

City University of New York (CUNY)

CUNY Academic Works

Dissertations, Theses, and Capstone Projects

CUNY Graduate Center

9-2022

Microaggressions, Imposter Phenomenon, and People of Color: A Quantitative Analysis

Rukiya King

The Graduate Center, City University of New York

[How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!](#)

More information about this work at: https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds/4943

Discover additional works at: <https://academicworks.cuny.edu>

This work is made publicly available by the City University of New York (CUNY).

Contact: AcademicWorks@cuny.edu

MICROAGGRESSIONS, IMPOSTER PHENOMENON, AND PEOPLE OF COLOR: A
QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

by

RUKIYA KING

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2022

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

© 2022

RUKIYA KING

All Rights Reserved

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

Microaggressions, Imposter Phenomenon, and People of Color:
A Quantitative Analysis
by

Rukiya King

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in
Psychology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy.

Date

Kevin L. Nadal

Chair of Examining Committee

Date

Richard Bodnar

Executive Officer

Supervisory Committee:

Kevin L. Nadal

Veronica Johnson

Matthew B. Johnson

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

ABSTRACT

Microaggressions, Imposter Phenomenon, and People of Color: A Quantitative Analysis

by Rukiya King

Advisor: Kevin L. Nadal

Research has demonstrated the impact of racial and ethnic microaggressions on marginalized groups. However, research has not established the presence of imposter phenomenon as a consequence of microaggressions. Imposter phenomenon has been described as intense and pervasive self-doubt experienced by individuals of marginalized identities. Although imposter phenomenon was first conceptualized as an experience among high achieving women, researchers have demonstrated its presence in other marginalized groups, particularly people of color. However, research on imposter phenomenon has mostly focused on perceived racism and racial identity within people of color. The current study examined the relationship between microaggressions, imposter phenomenon, and mental health. It also examined presence of imposter phenomenon in individuals with multiple marginalized identities. Results revealed a positive correlational relationship between perceived microaggressions and imposter phenomenon, with mental health symptoms mediating that relationship. Although there were no differences on scores of impostership across gender, results revealed those who identified as LGBQ were more likely to endorse feelings of imposter phenomenon than heterosexual individuals. Finally, there were relationships between certain indicators of imposter phenomenon subscales and specific types of microaggressions. Suggestions for future research, possible training opportunities, and clinical implications were discussed.

CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	ix
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	10
CHAPTER 3: METHOD.....	36
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS.....	41
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION.....	48
REFERENCES.....	62

TABLES

	Page
Table 1. Regression Table.....	59

FIGURES

	Page
Fig. 1. Mediation Analysis	60
Fig. 2. Multiple Multivariate Regression.....	61

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The foundations of the United States of America (USA) are imbued in White supremacy. The consequences of White supremacy have been damaging and deadly for marginalized groups that reside in the USA. For example, European contact with the indigenous peoples of North and South America resulted in genocide and generational trauma (Brown-Rice, 2013). Further, the European colonialists attempted to enslave indigenous peoples who were wiped out because they could not withstand the harsh labor conditions and the diseases brought forth by the European settlers (O’Fallon & Fehren- Schmitz, 2011). In order to supplement the loss of free labor, European scholars suggested importing humans from the west coast of Africa as indentured servants (Degruy-Leary, 2017).

Slavery in the USA lasted for over 400 years and significantly impacted the lives of Black people (Degruy-Leary, 2017). After slavery, several forms of overt discrimination were employed to ensure the subjugation and oppression of Black people in the United States. Jim Crow laws resulted in significant losses of civil rights, anti-black violence, massacres, scientific-medical experimentation, lynching, mass incarcerations, and other forms of overt discrimination (Brown, 1975; Roberts, 2003; Wallace, 1970). Other forms of discrimination against people of color (POC) included immigration policies against Asian Americans, displacement of indigenous peoples from their lands, internment camp placements of Japanese Americans, and many other acts of racial and ethnic oppression (Komisarchic et al., 2020; McLoughlin, 2014).

Along with these nefarious forms of racial bias, more covert and well-intentioned forms of bias also existed. For example, in his biography, Malcolm X detailed an interaction he had with a grade school teacher after the teacher asked him what he wanted to be when he grew up. X stated he wanted to be a lawyer and the teacher replied that he needed to be more realistic and

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

he should set his goals on carpentry instead (X & Haley, 1965). X recalled this interaction, stating, "... he probably meant well in what he happened to advise me that day. I doubt that he meant any harm. It was just in his nature as an American white man," (X & Haley, 1965, p. 35). X noted that the interaction greatly affected him. He began to self-isolate and his caretakers noticed his change in mood. This anecdote illustrates that while overt racism was the norm, covert and more insidious forms of bias were extant and presented similar damaging consequences. In essence, while overt discrimination is clear and sometimes the consequences are more readily observed, covert discrimination can be more furtively hurtful.

Malcolm X's experience with his teacher happened in the early part of the 20th century when people of color were regularly oppressed and brutalized. After the implementation of the 14th Amendment in 1968 and Civil Rights Act of 1964, blatant discrimination based on an individual's ethnic group membership was deemed illegal. Citizens of the USA could no longer deprive men and women of their constitutional rights based on racial/ethnic identities and other protected identities such as disability status. For some, this meant Americans no longer engaged in racial discrimination, racial stereotyping, and racial prejudice. In fact, a study conducted as early as 1966 suggested White Americans' ideals of White supremacy and anti-Black rhetoric significantly decreased between 1954 and 1963 (Sheatsley, 1966). This study demonstrated White Americans were more likely to support policies promoting desegregation and equal voting rights. Further, they were less likely to endorse stereotypes of Black people as violent. Decades later, many Americans also believed racism was eradicated with the election of President Barack Obama, the country's first Black president (Tesler & Sears, 2010).

Despite these beliefs regarding the eradication of racism, institutional racial inequities continue to persist. For example, people of color (POC), specifically those of African, Latin, and

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

Indigenous descent, continue to be overrepresented in the criminal and juvenile justice systems (Carson, 2018; United States Census, 2017). Additionally, individuals of African descent are at greater risk of being murdered by police officers than any other ethnic group (Chaney & Robertson, 2013; The Guardian, 2018). According to Williams et al. (2016), POC in the US are at greater risk of death, adverse health outcomes, and poorer quality of care than White Americans. For example, Indigenous people are at higher risk of death resulting from injuries related to violence than White Americans (Williams, 1998). Thus, the historical racism pervasive in contemporary society has fostered adverse living conditions for POC.

Given that overt racism is no longer acceptable, current forms of racism pervade in a more clandestine form. Rather than invoke explicitly biased policies and behaviors, individuals and institutions tend to engage in oppression in ways that are mystified and difficult to detect (David & Derthick, 2017; Sue et al., 2007). While covert racism exists in many different institutions and systems in the USA, the workplace has proven a prime area for covert discrimination to thrive. For example:

- According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics (2015), Black men earn 75 cents to every dollar that White men earn. Black women make 64 cents to every dollar that a White man makes, and Latinx women make 54 cents to every dollar that a White man makes. While this is not an explicit rule or an overtly conscious practice, it is common for employers to engage in wage stratification by intersections of race and gender.
- White job applicants with criminal histories are more likely to be considered for a position than a Black applicant with no criminal history (Pager, 2003).
- Black college educated adults are twice as likely to be unemployed as White college educated adults (Williams & Wilson, 2019).

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

- When surveying 2,028 adults, Glassdoor's Diversity and Inclusion Study (2019) demonstrated that 42% of its sample had either experienced or witnessed racial discrimination in the workplace. Forty-two percent of the sample had either experienced or witnessed discrimination related to gender, and 33% experienced or witnessed discrimination related to sexual orientation.

Further, company policies tend to engage in aversive racial discrimination (Deitch et al., 2003; Holder & Nadal, 2016). This type of racial discrimination is more insidious, as it is often denied and rationalized as not being a product of the victim's race. For example, Catastrophe Management Systems, a customer service organization, refused to hire a woman because of her dreadlocked hair, a popular hairstyle typically worn by individuals of African descent (Gandy, 2018). The company's grooming policy stated hairstyles should be professional and well groomed. Although the policy did not state dreadlocks were unprofessional, the ambiguous language allows room for aversively racist interpretations.

Another example of language that can cultivate hostile work environments are job descriptions that ask for "native English speakers." This language implies that irrespective of an individual's English proficiency, one can only be considered for a position if their first language is English. This criterion is aversively racist because it excludes individuals who may have heritage from non-English speaking countries and presumes that individuals learning English as a second language are incapable of being fluent in English. These types of offenses could be labeled as microaggressions—that is, subtle statements that send denigrating messages to someone about their social group, related to race/ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation (Davis et al., 2015).

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

According to Davis et al. (2015), microaggressions occur frequently in the workplace. In educational and workplace settings, people of color and other minority groups (or people with multiple marginalized identities) are frequently exposed to adverse experiences based on their group membership. Galupo and Resnick (2016) asked 100 professionals who identified under the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex and other identities (LGBTQI+) umbrella about their experiences with microaggressions. Many participants endorsed that experiencing workplace microaggressions made them feel offended, disturbed their relationships with their coworkers, hindered their job performance, and negatively impacted their wellbeing. Notably, individuals who possess multiple marginalized identities are exposed to more discrimination than those who identify with one marginalized group, further highlighting the impact of marginalized identities on experiences with discrimination (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008).

Workplace discrimination has a negative effect on the wellbeing of the individuals who experience it. However, workplace discrimination can be especially minacious toward individuals of color. A metaanalysis conducted by Triana et al. (2015) revealed that perceived racial discrimination in the workplace led to adverse outcomes for employees. Individuals in these studies were less likely to be satisfied with their jobs, in addition to exhibiting poorer psychological and physical health. Further, these effect sizes were larger for those who identified as both a woman and a person of color, implying these individuals are more affected by workplace discrimination. Velez et al. (2018) examined the effects of workplace discrimination among 276 women of color, further showcasing the adverse effects of having an intersectional marginalized identity in the workplace. Velez and colleagues (2018) inquired about participants' relationships with racist discrimination, sexist discrimination, job fit, psychological distress, and job burnout. Results indicated that racial and sexist discrimination were positively correlated

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

with job-related burnout, psychological distress, and turnover intentions. Additionally, the study revealed discrimination was negatively correlated with self-esteem, perceived job fit, and perceived organizational support.

Before entering the workplace, it is not uncommon that people of color are exposed to racism during their educational experiences. In academic settings, teachers engage in behaviors that have negative long-term effects on their students. A study conducted by Papageorge et al. (2018) suggests White teachers continue to hold biased expectations for the abilities of White students compared to their expectations for students of color. The term “spirit murder” (Williams, 1991) has been used to describe the results of oppressive interactions between White educators and students of color. Spirit murder is commonly perpetrated by officials within education and workplaces against people who identify within marginalized groups. Spirit murder is essentially the psychological and spiritual condemnation (i.e. destroying the values, agency, and self-confidence) of these groups, which may result in poor self-esteem and self-efficacy. Therefore, before people of color enter the workplace, and from a very early age, they may be exposed to messages that imply intellectual inferiority.

Educational and workplace discrimination can have deleterious effects on the self-esteem of the recipient. For example, imposter phenomenon or imposter syndrome, or the feeling that an individual’s success is a result of luck or chance (Clance & Imes, 1978), has been used to describe the damaged self-image of individuals exposed to workplace discrimination. Individuals who experience feeling of impostership often feel like frauds. They also often experience fears related to being exposed as a fraud when their imagined luck runs out. Consequently, individuals who experience imposter phenomenon are more likely to attribute their success to luck or external circumstances rather than their own hard work and fortitude rather than meritocracy.

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

Unfortunately, imposter phenomenon is often explicated as being the consequence of a faulty personality rather than exposure to invalidating environments. Torino et al. (2019) argued that spirit murder can act as an antecedent event for the development of imposter phenomenon. In sum, academic and work experiences can greatly impact the wellbeing of people of color. Therefore, it is essential to examine the ways that intersecting identities may mitigate or exacerbate the adverse effects of discrimination.

