

**Multiracial Individuals' Experiences with Racial Microaggressions: An Ethnographic
Content Analysis of an On-Line Forum**

by

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Abstract

In 2015, the Multi-Racial/Ethnic Counseling Concerns Interest Network of the American Counseling Association published the Competencies for Counseling the Multiracial Population. In it, they asserted that counselors had a responsibility to “Recognize how stigma, prejudice, discrimination, and oppression by family, community, and society can affect developmental decisions and milestones in the lives of multiracial individuals” (MRECC, 2015, p. 16). Currently, there is a paucity of professional counseling literature that explores the discrimination experienced by multiracial individuals. To aid in counselor preparation, I conducted an Ethnographic Content Analysis that explored the nature and frequencies of the racial microaggressions experienced by multiracial individuals in an on-line forum, We Are All Mixed Up. In total, I analyzed 120 entries that had been posted between March 2016 and March 2015. Seven thematic categories emerged during analysis: (1) Physical Appearance, (2) Identity Erasure, (3) Overt Racism, (4) Dismissal of Perspective, (5) Inappropriate Social Interactions, (6) Criticism of Behavior, and (7) Accusations of Fraudulence. A study of the frequency showed that the majority (76; 63%) of the microaggressions including in the data analysis were best described as microinsults.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

The 2000 U.S. Census featured a racial category that had not been previously included and for the first time, an individual could self-report as being two or more races (Jones & Smith, 2001). This change in how multiracial Americans could report their racial background on the U.S. Census resulted in 6,826,228 individuals, roughly 2.4% of the U.S. population, self-reporting as being two or more races. By 2010, multiracial people encompassed 2.9% of the general population as the number of people who self-reported as being two or more races on the U.S. Census increased to 9,009,073, a 32% increase (Humes, Jones & Ramirez, 2011). Multiracial individuals make up one of the fastest growing racial demographics in the United States (Whitaker, 2013). Responding to this trend in racial demographics, the Multi-Racial/Ethnic Counseling Concerns (MRECC) Interest Network of the American Counseling Association Taskforce published the Competencies for Counseling the Multiracial Population in 2015.

The Pew Research Center (2015) suggests that approximately 6.9% of the U.S. population could be described as multiracial, nearly three times higher than the 2.9% who self-reported as a racial identity of two or more races. One suggestion for this discrepancy is that some individuals who have parents and grandparents of differing racial backgrounds, do not describe themselves as being two or more races. For example, the Pew Research Center found that many biracial adults identified as European American and American Indian, the largest group of multiracial Americans, did not include their Native American ancestry in self-reports. In fact, only 22% of those surveyed felt that they had more in common with American Indians, 61% of those same individuals reported feeling they had more in common with Whites (2015, p.

6). This one example suggests a larger issue in that multiracial individuals are a complex and growing population. In fact, multiracial people are comprised of multiple racial heritages leading to various subpopulations within this racial classification making it difficult to examine the unique needs and characteristics of multiracial individuals (Evans & Ramsay, 2015).

A Brief Review of Multiracial Individuals in the United States

Though treated like a newer phenomenon, “race-mixing” was reported in the United States as early as 1607 when male European settlers first established colonies. Due to the lack of female European settlers, male settlers engaged in sexual relationships with Indigenous females leading to mixed race offspring (Douglas, 2015). This practice would continue when the slave trade was introduced in the United States in 1619 (Douglas, 2015). Children from these relationships were referred to as Mulatto, a Spanish term for hybrid, was used to describe children that were the product of a “pure African negro” and a “pure White” (Davis, 1991, p. 4). Eventually, Mulatto, Negro, Colored, Black, and African American all became interchangeable terms for individuals with African ancestry, a change in vernacular that supported the “one-drop” rule (Davis, 1991, p. 3). The “one-drop” rule meant that individuals who had at few as one drop of Black blood, then they were as a result legally identified as Black (Davis, 1991, p. 4). Also referred to as the *Hypodescent Rule*, the *One Drop Rule* impacted the multiracial population as many were assigned the status of the societally imposed subordinate group that they belong to (Melvins, 1964). Although multiracial individuals were often categorized in the United States as one of their multiple races, it appears that individuals with African American racial heritages received the most extreme categorizations as evidenced in the *One Drop Rule* phenomenon.

The multiculturalism movement in the United States can be traced to the 1960’s and occurred as a result of the Civil Rights and Women’s Movements (Sue & Sue, 2008). Despite its

emergence, it was not until the 1990's that the counseling profession, through the Association of Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD), disseminated the *Multicultural Counseling Competencies* to advise counseling professionals in working with clients from diverse cultures (Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis, 1992). It was also during the 1990's that the U.S. Census reported that the country was diversifying and minority populations were increasing. One cause for this increase in minority populations as reported by Atkinson, Morten, and Sue (1992) was that minority populations were immigrating to the U.S. in higher rates as well as European Americans reported lower birth rates than their minority counterparts (Sue et al., 1992). Ultimately, the demographics of the United States was changing and AMCD recognized that counselors needed to be better prepared to meet the needs of a growing minority population.

Multiculturalism and Multiracial People

Although the AMCD recommended competencies to counseling professionals, many of these recommendations were intended for monoracial individuals and as a result overlooked the unique needs of multiracial people. Ultimately, multiracial people have been neglected in the counseling literature (Evans & Ramsay, 2015). A thorough review of the history of multiracial people and the multicultural counseling movement will be described in chapter two.

In 1990, Dr. Maria P. P. Root, a clinical psychologist, began publishing work on multiracial individuals due in part what she perceived as a 25-year biracial baby boom (Root, 1992). Her first professional contribution, "Resolving "Other Status": Biracial Identity Development" to *Complexity and Diversity in Feminist Theory and Therapy* (1990). By 1992, she would contribute to and edit her own book, *Racially Mixed People in America*". This book aimed to "bridge the gap and offered a comprehensive view social and psychological adjustment of multiracial people" (Root, 1992). In 1996, the same year the MRECC was established, she

would edit *The Multiracial Experience: Racial Borders As a New Frontier* as well as write “A Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People”. While Dr. Root focused her research more on exploring the multiracial experience, there were others who would aim to understand the racial identity

After the emergence of the Multicultural Counseling Competencies (MCC), some professionals proposed racial identity development models to describe the experiences of multiracial people. Researchers have explored multiracial identity development in both stage and non-stage models (Terry, 2008). Researchers that viewed racial identity in biracial individuals took place in a sequential order theorized that it first began when individuals became aware of the importance of race (Jacobs, 1992; Kerwin & Poterotto, 1995; Kich, 1992; Poston, 1990). Additionally, many inferred that this process is often complex as individuals experience conflicts as they attempt to develop their racial identity (Kich, 1992).

In 1999, the *Journal of Counseling and Development* published a special issue on “Racism” edited by Robinson and Ginter. In it, two biracial counselors, Dr. Mary A. Fukuyama and Dr. Carmen Braun Williams explored their biracial identities. In her contribution, “Growing Up Biracial”, Dr. Fukuyama asserted the importance of counselors in supporting the ethnic and racial identity of their clients (1999, p. 13). In “Claiming a Biracial Identity: Resisting Social Constructions of Race and Culture”, Dr. Braun Williams encouraged counselors to suspend their assumptions about clients’ experiences (1999, p. 35). Moreover, Dr. Braun Williams discussed attending a workshop where Dr. Charmaine Wijeyesinghe (1997) explored work she had been conducting on multiracial individuals. It was the notion that there was no “correct” identification for multiracial individuals but rather they themselves self-identify that was of particular importance to Dr. Braun Williams (1999, p. 34).

Counselors are ethically required to provide culturally sensitive care to individuals from historically oppressed and marginalized social groups (ACA, 2014). It is important for them to understand how multiracial individuals experience both race-based trauma. It is also important to understand the types of microaggressions that they experience. Insight into both of these matters will allow counselors to meet their ethical responsibilities. In particular, they will be better prepared to “Recognize how stigma, prejudice, discrimination, and oppression by family, community, and society can affect developmental decisions and milestones in the lives of multiracial individuals” (MRECC, 2015, p. 16).

Microaggressions

The term microaggression was first introduced in the 1970s by an African American psychiatrist named Dr. Chester Pierce to describe the subtle and stunning forms of racism that African Americans experienced (Sue, 2010). Since then, it has been expanded to describe the experiences of all minorities. Sue, et al. (2008) described racial microaggressions as, “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color” (p. 271). They are often subtle can be verbal, nonverbal, visual or behavioral (Sue & Sue, 2008). Furthermore, these responses are often automatic and unconscious (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). The perpetrator engages in the offending behavior often without realizing that it is offending. For instance, asking someone who is Asian American where they are from. Society culturally conditions racist, sexist, and heterosexist attitudes and behaviors in individuals making them seem as valid perspectives instead of covert racist beliefs (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2002). Sue and Sue (2008) identified three types of microaggressions: microassault, microinsult, and microinvalidation. Sue (2010) also noted that are eight themes to

microaggressions: (1) Alien in One's Own Land, (2) Ascription of Intelligence, (3) Color Blindness, (4) Criminality/Assumption of Criminal Status, (5) Denial of Individual Racism/Sexism/Heterosexism, (6) Myth of Meritocracy, (7) Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles, and (8) Second-Class Citizen.

Microinsults are the rude and insensitive behaviors and statements that degrade an individual's heritage or identity (Sue et al., 2007). These are usually more unconscious but carry a hidden and insulting message (Sue & Constantine, 2007). Suggesting that Affirmative Action prevents all of the best applicants from getting in to a university is a microinsult. It carries with it the message that some of the minority students that are admitted to the university as a result of Affirmative Action are less deserving of the spots than some of the White students who may have been otherwise admitted.

Microinvalidations take place when an individual has their thoughts, feelings, or experiences negated and denied (Sue & Sue, 2008). Often, microinvalidations are the result of an individual having never experienced an event before. A common microinvalidation is saying, "I don't see color, I only see human beings" (Sue et al., 2007). These microinvalidations negate the experiences of people of color by suggesting that race does not matter (Helms, 1992).

Microinvalidations are often unintentional and outside of the awareness of the perpetrator (Sue & Sue, 2008).

Microassaults are the blatant and overt verbal, nonverbal, and behavioral attacks (Sue, et al., 2007; Sue & Constantine, 2007). The utilization of racial slurs, refusing to provide service to LGBTQ+ clients, and supporting anti-minority groups are all examples of microassaults. In his June 6th speech to announce his intention to run for President, Donald Trump insisted about the Mexicans that were immigrating to the United States that, "They're bringing drugs. They're

bringing crime. They're rapists" (Hee Lee, 2015). This is an example of a microassault that has been publicly supported by some despite the derogatory nature of the comment. Due to the overt nature and similarity to what is traditionally viewed as racism, Sue and Sue (2008) contend that microassaults are more difficult to deny.

There is a pervasive belief in the United States that racism no longer exists (Sue, 2010). As a result, the power of racial microaggressions is due to the fact they are often invisible to the perpetrator (Sue, 2005). They can often be explained away (Sue et al., 2007) such as someone saying "I did not mean it like that" or "they probably did not see you standing there beside the bar". The person who experienced the microaggression is often left to question whether or not the event actually happened as they perceived it and if their reaction was valid (Sue & Sue, 2008). Yet, racial microaggressions are of particular important to counseling practice due to the relational nature of it (Sue et al., 2007). It is important that counselors are not only versed in the concept of microaggressions but also engage in the reflection necessary to see how they come up in the counseling dynamic to adequately meet the needs of their clients (Nadal, Griffin, Wong, Hamit, & Rasmus, 2012). Therefore, this proposed qualitative study aims to increase counselor awareness as to the types of microaggressions that are experienced by multiracial individuals.

Significance of the Study

In order to adequately provide competent counseling to multiracial individuals, counselors needs to better understand this complex and growing population. Lee and Bean (2004) estimated that by the year 2050, 20% of the U.S. population will be multiracial. Yet, currently the majority of the research regarding this population focuses on racial identity development as opposed to their experiences with racism and oppression. As a group who experienced institutional racism in regards to U.S. Census until the year 2000 when they were

finally allowed to self-report as being two or more races (Jones & Smith, 2001), it is important to expand counselor understanding of their experiences with racial microaggressions. There have only been three studies conducted on how multiracial individuals experience racial microaggressions. These will be further examined in chapter two. While they provide insight in to multiracial individuals experiences with racial microaggressions, more research needs to be done to ensure that counselors understand the types of racial microaggressions experienced by this growing demographic. It is imperative that counselors are better prepared to provide the ethical counseling practices as outlined in the Competencies for Counseling the Multiracial Population to this neglected population.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the conducted Ethnographic Content Analysis was to explore multiracial individuals experiences with racial microaggressions. The study analyzed multiracial individuals posts on an online forum, We Are All Mixed Up at www.weareallmixedup.tumblr.com explore the nature of the racial microaggressions experienced by multiracial individuals. Furthermore, the study aimed to survey the frequency of the microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations experienced by the multiracial individuals including in the study. Ultimately, the findings hoped to assist counselors to be better prepared to, “Recognize how stigma, prejudice, discrimination, and oppression by family, community, and society can affect developmental decisions and milestones in the lives of multiracial individuals” (MRECC, 2015, p. 16). It is important that counselors are aware of the impact that racism can have on a client’s mental health as they risk invalidating the clients experience and revictimizing them (Helms, Nicolas, & Green, 2012).

