated overly friendly, exoticization, infantilization, minimization, and invisibility.
Murphy-Shigematsu (2010)	X						Community	The author advocates personal reflection by supervisors to become more aware of their own biases about race.
Poon (2010)	X	X	X		25	Asian American students	University	Critical mass alone does not mitigate against experiencing racial MAs.
Rivera et al. (2010)	X	X	X		11	Latina/o	Community	Sue et al.'s (2007a, b) taxonomy is appropriate. A unique type of MA identified was "characteristics of speech."
Sauceda (2010)	X	X		X	309	Latina/o students	University	Strong ethnic identity is a protective factor against the negative psychological impact of MAs.
Sue et al. (2010)	X	X	X		14	White students	University	The participants were not able to identify difficult dialogues, which indicates the students might have a decreased awareness of racial content. Also, this study validates Sue and Constantine's (2007) earlier findings that racial discourse makes white students anxious and uncomfortable.
Torres et al. (2010)	X	X	X	X	97 107	Black students	University	Sue et al.'s (2007a, b) taxonomy is appropriate for this population. The authors also found that the experience of racial MAs in the form of underestimation of personal ability may carry greater risk to psychological health than other forms.
Watkins et al. (2010)	X	X	X		10	Black students	University	Sue et al.'s (2007a, b) taxonomy is appropriate for this group. Black students devote a great deal of mental energy to determining whether or not an event was racially motivated. Also, the participants felt more comfortable with peers of color than with white students.
Balsam et al. (2011)	X	X	X	X	117 900 1217	POC LGBT	Community	Development and initial validation of The LGBT People of Color Microaggressions Scale
Bames (2011)	X	X	X	X	34	Black supervisors, white supervisees	University	A negative correlation exists between the perception of racial MAs by the supervisor in supervision and the working alliance.

References	Nature of article		Methods		Sample characteristics		Setting/ context	Contributions
	Theory/ conceptual	Data driven	Qualitative	Quantitative	N ^a	Demographics ^b		
Burdsey (2011)		X	X		12	British Asian athletes	Community	Racial MAs exist in this population, the most common of which is racial jokes.
Clark et al. (2011)		X	X		10 blogs	American Indian	University	Sue et al.'s taxonomy is validated for American Indians. Unique themes for this group include: "extinct or vanishing," "sociopolitical dominance," "adoration and grief."
Crawford (2011)		X		X	110	Black clients	University	Those who experience racial MAs are less likely to seek treatment.
De Oliveira Braga Lopez (2011)		X		X	16	Black immigrants to Portugal	Community	Sue et al.'s taxonomy is appropriate for this population. Types of MAs include: unwelcoming environment, assumption of inferiority and criminality, denial of differences, and exoticization.
Doucette (2011)		X		X	137	White students	University	Participants were less aware of subtle forms of MAs than overt instances of racism.
Gomez et al. (2011)		X	X		9	POC students	University	Sue et al.'s taxonomy is appropriate for teaching assistants of color. Identified themes include: undermining authority and questioning one's own ability.
Granger (2011)		X	X		5	Black students	University	A heuristic inquiry of racial MAs identified the following themes: anger, fear, hopelessness, hypervigilance, culture shock, and spirituality.
Henfield (2011)		X	X		5	Black students	Community	Sue et al.'s taxonomy is appropriate for this group.
Huber (2011)		X	X		20	Latina/o students	Community	Argues Sue et al.'s (2007a, b) taxonomy should be broadened to include racist nativist MAs. Experiences of these types of MAs are similar between US-born and immigrant individuals.
Hunter (2011)		X	X		20	POC employees	Community	Sue et al.'s (2007a, b) is appropriate for this group. Identified themes include: ascription of intelligence, colorblindness, criminality, denial of racism, myth of meritocracy, catholicizing, and stereotyping. Racial MAs also have a negative impact on work performance.
Huynh (2012)		X	X	X	286	Asian American Latina/o	Community	Development and initial validation of the Ethnic Microaggressions Scale.
Lin (2011)		X	X	X	347	Asian American	Community	Development and initial validation of the Asian American Racial Microaggressions Scale.
Mercer et al. (2011)		X	X	X	385	Black students	University	Development and initial validation of the inventory of microaggressions against black individuals.