Theoretical Framework

When considering the experiences of marginalized identities, it is imperative to acknowledge that these experiences are not ubiquitous. Each marginalized group in the United States has its own experiences with oppression. It is important to interpret these experiences from *intersectional* and *minority stress* perspectives. Intersectionality was first coined by Crenshaw (1989) to describe the vulnerabilities Black women encounter when combatting racism, sexism, and racist-sexist discrimination. Crenshaw (1989) suggested Black women face barriers in society because of their racially gendered identities. Essentially, the intersectionality perspective is diametrical to the single-axis paradigm traditionally used to define the experiences people of marginalized identities have with oppression (Lewis & Grzanka, 2016). Rather, intersectionality endorses a multi-axis approach, where the experiences of oppressed individuals are considered interlocking rather than summative. For example, traditionally, the experiences of Black people have with racist oppression are generalized to fit the entire populace. However, intersectional perspectives would argue that Black women face a different type of oppression- racist-sexist oppression- from men because of their interlocking identities of race and gender.

Since Crenshaw (1989) coined the term intersectionality, the definition of intersectionality was expanded to incorporate other identities that may impact an individual's

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

experiences with discrimination. The American Psychological Association (2017) defines intersectionality as, “A paradigm that addresses the multiple dimensions of identity and social systems as they intersect with one another and relate to inequality, such as racism, genderism, heterosexism, ageism, and classism, among other variables” (p.167). Based on this definition, intersectionality incorporates the convergence of race, gender, and other reference groups such as age, class, and sexual orientation when examining the experiences marginalized groups have with oppression.

Meyer (2003) originally coined “minority stress theory” to explain the manner in which LGBTQI+ experience oppression. Meyer (2003) posited individuals of marginalized identities are exposed to different living conditions and social stressors to which members of dominant groups are not exposed. However, the marginalized individual is exposed to these stressors because social structures are created to accommodate members of dominant groups. Therefore, being a member of a marginalized group causes discordance between the individual and their settings. As a result, minority stress develops, which is stress that is unique, chronic, and social based (Meyer, 2003). Further, this stress greatly impacts the psychological and physical health of those who experience it (David & Derthick, 2017).

Since the inception of minority stress theory, studies have demonstrated the link between intersectional identities and minority stress (Everett et al., 2019; William et al., 2020). Those who have additional marginalized identities experience more adverse health outcomes, such as higher allostatic loads, than those who have fewer marginalized identities.

The current study sought to employ intersectionality theory and minority stress theory to examine the extent to which microaggressions may influence the presence of imposter phenomenon in people of color. The study also examined the psychological distress these

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

individuals may experience as a result of being exposed to microaggressions and experiencing imposter phenomenon.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Microaggression theory is an ever-expanding field in the context of multicultural psychology. Since the inception of microaggressions research, the literature has gone on to redefine and substantiate the experiences of people of color with racism. Microaggressions have also been useful in describing the experiences of subtle discrimination as experienced by LGB identities (Nadal, 2013), religious minorities (Nadal et al., 2010), Black people (Sue et al., 2008), Indigenous peoples (Walls et al., 2015), Latinx persons (Nadal et al., 2014), Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (Nadal et al., 2015), and trans people (Nadal et al., 2012). Although some individuals may critique and question the existence and impact of microaggressions (presented below), several research studies have been able to empirically demonstrate the existence of microaggressions and their effects (Torino et al., 2019).

Like various clinical diagnoses, imposter phenomenon can be conceptualized as a sequela of experiencing microaggressions. Individuals who experience microaggressions may also experience intense self-doubt regarding their abilities and competence. However, much of the research on imposter phenomenon focuses on personal qualities that may be linked to the development of imposter phenomenon. Often times, individuals may experience feelings of impostership related to being tokenized in their workplace or academic environments. These environments send hostile and derogatory messages that may further inculcate these feelings. This section will explore the current literature on covert racism/ microaggressions, imposter phenomenon, and discuss how the current study seeks to examine the relationships among these constructs.

Microaggressions

Defining Microaggressions

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

Covert and subtle racism has manifested under the framework of microaggressions. The term microaggressions was originally used to describe the alternate form of racism experienced by Black people as a byproduct of White oppression (Pierce et al., 1977). Pierce et al. (1977) described microaggressions as “subtle, stunning, often automatic, and non-verbal exchanges which are ‘put downs’” (p. 65). Pierce (1995) also determined these transgressions often operate outside the awareness of the perpetrator and often occur during interactions where the transgressor belongs to a socially dominant identity and the victim belongs to a socially subordinate identity.

Early microaggression research can be credited to Solozarno et al. (2000). Solozarno and colleagues interviewed 34 African-American students attending a predominantly White university (n=34). The students were asked about their college racial climate, the discrimination they faced, and their responses to the discrimination. Results revealed students were exposed to microaggressions in the classroom that included but were not limited to: 1) being ignored and invalidated by professors, 2) professors maintaining low expectations of their work, and, 3) feeling unwanted. The students also described feeling frustrated, discouraged, helpless and hopeless as a result of experiencing the microaggressions. Students also described pervasive feelings of self-doubt.

Another study examined the experiences African-American, Latinx, Asian American and White students ($N=25$) have with microaggressions (Solozarno et al., 2002). Participants engaged in focus groups that inquired about similar content in the Solozarno et al. (2000) study. Results revealed that Black and Latinx participants were more likely to be victims of racial microaggressions than any other ethnic group on campus. These microaggressions implied Black and Latinx students were intellectually inferior. Asian American students were more likely to be

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

perceived as the model minority (or the well-behaved minority that other marginalized ethnic groups should strive to be) and White students were assumed to be intellectually superior.

Microaggressions were both institutional and interpersonal in nature and contributed to the racial tensions on campus. For example, a Black student cited interpersonal microaggressions where other students assumed he attended the college on a sports scholarship rather than an academic scholarship. Institutional microaggressions occurred in the form of faculty providing more flexibility to White students or over-policing certain buildings on campus. Further, the students of color exhibited various responses to the microaggressions, including trying to defy the stereotypes put forth by the microaggressions and creating social spaces that fostered a positive climate.

Sue and colleagues (2007) expanded on the definition of microaggressions, stating, “Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group” (p. 273). Sue and colleagues (2007) also proposed a taxonomy for microaggressions: microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations, each of which are defined below.

Microassaults are usually verbal or nonverbal forms of communication that intentionally degrade the recipient (Sue et al., 2007). Some examples of microassaults are using racial slurs or deliberately serving a White man before a Black man at a bar. However, these exchanges are usually denied or referred to as jokes to mystify the intentions of the perpetrator. Microinsults are subtler in nature, may be well-intentioned, or occur outside the consciousness of the perpetrator. These verbal or nonverbal slights still convey degrading messages about someone’s ethnic group. An example of a microinsult would be a White person telling a person of Latin descent

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

that they “speak English well,” implying this person is an anomaly and that most people of Latin descent cannot speak English. Another example of a microinsult would be a White person telling a Black woman, “You are pretty for a dark skin girl,” implying that dark skin women are rarely attractive. Finally, microinvalidations negate or invalidate the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of people of color (Sue et al., 2007). An example of this is when a person of color tells a White person they have been a perpetrator of microaggressions and the White person says, “no, you are just being too sensitive,” making the dismissal of their role in being subtly racist a microaggression in of itself. Another example of a microinvalidation is the endorsement of a color-blind ideology. Color-blindness implies a person does not see color, but rather sees all people as equal. This ideology invalidates the experiences of discrimination many non-White individuals experience because of their ethnic group and undermines the importance of one’s racial or ethnic identity to their overall self.

Sue and colleagues (2007) created a taxonomy of microaggressions which consists of nine different themes. These themes were derived from past literature and anecdotal experiences. The themes are: 1) alien in own land, 2) ascription of intelligence, 3) color blindness, 4) criminality/assumption of criminal status, 5) denial of individual racism, 6) myth of meritocracy, 7) pathologizing cultural values/communication styles, 8) second-class citizen, 9) environmental microaggressions.

The first eight themes fall under the category of either microinsult, microassault, or microinvalidation. However, environmental microaggression falls under all three umbrellas, as these microaggressions are often systemic in nature. Environmental microaggressions are usually perpetrated by institutions that set regulations, laws, and policies that are exclusionary in nature. Environmental microaggressions communicate messages that the marginalized individual does

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

not belong within the institution or cannot align with the institution because of their group membership (Sue et al., 2007). These messages can be delivered overtly and covertly.

Ascriptions of intelligence, second class citizenship, pathologizing cultural values, and assumptions of criminal status are considered microinsults (Sue et al., 2007). Ascriptions of intelligence presume the victim of the microaggression is intellectually inferior or only has intelligence in one specific area of knowledge. For example, assuming Black individuals are less intelligent than Whites or that Asian individuals are only good at math can both be considered examples of ascriptions of intelligence. Similarly, assumptions of criminality propose that the person of color being targeted is dangerous and cannot be trusted because of their group membership. Second class citizenship assumes that a POC is not deserving of the same preferential treatment awarded to White people. Pathologizing cultural values communicates messages about otherness. This theme suggests the cultural values of nondominant groups are deviant and faulty in comparison to the dominant group's cultural norms. Therefore, the dominant group's norms are the ideal and the standard that other groups should strive to meet.

The remaining themes fall under microinvalidations because they negate the identities and experiences of the individuals that experience them (Sue et al., 2007). The theme of being an alien in one's own land is perpetrated by individuals who assume the victim is foreign-born and not American. Color-blindness occurs when White people make attempts to deny the salience of race in a particular situation. Doing so may deny individuality that may occur based on racial identity. In a similar fashion, denial of individual racism occurs when White people fail to acknowledge their own racial biases. Finally, the myth of meritocracy implies that race and White privilege do not contribute to individual success.

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

Evidence also suggests LGBTQ individuals of color are more prone to experiencing microaggressions than their heterosexual counterparts because they experience microaggressions related to heteronormativity and racism (Nadal et al., 2017). Nadal and colleagues (2017) conducted focus groups with 14 individuals who identified as queer people of color. The sample consisted of eight men, seven women, and one person who did not disclose their gender. Participants disclosed they were exposed to microaggressions related to race, as well as microaggressions related to their sexual orientations. Results also indicated participants were exposed to microaggressions related to the intersections of their race and sexual orientation.

Researchers sought to quantify the experiences of microaggressions through the construction of various scales. Perhaps the most widely used scale is the Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS; Nadal, 2011) which is a 45- item scale that measures people's experiences with microaggressions surrounding race and ethnicity. In a similar effort, Torres-Harding et al. (2012) also developed the Racial Microaggressions Scale. Other researchers developed scales based on other identities or intersections of multiple identities. These scales include the LGBT People of Color Microaggressions Scale (Balsam et al., 2011), the Gendered Racial Microaggressions Scale (Lewis & Neville, 2015), and the Inventory of Microaggressions Against Black Individuals (Mercer et al., 2011).

Given the complex taxonomy of microaggressions, it is possible that microaggressions often occur outside the awareness of the perpetrator. Microaggressions are also received unconsciously or consciously by the victim. The surreptitious nature of microaggressions usually results in the victim feeling uncomfortable but struggling to identify what about the statement initially made them feel uncomfortable. If the individual does recognize the microaggression, they may choose to react or stay silent (Torinov et al., 2019). Sometimes individuals respond by

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

addressing the perpetrator calmly or may reach out to others for support. Because microaggressions are a less vociferous form of discrimination than what was previously acceptable, there are various reactions individuals can have that may not be commensurate to the reactions to overt oppression. The scales researchers developed have significantly contributed to research surrounding the experiences of microaggressions. Psychological distress resulting from microaggressions is one of the more well-developed bodies of literature regarding the effects of covert forms of oppression and microaggressions (Wong et al., 2014).