Research Questions

What is the nature of the racial microaggressions experienced by multiracial individuals?

To what extent do multiracial individuals experience microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations?

Definition of Terms:

Competencies for Counseling the Multiracial Population are the ethical guidelines supported by the American Counseling Association for providing ethical and multiculturally competent services to multiracial individuals (MRECC, 2015).

Microassaults are the blatant and overt verbal, nonverbal, and behavioral attacks (Sue & Sue, 2008).

Microinsults are the rude and insensitive behaviors and statements that degrade an individual's heritage or identity (Sue & Sue, 2008).

Microinvalidations take place when an individual has their thoughts, feelings, or experiences negated and denied (Sue & Sue, 2008).

Multiracial individuals are those who are of two or more racial/ethnic heritages (Root, 1992, xi).

Racial microaggressions are "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 271).

Racism is a system of oppression, whereby members of a dominant racial group such as Whites in the United States oppress non-dominant minority groups through the use of power and privilege that can occur on the individual, cultural, or institutional level (Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005; Mallot & Schaeffle, 2015).

CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Multiracial individuals represent a complex and growing demographic of the U.S. population. The Pew Research Center (2015) estimates that 6.9% of the U. S. population is multiracial. By 2050, 1 in 5 Americans will be multiracial (Lee & Bean, 2004). Despite the increase of multiracial people in the U.S., the unique and lived experiences of this population is less available.

Counselors have an ethical responsibility to provide multiculturally competent counseling to clients (ACA, 2014). Due to the paucity of professional literature regarding this growing population (Evans & Ramsay, 2015) it is imperative that research is conducted to bridge the gaps and better prepare counselors to work with multiracial clients. This chapter will review the literature on multiracial people with an emphasis on discrimination in the form of racial microaggressions.

Multiracial Individuals in the United States

Multiracial people can be documented in the United States since the 17th century as European Settlers colonized North America (Douglas, 2001; Root, 1996). Primarily interracial unions and resulting mixed race children, were considered improper and illegal throughout much of U.S. history (Douglas, 2001). Although multiracial individuals can be traced to all racial categories, throughout history, the United States primarily focused on Black and White multiracial individuals for regulation and categorization purposes. Oftentimes mixed race children were classified as belonging to the inferior race as evidenced in the *One Drop Rule* classification system that acknowledged an individual with at minimum one drop of African

American blood to be considered African American (Davis, 1991). Also referred to as the *Hypodescent Rule*, the One-Drop Rule resulted in the identification of multiracial individuals to the societally imposed subordinate group that they belong to (Davis, 1991).

In the 17th and 18th Century there was a pervasive belief in the United States that interracial marriage was wrong and would lead to the creation of children that were riddled with problems and disease (Nash, 1999). *Amalgamationists*, the term used to describe those in support of interracial relationships, challenged the 1786 Massachusetts law that banned mixed marriages (Moulton, 2015). William Lloyd Garrison, an abolitionist and supporter of racial equality argued that banning mixed marriages violated an individual's inalienable rights (Nash, 1999). Initially unmoved by the pleas from amalgamationists, by 1843 the Massachusetts legislature voted to remove the law after receiving an outpouring of support for interracial marriage from individuals across the state including ninety-two petitions containing over 8,700 signatures (Nash, 1999; Pascoe, 2004). By the 1880s, there would be mixed-race communities in the West including Montana, Wyoming, and New Mexico where people were thoroughly mixed (Nash, 1999).

It was not until 1967, as a result of *Loving v. Virginia*, anti-miscegenation laws were found to be unconstitutional and were struck down by the United States Supreme Court, allowing individuals of different races to marry. Though there was thought to be an increase in the number of multiracial individuals in the 1970's there was no specific demographic information for this population as they were unable to properly identify their racial heritage on the United States Census (Jones & Bullock, 2012). What is known is that in 1970, less than 1% of marriages were interracial, by 2013 this number had risen to 6.3% (Wang, 2015). Moreover, the Pew Research Center (2015), found in their report *Multiracial in America: Proud, Diverse, and Growing in Number* that the number of babies born in the United States to parents of different races has

increased from 1% in 1970 of all births to 10% in 2013. As interracial marriage continues to increase (Wang, 2015) the number of multiracial children born will continue to increase making it important that this population is included in professional counseling literature.

Multiculturalism in Counseling

Multiculturalism increased in both prominence and acceptance in the 1980s as a result of the Civil Rights and Women's Movements of the 1960s and 1970s (Sue & Sue, 2008). In 1981, both the Association for Counseling and Development (AACD) and the American Psychological Association (APA) published ethical guidelines requiring counselors and therapists to have some sort of formal training on cultural differences (Sue et al., 1992). It was first declared as the "fourth force in psychology" in 1988 (Pedersen). Despite this, counselors practicing at this time typically worked from a monocultural and monolingual perspective that had been long supported by society (Sue et al., 1992). There was a call among some professionals in the field to make the infusion of multiculturalism in counseling standard practice (Pedersen, 1991; Sue et al., 1992). The 1990 U.S. Census reflected that the country was not only diversifying and minority populations were on the rise. Yet, the counseling profession was not prepared to effectively counsel many non-White clients (Sue et al., 1992). Additionally, a review of the AACD's now known as the American Counseling Association (ACA) 1988 Ethical Standards revealed a lack of professional commitment by the counseling profession to multiculturalism (Sue et al., 1992).

There had been evidence to suggest that training programs were making a better effort to incorporate multiculturalism in the coursework (Sue et al., 1992). A national survey of counselor education programs found that 33% of the 58 programs who responded (95 were surveyed) required courses or a practicum in cross-cultural counseling survey (Ibrahim, Stadler, Arredondo & McFadden, 1986). While this study reflected an improvement, an earlier curriculum survey

found that less than 1% of graduate programs surveyed required their students to study ethnic and racial minorities, it still was not 100% reflecting that not all programs were working to be in accordance with professional ethical guidelines (McFadden & Wilson, 1977). Wyatt and Parham (1985) found that one reason for this is that some program directors were unsure how to incorporate increased multiculturalism in their programs and requested guidance. AMCD also noted that there was still no way to gauge the integration of multiculturalism in all counseling coursework as well as the professional commitment to it (Sue et al., 1992).

In 1991, “Multiculturalism, the Fourth Force of Counseling”, a Special Issue of the *Journal of Counseling Development* edited by Pedersen was published. The Special Issue included articles that encouraged readers to redefine their understanding of multicultural counseling (Speight, Myers, Cox & Highlen) consider how race-labeling, labeling a person based on their racial background, impacted cultural identity as well as conceptualization (Dobbins & Skillings), and multicultural gender issues (Davenport & Yurich). Furthermore in this Special Issue, Pedersen (1991) called upon counselors to consider the personal lived experiences of the clients that they work with as well as to reflect on how they provide their clients with multiculturally competent counseling services. Both this Special issue and AMCD supported the perspective that multiculturalism needed to be infused in counseling services to effectively meet the needs of clients. In 1992 (Sue et al.), “Multicultural Counseling Competencies and Standards: A Call to the Profession” was first published in the *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*. Viewed as being incredibly important to the profession, it was also published in the *Journal of Counseling and Development* to reach a broader professional audience (Sue et al., 1992).

Today it appears that the counseling profession took the calls for increased commitment to multiculturalism as evidenced by its inclusion in varying areas of the profession. First, the 2014 ACA Code of Ethics Preamble noted the profession's dedication to, "honoring diversity and embracing a multicultural approach in support of the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of people within their social and cultural contexts" (p. 3). This stance appeared to reflect the generalization of multiculturalism supported by Sue et al. (1992) and Pedersen (1991). Furthermore, it is now reflected in counselor preparation, as social and cultural diversity are one of the eight common core areas of foundational knowledge for counselor education by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling Related-Educational Programs (CACREP, 2016). In addition, the Multicultural Counseling Competences (MCC) were also revised in 2015 and are now the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies which recognize the important of implementation in addition to acquired knowledge (MSJC; Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2015). They now include the following aspirational competencies: attitudes and beliefs, knowledge, skills, and action. Finally, of importance to this study is the fact that ACA recently endorsed the Competencies for Counseling the Multiracial Population, which were developed by the Multi-Racial/Ethnic Counseling Concerns (MRECC, 2015) Interest Network of American Counseling Association Taskforce.

Multiracial Individuals in Professional Literature

Multiracial individuals represent a rapidly growing racial demographic. There has been increased research about the experiences of multiracial individuals since 2000. One explanation for this increase in research is that researchers have larger data sets such as the U.S. Census to work with (Khanna, 2010). Until the inclusion of multiracial individuals on the U.S. Census researchers were only able to estimate the number based on birth and marriage statistics. Khanna

(2010) also attributes the increase in research to increased awareness by researchers to the paucity of research on this growing population. Due the diversity within this group, they have varied experiences (Root, 1997).

One major source of diversity for this group is the generation in which a multiracial person is born. For instance, identifying as multiracial was a luxury for older generations (Root, 2003). There is research to suggest that they have some shared cultural challenges because their existence challenges society's monoracial perspective including racial misidentification, media representation of multiracial people, personal and institutional racism, and identity development (Shih, Bonam, Sanchez, & Peck, 2007; Shih & Sanchez, 2005; Shih & Sanchez, 2009). Potentially because racial identification is a shared challenge of this group, historically the literature has been theoretical and focused on racial identification (Rockquemore, Brunnsma & Delgado, 2009; Herman, 2004; Miville, Constantine, Baysden, & So-Lloyd, 2005; Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007; Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal, & Torino, 2007).

Both stage (Jacobs, 1990; Kerwin and Ponterotto, 1995; Kich, 1992; Poston, 1990) and non-stage (LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton, 1993; Rockquemore and Brunnsma, (2002) models have been applied to the racial identity development of multiracial individuals. Terry (2008) noted that Poston (1990), Jacobs (1992), and Kerwin and Poterotto (1995) all shared three overarching ideas: "(1) Multiracial adolescents develop an awareness of race and what race means to society at large; (2) the presentation of the choice and/or conflict of having to adopt one particular race or ethnicity; and (3) the multiracial individual is able to integrate and appreciate all of his or her racial identities" (p. 20).

LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton (1993) and Rockquemore and Brunnsma (2002) both developed non-stage racial identity development models. LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton

(1993) identified six dimensions of racial identity development for multiracial individuals. These six dimensions included: (1) multiracial individuals can live within more than one racial group, (2) positive beliefs regarding biracial inclusion benefits multiracial individuals, (3) knowledge of cultural beliefs and practices also benefits multiracial individuals, (4) being proficient in different cultural group activities aids in situational behaviors in different groups, (5) it is important to have social support from different groups, and (6) it is important that one can utilize verbal and nonverbal among different cultural groups. Rockquemore and Brunnsma (2002) posited that multiracial individuals specifically those who are Black and White belonged in one of four identity types. These identity types include: (1) the “race border identity” where multiracial individuals exist between racial classifications, (2) the “singular racial identity” where they choose to identify as a single racial identity either Black or White, (3) the “protean identity” where they identify as different racial identities including Black, White, or multiracial and (4) the “transcendent identity”, where multiracial individuals choose to be raceless.

Not only have researchers utilized stage models and non-stage models to understand racial identity development in multiracial individuals. MacDonald (2015) also noted the following approaches in understanding multiracial racial identity development: (1) a linear racial identity approach (Jacobs, 1992; Kich, 1992; Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995; Poston, 1990); (2) a resolution approach (Kilson, 2001; Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2002; Root, 1990; Wallace, 2001); (3) a problem approach (Park, 1928; Rockquemore, Brunnsma & Delgado, 2009; Stonequist, 1935); (4) an equivalent approach (Cross, 1971; Erickson, 1968); (5) a variant approach (Brown, 1990; Gibbs, 1989; Herring, 1992; Kerwin & Ponterotto, 1995; Poston, 1990; Standen, 1996; Stephan & Stephan, 1989); and (6) an ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Renn, 2004, 2008; Root, 1990, 1996; Wijeyesinghe, 1992).