References	Nature of article		Methods		Sample characteristics		Setting/ context	Contributions
	Theory/ conceptual	Data driven	Qualitative	Quantitative	N ^a	Demographics ^b		
Mitchell (2011)		X	X		32	African American students	Community	Both hometown and transfer students experience racial MAs, but hometown (native to area) students report more distress.
Morton (2011)		X		X	19	White clinicians, black clients	University	Color blindness of the clinician predicts the perpetration of racial MAs, the most common of which are the avoidance of discussing race and culture and a minimization of the importance of race and culture.
Nadal (2011a)		X		X	443	African American, Asian American, Latina/o	Community	Development and initial validation of the Racial and Ethnic Racial Microaggressions Scale.
Nadal (2011b)	X							Offers practical strategies for coping with racial MAs in the workplace
Nadal et al. (2011a)	X							Discusses Sue et al.'s (2007a, b) taxonomy in relation to workplace settings.
Nadal et al. (2011b)	X		X	X	9 262	Multiracial	University	Identifies types of racial MAs unique to multiracial individuals: exclusion from family, the "racial ideal," and assumption of dysfunctional family dynamics.
Nnawulezi (2011)		X	X		14	POC	Community	Victims of domestic violence are reluctant to discuss racial MAs perpetrated by people in positions of authority over them.
Owen et al. (2011)		X		X	215	African American, Asian American, Latina/o, multiracial clients	University	No difference in the rate at which participants experienced racial MAs in treatment. MAs have negative relationship to psychological well-being and treatment outcome.
Robinson (2011)		X	X		8	POC students	University	The most common form of MAs experienced are microinvalidations and microinsults, both of which have a negative impact on emotional, career, social, physical, psychological, personal and spiritual wellness.
Schoulte et al. (2011)		X		X	146	POC	Community	"Cultural" MAs lead to levels of psychological distress in their victims similar to those who have suffered, betrayal, sexual abuse, and physical abuse.
Smith et al. (2011)		X		X	661	Black Male	University	Increased education is associated with increased psychological distress from racial MAs.
Sue et al. (2011)		X	X		8	POC faculty	University	Difficult dialogues were often instigated by racial MAs delivered toward students of color and the instructor. All faculty experienced an internal struggle to balance their own beliefs with an attempt to remain objective.

References	Nature of article		Methods		Sample characteristics		Setting/ context	Contributions
	Theory/ conceptual	Data driven	Qualitative	Quantitative	N ^a	Demographics ^b		
Wang et al. (2011)		X		X	172 327	Asian American White	Community	Asian Americans are more likely to experience negative emotions than whites when an ambiguous event is interpreted as racially motivated.
Blume et al. (2012)		X		X	178	African American, Asian American, Latina/o students	University	Racial MAs and self-efficacy are correlated with anxiety; MAs and self-efficacy are correlated with binge drinking; and MAs, self-efficacy and binge drinking are correlated with alcohol-related events.
Cappiccie et al. (2012)	X						University	Suggests the use of Critical Race Theory to evaluate cartoon films as a way to teach about racial MAs in the classroom.
Hall and Fields (2012)	X							Introduces Sue et al.'s taxonomy to the Nursing establishment and makes suggestions for research and applications.
Torres-Harding et al. (2012)		X	X	X	406	African American, Asian American, Latina/o, multiracial	Community	The development and initial validation of the Racial Microaggressions Scale.

^aIf more than one number is listed, each number corresponds to a different component of the article

^bThe authors' own descriptions were used here. POC refers to people of color

Table 2

Summary of gaps in existing racial microaggressions literature

Conceptual gaps	Consequences yet to be explored	Methodological gaps
Microassaults is one type of microaggressions that seems to overlap with overt racism. Therefore, how do racial microaggressions conceptually differ from overt racism when microassaults are deliberate by definition?	Psychological and physical health outcomes of racial microaggressions, specifically longterm effects.	The initial wave of racial microaggressions researchers used are qualitative methods. Therefore, limitations of qualitative approaches need to be addressed for racial microaggressions research.
The racial microaggressions themes of different racial groups have broadened from Sue et. al's original conceptualization. Therefore, is there an overarching taxonomy of microaggressions for all POC, or should taxonomies be developed for different racial groups?	In regards to the microaggression process model, the immediate reaction phase still needs to be explored.	Quantitative scales of racial microaggressions rely on self-report and recall which makes it difficult to determine the immediate and proximal effects of microaggressions.
Do members of the non-visible racial and ethnic minorities experience racial microaggressions differently, or even experience them at all?	The cumulative effect of racial microaggressions across one's life.	The clinical utility of existing racial microaggression scales requires investigation.
Do racial microaggression experiences vary across immigrant and non-immigrant groups?	Consequences of racial microaggressions perpetrated between and within groups of racial and ethnic minority status.	There is a need for more experimental and longitudinal designs.
How does internalized oppression play a role in the recognition and experience of racial microaggressions?	How, and to what degree, do preferred coping mechanisms, like spirituality, mitigate the effects of racial microaggressions? What is the inverse relationship between racial microaggressions and coping mechanisms?	
How do racial microaggressions differ from, relate to, or fit in with other theoretical models of discrimination?		

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