Consequences of Experiencing Microaggressions

The effects of microaggressions have proven to be damaging to the psychological and physical health of those who experience them. For example, Sue et al. (2008) examined the effects of microaggressions on Black Americans (n=13) using focus groups. Results revealed three primary consequences of experiencing microaggressions. First, the participants reported feeling powerless in the ability to define their own realities. Second, participants reported feeling invisible and like they had to make extra efforts to be noticed. Finally, participants reported experiencing a loss of self due to the additional effort necessary to navigate both worlds and an additional need to represent their race well.

A more recent study (Nadal et al., 2014) used the REMS (Nadal, 2011) and a short form health survey to draw conclusions about microaggressions and health. Results demonstrated a significant relationship between perceived racial/ethnic microaggressions and negative mental health symptoms for people of color (N=506). Specifically, these individuals endorsed more symptoms of depression, anxiety, and negative views about the world. Further, certain types of mental health symptoms were more related to certain types of microaggressions such as depression and suicide ideation. Participants were so impaired by the racial experiences that they

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

struggled with completing their job requirements. Experiencing microaggressions also impacted emotional wellbeing, social functioning, and feelings of emotional pain.

Experiencing microaggressions can also negatively impact individual self-esteem (Nadal et al., 2014). Nadal et al. (2014) asked college students ($N=225$) to participate in a study examining the relationship between perceived microaggressions and self-esteem. A majority of the sample (81.9%) identified as non-White. The participants completed a self-esteem scale, the REMS (Nadal, 2011) and a demographic survey. Results revealed REMS scores significantly predicted self-esteem but only accounted for a small proportion of the variance in the model (1.6%). Thus, there are many other factors that may have contributed to these results.

Other studies have examined the link between microaggressions and various symptoms of psychological distress and risky behaviors. Blume et al. (2012) examined a relationship between racial/ethnic microaggressions and underage drinking for a sample of college students of color ($N=178$). The sample was primarily African-American. Participants completed a measure on anxiety and alcohol use, based on a scale the authors created for the purposes of this study. The scale inquired about whether or not the participants had been exposed to 51 different types of microaggressions. Individuals who reported experiencing more microaggressions were more likely to endorse anxious symptoms and engage in underage drinking.

Perhaps even more alarming, experiences with microaggressions have been shown to be positively correlated with suicidal ideation (Hollingsworth et al., 2017; O'keefe et al., 2015). O'Keefe and colleagues (2015) were the first to investigate the relationship between perceived microaggressions and suicidal ideation. The authors examined this experience in undergraduate students of color ($N=405$). Participants were primarily of American Indian descent and African American descent. The students completed the RMAS (Torres-Harding et al., 2012), a measure

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

of depression and measure of hopelessness and suicidal ideation. Results revealed perceived microaggressions can lead to suicidal ideation by way of depressive symptoms. The more microaggressions someone perceived themselves to be experiencing, the more depressive symptoms they endorsed and ultimately endorsed greater feelings of suicide ideation.

Hollingsworth and colleagues (2017) utilized a sample of 135 African American college students at a predominately White institution to explore the relationship between experiencing microaggressions and suicidal ideation. The participants were young, with an average age of 19.45 years, and mostly female (56.3%). The authors administered the Interpersonal Needs Questionnaire, Racial Microaggressions Scale, and The Hopelessness Depression Symptom Subscale to determine suicidal ideation. Results indicated that the relationship between experiencing microaggressions of invisibility, low achievement, and environmental invalidations and suicide ideation was mediated by perceived burdensomeness or how much of a burden one feels they are to society. While this study demonstrated links between various concepts, it failed to provide a direct correlation between the quantity of perceived microaggressions and suicidal ideation.

Research has also demonstrated a link between microaggressions and adverse physical health outcomes. Nadal et al. (2017) administered a demographic survey, the REMS, and a short form health survey to 277 adults. The sample was primarily Latinx (32.4%) and female (75.5%). The sample was younger ($M=24.8$, $SD=8.44$) and a majority were born in the United States. The findings demonstrated a link between experiencing racial microaggressions and adverse health outcomes. Experiencing microaggressions was negatively correlated with role limitations due to physical health, and role limitations due to emotional problems. Emotional wellbeing decreased

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

as REMS scores increased. Unfortunately, this study did not inquire about preexisting health conditions, which may have skewed the results.

Finally, one study empirically demonstrated a link between microaggressions and posttraumatic stress symptoms (Nadal et al., 2020). In this study, the researchers examined the relationship between perceived microaggressions, culturally related traumatic events, and posttraumatic stress symptoms in a sample of people of color ($N=257$). Results revealed that individuals who experienced more microaggressions also experienced more posttraumatic stress symptoms. Moreover, culturally related traumas (such as being discriminated against at work) were directly related to the trauma symptoms. Finally, the effect sizes for this study were greater than the effect sizes for studies examining the relationship between perceived microaggressions and other forms of psychological distress.

Much of the research in the area of microaggressions is correlational and frequently extracted from college-aged samples. This presents limitations to making casual inferences and hinders the generalizability of findings. Nonetheless, the findings are consistent and more often than not are indicative of a commonality in experiences of people of color and microaggressions. Experiencing microaggressions can greatly impact the wellbeing of high functioning individuals. Just as depression and anxiety can greatly impact an individual's wellbeing, so can the presence of feelings of impostership and loss of sense of self. There is evidence that microaggression are related to low self-esteem. However, qualitative studies (Huber & Cueva, 2012; Sue et al., 2008) demonstrated microaggressions can also lead to aggrandizing feelings of self-doubt. Given the evident adverse outcomes of experiencing microaggressions, it is essential to examine imposter phenomenon within the context of these experiences.

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

Criticisms of the Microaggression Theory

According to Torino et al. (2019) microaggression theory is the amalgamation of literature that defines microaggressions, describes the myths about definitions, demonstrates the impact of microaggressions, and interventions that may diminish the consequences of experiencing microaggressions. Further, since the Sue et al. (2007) paper, microaggression theory has significantly impacted the policies at various institutions such as universities and workplaces (Torino et al., 2019). While research into microaggressions has validated and explored the experiences of individuals who belong to marginalized groups, microaggression research often falls under harsh criticism.

Early criticisms of microaggression research were mostly commentaries. Harris (2008) focused primarily on an anecdote of a microaggression that Sue provided during a talk. Sue described a scenario where he was on a plane and seated toward the front but was asked to move toward the back of the plane. Harris (2008) casted doubt on the scenario and stated that it was unclear whether or not the incident was a microaggression or if there were other explanations for why Sue would be asked to move to a different part of the plane. Further, he discussed his own interactions with Sue via email and stated Sue never answered his questions regarding alternate hypotheses.

Thomas (2008) expressed concern regarding the taxonomy of microaggressions. According to Thomas, many of the examples of microaggressions listed in the Sue et al. (2007) paper should not be considered racist. He also posited that many of the microaggressions cited by Sue et al. (2007) are acceptable and harmless comments. For example, Thomas (2008) cited that given the density of immigrant communities in the United States, it is acceptable to ask someone if they were born in the United States. He also questioned the claim that these statements and

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

questions can have negative effects on those who experience microaggressions. He additionally posited that these statements about negative effects characterize people of color as weak and incapable of tolerating human interaction.

Goodstein (2008) also provided commentary on the Sue et al. (2007) paper. Goodstein posited that she mostly agreed with Sue et al. (2007). However, she highlighted concerns regarding the synonymous references of race and culture. She acknowledged that Whiteness does not solely belong to White people and that people of color can possess a Eurocentric worldview as a result of internalized racism. Her second concern was regarding a statement Sue made regarding racial self-awareness as the precursor to gaining cultural competence. Goodstein (2008) argued that racial awareness was merely a prerequisite and that many other factors are involved in inculcating cultural competence that must be acknowledged. Other criticisms have included that within dyads, White people are not necessarily always the perpetrators of microaggressions. Schact (2008) commented on the presence of microaggressions in psychotherapy. Schact (2008) posited that within dyads, White people are not necessarily always the perpetrators of microaggressions. Sue affirmed that all people, regardless of race, can be perpetrators of microaggressions.

Lilienfeld (2017) generated the primary critique of microaggression research and labeled it the “Microaggression Research Program”. Lilienfeld noted individuals feel microaggression research contributes to racial tensions, suppresses freedom of speech, fosters a victim culture, and forces a culture of political correctness. He further discussed scientific issues with operationalizing and measuring microaggressions.

Lilienfeld (2017) contended microaggressions are poorly defined and can only truly be identified by the individual on the receiving end of the microaggression. Thus, if the victim does not perceive a microaggression occurred, then it did not occur. He further purported that

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

microaggressions are embedded in political values. That is, Lilienfeld accused microaggression researchers of being clouded by their own political agenda. Additionally, he argued that microaggressions can only be assessed through self-report of the victim, creating a mono-source bias. Finally, he argued there is little evidence for the adverse impacts microaggressions have on mental health and general wellbeing. Lilienfeld (2017) also provided 18 recommendations how to better improve research on microaggressions.

Sue (2017) responded to Lilienfeld and highlighted several issues with his criticisms. First, he acknowledged the importance of considering the phenomenological approach to studying microaggressions. He emphasized the importance of understanding the perspectives of the oppressed and culturally undervalued. Sue (2017) highlighted the skepticism Lilienfeld used to question microaggression research and compared it to the traditional ways White Americans have consistently questioned the experiences of people of color. Finally, Sue (2017) introduced the issues of empiricism and experience and noted that the two may be juxtaposed in scientific truth-seeking. That is, some researchers believe empiricism lies in opposition of reporting individual experiences. However, he also acknowledged that the juxtaposition does not reverse one methodology over the other.

Williams (2019) provided a more critical analysis of Lilienfeld's points. First, Williams (2019) explored the manner in which Lilienfeld failed to accurately capture the definitions of microaggressions provided by the literature. Williams (2019) posited that several validated microaggression scales support the notion that microaggressions are well operationalized. Williams (2019) also stated that research supports the notion that many people of marginalized identities find microaggressions to be offensive, but it is not necessary that all of them do. Additionally, both White and non-White samples agree on what constitutes as a microaggression,

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

nullifying the point that individuals who perpetrate do not perceive microaggressions the same way as the victims. Finally, microaggressions are also correlated with several adverse health outcomes. These associations were captured empirically using traditional behavioral scientific analyses.

Imposter Phenomenon

Defining Imposter Phenomenon

Clance and Imes (1978) coined the term imposter phenomenon in a theoretical paper based on behaviors Clance observed in therapy sessions with 150 of her high-achieving private female therapy clients. The definition described these women as high achieving women who have “a strong belief that they are not intelligent; in fact, they are convinced that they have fooled anyone who thinks otherwise” (p. 241). For these women, notions of incapability and impostership persisted despite evidence indicating competence and high intelligence. The authors also found these women were more likely to ascribe their accomplishments to luck or errors in the system. Further, the self-doubt was accompanied by anticipation of being exposed as an imposter after inadequately completing a designated task.

Clance and Imes (1978) attributed the development of imposter phenomenon to family dynamics. Clance and Imes (1978) bifurcated these dynamics into two groups: 1) families that told the women they were not as bright as another more intelligent sibling and disregarded all evidence indicating the woman’s intelligence or capability, and 2) families that inculcated a sense of perfection and relayed messages of superiority, whereby these messages became problematic when the woman realized she experiences difficulty in completing certain tasks. Clance and Imes (1978) indicated that the development of this phenomenon was based on messages the women received from their environment at a very early age.

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

The authors also proposed there are four behaviors that maintain the presence of imposter phenomenon based on the women who were in the study. First, the women tended to work hard in order to prevent the discovery that they were a fraud. However, Clance and Imes (1978) argued that this generates a cyclical pattern. When the woman works hard and sees the results of her hard work, the accolades reinforce the idea that working hard will cover-up her fraudulence and thus, the cycle perpetuates itself. The second maintaining behavior is the act of self-inhibition. In these situations, women usually told professors, supervisors and colleagues what they wanted to hear. Essentially, when their opinions or understanding of a topic were opposed to the opinions of the individual evaluating them, they were more likely to endorse those opinions instead of their own for fear of retaliation or being viewed as unintelligent.