Another challenge for multiracial Americans is navigating the monoracial society of the United States (Root, 1997). How a multiracial person is allowed to identify is limited by factors such as racial appearance (Rockquemore & Brunson, 2002). Some multiracial individuals have an appearance that makes it difficult to be categorized by outside society into a single racial group, for these individuals it can be increasingly difficult (Kenney & Kenney, 2014). A multiracial person who is Black/White with darker skin and kinkier textured hair may have a more difficult time identifying as being of White descent. Furthermore, though the multiracial population has gained increased visibility, often members of this group still face questions about their racial background (Buckley & Robert, 2004; Houston, 1997; Kerwin, Ponterotto, Jackson, & Harris, 1993; Miville et al., 2005; Ramirez, 1996; Renn, 2008; Shih & Sanchez, 2009; Tran, Miyake, Martinez-Morales, & Csizmadia, 2015; Wijeyesinghe, 2001; Williams, 1996). Answering racial identification questions such as *what are you?* and *where are you from?* are common experiences for multiracial individuals (Johnson & Nadal, 2015; Kerwin et al., 1993; Miville et al., 2005). Additionally, answering racial identification questions is an experience through the lifespan for multiracial individual and can start before the individual is even born (Williams, 1996).

Multiracial individuals may encounter racism, discrimination, and pressure to adopt a racial identification (Salahuddin & O'Brien, 2011). Despite this, research suggests that the psychological adjustment of multiracial individuals is not adversely impacted because of their interracial backgrounds (Shih & Sanchez, 2005). Moreover, there is research to suggest that multiracial individuals can derive resilience and positive meaning from their racial backgrounds (Kerwin et al., 1993; Salahuddin & O'Brien, 2011; Shih & Sanchez, 2005). For example, multiracial individuals report being more sensitive to cultural differences as well as an

appreciation of diverse perspectives as a result of their background (Bonam & Shih, 2009; Kerwin et al., 1993; Shih & Sanchez, 2005). Overall, while multiracial individuals face and societal pressure, a multiracial identity can potentially serve as a psychological resource (Binning, Unzueta, Huo, & Molina, 2009; Cheng & Lee, 2009).

Racial Microaggressions

The term microaggression first appeared in professional literature in the 1970s by an African American psychiatrist, Dr. Chester Pierce. The term was used to describe the subtle and often automatic forms of racism that African Americans experience (Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalez, & Willis, 1978). Pierce contended that, “one must not look for the gross and obvious. The subtle, cumulative miniassault is the substance of today's racism...” (1974, p. 516). Since then, the term has expanded to cover the experiences of all minorities including racial minorities, member of the LGBTQ+ community, and women. Racial microaggressions specifically have been defined as, “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color” (Sue, et al., 2008, p. 271). They also have been defined as, “stunning, automatic acts of disregard that stem from unconscious attitudes of white superiority and constitute a verification of black inferiority” (Davis, 1989, p. 1576).

Making racial microaggressions particularly problematic is the fact that they are unconscious and frequently automatic responses that stem from attitudes that are societally upheld as valid beliefs (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2002). Microaggressions are closely associated with the concept of aversive racism, unconsciously acting in a racist manner despite being ostensibly non-prejudiced (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004; Pearson, Dovidio, & Gaertner, 2009). Yet, racial microaggressions can negatively impact a person of color’s self-image (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). Sue and

Sue (2008) identified three types of microaggressions: microassault, microinsult, and microinvalidation.

Types of Microaggressions

Microassaults are overt behaviors that are intended to demean an individual (Sue et al., 2007). They can either be verbal (e.g. racial slurs) or nonverbal (e.g. providing substandard service to a person of color). They are the most closely associated with old-fashioned racism (Sue & Sue, 2008). Microassaults often take place on-line (e.g. YouTube comments) because it can provide the perpetrator a feeling of anonymity as overt racism is not condoned by society. For microassaults to take occur publicly Sue et al. (2007) contends that the offender will have lost control (e.g. Michael Richards slur-filled comedy club rant) or in an environment where they feel safe (e.g. members of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon singing a racist chant on a bus). Due to their intentional and overt nature, microassaults are more difficult to deny as being racist in nature (Sue & Sue, 2008). Furthermore, because of the obvious intention behind microassaults some persons of color find them easier to deal with, as it is clear what happened and there is not the uncertainty and ambiguity associated with other microaggressions (Salvatore & Shelton, 2007; Sue, 2010b).

Microinsults are verbal or nonverbal communications that are insensitive and demean a person's racial or ethnic heritage (Sue et al., 2007). They differ from microassaults in that they are not intentional. Often, perpetrators of microinsults often do so unconsciously (Sue & Sue, 2008). Furthermore, due to the subtlety and unconsciousness of microinsults many individuals who make these disempowering statements will continue to believe themselves as non-racist (Sue, 2010a). They have been described as potentially being the most dangerous form of microaggressions (Barstow, 2015) because they are often easily dismissed. A common example

of a microinsult would be telling someone a Latina that, “they speak English well”. While the perpetrator might have meant it as a compliment it sends the message that it was expected that they would not speak English well because of their heritage. Furthermore, the perpetrator may accuse the Latina of being overly sensitive and not being able to take a compliment.

Finally, microinvalidations invalidate the person of color’s thoughts, feelings, and experiences (Sue & Sue, 2008). They usually take the form of verbal statements but can be nonverbal behaviors. A common microinvalidation is saying, “I don’t see color, I only see human beings” (Sue et al., 2007). These statements not only invalidate the experiences of persons of color but also ignore the existence of privilege and racism (Helms, 1992). Additionally these statements can result in a person of color questioning themselves and their experience. This can result in the person of color experiencing both paranoia and anxiety (Sue, 2010b). These are statements are often unintentional and are the result of a lack of awareness and experience (Sue & Sue, 2008).

Sue and colleagues (2007) also noted that are eight themes to microaggressions: (1) Alien in One’s Own Land, (2) Ascription of Intelligence, (3) Color Blindness, (4) Criminality/Assumption of Criminal Status, (5) Denial of Individual Racism/Sexism/Heterosexism, (6) Myth of Meritocracy, (7) Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles, and (8) Second-Class Citizen. Alien in One’s Own Land refers to the experiences of persons of color who are made to perpetually feel like they are foreigners based on their appearance or names despite the fact that they may have been born and raised in the United States. Questions such as “where were you born” may convey to these individuals that you are not a real American to these individuals. Ascription of Intelligence is basing a person’s intelligence or their race/ethnicity. The assumption that a person of Asian descent is good at

math because of their racial/ethnic background suggests that they do not have to work hard for what they achieve. Color Blindness denies the importance of race and ethnicity in the United States. It also denies the existence of racism. Criminality is the perception that a person of color is a criminal or deviant. A clerk who follows a Black teenager around a store because they believe they will steal something if unattended sends the message to the Black teen that they cannot be trusted because they are a person of color. Denial of Individual Racism/Sexism/Heterosexism and Myth of Meritocracy invalidates the experiences of minorities and suggests that society is equal. Furthermore, Myth of Meritocracy promotes the belief that attempts to make society more equal (e.g. Affirmative Action) are actually problematic. Pathologizing Cultural Values promotes values the beliefs and customs of the dominant culture. Individuals who engage in the cultural customs and beliefs that are not conventional (e.g. fasting for Ramadan) are criticized and encouraged to assimilate. Finally, the theme Second-Class Citizen is when a person of color is assumed to be a lesser of standing or a White customer is provided preferential treatment. The message communicated is that the person of color is lesser.

Microaggressions and Multiracial People

There has been a paucity of research on the experiences of multiracial individuals with racial microaggressions (Nadal, Sirken, Davidoff, Wong, & McLean, 2013). One reason for this might be the varied experiences of multiracial individuals (Nadal et al., 2013). A person who is White and Asian may have different experiences than someone who is Black and Asian. Johnston and Nadal (2010) developed five theoretical domains to describe the microaggressions experienced by multiracial individuals. The first, *exclusion or isolation* occurs when multiracial individuals are made to feel excluded or isolated based on their race (e.g. a person who is Black and White being told that they are not Black enough). *Exoticization and objectification* occurs

when multiracial individuals are treated not like a human but rather an object (e.g. a multiracial person being made to feel that their racial background is exotic). *Assumption of monoracial background and mistaken identity* refer to experiences when multiracial individuals are assumed to be part of a different racial group (e.g. a monoracial person attempting to guess the racial background of a multiracial person). *Denial of multiracial reality* refers to invalidation of the experiences of a multiracial person by monoracial individuals (e.g. being told they think about race too much). Finally, *pathologizing of identity and experiences* occurs when the experiences of someone who is multiracial is viewed as being psychologically abnormal (e.g. feeling judgment when discussing an experience they had as a result of being multiracial). Nadal, Wong, Griffin et al. (2011) further researched the types of microaggressions experienced by multiracial individuals. They added a sixth category to the Johnston and Nadal's model, *microaggressions based on stereotypes*. These refer to the experiences that multiracial and monoracial people experience based on racial prejudice (e.g. a multiracial individual who is Black and White being followed in a store).

Nadal et al. (2013) reexamined the data used in Nadal, Wong, Griffith et al. (2011) to learn more about the microaggressions multiracial individuals experienced within their families. The first domain was *isolation within family*, which found that multiracial individuals felt isolated or distant within their families because of their racial background (e.g. feeling as though you could not talk about your experiences with your monoracial family members). The second domain, *favoritism within the family*, occurs when multiracial individuals feel lesser than family members due to their multiracial background (e.g. monoracial family members receiving preferential treatment). *Questioning of authenticity* is the third domain and refers to intentional occurrences of exclusion and questioning by family members (e.g. being asked by family

members what are you). The fourth domain, *denial of multiracial identity and experiences by monoracial family members*, denied their experiences of microaggressions (e.g. denying discrimination that a multiracial person experienced). Finally, the fifth domain identified was *feelings about not learning about family heritage or culture*, was not a microaggression but rather referred to feeling that they did not learn enough their culture and background.

Finally, Foster (2014) conducted a qualitative study examining multiracial individuals experience of microaggressions in psychotherapy. The first subtheme identified was, *avoidance/minimization of racial-cultural issues*, which occurred the therapist did not validate the racial experiences of multiracial individuals (e.g. changing the subject when client discusses race). *Denial of multiracial reality*, the subtheme, refers to instances the therapist invalidated the experiences of a multiracial individual (e.g. referring to being biracial as the best of both worlds). The third subtheme, *Stereotypical assumptions based on race*, occurs when therapist assume things about the multiracial clients based solely on their racial background (e.g. assuming that the father of White/Asian individual was in the military). Finally, *second-class status and treatment of multiracial individuals*, refers to the poor treatment of multiracial individuals (e.g. agency staff treating them inferior).

Race and Mental Health

There is a pervasive belief that we live in a post-racial society where race no longer matters and racism no longer exists (Kaplan, 2011; Sue & Sue, 2008). The election of President Barack Obama in 2008 is often cited as proof that race no longer matters in the United States (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). While overt racism has declined, racial disparities continue to exist in the United States (Pearson et al., 2009). Incarceration rates for minorities continue to be higher with approximately 3% of all Black males in the United States incarcerated as compared to 0.5% of

White males (Carson, 2014). Additionally, the Black-White income gap has actually widened since 1960 when it was \$19,000 to \$27,000 in 2012 (Pew Research Center, 2013). Moreover, a poll conducted by CNN and the Kaiser Family Foundation found that nearly half (49%) of the 1,951 individuals polled believed that racism was a big problem in the United States in (Shoichet, 2015).

Racism has been defined as power plus prejudice (Glasswing, 2012). It assumes the superiority of one racial group over another (Ponds, 2013). It can take the form of individual, cultural, or institutional racism (Jones, 1997). It can be difficult to understand contemporary racism in the United States because it is less likely to take the overt form it did during the Civil Rights Movement (Kaplan, 2011). Bonilla-Silva (2013) describes new racism as *color-blind racism*. Color-blind racism is when contemporary racial inequality is explained as “the outcome of nonracial dynamics” (Bonilla-Silva, 2013, p.2). Furthermore, there is a belief that if persons of color could move past racial inequalities of the past all people could achieve the same success in post-racial America.