Third, women used charm to get people to like them and reinforce their intelligence. This may take the form of engaging in conversation about her superior's interests. Clance and Imes (1978) argued the issue with this is that when the superior did endorse the woman's intelligence, she was likely to attribute this endorsement to the other attributes she may have used to be liked by that person. This technique is a crowdsourcing of self-esteem and not an intrinsic form of self-confidence. Lastly, Clance and Imes (1978) stated the final maintaining behavior is the manner in which society reacts to a woman displaying her abilities. In this situation, a woman's success is usually perceived as antithetical to her femininity. Ultimately, the woman must cognitively choose between being perceived as intelligent or being perceived as feminine.

Measuring Imposter Phenomenon

Since the conception of imposter phenomenon, there have been various definitions and scales that attempted to measure the construct. Clance (1985) developed a Clance Imposter Phenomenon Scale (CIPS) to examine the presence of imposter phenomenon. Chrisman and

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

colleagues (1995) administered the CIPS and several measures of psychological wellbeing to 269 undergraduate college students. Many of the students were in honors programs or had high GPAs. The sample was mostly female (69%) and had an average age of 23 years. Results revealed the CIPS had high internal consistency ($\alpha = .92$). The CIPS was also significantly positively correlated with measures of depression and social anxiety.

Harvey (1981) developed a scale to measure the presence of imposter syndrome and examined its utility in a group of graduate students (sample size not reported). Results indicated first year graduate students were more susceptible to experiencing imposter phenomenon than students in their later years. Based on these results, Harvey (1981) concluded the presence of imposter phenomenon is dependent on the passage of time, where individuals who spent more time in their environments were more likely to exhibit feelings of impostership. Furthermore, results indicated that vulnerability toward experiencing imposter phenomenon was not contingent on gender and race.

Kolligan and Sternberg (1991) developed the Perceived Fraudulence Scale (PFS) and redefined Clance and Imes' (1978) meaning of impostership. Kolligan and Sternberg (1991) argued that perceived fraudulence stems from three qualities: 1) low self-esteem, 2) fear of being evaluated, and 3) being overly concerned with the opinions of others. The researchers validated this measure with a sample of 50 undergraduate Yale students (51% male). The race of the participants was not reported. During the validation study, Kolligan and Sternberg (1991) demonstrated that high expectations of achievement, social anxiety, and self-critical thinking predicted high scores on the Perceived Fraudulence Scale, providing evidence for their definition of imposter phenomenon. The scale significantly correlated with the CIPS ($r = .78, p < .01$; Chrisman et al., 1995).

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

Leary et al.(2000) also developed a scale based on assumptions behind their definition of impostership. According to Leary and colleagues (2000), imposter phenomenon is an amalgamation of feeling like a fraud, the fear of being exposed as a fraud, and difficulty internalizing success. Leary and colleagues (2000) further posited that these proclivities are paradoxical because individuals who suffer from imposter phenomenon will engage in self-deprecating dialogue with others that supports notions of incompetence. Therefore, the imposter is intentionally engaging in these behaviors. Leary and colleagues (2000) tested this assumption through a series of three studies. In the first study, the researchers administered the PFS, CIPS, and Harvey Imposter Syndrome scale to 238 college students. The students were also asked to complete a self-appraisal scale. Results revealed that those who scored highly on impostership appraised themselves highly but also felt that others saw them negatively. However, the results were not significant.

The second study aimed to determine whether or not the self-deprecating nature of the individual with imposter phenomenon was an intentional strategy (Leary et al., 2000). The researchers developed their own scale. They asked 95 undergraduate students to complete a task. They were asked to privately rate how they would perform on the task and then publicly rate how they thought they would perform on the task. Those who scored high on impostership rated themselves highly in private but rated themselves poorly in public. Finally, the third study was meant to determine if there were two types of imposters: those who genuinely expected the worst out of their performance and those who reported expecting the worse out of their performance but did not genuinely appraise themselves as incompetent. Results did not reveal any significant relationships between appraisals and feelings of impostership. However, it is not clear if these results were null because the researchers did not use an already validated scale.

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

These studies exhibited several limitations. All of the studies used samples of either graduate or undergraduate students, leaving little room to generalize the findings to non-educated persons or individuals who already have careers. Further, with the exception of Harvey (1991), none of the studies reported the ethnicity or race of their participants. This leaves very little information on how imposter phenomenon may impact individuals of different marginalized identities, as individuals of various identities are exposed to different experiences in the workplace.

Theories About the Source of Imposter Phenomenon

When considering the development of imposter phenomenon, the literature frequently examines personal characteristics as predictors of imposter phenomenon. For example, Langford and Clance (1993) suggested research on imposter phenomenon supports the idea that individuals with a “shaky sense of self and fear of shame” are more likely to endorse impostership (p. 498). Further, according to Langford and Clance (1993), these persons also experienced validation deprivation within their family structures. Validation deprivation occurs when an individual is reared in an environment devoid of validation and praise. These characteristics in turn create an individual who is desperate for approval while simultaneously avoiding criticism in an effort to “protect themselves from narcissistic injury” (p.499). Koligan Jr. and Sternberg (1991) coined imposter syndrome as “perceived fraudulence” which can be attributed to an individual’s propensity for social anxiety, self-criticism, and personal pressure for achievement.

Some studies examined the prevalence of imposter syndrome in the context of trait theory. Trait theory details a set of traits or characteristics combined together can be responsible for the development of an individual’s personality. Ross et al. (2001) attempted to determine

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

which traits from the Five-Factor Model of personality predicted the prevalence of imposter syndrome in a group of college students ($N=129$). The sample was mostly White (90%) and female (71.3%). Participants completed an imposter scale, anxiety scale, a scale measuring two competitive attitudes, and the Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R; Costa & McCrae, 1992). The researchers found that neuroticism positively predicted imposter phenomenon, while conscientiousness and extraversion were negative predictors. Ross and Kruwoski (2001) also demonstrated imposter syndrome was positively correlated with detachment, dependency, and low self-esteem. The authors were also able to establish relationships between symptoms of Avoidant and Dependent personality disorders and feelings of impostership. These findings suggest only certain people with specific vulnerabilities are susceptible to developing imposter phenomenon.

Alternatively, a study conducted by Leary et al. (2000) posited imposter phenomenon was a strategic quality utilized by high achieving individuals. That is, the researchers claimed that people tend to vocalize negative self-appraisals in public but are less likely to endorse these sentiments in private. Based on these assumptions, the individual is manipulative and seeking to set low expectations of themselves from others so that when those expectations are met, they appear high achieving. However, it is possible that these individuals genuinely experience feelings of incompetence in hegemonic, hostile, and exclusionary work environments. Conversely, they may appraise their efforts differently when alone because they are not being exposed to environments that deliver covert and overt derogatory sentiments about their capabilities.

Consequences of Imposter Phenomenon for People of Color

Although Clance and Imes (1978) used the term “imposter phenomenon” to describe the intense self-doubt experienced by high achieving women, the term has been applied to other identities as well. People of color experience imposter phenomenon irrespective of their gender, indicating that feelings of impostership may be more aligned with racial/ethnic identity. When considering the experiences of people of color and imposter phenomenon, the literature has gained momentum in looking at the mental health and salience of racial identity within individuals experiencing feelings of impostership.

One study examined predictors of imposter phenomenon in high achieving undergraduate students (Peteet et al., 2015). Peteet and colleagues (2015) recruited 161 undergraduate college students of color from a predominately White institution in the Midwest. Most of the sample were women (74%) and African American (73%). Approximately half of the sample identified as not having parents who attended college. Participants were asked to complete a racial/ethnic identity measure, a measure of psychological wellbeing, and the CIPS. Results revealed that students who scored low on racial/ethnic identity and had poorer psychological wellbeing were more likely to endorse high feelings of impostership than those who did not.

In a similar effort, Peteet et al. (2015) examined the effects of imposter phenomenon in a group of Black college students ($N=112$). Participants were asked to complete the CIPS, a measure of self-esteem, and a measure of psychological distress. Results demonstrated a positive relationship between feelings of impostership and distress symptoms. Further, participants who endorsed greater feelings of impostership exhibited lower self-esteem than those who exhibited fewer feelings of impostership. The researchers also found psychological distress significantly

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

predicted imposter phenomenon scores. Additionally, low self-esteem significantly predicted imposter phenomenon scores.

Further investigating the link between self-esteem and imposter phenomenon, Lige et al. (2017) administered a measure of self-esteem, racial identity, and the CIPS to 112 Black undergraduate students. The results revealed that students who had higher identification with their ethnic background also had higher self-esteem than students who identified less with their ethnic background. Furthermore, individuals who endorsed higher self-esteem and scored higher on racial identity tended to score lower on the CIPS. Moreover, a regression model revealed that self-esteem mediated the relationship between racial identity and imposter phenomenon, such that individuals with lower self-esteem exhibited higher scores of impostership feelings. Racial identity and self-esteem accounted for 46% of the variance in the model. This suggests that being exposed to racism may negatively impact self-esteem for students of color.

Other studies examined the effects of racial discrimination, racial identity, psychological distress and imposter phenomenon. For example, Cokley et al. (2013) recruited college students of color ($N=240$) to examine the relationships between minority stress, feelings of impostership, and mental health and wellbeing. The sample was primarily composed of students who identified as African American, Latinx, and Asian American. Minority stress status, or the notion that minorities experience additional stressors that members of the dominant group do not experience (Velez et al., 2013), and imposter phenomenon were examined as independent variables on psychological wellbeing. Results revealed that there was no significant effect for gender but there was a significant effect for ethnicity on the imposter phenomenon scale. Those who identified as Asian American scored slightly higher than participants who identified as African American or Latinx. Additionally, minority stress status was positively correlated with feelings

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

of impostership and psychological distress. Individuals who scored high on impostership exhibited higher psychological distress. When all variables were entered into a regression model, minority stress failed to account for any of the variance in the model, whereas imposter feelings accounted for 17% of the variance in the model.

More recent research has also focused on perceived discrimination as a possible factor in feelings of impostership. Cokley and colleagues (2017) asked 227 undergraduate students of color to participate in a research study. The sample was composed of African American (34%), Latinx (34%) and Asian American (32%) college students majoring in psychology. Students were asked to complete the CIPS, a measure of perceived discrimination, and a measure of psychological wellbeing. Results revealed African-American students reported higher scores of perceived discrimination, followed by Asian American students, and then Latinx American students. These differences in scores were significant with a medium effect ($\eta^2 = .08$). Similarly, the African American students exhibited higher scores of psychological distress, followed by Asian American students, and Latinx students. Feelings of impostership were significantly positively related to scores of depression. Perceived discrimination was also positively correlated with depression and anxiety, but only for African American and Latin students.

McClain and colleagues (2016) examined the relationship between racial discrimination, race centrality, ethnic identity, imposter syndrome and mental health in 218 Black college students. McClain and colleagues asked the participants to complete self-report measures and analyzed their responses using regressions and correlations. The study revealed Black students who reported experiencing greater amounts of racial discrimination were more likely to endorse characteristics of imposter syndrome. Those who experienced imposter syndrome were more likely to exhibit higher levels of psychological distress. However, strong racial identity served as

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

a protective factor against psychological distress, such that racial identity mediated the relationship between perceived racial discrimination and imposter phenomenon.

Finally, one study examined the interactions of race, racial discrimination, imposter phenomenon, and mental health (Bernard et al., 2017). A sample of 157 Black college students (68% female) were asked to complete a measure of imposter phenomenon, a mental health inventory, and a measure indicating the extent to which they experienced racial discrimination. The students were all recruited from a predominantly White institution. The researchers found women experienced higher rates of racial discrimination than men and were more likely to endorse imposter feelings than men. Thus, the findings from this study suggest women may be more vulnerable to imposter feelings than men when they belong to an additionally marginalized group.

Critiques of Imposter Phenomenon Research

There are currently no studies to date that examine the experiences that queer people or queer people of color have with imposter phenomenon (Joshi & Manette, 2018). Further, while much of the literature on imposter phenomenon examines race and gender, virtually none of the studies inquired about the participants' sexual identities. Given that imposter syndrome affects White women and people of color, research should demonstrate its presence in people who identify as LGBTQ. This is essential because of the specific types of heteronormative and cisnormative discrimination LGBTQ individuals experience in the workplace (Davis et al., 2015). Further, LGBTQ individuals are at greater risk for mental health issues than their heterosexual and cisgender counterparts (Russel & Fish, 2016; Sue et al., 2016)

It is also important to note that the manner in which the aforementioned studies frame the development of imposter phenomenon is problematic as it approaches this issue from a deficit

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

perspective. The underlying assumption of these studies is that the individual is deficient and incapable of coping with every day stressors. This problem is two-fold. First, it normalizes the notion that work and educational environments are hostile and that the individual should change in order to cope with this issue. Second, it implies that individuals who cannot thrive in these environments are the problem. Rather than examine the way the environment has a negative impact on the individual, this approach ascribes the imposter phenomenon to deficits within the individual instead of playing on strengths the individual has used to propel them to be in those environments in the first place.

There are also issues with the manner in which researchers have identified the presence of imposter phenomenon in people of color. First, the samples were often homogenous in age, socio-economic status, and education as the studies primarily utilized college students as participants. Further, the inherent assumption is that individuals are vulnerable to feelings of impostership because they lack a positive racial self-concept. While personality traits may contribute to feeling of impostership in POC, this suggestion excludes the power external forces may have on an individual. It also operates from a deficit perspective, suggesting that there is something wrong with the individual if they cannot operate in a hostile environment. Given the complications of white racial-social economic dominance, white privilege, and the prevalence of systemic and individual oppression, it would be irresponsible to fault someone for not having a strong racial identity and then expect those with strong racial identities to be immune to the deleterious effects of racism. It further places the burden on the individual to remedy themselves and removes the onus from hostile environments to rectify the ways in which these environments propel hegemonic oppression and become unsafe for individuals of marginalized groups.

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

Given these limitations, the current study will seek to establish a relationship between microaggressions and imposter phenomenon. Further, given that depression and anxiety and other forms of psychological distress have been established as outcomes of experiencing racism, this study will seek to correlate experiences of psychological distress with experiencing imposter phenomenon.

Overview of the Current Study

The current study assumes individuals are not inherently inculcating feelings of impostership but are receiving messages from their environment suggesting they do not belong there. Previous research has demonstrated this to be the case. For example, a study conducted by Holder et al. (2015) examined the types of microaggressions perpetrated in the workplace against high achieving Black women. Results revealed Black women in supervisory positions often received negative messages about their capacities and intellectual functioning. Further, participants often felt their authority was undermined by subordinates. These women also spent a significant amount of time trying to validate their competence and their experiences within the workplace. Dancy (2017) affirmed individuals who belong to supportive and caring work environments are less likely to engage in feelings of impostership. Finally, Martin (2018) suggested a supportive environment is a contributing factor to eradicating feelings of impostership.

The present study sought to examine the relationship between discrimination and imposter phenomenon. Rather than implying an individual is more vulnerable to imposter phenomenon due to personality defects, the present study examined the effects of external forces on the individual. Specifically, the goal of this study was to determine whether there is a connection between the experience of microaggressions (measured via the Racial and Ethnic

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

Microaggressions Scale) and the extent to which an individual feels like an imposter (measured via the Clance Imposter Phenomenon Scale). This study hypothesized there would be a positive correlation between the frequency of experiencing microaggressions and endorsement of feelings of impostership. Further, it was hypothesized that self-reports of microaggressions and endorsement of impostership feelings would be higher for individuals belonging to multiple marginalized identities.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

Design

The current study utilized a correlational- mediation design. Perceived racial/ethnic microaggressions was treated as a predictor variable, and symptoms of imposter phenomenon were examined as an outcome variable. Psychological distress was examined as a variable that may mediate the relationship between racial microaggressions and imposter phenomenon. Demographic variables and frequency of racial/ethnic microaggressions also served as predictors of impostership.

Participants and Recruitment

Power. An a-priori power analysis was conducted to determine the appropriate sample size for this study. The G*Power analysis suggested utilizing a sample of 133. That sample size should yield an effect size of 0.15 in testing hypotheses surrounding the predicting variables of REMS, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender on the dependent variable CIPS. The alpha level of 0.05 remained unaltered in the power analysis.

Recruitment. Participants were recruited online through various advertising websites and social media platforms. The survey was advertised on Craigslist and similar advertising sites so that those who were interested could volunteer to participate. The study was advertised on social media groups such as “I Love Being Black” and “Professionals of Color”, in an attempt to target people of color. Further, a snowball sampling strategy was utilized where participants were asked to distribute the survey link to individuals they believed would be interested in taking it. The recruitment strategy was previously used by Nadal, Erazo and King (2020).

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

Measures

Demographic survey. Participants were asked to identify their age, gender identity, ethnicity/race, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education level, employment status, field of experience, religion, whether or not they have ever received accolades for their professional performance, and region of the country where they reside.

Racial and Ethnic Microaggression Scale-45 (REMS- 45). The REMS-45 (Nadal, 2011), a 45-item scale, was used to assess the participants' experiences with racial and ethnic microaggressions within the past six months. Participants are presented with an example of a microaggression and asked to indicate whether or not they experienced the microaggression in the past six months. The items are loaded onto six factors that translate into subscales: 1) Assumptions of Inferiority ($\alpha = .894$), 2) Second Class Citizens and Assumptions of Criminality ($\alpha = .883$), 3) Microinvalidations ($\alpha = .888$), 4) Exoticization/Assumptions of Similarity ($\alpha = .852$), 5) Environmental Microaggressions ($\alpha = .850$), and 6) Workplace and School Microaggressions ($\alpha = .850$). Higher scores on this measure indicate the participant experienced more microaggressions. The total scale also exhibited high reliability ($\alpha = .928$).

Clance Imposter Phenomenon Scale (CIPS). The CIPS (Clance, 1985) is a 20-item measure that was used to assess the participants' experiences with feeling like an imposter. The items load onto three factors: 1) concern surrounding inability to repeat success because success is a product of chance (Luck), 2) fear of being exposed as less capable than others and doubts about one's own intelligence (Fake), and 3) fear of being evaluated and inability to acknowledge a good performance (Discount). Participants are presented with a statement and then asked to respond on a five-point Likert scale with the extent to which the statement is true (1= not at all true; 5= very true). Higher scores are commensurate with the individual feeling more like an

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

imposter. Specifically, scores under or equal to 40 are indicative of not feeling much like an imposter. Scores between 41 and 60 are indicative of moderate feelings associated with being an imposter. Scores between 61 and 80 suggest the individual frequently feels like an imposter and scores above 80 imply the individual intensely identifies with being an imposter. The scale displayed high internal consistency ($\alpha = .92$; Chrisman et al., 1995).

Mental Health Inventory-18 (MHI-18). The MHI-18 (McHorney et al., 1992) is an 18-item short-form version of the Mental Health Inventory (MHI; Veit & Ware, 1983). The items load onto four subscales: 1) Anxiety, 2) Depression, 3) Behavioral Control, and 4) Positive Affect. Participants are presented with a statement and asked to respond on a six-point Likert scale with the frequency to which the statement applies to them (1=all of the time; 6= none of the time). Higher scores suggest the individual is experiencing better mental health than individuals who score lower on the measure. The MHI-18 has high reliability ($\alpha = .93$; Ritvo et al., 1997).

Procedure

After receiving Institutional Review Board approval, the aforementioned measures were placed into Qualtrics. Participants were recruited online and provided access to a link that led them to the survey. The survey was administered on the survey program, Qualtrics. Participants first completed informed consent. After consenting to participate in the study, participants completed the MHI-18, CIPS, REMS, and then a demographic survey. After completing the survey, participants were provided with a debriefing. Data were entered and analyzed in SPSS.

Hypotheses

The current study examined the empirical relationship between experiencing microaggressions and imposter phenomenon. The following hypotheses were tested:

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

H1) People of color who report experiencing more microaggressions will also report higher scores of imposter phenomenon.

H2) Scores of mental health symptoms will mediate the relationship between the frequency of microaggressions and feelings of imposter phenomenon.

H3) Individuals belonging to multiple marginalized identities will report higher scores of imposter phenomenon than individuals belonging to fewer marginalized identities.

H3a) Women of color will report higher scores imposter phenomenon than men of color.

H3b) LGBTQ people of color will report higher scores imposter phenomenon than heterosexual/cisgender people of color.

H4) There will be significant predictive relationships between the subscales on the REMS-45 subscales and CIPS subscales, where higher REMS-45 subscale scores will predict higher CIPS subscale scores.

One exploratory research question examined differences in the relationship between microaggressions and imposter phenomenon based on various demographic variables- namely race/ethnicity, income, and education. Another research question explored the predictive validity of the MHI-18 in predicting imposter phenomenon when entered into a model with perceived microaggressions.

Analysis

Three types of analyses were conducted. First, correlations were conducted on the REMS, CIPS, and MHI-18 to establish internal consistency for each measure. Then, correlations were computed for the REMS and CIPS to establish a relationship between frequency of ethnic/racial microaggressions experienced and feelings of being an imposter. Another correlation was

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

conducted to determine the strength of the relationship between MHI-18 and CIPS. A multivariate multiple regression was used to determine relationships between CIPS and REMS subscales. A stepwise regression was used to identify significant demographic predictors of CIPS, as well as the predictive ability of the REMS. The MHI-18 was entered into the model to determine the extent that it moderated the relationship between REMS and CIPS. Finally, a multivariate multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the relationships between the REMS subscales and CIPS scores based on various demographic variables.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS**Sample demographics**

The sample was relatively large- 1,001 adults ($n = 1,001$) responded to the survey. The response rate could not be determined because the survey was advertised online and disseminated via snowball sampling. After removing individuals who did not identify as people of color and duplicate entries, a total of 655 participants remained. Those who did not complete the dependent variable (CIPS) or the REMS-45 were excluded from the analysis, which resulted in a final sample of $n = 485$. Demographic data were collected qualitatively in an effort to allow participants to freely identify how they chose. Qualitative data for race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, country, and region were coded in order to include data in a quantitative analysis.

After coding, the sample was 54% male ($n = 262$) and 44.1% female ($n = 214$). Nine (1.9%) participants chose not to disclose their genders. None of the participants specifically identified as trans or gender nonconforming. The sample was relatively young, with ages ranging from 18 to 46 years old ($M = 29.6$, $SD = 4.72$). One participant did not disclose their age. Thirty-two percent ($n = 155$) of responses were gathered from the Midwest/Northwest region of the US, 25.5% ($n = 123$) gathered from the Western part of the US, 27.6% from the South ($n = 134$), and 13.6% from the Northeast ($n = 66$). Only 1.4% ($n = 7$) of participants did not disclose their region or state. Most of the sample lived in the city ($n = 263$; 53.3%), 30.3% ($n = 154$) lived in the suburbs and 12.1% ($n = 60$) lived in a rural area. Eight (1.6%) participants chose not to disclose their neighborhood type.

Regarding ethnicity, 78.4% ($n = 380$) of participants identified as being Black and/or of African descent, followed by 14% ($n = 68$) of Latinx descent (not identifying race), and 7.6% ($n = 37$) identifying as Asian American or Pacific Island descent. In terms of sexual orientation, the

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

majority of the sample identified as heterosexual (78.1%, $n = 379$) and 19.4% identified as LGBTQI+. Twelve (2.5%) participants did not disclose their sexual orientation. With respect to education, most of the sample identified as having either some college (44.1%, $n = 214$), a college degree (34.8%, $n = 169$), or a graduate degree (10.7%, $n = 52$). Most of the sample was employed (88.2%, $n = 428$) and currently not in school (92.2%). Finally, 62% of the sample reported having ever received accolades for their work performance.

Sample for Measures

Cronbach's alpha analyses were conducted to determine the internal consistency of the REMS-45, CIPS and MHI-18. REMS yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .927. CIPS also displayed high internal consistency with a coefficient of $\alpha = .731$. The internal consistency analysis revealed a coefficient of $\alpha = .771$ for the MHI-18.