Regular exposure to unfair treatment is likely to trigger psychological and physiological responses in Persons of Color (Molina, Algeria, & Mahalingam, 2012). Research has shown that racism can have a negative impact on psychological well-being (Lambert, Herman, Bynum, & Ialonga, 2009; Whitbeck, McMorris, Hoyt, Stubben, & LaFramboise, 2002). Furthermore, Harrell (2000) found that racial discrimination leads to feelings of alienation, low self-esteem, anxiety, and poor general mental health. Due to their subtle nature, microaggressions have experienced criticism and referred to as victimhood culture (Friedersdorf, 2015). Yet, not only have the experience of racial microaggressions been found to cause paranoia and anxiety in persons of color (Sue, 2010b) but they also have been associated with depression, negative affect

(Nadal, Griffin, Wong, Hamit, & Rasmus, 2014), physical pain and fatigue (Nadal, Griffin, Wong, Davidoff, & Davis, 2012). Nadal and colleagues (2014) found that the more racial microaggressions a person experienced, the more negatively a person of color was impacted. Furthermore, Nadal (2012) has hypothesized that aversive racism and racial microaggressions are causing irreparable harm to persons of color in the United States.

One way that racial microaggressions can cause irreparable harm is that persons of color can develop Race-based Trauma. Race-based trauma (RBT) has been described by many names including societal trauma, intergenerational trauma, racist-incident based trauma, insidious trauma, psychological trauma, race-based traumatic stress, emotional abusiveness, and racism (Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005; Carter, 2007; Carter & Helms, 2002; Daniel, 2000; Loo et al., 2001; Root, 1992; Sanchez-Hucles, 1998; Wyatt, 1990). RBT is the physical and psychological reaction an individual has after encountering (through victimization or observation) a racist incident. A stressor does not have to be physical assaulting to be traumatic, rather the experience of both overt and covert acts of racism can be enough to negatively impact a Person of Color (Bryant-Davis, 2007; Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005). RBT can take the form of emotional stress, physical harm, and/or fear (Bryant-Davis, 2007; Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005), shock, anger, and helplessness (Helms, Nicolas, & Green, 2012). Not all who experience racism will develop RBT; however individuals who have experienced racial discrimination to the point it was traumatic may demonstrate symptomology consistent with trauma exposure (Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005).

The physical and psychological effects of racial discrimination can be extensive. Harrell, Hall, and Taliaferro (2003) found that exposure to discrimination can have a negative impact on health. Additionally, it can have the potential to cause cognitive, affective, somatic, relational,

behavioral, and spiritual issues for those who experience it (Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005). Individuals who have experienced RBT also are at risk for the development of depression (Karlsen & Nazroo, 2002) in addition to substance abuse, lowered self-esteem, and health problems (Verkuyten, 1998; Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000). Therefore, Carter (2007) contended that it is imperative mental health practitioners do not overlook the importance of racism and discrimination on the physical and psychological well-being of Clients of Color. Moreover, if mental health professionals are not trained to provide services that address the impact of racism on a client's mental health they could not only invalidate their experience but also revictimize them (Helms et al., 2012).

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

The experiences of multiracial people have been understudied, especially as this relates to racism and discrimination. In this chapter, I will provide an overview of a research study that explored the experiences of racism and discrimination in the form of racial microaggressions. In this chapter, I will describe the Ethnographic Content Analysis conducted to examine the lived experiences of multiracial people on a blog named We Are All Mixed Up. This chapter will include a presentation of the research methodology emphasizing the data collection process, inclusionary criteria, and data analysis approach. Finally, I will discuss the process to ensure the quality, validity, and trustworthiness of the study.

Ethnographic Content Analysis

Due to the exploratory nature of the study, I employed an Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA) research method to explore the racial microaggressions experienced by multiracial individuals. ECA is a “systematic and analytic but not rigid” method for qualitative document analysis (Altheide, 1996, p. 16). ECA was selected for this study because it is an inductive and reflexive approach that places emphasis on the emergence of themes. It emphasizes, “discovery, description and the investigation of contexts, underlying meanings, patterns and processes” (Brooks, 2015, p. 144). To effectively conduct ECA, the researcher is required to immerse themselves in the culture that they are researching (Altheide, 1987; 1996).

In ECA, researchers can use the Constant Comparative Method (CCM) a grounded theory approach to data analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). CCM requires the researcher to compare new data with the previously collected data in a study. Through open coding, the

researcher begins to categorize the data. As data analysis continues and new data is introduced, open coding shifts to axial coding. Axial coding leads to the reduction of coding categories and subsequent themes (McLeod, 2011). ECA requires the researcher to note the frequency of responses through tracking so that this can be reported numerically and support the themes (Porter & Ipsa, 2013). In this case, the phenomenon is the nature of the microaggressions experienced by multiracial individuals in an online forum. ECA has been employed with a variety of mediums including newspapers, radio broadcasts, television programs, advertisements, magazines, textbooks, and online community postings. Thus, in analyzing a blog, ECA appeared to be the most congruent research methodology to analyze participant responses.

Sample

The participants of this study are best defined as multiracial individuals who are members of an online community called We Are All Mixed Up (WAAMU). The moderators of this community intended to, “create a space that highlights that not every person of color is monoracial and not every problem we face can be looked at through a monoracial lens” (We Are All Mixed Up, 2016). The web address for this online community is weareallmixedup.tumblr.com. This specific blog was selected due to its focus on highlighting the experiences of multiracial individuals and presence of anecdotal information. Furthermore, it is an active and open online community created exclusively to discuss the perspective of multiracial individuals. Submissions from members of the community are shared several times a week. The community, WAAMU has existed since April 4, 2013 and has 10,0004 followers as of January 31, 2016.

An important feature of this community is that individuals can participate and share their experiences as a self-reported multiracial person anonymously. Due to the anonymity provided

through this website, all of the demographic information collected was self-reported. The majority of the entries (75 out of 120; 62.5%) selected were submitted by individuals who self-reported as being multiracial with White heritage. The next largest demographic group, nearly 21%, were individuals who did not self-report their racial demographic background but due to their participation in the community are assumed to be multiracial. An individual who reported that both of their parents were Persons of Color submitted approximately 11% of the entries. Finally, the smallest group (7 out of 120; 5.8%) were individuals who reported as being multiracial but only self-reported one specific part of their racial background.

Data Collection

For this study, I initially collected 100 postings on WAAMU. In total 120 entries were collected for this study. The entries collected were posted between March 2015 and March 2016. To be included in the study responses had to be: a) an on-line written submission to We Are All Mixed Up: b) posted by someone who self-identified as multiracial; c) reflects an incident personally experienced by a multiracial individual; d) a reflection of an experience with a type of microaggression (i.e. microinsult, microassault, or microinvalidation) as defined by Sue and Sue (2008). An example of an entry that met the inclusionary criteria is,

“Oh my god so I’m half Japanese and my mom, who is White, sometimes says she wonders if my Japanese grandmother had an affair and had my dad because I don’t look Asian enough” (We Are All Mixed Up, 2016).

Examples of postings that were not included in the study included videos, questions about terminology, pictures, entries that were primarily related to current events, questions that sought advice for a problem, discussions about famous multiracial individuals, and questions that were not related to microaggressions and race-based incidents. An example of a post that was not

included in the study is, “Do you guys have any advice/tips to stop relaxing your hair and let it go natural?” (We Are All Mixed Up, 2016).

The first step of ECA is identification of a problem to be explored (Altheide, 1996). The problem that I decided to explore is multiracial individuals experiences with microaggressions. There is research to suggest that multiracial individuals are vulnerable to racism and discrimination (Townsend, Markus, & Bergsicker, 2009); however, at the same time there is a pervasive belief that racism no longer exists in the United States (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Sue et al. (2007) contended that racism does continue to exist and that it manifests more likely in the form of cover racism such as racial microaggressions. Racial microaggressions are the denigrating statements and behaviors that are often communicated towards Persons of Color (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). Therefore, it is important to explore the racial microaggressions that multiracial individuals might experience.

The second step in ECA after identifying the proposed problem is the selection of a source to explore it. I reviewed several online communities to assess their appropriateness for the current study. Some communities were excluded because they focused specifically on certain multiracial heritages, such as individuals who were multiracial with Asian heritage. Other communities primarily involved sharing pictures and lacked personal reflections. I selected the online community, We Are All Mixed Up because it is a community to discuss the experiences and perspectives of all multiracial individuals no matter their heritage. Furthermore, it is an active community with entries published several times each week. Before selecting this community, I spent three months immersed in the community through observation and exploration of the website. I checked the website daily to learn what new information was being discussed. I became familiar with the moderators of the website. I made an effort each day for

three months to ensure that We Are All Mixed Up was the best source to explore the microaggressions experienced by multiracial individuals. Through observation I was able to learn the methods in which people participate as well as popular topics for discussion.

Altheide (1996) then encourages the researcher to review 6-10 documents that are relevant to the proposed problem. After spending three months observing and exploring We Are All Mixed Up, I actively sought out submissions by individuals that reflected an experience with a racial microaggression. Prior to beginning the study, I assumed that multiracial individuals would have experiences with racial microaggressions. Through the selection and analysis of these relevant documents, I was able to confirm that multiracial individuals are exposed to racial microaggressions. Additionally, after reviewing relevant documents it became clear that inclusionary criteria was necessary to ensure the quality of data collection.

As previously discussed, there are several methods in which individuals can participate on WAAMU. To ensure that I was actively seeking data that was appropriate for this study I developed inclusionary criteria. The main criterion was that the self-reported multiracial individual reflected an experience with a microinsult, microassault, or microinvalidation as defined by Sue and Sue (2008). I discussed with my external auditor how to reduce potential researcher bias and ensure that the postings I selected were appropriate. Together, we decided that I would select 100 postings that I believed exemplified a microinsult, microassault, or microinvalidation and she would review 10 that had been randomly selected. I collected the entries on March 10th and March 11th. I then randomly selected and shared 10 postings with her. She was also provided Sue and Sue's (2008) definition of microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations to reference. She was asked to review the postings to determine if they adequately met the definitions provided. She reviewed the randomly selected data and

determined that all ten of the postings did in fact exemplify a microaggression. After receiving this approval from the external, I began to analyze the data.

In total I collected 120 entries that were posted on WAAMU from March 2015 to March 2016. I worked backwards in collecting the data because it ensured that no entries were missed during the data collection process. Furthermore, while immersed I deduced that it was easier to navigate the website this way because posts are made in chronological order. The first entry that was collected was posted on March 1, 2016 and the last posting on March 11, 2015. Further information about the data analysis process will be covered below.

Codebook

The codebook was saved in a Microsoft Word document on my computer and made available to all committee members. A backup was also uploaded to Dropbox to prevent any potential data loss. Each entry in the codebook was saved in its original format, including misspellings, grammatical and punctuation errors, and formatting. By not altering the format of the posts, this helped to eliminate potential personal researcher bias. Three colors were used to code the data in the codebook. Pink was the color used for any self-reported racial demographics. Data highlighted in yellow were the actual microaggressions. Finally, words that were highlighted in gray were any emotional content or clarification of feelings that the multiracial individual might have included in their entry.

There were a total of six columns in the codebook. The first column was utilized to keep track of the number of entries and the date that it was originally posted. The next column was for the original WAAMU entry. The third column included the type of microaggression that the post was deductively coded as. There were three options for this column: microinsult (MINS), microassault (MA), or microinvalidation (MINV). The fourth column was utilized for coding the

sub-themes and emotional content for each entry. The emotional content is italicized and helped to provide insight in to the reflections. In the fifth column, included the self-reported racial demographics. The sixth and final column held the overarching themes for the entry.

Quality and Verification

It is important to note that I am a 26-year-old female who identifies as multiracial. I have conducted and published research about multiracial individuals as well as presented professionally about the topic. Due to my personal experience with the topic, it was important that I used an external auditor to protect the validity, quality, and trustworthiness of the study. I also utilized an external auditor to limit the personal bias that may be a result of my familiarity with the topic.

External Auditor

The external auditor for this study was a 26-year-old White female Counselor Education and Supervision doctoral student. She has had no prior research experience with multiracial individuals. She has taken coursework on conducting qualitative research as well as microaggressions. She was asked to provide feedback on two points of the study. First, she provided feedback on the inclusionary criteria and appropriateness of the data selected for this study. Next, she reviewed the codebook to ensure that the coding was not the result of personal researcher bias. All of the feedback that she provided was discussed and implemented in the study.

I also kept a data audit trail to document every step of the data collection and analysis that has been provided in the appendix. Akkerman, Admiraal, Brekelmans, and Oost (2006) found that an audit trail allows for a means of reflecting the quality of a qualitative research study. They also allow other individuals to understand the research process, decisions, as well as

confirm the findings of the researcher (Koch, 2006). The data audit trail provides an overview of the research process including when data collection took place and any revisions that took place. This has helped to ensure the transparency of the study as well as describe the research method for the study.

Chapter four of this dissertation will include thick, rich description to support the findings of the study. There is some disagreement over what thick, rich description means (Ponterotto, 2006). For the purposes of this study, I am including examples of entries to illustrate the themes and sub-themes. All of the themes and sub-themes will be accompanied by examples of entries that were reflective of the description. This allows for the reader to better understand the findings of the study. It also provides some insight in to the coding and analysis process.

The final means of quality and trustworthiness used in this study is saturation. Saturation means that no new themes emerge despite the introduction of new data. It requires the researcher to continue to collect and analyze data until this phenomena occurs. By reaching saturation, I feel confident that the themes I described represent both the data and the nature of the racial microaggressions experienced by multiracial individuals at least for March 2015-March 2016. I collected an additional ten posts after initially reaching saturation to ensure that I did in fact reach saturation.

Data Analysis

CCM was utilized to analyze all of the data included in this study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Data was analyzed in groups of ten. This is important to note because it allowed for the consistent revision that also ensured that the data was synthesized in to a clear, easy to read and understandable manner. Themes and sub-themes were allowed to emerge through the process of inductive coding. Inductive coding is the process of developing meaning based on the data rather

than pre-existing theory (Creswell, 2013). I allowed the entries to guide me as I attempted to make meaning. After data in a group of ten was analyzed, I went back to the beginning of the data to synthesize the pre-existing codes. For instance, some entries were initially coded as Outright Hatred but through CCM became nuanced and were changed to the codes, Overt Negative Reaction and Use of Pejorative.

After analyzing posts to determine the nature of the microaggressions, I analyzed each post deductively to determine if it was a microinsult, microassault, or microinvalidation. I utilized the definitions developed by Sue and Sue (2008) to guide this part of the data analysis process. Furthermore, while not the focus of the study, it is worth noting the frequency that they experience microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations to determine if it is reflective of the racism experiences of others.

In all, 120 entries were analyzed and over 300 pages of the website were reviewed. Analysis and data collection was suspended after 120 posts because saturation was reached as determined by this researcher and external auditor. No new themes emerged despite the introduction of new data. Saturation was actually reached after 110 posts were collected but I decided to collect an additional 10 to ensure that saturation was in fact reached. There were seven themes that emerged in the data analysis process: physical appearance, identity erasure, fraudulence, overt racism, criticism of behavior, inappropriate social interactions, and dismissal of perspective. The majority of the posts (67; 56%) reflected just one theme. The next largest group was posts that reflected two of the themes (42; 35%). Finally 10 of the 120 posts (9%) included three themes and only 1 (<1%) reflected four.

Conclusion

This chapter provides an outline for the research design that I implemented to discover the nature of racial microaggressions experienced by multiracial individuals. All of the data collected for this study originated on the website We Are All Mixed up which can be found at weareallmixedup.tumblr.com. The data used for this study was posted from March 2016 to March 2015. I employed ECA to analyze the posts that were collected. In total, 120 posts were collected and analyzed. CCM guided the data analysis process for this study. Finally, an external auditor was used to ensure that the racial microaggressions reviewed in this study were appropriate as well as to limit potential personal researcher bias.

CHAPTER IV: Findings

This study consisted of an Ethnographic Content Analysis of 120 text entries to the blog We Are All Mixed Up regarding multiracial individual's experiences with racial microaggressions. The first part of the study focused on the nature of the racial microaggressions that are experienced specifically by multiracial individuals. The second part of the study explored the frequency in which these self-reported multiracial individuals experienced microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations. Seven themes were identified during the analysis of the entries: (1) identity erasure, (2) physical appearance, (3) accusation of fraudulence, (4) overt racism, (5) criticism of behavior, (6) inappropriate social interaction, and (7) Dismissal of Perspective. All 120 of the entries that were analyzed for this study encompassed one of the seven themes. In this chapter I will provide a description of each of the themes and sub-themes described in the analysis. Quotes incorporated in this chapter were corrected for grammatical and spelling errors to improve clarity and readability but remain in their original form in the codebook.

The themes with the largest number of entries were Physical Appearance and Identity Erasure with 40.1% ($n = 48$) and 32.5% ($n = 42$) respectively. Overt Racism was the third most popular thematic coding with 24.1% ($n = 28$). Dismissal of Perspective (19.2%, $n = 25$), Inappropriate Social Interactions (19.2%, $n = 22$) and Accusation of Fraudulence (8.3%, $n = 10$) and Criticism of Behavior (8.3%, $n = 10$) included the majority of the other entries.

Thematic Categories

Table 4.0 Thematic Categories Found in Entry Analysis

Entries (N = 120)

Rank	Theme	<i>n</i>	%	Description
1	Physical Appearance	48	40%	The self-reported multiracial person reported being criticized based on their physical appearance.
2	Identity Erasure	42	35%	The self-reported multiracial person was told that they were not really multiracial.
3	Overt Racism	28	23.3%	The self-reported multiracial person reported an experience with blatant racism.
4	Dismissal of Perspective	25	20.8%	The self-reported multiracial person was made to feel that their perspective did not count because of their status as being multiracial.
5	Inappropriate Social Interactions	22	18.3%	The self-reported multiracial person was subjected to an encounter that made them uncomfortable and pushed boundaries.
6t	Accusation of Fraudulence	10	8.3%	The self-reported multiracial person was accused of dishonesty when they told other individuals that they were multiracial.
6t	Criticism of Behavior	10	8.3%	The self-reported multiracial person was criticized for behaving a certain way.

Note. Some entries contained more than one theme. This resulted in the percentages being greater than 100%. The themes were coded a total of 185 times.

Table 4.1 Themes and Sub-Themes*Entries (N = 120)*

Theme	<i>n</i>	%	Sub-Themes
Physical Appearance	48	40%	Too This To Be You Don't Look Fetishism Looking Mixed Shouldn't You Look Alike? Are You Related? Good You Don't Have Change
Identity Erasure	42	35%	
Overt Racism	28	23.3%	Overt Negative Reaction Intentional Misidentification You're The Joke You're Not Human Use of Pejorative White Is Better
Dismissal of Perspective	25	20.8%	You're Part White Separation of Multiracial Person From Minority Group That Didn't Happen
Inappropriate Social Interaction	22	18.3%	Use of Pejorative What are you? Inappropriate Questioning/Statements
Criticism of Behavior	10	8.3%	Acting White Acting Black Trying to Be Brown How to Act
Accusation of Fraudulence	10	8.3%	

Note. Some sub-themes belong to more than one category.

Physical Appearance

Physical Appearance described instances where the multiracial person was criticized or judged based on their physical appearance by other individuals. This was a prominent theme, 49 of the 120 the entries (40.1%) encompassed it. Additionally, this theme includes seven sub-themes: (a) Too This To Be, (b) You Don't Look, (c) Good You Don't Have, (d) Fetishism (e) Shouldn't You Look Alike, (f) Are You Related and (g) Change. Furthermore, these microaggressions often included the person being told that they did not appear multiracial most often due to skin tone, whether that is because their skin appeared too light or dark. The Physical Appearance theme reflects that if an individual belongs to a certain racial group, then they should look a certain way. These instances left the self-reported multiracial people feeling frustrated, hurt, and like an outsider.

Too This To Be were instances where the self-reported multiracial individual was told that they were too something to be considered multiracial. White-passing individuals, those who due to having a lighter skin tone may appear to be White as opposed to multiracial, often reported being told this. For instance one poster asked,

“Does this happen to anyone else? So whenever I get asked my ethnicity and I tell whoever I'm mixed they don't believe me because I look too "black" yet when I say I'm black they don't believe me because I don't look black enough”.

You Don't Look reflected the moments when the self-reported multiracial individual was provided feedback that they did not look as though they belonged to one of the racial identities that they claimed. One post that reflected this experience is,

“Oh my god so I’m half Japanese and my mom, who is White, sometimes says she wonders if my Japanese grandmother had an affair and had my dad because I don't look Asian enough”.

Good You Don’t Have referred to instances where a multiracial person was told that it was a positive thing that did not have certain facial features. In both instances, these facial features were ones that are stereotypically associated with a minority. One of the participants shared, “When your white mom says it's "probably a good thing" you didn't get a wider nose like your father and doesn't even realize what she's saying (I'm mixed white/black/native)”. Fetishism occurred when the self-reported multiracial person found that their identity was accepted but conditionally. In these instances the multiracial person was sexualized based on their racial identity. Another participant stated,

“I'm Spanish-Cuban, Mexican and White. The only time (white) people are willing to accept my Latinx heritage is by getting all excited and saying "So that's where those curves come from!" It makes me feel gross”.

Are You Related referred to two distinct instances. The first instance was where a family was questioned as to whether or not they were related because of their varying racial backgrounds. The other instance that this took place is when individuals with the same racial backgrounds were asked if they were related because of their backgrounds. An example of this is,

“There are 2 girls in my classes that are mixed with the same ethnicities as me (Filipino and Black). It always gets awkward when we get confused for one another. "Are you related?" Or "You guys are twins right?" And I don't really know how to feel because none of us look alike? We have pretty distinct faces”.

Finally, Change described messages where the multiracial person was encouraged to change their physical appearance to better fit dominant culture. One multiracial individual reported, “25 years old and White family is still "encouraging" me to use relaxer so my hair is "more manageable”.

Identity Erasure

Identity Erasure occurred when the self-reported multiracial person had their racial identity negated by other individuals. This was the second most popular theme. 33.3% of the posters included in this study shared stories where they were told that they were not really a part of the racial identity that they reported. Additionally, they encountered these statements from friends, family, and strangers. These situations were coded with the term, Isn't Really because it was the term that they often were met with. One such instance was,

“I'm Biracial (White/Black) and deal with people constantly telling me I'm not actually black because of my light skin. It really drives me up a wall...”.

Another participant shared,

“I feel like sh*t about being a mixed person (half Mexican/half White). I look do not look completely Mexican and everyone keeps telling me that my dad is probably not my real dad because I'm so white. I honestly doubt my heritage all the time”.

Individuals who encountered these statements were made to feel as though they did not have a right to the racial identity with which they claimed.

Overt Racism

Overt Racism was the theme used to describe situations where the self-reported multiracial individual experienced overt and blatant racism. The described racist incidents

occurred in conversation with friends, families, and strangers. Some individuals described a single incident while others described long-term exposure. Typically, the long-term exposure was racism they experienced either in their family or in the community. 28 of 120 posts included in this study described instances of overt racism. The six subthemes for overt racism are: (a) Overt Negative Reaction, (b) Use of Pejorative, (c) Intentional Misidentification, (d) White is Better, (e) You're the Joke and (f) You're Not Human.

Overt Negative Reaction described incidents where the person was met with a blatant disapproving response to their racial identity. In general, it was the result of people misidentifying the multiracial person. When the multiracial person would share that they had a racial identity not expected by the other individual, their reaction was disrespectful and damning. For instance,

“So I’m mixed but White passing, although I have very curly hair and African American features. I was at the mall the other day and this girl asked me how I got my hair so curly. I said I was part Black (while standing next to my Haitian father) and she was like, there is no way. She then pointed to my dad and was like, “Are you related?” My dad and I both nodded our heads so she was kind of like “Oh...” And she walked away and under her breath she said “those goddamn n** lovers”.

Use of Pejorative was also categorized as Overt Racism when the derogatory comment and statement carried hostility. In these situations the individual was trying to offend the multiracial individual. An example of this includes,

“I was just told that all biracial people are rape babies and being mixed is nothing to be proud of. I didn’t even have the words to correct the assumption”.

Intentional Misidentification referred to instances when an individual would refuse to acknowledge the correct racial identity of a multiracial person despite being informed. One poster shared that a classmate that harassed her for an entire semester and regularly misidentified her despite the fact that she had corrected him on several occasions. Moreover the poster reported,

“For an entire semester, I had to deal with a White classmate making fun of my accent, the way I speak English, my background (that he got wrong, but hearing racist BS was aggravating), and so much more. I was constantly humiliated and taunted, teased and make fun of. No matter how many times I corrected him he didn’t listen. He didn’t listen when I spoke nicely; he didn’t listen when I spoke harshly.”