REMS-45 scores ranged from .33 to 3.36 with an average score of 1.88 ($SD = .63$). Scores approximated a bimodal distribution with the highest mode at 2.64. The CIPS revealed an average score of 56.34 ($SD = 8.203$) and scores ranged from 30 to 82. Scores on the CIPS approximated a normal distribution with a mode of 57. MHI-18 scores also approximated a normal distribution, with an average score of 61.87 ($SD = 9.89$) and scores ranging between 28 and 90.

Tested Hypotheses

H1: The first hypothesis predicted people of color who experience more microaggressions will also report greater feelings of impostership. Pearson product moment correlations were calculated to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between REMS-45 scores and CIPS scores, CIPS scores and the MHI-18, and REMS-45 and MHI-18. There was a significant positive relationship between the REMS-45 and CIPS ($r = .120$, $n = 485$,

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

$p = .008$). Pearson product moment correlations were also calculated to determine the relationship between the REMS-45 and MHI-18 and the CIPS and the MHI-18. Results revealed a significant negative relationship between the MHI-18 and the REMS-45 ($r = -.226, n = 485, p < .001$), and a significant positive relationship between the CIPS and MHI-18 ($r = .300, n = 485, p < .001$). Thus, as expected, those who reported experiencing a higher frequency of microaggressions also reported greater identification with imposter phenomenon.

H2: The second hypothesis predicted psychological distress would mediate the relationship between frequency of perceived microaggressions and feelings of impostership. Two separate analyses were conducted to test this hypothesis- a linear regression and a step-wise linear regression. First, the ability of the REMS-45 to predict MHI-18 scores was examined using a linear regression. The model was significant ($F(1, 483) = 25.97, p < .001$ and accounted for 5.1% of the variance in MHI-18 scores with an SE of 9.65 ($R^2 = .051, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .049$). REMS-45 scores significantly predicted MHI-18 scores ($\beta = -.226, t(484) = -3.52, p < .001$) where increases in REMS-45 scores led to decreases in MHI-18 scores. Thus, individuals who perceived more microaggressions experienced greater psychological distress.

A stepwise linear regression was conducted to determine the predictive ability of REMS-45 scores on CIPS scores and whether MHI-18 scores mediated the relationship between REMS-45 scores and CIPS scores (see Table 1 for the Regression Table). Step one included the REMS-45 entered as the sole predictor variable and the CIPS as the dependent variable. The outcome of this model was significant ($F(1, 483) = 7.02, p = .008$) and accounted for 1.4% of the variance in CIPS scores with a standard error of 8.15 ($R^2 = .014, \text{adjusted } R^2 = .012$). REMS-45 scores significantly predicted CIPS scores ($\beta = .12, t(484) = 2.65, p = .008$), where higher REMS-45 scores were associated with higher CIPS scores. The second step included the REM-45 and

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

MHI-18 as predictor variables (see Figure 1 for Mediation Analysis Model). The model was significant ($F(2, 482) = 35.033, p < .001$) and accounted for 12.7% of the variance in the dependent variable ($R^2 = .127$, adjusted $R^2 = .123$). The standard variance was 7.68. When controlling for MHI-18 scores, the REMS-45 significantly predicted CIPS scores ($\beta = .197, t(484) = 4.52, p < .001$). Finally, when controlling for REMS-45 scores, MHI-18 scores significantly predicted CIPS scores ($\beta = .344, t(448) = 7.88, p < .001$). Higher REMS-45 scores were associated with higher CIPS scores and higher MHI-18 scores were associated with higher CIPS scores. In accordance with what was hypothesized, people who are currently experiencing less psychological distress experience greater feelings of impostership when they experience a higher frequency of microaggressions.

Due to the nature of this finding, another linear regression was conducted to determine the predictive ability of the REMS-45 and CIPS on the MHI-18 with the CIPS as a potential mediator. Results revealed a significant model ($F(2, 482) = 45.707, p < .001$) that accounted for 15.9% of the variance in MHI-18 scores variable ($R^2 = .159$, adjusted $R^2 = .156$). When controlling for CIPS scores, REMS-45 scores were associated with better psychological wellbeing ($\beta = -.266, t(484) = -6.31, p < .001$). When controlling for REMS-45 scores, higher CIPS scores were associated with worsening psychological wellbeing ($\beta = .332, t(484) = 7.88, p < .001$).

H3: The third hypothesis predicted that participants that identified as women and those who identified as LGBTQI+ would experience greater feelings of impostership than those who identified as men and heterosexual. Independent sample t-tests were conducted to test the effects of gender and sexual orientation on CIPS scores to test this hypothesis. An independent t-test analysis revealed no significant differences between men of color ($M=55.79, SD=8.15$) and

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

women of color ($M=56.97$, $SD=8.28$) on the means for CIPS scores ($t(474)=1.575$, $p=.24$).

However, there were significant differences between those who identified as heterosexual ($M=55.96$, $SD=7.70$) and those who identified as LGBTQI+ ($M=57.81$, $SD=10.19$; $t(471)=-1.94$, $p=.002$). In line with the assumptions of this hypothesis, those who identified as LGBTQI+ endorsed more feelings of impostership than those who identified as heterosexual.

H4: The final hypothesis assumed REMS-45 subscales would be able to predict scores on the CIPS subscales. The hypothesis was tested using a multivariate multiple regression (MMR) analysis where the REMS-45 subscales were entered as covariates and the CIPS subscales were entered as dependent variables. The MMR analysis revealed three significant combined models based on the dependent variables: Fake ($F(6,477)=14.51$, $p<.001$, partial $\eta^2=.154$), Luck ($F(6,477)=5.19$, $p<.001$, partial $\eta^2=.061$), and Discount ($F(6,477)=3.89$, $p<.001$, partial $\eta^2=.047$) (see Figure 2 for Multivariate Multiple Regression). The MMR analysis also determined the strength of the covariates on the dependent variables. Specifically, Assumptions of Inferiority significantly predicted Discount ($\beta = -.525$, $t(477) = 2.87$, $p = .004$). Second Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality significantly predicted Fake ($\beta = 1.025$, $t(477) = 2.29$, $p = .02$). Exoticization significantly predicted Fake ($\beta = 1.62$, $t(477) = 3.19$, $p = .002$) and Luck ($\beta = .577$, $t(477) = 2.37$, $p = .018$). Environmental microaggressions significantly predicted Fake ($\beta = -.146$, $t(477) = -5.73$, $p <.001$), Luck ($\beta = -.284$, $t(477) = -2.301$, $p = .022$), and Discount ($\beta = -.226$, $t(477) = -2.45$, $p = .015$). Finally, Workplace and School significantly predicted Fake ($\beta = 2.25$, $t(477) = 3.63$, $p <.001$) and Luck ($\beta = .819$, $t(477) = 2.75$, $p = .006$). Microinvalidations did not significantly predict any of the CIPS subscales. In support of the fourth hypothesis, there were relationships between REMS-45 subscales and CIPS subscales, with the most robust relationship being between School and Workplace microaggressions and feeling like a fake.

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

Exploratory Analyses

A series of one-way Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) were used to explore the differences in REMS-45 scores and CIPS scores based on ethnicity, income, and education. A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant effect of racial/ethnic groups on REMS-45 scores ($F(2,482) = 10.317, p < .001$) and CIPS scores ($F(2,482) = 4.24, p = .015$). Post-hoc comparisons were conducted using the Tukey HSD tests and revealed there were significant mean differences on the REMS-45 between those who identified as Black/African descent ($M = 1.89, SD = .63$) and those who identified as AAPI ($M = 1.47, SD = .49$), as well as significant differences between those who identified as AAPI and Latinx ($M = 2.04, SD = .83$). There were no significant differences between Black and Latinx participants on REMS average scores.

On the CIPS, there were significant mean differences between those of Black/African descent ($M = 56.55, SD = 8.07$) and those of Latinx decent ($M = 54, SD = 8.20$) where Black participants endorsed greater feelings of impostership than those of Latinx descent. The second significant mean difference was between those who identify as being of Latinx descent and persons identifying as being of AAPI descent ($M = 58.51, SD = 8.05$), with AAPI participants scoring highest in terms of feeling like an imposter.

An additional one-way ANOVA revealed a significant effect of socio-economic status on the REMS ($F(5,479) = 5.624, p < .001$) and CIPS ($F(5,479) = 3.97, p = .002$). Tukey HSD post-hoc comparisons revealed those who earned \$90k or above experienced significantly more microaggressions ($M = 2.36, SD = .56$) and feelings of impostership ($M = 61.43, SD = 7.882$) than those who earned less than \$90K. In other words, people of color with higher incomes were more likely to endorse experiencing more microaggressions and feelings of impostership than those with lower incomes. Another ANOVA also revealed a significant effect of highest

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

education attained on CIPS ($F(2,481) = 7.24, p < .001$) and REMS-45 scores ($F(2,481) = 17.83, p < .001$). There were significant differences on REMS-45 scores between those who had less than a college education ($M = 1.77, SD = .620$), those whose highest level of education was a college degree ($M = 1.92.43, SD = .66$) and those who had a graduate degree ($M = 2.32, SD = .40$).

Regarding CIPS scores, there were only significant differences between those who had a college degree ($M = 55.43, SD = 7.98$) and those who did not ($M = 57.97, SD = 7.98$). Individuals who had more education reported higher frequencies of racial/ethnic microaggressions. However, those with less education were more likely to experience feelings of impostership.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Before exploring, explaining, and discussing the outcomes of this study, it is imperative to explain the social context in which data were collected. Data were collected between in the fall of 2020, which was five to seven months into a global public health crisis where COVID-19 deaths were disproportionately impacting people of color (Stokes et. al, 2020). Unemployment rates were relatively high (14.8%; Falk et al., 2020) and over one-third of the US workforce began working remotely (Brynjolfsson et al., 2020). Further, data were collected two months prior to an upcoming presidential election that presented the possibility of re-electing an incumbent president who endorsed many policies that harmed communities of color, immigrants, and other historically marginalized groups. As such, the social events that occurred at the time data were collected may have impacted the data of the study. That is, individuals who were experiencing more overt forms of oppression may have been less aware of microaggressions.

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a link between experiencing racial/ethnic microaggressions and feelings of imposter phenomenon. As expected, a higher frequency of perceived microaggressions was related to greater feelings of impostership. However, contrary to previous research (Koligan Jr. & Sternberg, 1991; Ross et al., 2001), higher feelings of impostership were related to better mental health outcomes. When examining the predictive ability of frequency of perceived microaggressions on feelings of impostership, REMS-45 only accounted for 1% of the variance. When MHI-18 scores were added to the regression, the model accounted for 12% of the variance. In this model, having less psychological distress significantly predicted greater feelings of impostership. The results of this mediational analysis suggested that when controlling for psychological distress, REMS-45 scores significantly predicted imposter phenomenon. That is, having more psychological distress does

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

not impact feelings of impostership in people of color. However, it is important to note that the sample examined was a sample of color and that certain maladaptive personality traits and adverse mental health symptoms may continue to contribute to feelings of impostership in White samples.

Perhaps the more perplexing component of the mediational analysis was the predictive ability of the MHI-18 on the CIPS. MHI-18 scores impacted the relationship between microaggressions and imposter phenomenon where people experiencing less psychological distress were experiencing greater feelings of impostership. This finding is inconsistent with previous studies where poorer psychological wellbeing predicted CIPS scores (Peteet, et al., 2015). It is possible that at the time data were collected, there was an uptick in social welfare because businesses were reopening, small groups were permitted to gather, the infection and death rate dropped, and unemployment dropped from 14.8% to under 7% (Falk, et al., 2020). Thus, individuals were may have been experiencing better mental health outcomes at the time of data collection compared to potential adverse mental health outcomes that may have occurred at the beginning of the pandemic. Therefore, individuals may have reported experiencing better psychological wellbeing despite experiencing microaggressions and imposter phenomenon.