White is Better was the sub-theme used when the underlying message was that the multiracial person should favor their White side. The communication of this message was that the person should strive to fit in more with mainstream White culture. This message also was apparent in entries where the multiracial individual described being encouraged to make an effort to keep their skin lighter. One example of this message is,

“I’m mixed and my family either makes comments on my appearance/tells me to “tone it down” (aka “try to look white”) or make comments about things not remembering that I’m also a minority”.

You’re The Joke was used to describe instances where the multiracial person was reduced to an insensitive joke. Similar to Use of Pejorative, this included instances where the individuals were subjected to unfair jokes typically at their expense because they were a minority. One participant shared,

“I’m White and Arabic. Whenever I spend time with the White side of my family me and my brother get so much racist microaggressive sh*t such constant terrorists jokes, comments about us not allowed to eat some stuff, weird policing of our diets, and talking about how much different we look form the rest of the family”.

Finally, You’re Not Human referred to interactions where the multiracial person encountered a dehumanizing experience. The situation made them feel as though they were something other than human. One such interaction was,

“When I was in high school I found a post my father had made on an Aryan women’s website. It was worse than my grandparents saying they were proud to have KKK members in the family tree. The worst thing was the feeling that I was lied to for so long. How could you pretend to love me? How could you be nice to my friends? If all you see is PoC as “animals” (his word) what was my mother?”

Dismissal of Perspective

Dismissal of Perspective referred to incidents where the perspective of the multiracial individual was negated based on their racial identity. 23 of the entries reflected an incident where the beliefs, thoughts, and feelings of the multiracial person were silenced. These microaggressions were invalidating in nature as they communicated to the multiracial individual that they did not have a right to an opinion on race matters. Additionally, they suggested that the multiracial person was not a minority. These situations occurred usually in discussion with friends and family. There were two sub-themes for this theme: (a) You’re Part White and (b) Separation of the Multiracial Person from Minority Group.

You’re Part White was often communicated to the multiracial person when they tried to introduce a perspective that the person they were talking to did not agree with. This typically

occurred when discussing issues of race. The assertion in this is that due to the fact that they were mixed with White they cannot possibly have an opinion on minority issues. One poster shared,

“I am half-White and half-Chinese. Whenever the topic of race comes up with some of my White friends and I start talking about my feelings on fetishism, representation, etc they always bring up the fact that I’m half white and thus ‘not a full Asian’ and shouldn’t talk about those things”.

Additionally, Separation of Multiracial Person From Minority Group was the sub-theme used to describe incidents where individuals did not seem to understand that the multiracial person was also a minority. Many posters described incidents where individuals would make racially insensitive jokes and opinions to the person without realizing that they were also a minority. Similar to You’re Part White it sent the message that because the person was not fully a member of a racial minority it was okay to say racially charged things in their presence. An example of this is,

“My white mom got pregnant with me by a Black man due to a one night stand. She married a White man while she was pregnant with me. She had two boys with him so my brothers are white. My brothers who love me unconditionally tell me all the time that I should stay away from black men because they’re “bad”.

Finally, That Didn’t Happen was used to describe instances where multiracial individuals were told that a racist incident did not happen. One member of the study described,

“Is it mean to be annoyed at my White girlfriend for not understanding racial issues well? I tried to tell her about getting dirty looks from old white people

today, and she was like “I think they just hate people who aren’t old and White like them.”

Inappropriate Social Interaction

Inappropriate Social Interaction referred to situations where the self-reported multiracial individual encountered a disrespectful and uncomfortable social situation. 20% of the posts included in this study described an inappropriate social interaction. The majority of these experiences were with strangers but in some cases also occurred with individuals in their social group. These situations occurred at family gatherings, work, school, and even in a park. The context of these situations as well as the statements and questions that the multiracial individuals encountered were often demeaning and sometimes shocking. The three sub-themes for this theme are: (a) Use of Pejorative, (b) Inappropriate Questioning/Statements, and (c) What Are You.

Use of Pejorative referred to the slurs and derogatory comments/phrases that the multiracial individuals were exposed to. Use of Pejoratives that were coded as Inappropriate Social Interactions differed from those in Overt Racism because of the described situation. These were instances where the hostility of the pejorative was not as overt. One such incident includes,

“I remember when I told my friend that I was really mixed (not even half anything, I’m a quarter of everything I’m mixed with pretty much) they told me that I’m a mutt “but you’re pretty anyway”...”.

While term mutt is still a pejorative, it was not overtly racist. Inappropriate questioning and statements occurred when strangers would ask or say things to the multiracial individuals that pushed boundaries and caused discomfort. These questions and statements were unsolicited. One

multiracial female poster described being at the park with her children and being asked first how much she charged for her childcare services and then about the racial background of the children's father when she said that they were her children. Another poster shared,

“I'm Black and Japanese and I get so annoyed when people tell me who to have children with in order to have “the most beautiful mixed baby”. Usually, they say a white person rather than black or Asian to get “optimal results...”

Finally, the reason that What Are You was described as being an inappropriate social situation is because strangers asked it in an uncomfortable manner. One such manner includes,

“At the store that I work at we allow dogs inside. A middle aged white man came in with his dog and I started talking to him, giving him 100% customer service. I asked him what kind of dog he had and he said “It's a mixed breed. How about you? Are you a mixed breed?” And I was so shocked/completely baffled that someone would compare me to a dog, especially because in saying that, he meant that since I'm biracial I'm a separate “breed” from monoracial people”.

Criticism of Behavior

Criticism of Behavior explained instances where the multiracial person was judged based on their behavior. Similar to Physical Appearance, it suggested that there was a certain way to act that reflected membership in a minority group. Furthermore, it conveyed the message that the way the person behaved could undermine their membership in a minority group. 8.3% (10) of the entries included an example where the multiracial person was criticized for behaving a certain way. The four sub-themes for this category include: (a) Acting White, (b) Acting Black, (c) Trying to Be Brown, and (d) How To Act.

Acting White was told to multiracial individuals to suggest that they could not identify with a minority group because their behavior suggested that they were White. It was used to invalidate and negate their experiences. For instance,

“I’m half-Black half-White, and have been told “you are (acting) SO white” constantly by family members. I also have been told “I always forget you’re black lmao” by friends, despite the fact I’m far from light skinned made me so confused growing up”.

Similarly, Acting Black was used to describe when a multiracial individual appeared to be acting as if they were Black. An example of this includes, “I am mixed (Jamaican and White/Welsh). The other day I was in an argument with a boy who is also mixed and he told me to “stop acting black”. Trying to Be Brown suggested that there is a certain way that a minority would act and that the individual was attempting to act this way. It also suggested that the way that the person was acting was inauthentic to who they were. One poster shared,

“I hate when people say I’m “trying too hard to be brown”. It’s usually white people that make that comment too. Like I’m sorry but my whole life I’ve had to deal with crappy comments of “not being brown enough”, “acting too white”, “favoring my white side”, etc. Unfortunately it does get to me. The reason I’m “trying so hard to be brown” is because I’m constantly expected to prove that I’m “enough”.

In all three of these sub-themes the undertone was that their behavior was closely tied to their racial identity. They also communicated that a multiracial person should be cognizant of their presenting behavior, as others can deem that appropriate or inappropriate. Finally, this message

closely relates to the final sub-theme, How to Act. This occurred when other individuals told the multiracial person the appropriate way to act. Specifically, one poster reported,

“People will say things to me, and not realize what they just said is very, very racist. I had one girl tell me how I should celebrate my culture, and that it was “problematic” I was angry all the time when talking about what happens on reservations, and another one tell me they had a “squaw” grandmother and honestly thought that was okay to say”.

Again, the primary message in Criticism of Behavior is that behavior is another indicator of racial identity and open to judgment by others.

Accusation of Fraudulence

Accusation of Fraudulence occurred when multiracial individuals were accused of being dishonest when they told someone their racial identity. This accusation was often the result of their physical appearance. The multiracial person did not outwardly appear to be a member of the specific racial group that they identified with and were often met with disbelief. These situations were an escalation from the Physical Appearance category where they were simply told they did not look a certain way. The message was that not only did the multiracial person not appear to be a member of a group but they were lying about it. This insistence that the person must be lying about their racial identity was frustrating and upsetting for the multiracial person. Accusations of Fraudulence were mentioned in 8.3% (10) of the entries. You’re Lying was used to describe these instances. An example of this accusation includes,

“I’m a stripper. I’m white passing (Latina) yet more “ethnic” looking (curvy and thick lips) than my all-white “coworkers.” I have customers ask me all the time

“what” I am. I usually tell them I’m Puerto Rican, then I’m met with “no you’re not don’t lie to me” even when the girls I work with assure them I am honest.

In these situations some of the multiracial individuals showed pictures of family members in an attempt to convince the person that they were not being dishonest. The multiracial individual is made to feel as though they have to convince people that they are not lying and in fact are multiracial.

Frequency of Microaggressions

Table 4.2 Frequency of Microaggressions

N = 120 Entries

Type	<i>n</i>	%
Microinsult	76	63%
Microassault	26	22%
Microinvalidation	18	15%

Additionally, all 120 of the collected entries were deductively analyzed to determine whether or not it best fit the definition of a microinsult, microassault, or microinvalidation. Definitions developed by Sue and Sue (2008) guided the analysis process. The majority of the postings, 63% (76 out of 120) were microinsults. This means that they reflected rude and insensitive behaviors and statements that degrade an individual’s heritage or identity. 22% (26 out of 120) were microassaults that means that they described blatant and overt verbal, nonverbal, and behavioral attacks. Finally, 15% (18 out 120) were microinvalidations and described the negation and denial of the self-reported multiracial individual’s experiences, thoughts, and feelings.

The three types of microaggressions (microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations) were also cross-tabulated with the seven themes. Microinsults were the most prevalent type of microaggression in six of the seven themes 86%. That is to be expected due to the fact that the majority of the entries analyzed in this study were categorized as microinsults. In only one category was the primary type of microaggression different, Overt Racism. 75% of the entries that were coded as Overt Racism were categorized as microassaults. This is also to be expected due to the fact that microassaults are typically considered to be overt and blatant forms of racism. The majority of the microinvalidations were associated with the Physical Appearance and Identity Erasure categories.

Table 4.3 Cross-Tabulation of Types Microaggressions and Themes

Entries ($N = 120$)

Themes	<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%
1. Physical Appearance	48	40%	Microinsults	32	66.6%
			Microassaults	6	12.5%
			Microinvalidations	10	20.8%
2. Identity Erasure	42	35%	Microinsults	27	64.2%
			Microassaults	4	9.5%
			Microinvalidations	11	26.1%
3. Overt Racism	28	23.3%	Microinsults	7	25%
			Microassaults	21	75%
			Microinvalidations	0	0%
4. Dismissal of Perspective	25	20.8%	Microinsults	16	64%
			Microassaults	5	20%
			Microinvalidations	4	16%
5. Inappropriate Social Interactions	22	18.3%	Microinsults	18	81.8%
			Microassaults	4	18.2%
			Microinvalidations	0	0%
6t. Accusation of Fraudulence	10	8.3%	Microinsults	8	80%
			Microassaults	1	10%
			Microinvalidations	1	10%
6t. Criticism of Behavior	10	8.3%	Microinsults	7	70%
			Microassaults	2	20%
			Microinvalidations	1	10%

Note. Some entries contained more than one theme. This resulted in the percentages being greater than 100%. The themes were coded a total of 185 times.

Conclusion

In total, 120 entries that were posted to the blog We Are All Mixed Up regarding multiracial individual's experiences with microaggressions were collected and analyzed. Seven overarching themes emerged in the data analysis including: Physical Appearance, Identity Erasure, Criticism of Behavior, Accusation of Fraudulence, Inappropriate Social Interactions, Overt Racism, and Dismissal of Perspective. Additionally, entries were deductively analyzed to determine the type of microaggression that the multiracial person was experiencing. 64% of the collected microaggressions were categorized as a microinsult, with 21% being a microassault, and the remaining 15% a microinvalidation.

Chapter V: Discussion

There is a paucity of literature on the experiences of multiracial people, a growing population in the United States. The majority of the research that does exist regarding multiracial individuals focuses primarily on racial identity development (Shih & Sanchez, 2005; Salahuddin, 2008). This study was conducted to help counselors conceptualize the unique needs of multiracial clients and to provide additional insight in to how multiracial individuals might be viewed and treated in a predominantly monoracial society. Racial identity development for multiracial individuals is a complex process and this study intended to examine the multiracial individuals experiences with microaggressions. Increased understanding of multiracial individual's experiences with microaggressions may help counselors working with this population to better understand why racial identity development for this group is such a complex process. Prior studies that explored this experience utilized interviews and smaller sample sizes.