Alternatively, the results of the mediation analysis could be reflective of the racial socialization of high-achieving people of color. The American work culture values Whiteness as the norm and endorses a myth that Whiteness is a property that can be obtained (Harris, 1993). As a result, Black, Indigenous and other people of color (BIPOC) are taught early in their academic pursuits that they must work twice as hard toward whiteness and success to obtain half of what White people are granted because of their privilege. Thus, BIPOC who exist in these spaces may suppress adverse mental health symptoms in their pursuit of academic and career

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

success or prioritize success over their psychological wellbeing. Essentially, BIPOC may build psychological resilience that helps them resist the deleterious effects of microaggressions in the workplace. Further, there may be additional pressure for high achieving BIPOC to mask their feelings of inadequacy and appear confident and competent. Thus, BIPOC in these settings may not externalize their psychological distress, but experience intense internal feelings of impostership given that symptoms of psychological distress such as depression and anxiety may impair their capacity to be high achieving.

Regarding gender differences on the CIPS, women scored higher than men; however, the difference was not significant and could have been due to chance. There are a few potential explanations for this. First, the majority of the sample was Black or of African descent. Black women are less likely to be unemployed than Black men (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). As a result, Black women are overrepresented in the workplace, while Black men are underrepresented in the workplace. Therefore, it can be assumed that when a Black person is working at an institution, he or she may be one of very few Black people, and thus, experiencing the brunt of microaggressions and other forms of racism that would otherwise be shared by other members of the racial group. As a result of isolation, a sense of self-doubt can burgeon in an employee.

The second possibility is that with remote working conditions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the types of microaggressions that people of color face in the workplace based on gender may not be readily available. For example, microaggressions that women of color frequently experience based on their way of dressing or hairstyles may not be criticized as heavily when working from home and thus would not create additional feelings of impostership in men and women. Finally, the CIPS was designed to detect feelings of impostership in women,

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

not specifying for racial/ethnic background. Therefore, men and women may score similarly on this measure because it was not necessarily intended to measure the intersections of race and gender. Future research can examine this by using scales that address racial/gender microaggressions and imposter phenomenon.

Another finding that is important to note is the effect of sexual orientation on endorsement of imposter phenomenon, where those who identified as queer endorsed greater identification with imposter phenomenon. The experiences that queer POC have in academia as it relates to discrimination and oppression is relatively understudied (Nadal, 2019). Research suggests queer POC face many obstacles during grade school, undergraduate, and graduate training that may lead to various adverse social and psychological outcomes. For example, in grade school, queer and trans POC tend to be more vulnerable to bullying and harassment than queer and trans youth that identify as White (Kosicow et al., 2018). Queer and trans POC are exposed to greater levels of social stress than queer/trans White people and cisgender-heterosexual (cis-het) POC. However, queer/trans POC are also described as very resilient, possibly as a consequence of experiencing intersecting forms of oppression (Follins et al., 2014; Nadal, 2019; Singh & MCKleroy, 2011). Therefore, it is possible that well-adjusted queer POC may face imposter phenomenon as a consequence of oppression rather than typical clinical symptoms frequently associated with experiencing discrimination.

Further, queer and trans POC face microaggressions specific to intersections of their identities as POC and LGBTQI+ identities (Balsam et al., 2011; Sadika et al., 2020). Because of their identities, queer and trans POC often face rejection from the various communities of color to which they belong (Sadika et al., 2020). Queer and trans POC face rejection from the workplace because they are people of color and additional layers of rejection from cis-het POC.

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

This two-fold layer of rejection may create additional feelings of impostership that may not be present in cis-het POC. Further, it is not uncommon for academic institutions to lack networks of support that address the nuanced challenges that queer and trans POC face in the workplace (Nadal, 2019). Without any resolve or validation, queer and trans POC may be especially vulnerable to imposter phenomenon.

Regardless of these assumptions, the finding that suggests queer POC experience greater feelings of impostership than their heterosexual counterparts provide support for minority stress theory and intersectional theory. Although the frequency of sexual orientation microaggressions were not examined, it is possible that the intersection of heterosexist oppression and racist oppression creates greater feelings of self-doubt in queer people of color than heterosexual POC.

Implications and Future Research

Training/Education

Given the results of the current study, which support that experiencing racial/ethnic microaggressions can predict feelings of imposter phenomenon, interventions can be developed to prevent the development of imposter phenomenon. Evidence suggests that preparing children for racism from an early age leaves them less vulnerable to psychological distress that results from being exposed to hostile environments (Neblett et al., 2008). While the onus should be on the system to eradicate racist policies and behaviors, racial socialization for children of color can also serve as a protective mechanism against racism.

Educational programs and youth services can develop practices that encourage healthy racial identity development in children (Brittain Loyd & Williams, 2017). Consistently receiving negative messages about one's identity from various systems may lead to adverse self-esteem and the development of imposter phenomenon and stereotype threat (Nadal et al., 2021).

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

However, research indicates that positive racial socialization increases self-esteem and positive interpersonal behaviors, and decreases the frequency of externalizing behaviors (Wang et al., 2020). Therefore, in the United States, it is especially crucial that educational institutions promote healthy racial socialization given that a substantial number of parents of color are in the workforce, leaving their children to the devices of educational and extra-curricular institutions. If these institutions are more invested in creating resiliency in children rather than perpetuating microaggressions, children of color might be less vulnerable to experiencing imposter phenomenon. Further research on microaggressions and imposter phenomenon can inform ways that parents and organizations create interventions targeted at addressing these issues.

The practices of creating scholars and leaders who are able to develop healthy racially socialized identities is essential to the social welfare of marginalized groups. Children with healthy racial identities may burgeon into adults who can teach mechanisms of coping and externalizing racism to children of color. Creating resiliency in children can also extend beyond a positive racial identity. These practices and interventions can address other intersectional identities of people of color. For example, if queer children are not exposed to hostility regarding their sexual orientation at an early age, then queer children may be less susceptible to imposter phenomenon. Other variables such as skin tone, gender, class, and other characteristics can be considered when creating these interventions as well.

The findings of this study suggest that certain types of microaggressions can predict certain components of imposter phenomenon. For example, environmental microaggressions significantly predicted all three components of imposter phenomenon. This finding is particularly important given that environmental microaggressions can occur on interpersonal and institutional levels. Based on these findings, institution-wide changes can be employed to minimize the

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

frequency of environmental microaggressions that appear to impact feelings of impostership in people of color. For example, including scholars of color, both cis/het and queer/trans, on plaques and portraits on display at an academic institution can abate feelings of impostership in students and faculty of color.

Additionally, other REMS-45 subscales, such as School and Workplace microaggressions only predicted changes in one of the CIPS subscales. Future research can evaluate these relationships at a deeper level and develop interventions that can target the occurrence of these types of microaggressions based on what symptoms of imposter phenomenon an individual is experiencing. Interventions can be put in place that target these specific microaggressions to lead to a safer work environment for POC.

Implications for Clinical and Counseling

It is also important to consider these findings in the context of mental healthcare. As a mental health treatment provider, it is critical to make the distinction between intrinsic static personality traits and personality traits that only persist in certain environments. Attributing imposter syndrome to personality faults and poor mental health further suggests the individual is too incompetent to cope with their environment, which bolsters the notion the person is incapable of excelling in their work. It also implies the individual is faulty, incompetent, and weak. If the therapist endorses these beliefs, it can rupture the therapeutic relationship and cause further distress on the part of the client experiencing imposter phenomenon. The invalidation of the external experiences of racism and oppression may lead to poor self-concept within the client. Clinicians should conceptualize imposter syndrome as a normal reaction to oppression that may cease if the person is no longer exposed to the hostile and invalidating environment.

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

The findings that better mental health outcomes significantly impacted the predictive ability of REMS scores is also worth noting. These results dispel the notion that poorer mental health is related to greater endorsement of impostership. When treating clients who experience imposter phenomenon, counselors and clinicians should conceptualize impostership as a disparate component of wellness and mental health. Persons of color who are psychologically well-adjusted are vulnerable to experiencing imposter phenomenon. It is also important to note the correlational nature of the current study. There is no way to determine the causal nature of microaggressions and mental health on imposter phenomenon. Based on the regressions conducted in the study, it is difficult to determine whether CIPS scores cause poorer psychological wellbeing or poorer psychological wellbeing causes greater feelings of impostership. However, there are results suggesting that persons of color whom are psychologically well-adjusted are vulnerable to experiencing imposter phenomenon. Therefore, when conceptualizing treatment of self-doubt and poor self-concept related to workplace competencies, clinicians and counselors should look beyond common disorders attributed to these symptoms such as depression and anxiety.

Future Research

Future research should focus on the relationship between racial-gendered microaggressions and imposter phenomenon. There is evidence that POC who also identify as gender minorities experience disparate forms of discrimination from those who do not (Lewis et al., 2016; Moody & Lewis, 2019). Additionally, the current study suggests queer POC experience greater feelings of impostership than heterosexual POC. Therefore, future studies can qualitatively and quantitatively investigate the experiences LGBTQI+ individuals have with microaggressions and imposter phenomenon. Previous studies also examined the influence of

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

variables such as racial/ethnic identity (McClain et al., 2016) and minority stress status (Velez et al., 2013) on imposter phenomenon. Future studies can examine the effects of other mediating variables, such as stereotype threat, self-esteem, and sexual orientation identity development.

Developing new scales addressing impostership is another direction for future research. The Clance scale (Clance, 1985) and Harvey scale (Harvey, 1981) only consider the internal experience of the person taking the scale. Future scales can incorporate subscales investigating the environment to which the person is exposed and how that may contribute to scores regarding impostership. This literature also warrants an investigation of coping mechanisms utilized by individuals who have feelings of impostership and are also exposed to hostile environments. These studies can potentially reveal techniques that can be used by all individuals rather than seeking internal characteristics that may serve as protective factors against impostership. Studies surrounding coping can also operate from a strength-based perspective and allow for counselors and educators to utilize this approach instead of a deficit perspective.

Finally, qualitatively research studies would be beneficial to further exploring the impacts of racial/ethnic microaggressions on imposter phenomenon. When predicting imposter phenomenon scores, REMS scores accounted for a small percent of the variance. When psychological wellbeing was added to the regression, it accounted 12.7% of the variance in the model. Qualitative studies may provide insights on variables that could be operationalized and used in future quantitative studies to determine the predictive influence of these variables on imposter phenomenon. Qualitative studies may also focus on samples composed of specific ethnic identities. For example, future studies can focus on the experiences of queer people of color, their experiences with imposter phenomenon, and networks of support. Given that results suggested well-adjusted people of color still experience imposter phenomenon and those of

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

higher incomes experience imposter phenomenon more than people have lower incomes, qualitative research can also examine the experiences of those with higher incomes and imposter phenomenon.

Conclusion

Traditionally, the experiences of marginalized groups had to be empirically validated for social scientists and the greater community to accept them as truth (Bonnet, 1996). Social science research is traditionally conducted from a White supremacist perspective where the White experience is considered the standard and all other experiences are secondary (Bonnet, 1996). Much of the traditional imposter phenomenon research was developed to examine the experiences of majority White samples. Subsequent imposter phenomenon research utilized samples of color, but attributed the development of imposter phenomenon to poor racial socialization.

This study used a sample of color in an effort to jettison traditional ways of conducting research where White perspectives are centered and POC perspectives are conceptualized as opposition to White perspectives. This study sought to examine the experiences of POC outside of White centrality because racial/ethnic microaggressions are only experienced by those of marginalized racial/ethnic identities. This study examined those experiences but also revealed results that oppose what previous literature suggested. That is, although maladaptive personality traits and poorer mental health were related to imposter phenomenon in primarily White samples, psychologically well-adjusted POC still experienced imposter phenomenon. Therefore, we should refrain from pathologizing individuals who cannot experience confidence and high self-worth, particularly when those individuals are exposed to hostile environments.

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

Further, this study utilized intersectionality and examined imposter phenomenon in POC who identify as LGBTQI+. Previous studies on imposter phenomenon failed to examine the experiences QPOC have with imposter phenomenon. The lack of intent in examining the experiences of QTPOC is a microaggression that sends a message suggesting the unimportance of QTPOC in this area of research. However, the current study revealed that QPOC experience imposter phenomenon at higher rates than those who identify as heterosexual. These findings highlight the importance of intersectionality when examining the experience of POC, as certain groups are more vulnerable to experiencing imposter phenomenon than others. The results of the study also provide evidence of the need to continue exploring imposter phenomenon in marginalized populaces.