Data for the current study was gathered on the blog, We Are All Mixed Up. One hundred-twenty text entries were collected from March 2016 to February 2015. The study examined the nature of the microaggressions experienced by multiracial individuals by isolating the themes in each data entry utilizing Ethnographic Content Analysis (Altheide, 1996). The study also explored to what extent the microaggressions experienced by multiracial individuals could be categorized as microinsults, microinvalidations, and microassaults. Through further exploration of the microaggressions experienced by multiracial individuals, the researcher aimed to provide greater insight in to the unique challenges that this growing population may experience.

Nature of Microaggressions

As a growing minority population, it is imperative that counselors understand how multiracial individuals experience this form of discrimination. Recently, the American Counseling Association endorsed the Competencies for Counseling the Multiracial Population (2015). Made clear in these competencies is the need for the counseling profession to recognize the racial discrimination that they experience. As racism continues to present less overtly and more covertly, exploration of how minorities experience covert racism will continue to be important. That is why further understanding of how multiracial individuals experience microaggressions is imperative.

In response to this question, the study had seven thematic findings. First, the physical presentation of multiracial individuals may impact how they are perceived and treated by others. Also, individuals may make statements to multiracial individuals that are identity erasing in nature. Multiracial individuals can be confronted with overt racism from friends, strangers, and family members. They may also contend with inappropriate social interactions in which their racial identity is inappropriately questioned. The behavior of multiracial individuals may be criticized based on cultural stereotypes. Finally, they may have their perspectives dismissed and invalidated as well as be accused of fraudulently identifying themselves.

Physical Appearance

This study revealed that the physical appearance of multiracial individuals had an impact on how they were perceived and treated by monoracial individuals. This finding is supported by research that shows individuals may ascribe negative and prejudicial social judgments on multiracial individuals based on their physical appearance (Chesley & Wagner, 2003; Miville et al., 2005; Root, 1998; Salahuddin & O'Brien, 2011; Sanchez & Bonam, 2009). In the case of this

study, individuals were met with criticism and backlash if their self-identified racial identity did not match the perspectives and beliefs of others. This is further complicated by the fact that there is no clear definition or set of rules for what it means to be multiracial (Shih & Sanchez, 2005). Instead, as reflected in the consistent criticism of physical appearance, multiracial individuals are subjected to the thoughts and perceptions of others when attempting to define and understand their racial identity. Therefore, it can be difficult for a multiracial individual to develop a racial identity when provided with consistent feedback that questions the authenticity of a multiracial identity. Furthermore, potentially due to criticism of physical appearance, racial identification can be a stressful and difficult process for multiracial individuals (Gaskins, 1999; Miville et al., 2005; Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007).

Identity Erasure

Research has shown that multiracial individuals may experience alienation as a result of their racial identity (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Nadal, Griffin, Wong, Hamit, & Rasmus, 2014). This may be due in part to one of the findings of this study, exposure to the identity erasing statements. The identity erasure statements in this study called in to question the person's racial identity and background. There is no research specifically about how identity erasure impacts multiracial individuals. This type of microaggression is unique to multiracial individuals as it calls in to question their racial background and heritage (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). These identity erasure statements may contribute to multiracial individuals feeling alienated and disengaged from extended family who made many of the identity erasing statements in this study (Root, 1998) and a lack of social recognition as they are made to feel like outsiders for wanting to claim an identity that others deny them (Nakashima, 1996). Moreover, identity erasure

statements can potentially complicate the already complicated racial identity development process for multiracial individuals (Shih & Sanchez, 2005).

Overt Racism

In researching identity development of multiracial individuals, Jackson (2007) found that all of the participants in her study had encountered racism and racial discrimination ranging from direct (racial slurs aimed at them) to indirect (racially charged jokes). Additionally, it has been hypothesized that not only do they experience forms of racism experienced by monoracial individuals but also racist incidents that are unique to multiracial individuals (Buckley & Carter, 2004; Collins, 2000; Henriksen & Trusty, 2004; Miville et al., 2005; Rockquemore & Brunσμα, 2002). This belief that multiracial individuals experience forms of racism similar to monoracial individuals as well as others that are unique to multiracial individuals is supported in this study. For instance, several members of the study reported incidents where they experienced overt negative reactions after telling someone their racial background. They also were subjected to pejoratives and racist humor. Their monoracial counterparts could also experience some of the racist incidents experienced by the multiracial individuals in this study. Yet, many of the individuals mixed with White in this reported receiving messages that suggested that they should distance themselves from the minority group that they also belong to. These messages seemingly suggested that aligning yourself with dominant White culture was preferable. This is an experience that is unique to multiracial individuals. Moreover, due to the fact that many multiracial individuals have few multiracial family members, there may be a lack of understanding about the impact of these messages on the individual (Salahuddin, 2008). As a result of feeling as though they do not have someone in their family that they can talk to, they may feel as if they do not belong in their family leading to alienation and distancing oneself from

family (Root, 1998). It is important to recognize the impact that exposure to overt racism can have on multiracial individuals as exposure to racism has been shown to include reduced self-rated health status (Clark & Gochett, 2006), depression and anxiety (Karlsen & Nazroo, 2002; Nadal et al., 2014), and poorer mental health status (Schneider, Hitlan, & Radhakrishnan, 2000).

Inappropriate Social Interactions

Multiracial individuals may encounter inappropriate social interactions with strangers that may cause discomfort or are dehumanizing in nature. Many of the inappropriate incidents described in this study were also reflected in Root's (2003) list of 50 experiences that multiracial individuals have. One includes being assumed to be paid help instead of being the parent of a child. These assumptions are often based on physical appearance and are encountered without encouragement from the multiracial individual. These experiences may result in multiracial individuals feeling isolated and excluded (Root, 1990; Weisman, 1996). Many multiracial individuals may have to answer racial identification questions (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Shih & Sanchez, 2005; Tran, Miyake, Martinez-Morales & Csizmadia, 2016). Furthermore, Johnston and Nadal (2010) describe these questions as objectifying as they send the message that you are different and it is okay for me to ask you about it. This current study supports that stance and suggests that racial identification questions can be hostile and denigrating in nature.

Criticism of Behavior

Along with a focus on physical appearance this study found that multiracial individuals are at risk of exposure to statements that criticize their behavior based on race. This criticism was the result of preconceived beliefs about how certain cultures should act. Multiracial individuals were made to feel as though they were being inauthentic. This has been described in other research articles as denial of multiracial reality (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Nadal, et al., 2014). It

may make multiracial individuals feel as though they have to choose between racial identities (Townsend, Markus, & Bergsicker, 2009). Again, these criticisms can challenge the racial identity development of multiracial individuals as well as result in feelings of inadequacy. They may feel as though choosing to be multiracial is not an actual option for them due to the perceptions and beliefs of others.

Dismissal of Perspective

Root (2003) described experiences in which multiracial individuals were made to feel as though they were unable to identify with certain parts of their racial background. The participants in this study described having these instances occur in their own lives. Furthermore, they described this stance about how they were allowed to identify as resulting in people dismissing their perspective as a minority. For instance, individuals who were mixed with White were told that they were not allowed to have an opinion or voice opinions on racial issues due to the fact that they are part White. This is a unique microaggression experienced only by multiracial individuals (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). Despite being a minority, their perspectives are nullified. When a person of color's perspective is dismissed they can feel not only invalidated but also alienated as they receive the message that their experiences and feelings do not count (Sue & Sue, 2008). Furthermore, research has shown that overlooked multiracial discrimination can have a harmful impact (Leong, 2010).

Accusation of Fraudulence

Not only can multiracial individuals be objectified and exoticized, they can also be made to feel as though they are being fraudulent (Buckley & Carter, 2004; Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Nadal et al., 2014). In the current study, when a multiracial individual attempted to identify with a group that is unexpected or that they do not fit the physical stereotype of, they may have been

accused of lying. These accusations can make them feel less trusting and hesitant to discuss their racial background. It can also lead to frustrations as they attempt to prove that they do not belong anywhere (Johnston & Nadal, 2010). Some individuals in this study went as far as to show pictures in attempt to convince others that they were not being dishonest. These accusations of fraudulence can also challenge racial identity development as it may result in a person questioning their membership to a group as well as whether or not they should self-identify a certain way.

Frequency of Microaggressions

The majority of the microaggressions experienced by the multiracial individuals in this study were microinsults (76; 36%). Suggesting that the microaggressions were more covert in nature. This is reflective of the decline in overt racism and rise of covert racism (Sue, Capodilupo, et al. 2007). Multiracial individuals are at risk of encountering statements that they may not be sure how to feel about it. Several of the participants in this study after describing the racist-incident, would ask if it was okay to feel frustrated or upset because they were unsure. Covert racism can be challenging because it is harder to identify and easier to write off as being a misunderstanding of the victimized individual (Nadal, 2008).

Implications for Counselor Educators

Counselors must explore the unique needs and experiences of multiracial individuals (MRECC, 2015). Racial identity development is a complex process for this growing group. One such reason for this may be the racial microaggressions that they encounter which call in to question their racial identity. It is important for counselors to realize that multiracial individuals experience both overt and covert racism (Jackson, 2007; Johnston & Nadal, 2008; Nadal et al., 2014; Townsend et al., 2009). Furthermore, multiracial individuals may experience different

forms of racism than their monoracial counterparts meaning that they may face unique racial challenges (Buckley & Carter, 2004). Without proper understanding of the racial discrimination that this group may face, counselors may potentially invalidate and alienate multiracial clients. Moreover, they experience may encounter racism from friends, family, and strangers. The racism that they encounter from their family could be particularly detrimental because it could span a long period of time and result in internalized racism or alienation. The racial microaggressions experienced by multiracial individuals may result in them feeling isolated and invalidated (Root, 2003). Therefore, counselors should be aware that the microaggressions experienced by this growing population might have a long-term impact on their social and racial identity development.

Limitations

One of the primary limitations of this study was that a single researcher who identifies as multiracial conducted it. This single researcher was responsible for all of the data collection and analysis. Steps were taken to limit researcher bias. A White external auditor reviewed the inclusionary criteria and reviewed all of the data. Despite, attempts to limit researcher bias, some may still remain. We Are All Mixed Up was the only website used to collect data for this study and was deemed the most appropriate website for the study. Yet, the use of a different website may have resulted in different results. There is also no way to confirm that the participants were multiracial and so the researcher had to trust that they were in fact multiracial based on their participation on the site. Additionally, the data collected spanned 12 months (March 2016 to March 2015) on We All Are Mixed Up. Further collection of entries past March 2015 may have revealed new racial microaggressions experienced by multiracial individuals.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this study correspond with previous research that purports that multiracial individuals have unique experiences with racism and discrimination (Buckley & Carter, 2004; Collins, 2000; Henriksen & Trusty, 2004; Miville et al., 2005; Rockquemore & Brunson, 2002). It is important to better understand how this racism impacts the psychological and racial identity development of multiracial individuals. This is why it would be useful for counselors to further research how multiracial individuals experience Race-Based Trauma (RBT). RBT is the traumatic physical and psychological symptoms a person (i.e., victim or observer) might experience following a racist incident. Currently, there is no research regarding how RBT impacts multiracial individuals. Due to the fact majority of the research surrounding this population is qualitative in nature therefore a quantitative study may be useful.

Research has shown that multiracial individuals may experience overt racism and racial microaggressions within their families (Nadal et al., 2014). Currently, there is no research as to how they cope with these race-based incidents. Unlike, racial encounters with strangers, multiracial individuals may be forced to regularly interact with family members who make derogatory statements about the individual's racial identity. Not only can these incidents invalidate the racial identity of multiracial individuals but also result in Race-Based Trauma. It would be helpful for counselors to explore how multiracial individuals cope with these situations as it may provide additional insight in to one of the more unique forms of racism experienced by multiracial individuals.

As noted in this study, racial microaggressions may impact the racial identity development of multiracial individuals. Many of the racial microaggressions described in this study described statements where the racial identity of the multiracial individual was dismissed or criticized. Currently, there is no research about how racial microaggressions impact racial

identity development. Racial identity development has been shown to be a complex process for this growing population. By understanding, how racial microaggressions impact this process counselors may be better prepared to meet the unique needs of multiracial clients.

It would be also useful for future research regarding perceived hostility of racial identification inquires. As research has shown that this is a common experience for multiracial individuals it would be helpful to gain better understanding of how to respectfully broach the topic of race and racial identity with this group. Additionally, as this study indicated the racial microaggressions experienced by multiracial individuals may negatively impact racial identity development. Further quantitative and qualitative research regarding this phenomenon would provide additional insight in to the racial identity development process for multiracial individuals.

Conclusion

Multiracial individuals are one of the fastest growing racial demographics in the United States (Jones & Bullock, 2012). Research on racial identity development has shown that it is a complex process for multiracial individuals that as this study highlighted may be complicated by racial microaggressions. This study also provides an emerging understanding of the challenges that this group face including accusations of fraudulence, criticism of behavior, and overt racism from friends, family, and strangers. More research needs to be done regarding the racist-incidents that this growing demographic face including perceptions of physical appearance and inappropriate racial identification questioning. Currently, what is known is that as a result of racism multiracial individuals may experience isolation, alienation, and feelings of “otherness” (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Root, 2003). If counselors are going to meet the needs of multiracial

clients then they must be willing to engage in research and understanding of the unique forms of racism that they face.

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Appendix A

We All Mixed Up Website

on being
a mixed
person of
color

ABOUT

This is a blog for those of us who are forgotten in the mainstream anti-racism movement. Those of us who are biracial, multiracial, and multiethnic and have struggled year after year with establishing our identities. This is a safe space for all mixed people of color.

This space encourages stories, submissions, art, poetry, photos, research, links to articles, questions, and whatever else you would like to submit!

We hope to create a space that highlights that not every person of color is monoracial and not every problem we face can be looked at through a monoracial lens.

Enter, submit, ask, and enjoy.

I'm Not White, But Nobody Can Ever Tell What Race I Am

451 notes Permalink

japanese mixed multiracial mixed_race identity erasure microaggressions

givergirl:

thedatingfeminist:

If a problem a marginalised community faces seems simple to you and you're pretty sure you know exactly how to fix it, but you're not part of that community, chances are you don't understand the complexity of the issue. Especially if your solution is for the marginalised community to change their own behaviour.

So if you ever feel the urge to tell someone how to solve the problem of their own oppression, this is a good time for listening and a bad time for you to be talking.

Holy fucking shit

(Source: [thatdiabolicalfeminist](#))

6,805 notes Permalink

autisticnima

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying a Tumblr blog. The browser's address bar shows the URL 'weareallmixedup.tumblr.com'. The page title is 'On Being a Mixed Person of Color'. The main content area features a post with a title 'Anonymous asked: I don't know if other mixed other ppl go through this, but both of my parents are multiethnic/multiracial. although both of them just consider themselves more of one race than the others, i still conflicted with my identity because a lot specific ethnicities are me are in the 1/8th range. sometimes i feel like im overthinking everything and should just simplify myself to what my parents only consider themselves, but on the other hand i want to connect to my other culture. idk just venting.' The post has 16 notes and a 'Permalink' link. Below this, another post is visible with the title 'Anonymous asked: My skin gets fairly light in the winter, but darkens many shades after the first few sunny days of the year. When I was in Europe, I was the only POC in this particular situation, and someone said to me at a grill party it was "unverschämt" (in a somewhat "complimentary" tone) how tan I was in the summer. It's hard to translate this term, but it can mean the following: shameless/not fair/outrageous/unbelievable/etc. Probably the strangest reaction to my skin color so far...' with 17 notes and a 'Permalink' link. The page also includes a sidebar with navigation links such as 'Colorism', 'Family', 'Mixed Hair Day', 'Mixed Make Up Day', 'Mixed Skin Care Day', 'Mental Health', 'Movies', 'Poetry', 'Resources', 'Throwback Thursday', 'What Racists Do', and 'White Passing'. At the bottom, there is a date separator for 'WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, 2016' and a snippet of text starting with 'this white girl said Not To My Face tht i was problematic for being angry abt ""certain issues"" (i am. half chinese half white) and then talked abt her trip to china and complained tht nobody spoke english or spoke 'broken english',...like Shut Up,'.

Appendix B

Data Audit Trail

December 3, 2015 - Discussed ideas for dissertation with committee members following Portfolio defense. Was told that exploring the unique experiences of multiracial individuals was too broad and that I would never reach saturation. Was told that I should focus on something that related specifically to counseling. Did get feedback that doing ethnographic content analysis of an online forum was appropriate but would have to be clear about what I did. We discussed the idea of doing the alternative form of a dissertation and that I would write two manuscripts. The first manuscript would explore the microaggressions experienced by multiracial individuals and the second would explore their experiences with Race-Based Trauma.

December 4, 2015 - Began to search for websites that focused on the experiences of multiracial people. Wanted a community that was about all races and not just specific multiracial backgrounds such as Black/Asian. Decided to further explore Fuck Yeah Mixed Beauty, You Know You're Mixed When, and We Are All Mixed Up.

December 5, 2015 - Further explored multiracial online communities.

Explored Fuck Yeah Mixed Beauty.

Pros:

Active community meaning that there are regular posts on the website.

Existed since 2011.

Includes all multiracial backgrounds.

Cons:

Mostly focuses on pictures.

Lack of regular text submissions.

Explored You Know You're Mixed When.

Pros:

Existed since 2013.

Caters to all multiracial people.

Has text submissions.

Cons:

Lack of consistent posting.

No posts for the entire month of September and only 21 for the month of November. More general discussion about being multiracial and less personal experience.

Explored We Are All Mixed Up.

Pros:

Existed since 2013.

Caters to all multiracial people.

Has text submissions.

Has regular posts.

Cons:

Sometimes share more general submissions such as information about LGBT rights.
Decided to utilize We Are All Mixed Up because it best met what I was looking for in a website. It is an open community where people actively participate. During my immersion on the website on January 31, 2016 the moderators announced that they had 10,003 followers. People of varying multiracial backgrounds posted on the website. There were also a balance of picture and text posts. Other websites focused more on pictures and less on actual stories. There was a clear example of people using the website to vent about frustrating experiences and share stories. It was clear that I would be able to find the data that I was interested in on this website.

December - March -

Wrote chapters one through three of dissertation.

Checked in with website community regularly to learn what was being shared and how people were utilizing the website. This process confirmed my belief that the website included appropriate information about multiracial individual's experiences with microaggressions. People were posting about experiences that fit the definition of a microaggression. Also, provided me with a beginning understanding of these experiences. I noticed that many of the posters had some of these experiences from family members and friends.

Realized during this time that it was going to take a lot of sorting through the website to find the information as it was not a topic that was regularly posted about. For instance, a person may share an experience, which would spawn three more people talking about a similar experience, or it could be days and weeks between individuals sharing these experiences.

Also took this time to review the tags on the website. While, the tag were helpful navigation if I wanted to review everything that the moderators had tagged as colorism for example, it was not going to be appropriate for finding information as it could result in me missing information that was necessary.

Learned that it was easiest to navigate the website going backwards. This meant that no posts were missed. Also, it meant that you covered all of the information for a specific time period.

January 18th -

Was provided feedback by Dr. Evans that I should focus on doing a traditional dissertation that just explored racial microaggressions. Decided to no longer research Race-Based Trauma.

March 9th, 2016 -

Proposed dissertation topic.

Was provided feedback that my research question needed to be clear. It initially sounded like I was going to write a quantitative content analysis instead of a qualitative content analysis. Changed question from, "To what extent do multiracial individuals experience microaggressions?" to "What is the nature of the microaggressions experienced by multiracial individuals?" I also decided to keep the question about frequency because quantitative

information is also important in ECA. The quantitative piece provides a support for the thematic information.

Suggested that I provided my External Auditor with examples of racial microaggressions to ensure that we are on the same page about the data that I am collecting.

Was also told that more information needed to be provided about the website to ensure it was trustworthy for the study.

Talked with my EA following the meeting about providing her with sample racial microaggressions to ensure that we agreed on what a racial microaggression was. Shared with her the concerns that I could see something as a racial microaggression that others may not view this way because I may interpret with my research and personal experience. We decided that I would send her a random ten out of a collected 100 posts.

March 10th, 2016 -

Collected 75 posts that were made on the website from March 2016 to May 2015. This encompassed 265 pages of the website.

March 11th, 2016 -

Collected 25 more posts that were made on the website from May 2015 to April 2015. In doing so, I reviewed an additional 39 pages of the site. Went back to the beginning of the website to see if any new posts that met the inclusionary criteria had been posted since the day before. None were. Randomly selected 10 posts for EA. Emailed them to her with Sue & Sue (2008) definition of microinsult, microassault, and microinvalidation. I used the Sue & Sue (2008) definition because I believed this was a clear and easy to understand definition that would provide a strong guide for the review.

Called EA and discussed again that I wanted her to review the entries to see if she thought that they were in fact a racial microaggression. Told her again that I was worried that I would be personally biased and may see a racial microaggression where she did not because I was multiracial. Asked her to give me her opinions and that we would incorporate them in the study. I stated that if she did not think they were a racial microaggression then I doubted that my committee and so her feedback during this process was incredibly important.

March 12th, 2016 -

Talked with EA about the review. She stated that she felt all of the examples were in fact a racial microaggression. I asked if she had any hesitations about any and she stated that she could see the emotional content that the person was feeling in the post and that she thought they were appropriate. She stated that what would be her hesitation about a post would be if it was vague and required a great deal of interpretation. She stated that the posts that I shared did not require that. I told her that I would continue to work on my data and would provide her with my entries when I was done.

March 13th, 2016 -

Analyzed 100 entries using CCM method. Analyzed data in groups of ten and then would return to the beginning to ensure that the posts were synthesized. Overt Racism became Outright Hatred which then returned to Overt Racism as an overarching theme and I realized I needed to break down the examples of overt racism. Talked with EA about how to describe the boundary crossing social interactions that were described. I knew that they were inappropriate but was having a hard time finding a phrase that really encompassed what was going on. Disturbing Encounters took shape as Inappropriate Social Interactions. Dismissal of Multiracial Individual's Experience became Dismissal of Multiracial Individual's Perspective, which was shortened to Dismissal of Perspective.

March 14th, 2016 -

Collected and analyzed 10 entries and realized that I had reached saturation. Was nervous that I did not in fact reach saturation and decided to collect and analyze 10 more entries to be safe. No new thematic categories emerged so I stopped because I was worried that something new may emerge in the next 10 and then data collection and analysis would need to continue. I reviewed all of my data again to ensure that everything was effectively synthesized. In this second pass I wanted to make sure that all of my coding was clear and easy to understand for my EA. I decided to change Focus on Physical Appearance to just Physical Appearance.

I have seven themes: physical appearance, identity erasure, criticism of behavior, accusation of fraudulence, inappropriate social interaction, overt racism, and dismissal of perspective. There were eight posts that do not fit in a theme and have been put in a other category. Sent codebook to EA and asked to review and provide feedback about any changes that she felt were necessary.

March 16th, 2016 -

Talked with EA about entries. She told me that she felt that all 120 were appropriate. She stated that she had five suggestions for edits that I may decide to make. She emailed me her edits while we were talking and we discussed them. An example of the feedback that she provided me was to remove the code denigration of minority features and change it instead to good you don't have because that was more accurately reflected the message that was being sent. I changed a couple of posts from microinsult to microinvalidation.

The only feedback that the EA provided that was not included was changing one post from a microinsult to a microassault. While, I thought the comments made by the perpetrator were inappropriate I did not think they were blatant racist. I shared this feedback with the EA about the distinction and she agreed that was appropriate to not make the change as she understood the distinction.

March 20th, 2016 -

Analyzed my codebook to determine the quantitative information such as the total number of codes, the number of microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations, and the number of entries that belonged in each category. Realized that the majority of the posts were microinsults and that the largest categories were physical appearance and identity erasure.

April 11th, 2016 -

Did a presentation on my dissertation in my Research Design class. This test drive helped me to explain my study as well as the outcomes. Realized how important it was to clearly explain the distinction why use of pejorative was not always overt racism in this study. I edited my chapter four so it was more clear the difference. Sometimes a person used inappropriate terminology but did not mean to be racist.

April 14th, 2016 -

Received feedback from Dr. A that encouraged me to make changes to my chapter four. She indicated that she felt that the posts that I had included in my other category did actually better fit in one of the pre-existing categories.

April 16th, 2016 - Reviewed my codebook and the eight entries that had originally been categorized as "other". I amended a pre-existing sub-theme, inappropriate questioning to inappropriate questioning/statements. This change in the category meant that five of the original others were included in the Inappropriate Social Interaction category. Two of them were added to the Physical Appearance category. Finally, one was amended to be Dismissal of Perspective. Talked with EA to ensure that she agreed with the changes.

April 17th, 2016 - Reviewed data again because the quantitative part of the research had changed as a result of the re-editing of the codebook.

April 21, 2016 - Submitted dissertation manuscript to Dr. Amanda Evans