The integrity of psychological research has been tarnished by White supremacy and other forms of oppression that exclude, subjugate, and undermine the legitimacy of the experiences of marginalized peoples. It is our responsibility as clinicians and academics to curtail these practices. While the field of psychology is championing toward more culturally diverse research and practices, there is still a want for additional inclusivity. For our society to become one that truly values equities for all and in which people of all backgrounds have equitable opportunities for success, we must make changes on all levels – institutionally, interpersonally, individually, and internally. In doing so, perhaps people of future generations will no longer feel like imposters who don't deserve their success, but rather know that they are worthy and valuable, and that their lives truly matter.

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

Regression Table

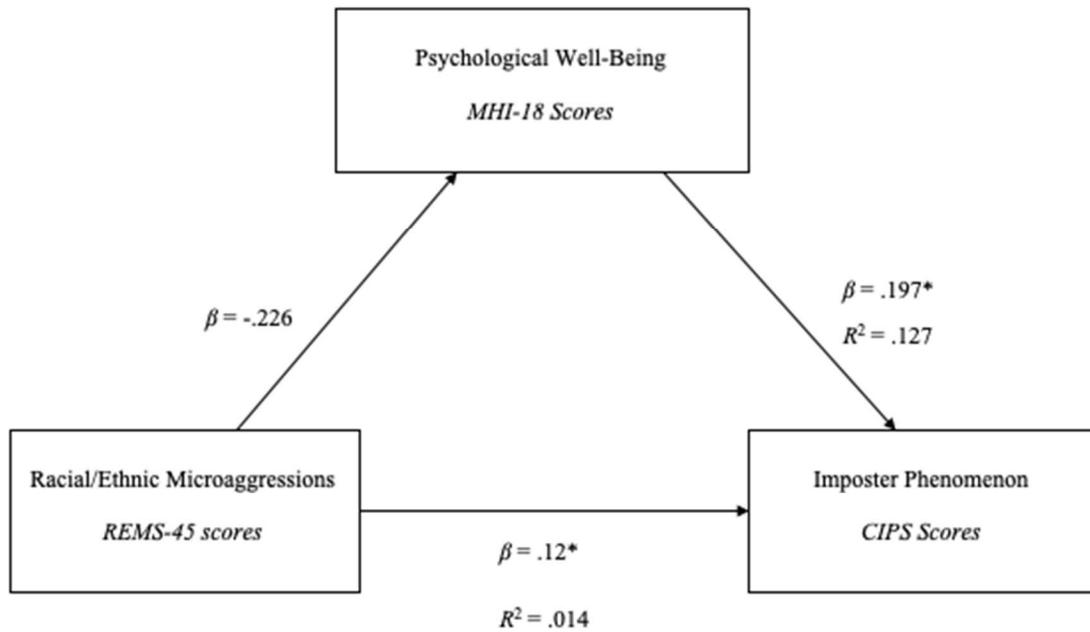
Table 1. *Regression table with CIPS as dependent variable*

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	
REMS-45	1.55	.67	.120*	.197	.57	.197	
MHI-18	-	-	-	.286	.033	.344	-

* $p < .05$

Mediation Analysis

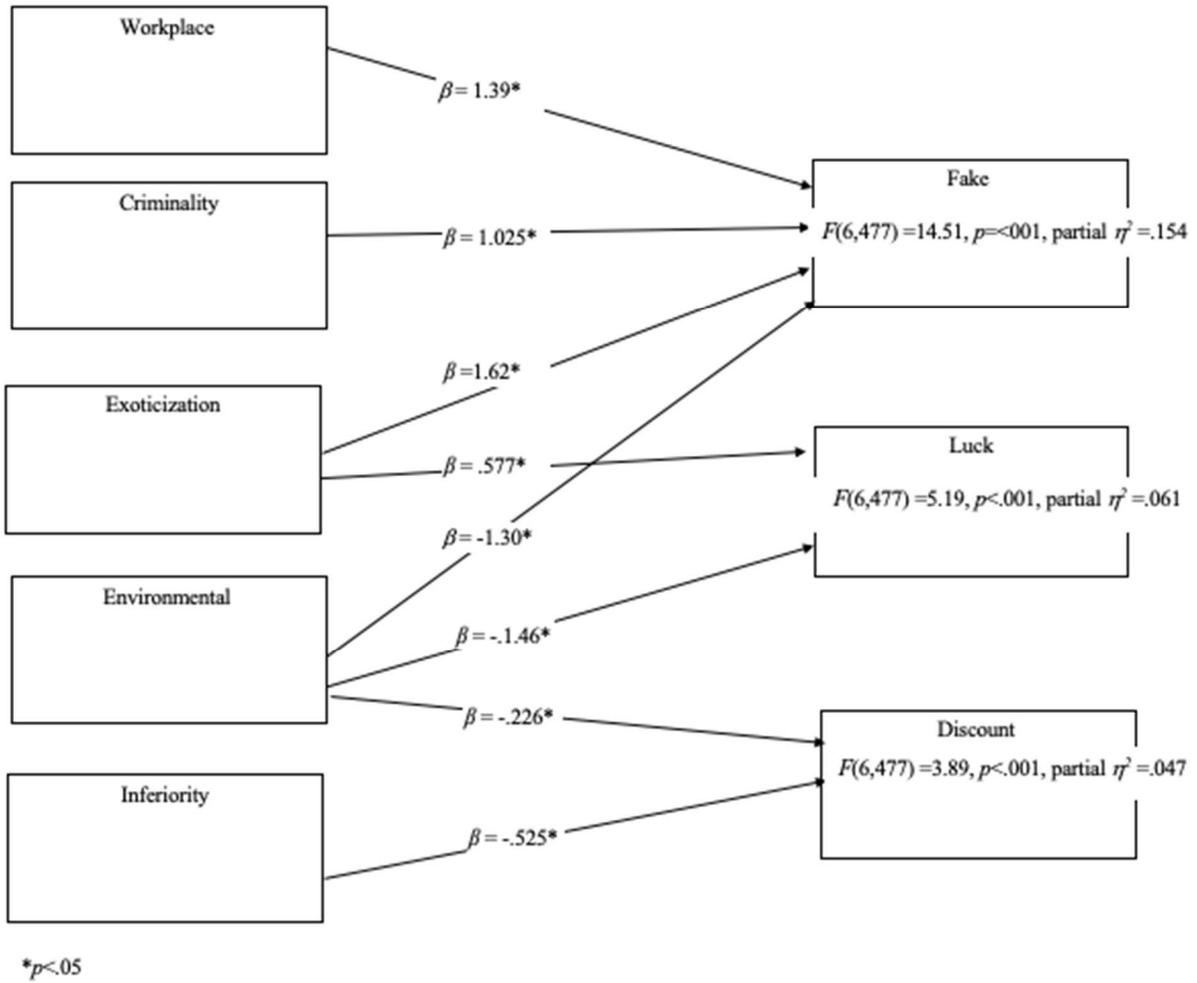
Figure 1. Mediation Analysis



* $p < .05$

Multiple Multivariate Regression

Figure 2. Multivariate Multiple Regression between REMS-45 and CIPS subscales



References

- American Psychological Association. 2017. *Multicultural guidelines: An ecological approach to context, identity, and intersectionality*. <http://www.apa.org/about/policy/multicultural-guidelines.pdf>
- Balsam, K. F., Molina, Y., Beadnell, B., Simoni, J., & Walters, K. (2011). Measuring multiple minority stress: The LGBT People of Color Microaggressions Scale. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 17*(2), 163–174. doi:10.1037/a0023244
- Bernard, D. L., Lige, Q. M., Willis, H. A., Sosoo, E. E., & Neblett, E. W. (2017). Impostor phenomenon and mental health: The influence of racial discrimination and gender. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 64*(2), 155-166. doi: 10.1037/cou0000197
- Blume, A. W., Lovato, L. V., Thyken, B. N., & Denny, N. (2012). The relationship of microaggressions with alcohol use and anxiety among ethnic minority college students in a historically White institution. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 18*(1), 45-54. doi: 10.1037/a0025457
- Bonnett, A. (1996). White Studies: The problems and projects of a new research agenda. *Theory, Culture & Society, 13*(2), 145-155.
- Brittian Loyd, A., & Williams, B. V. (2017). The potential for youth programs to promote African American youth's development of ethnic and racial identity. *Child Development Perspectives, 11*(1), 29-38.
- Brown, R. M. (1975). *Strain of violence: Historical studies of American violence and vigilantism*. Oxford University Press.
- Brown-Rice, K. (2013). Examining the theory of historical trauma among native americans. *The Professional Counselor, 3*(3), 117–130. doi:10.15241/kbr.3.3.117

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

- Brynjolfsson, E., Horton, J., Ozimek, A., Rock, D., Sharma, G., & TuYe, H.-Y. (2020). COVID-19 and Remote Work: An Early Look at US Data. doi:10.3386/w27344
- Bureau of Labor and Statistics. (2015). *Earnings*. BLS.gov
<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/wkyeng.pdf>
- Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2020). *Unemployment rates by age, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity*. BLS.gov. https://www.bls.gov/web/empsit/cpsee_e16.htm
- Carson, A. (2018). Prisoners in 2016 (US Department of Justice). Retrieved from:
<https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/p16.pdf>
- Clance, P. R. (1985). Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale. *PsycTESTS Dataset*.
doi:10.1037/t11274-000.
- Clance, P. R., & Imes, S. A. (1978). The imposter phenomenon in high achieving women: Dynamics and therapeutic intervention. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research & Practice*, 15(3), 241–247. doi:10.1037/h0086006
- Chaney, C., & Robertson, R. V. (2013). Racism and Police Brutality in America. *Journal of African American Studies*, 17(4), 480–505. doi:10.1007/s12111-013-9246-5
- Chrisman, S. M., Pieper, W. A., Clance, P. R., Holland, C. L., & Glickauf-Hughes, C. (1995). Validation of the Clance impostor phenomenon scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 65(3), 456-467. doi: 10.1207/s15327752jpa6503_6
- Cokley, K., McClain, S., Enciso, A., & Martinez, M. (2013). An examination of the impact of minority status stress and impostor feelings on the mental health of diverse ethnic minority college students. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 41(2), 82-95. doi: 10.1002/j.2161-1912.2013.00029.x

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

Cokley, K., Smith, L., Bernard, D., Hurst, A., Jackson, S., Stone, S., Awosogba, O., Saucer, C.

Baily, M., Roberts, D. (2017). Impostor Feelings as a moderator and mediator of the relationship between perceived discrimination and mental health among racial/ethnic minority college students. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 64*(2), 141-154. doi: 10.1037/cou0000198

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *u. Chi. Legal f.*, 139.

Dancy, T.E. (2017). Imposter Syndrome. In K. Nadal, *The Sage Encyclopedia of Race and Gender* (pp. 21-23).

David, E. J. R., & Derthick, A. O. (2017). *The psychology of oppression*. Springer Publishing Company.

Davis, L. S., Whitman, C., & Nadal, K. L. (2015). Microaggressions in the workplace: Recommendations for best practices. *Women's psychology. Sexual harassment in education and work settings: Current research and best practices for prevention*, 135-155.

Degrugy-Leary, J. (2017). *Post-traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's legacy of enduring injury*. Joy DeGruy Publications Inc.

Deitch, E. A., Barsky, A., Butz, R. M., Chan, S., Brief, A. P., & Bradley, J. C. (2003). Subtle yet significant: The existence and impact of everyday racial discrimination in the workplace. *Human Relations, 56*(11), 1299-1324. doi: 10.1037/e518712013-257

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

- Everett, B. G., Steele, S. M., Matthews, A. K., & Hughes, T. L. (2019). Gender, race, and minority stress among sexual minority women: An intersectional approach. *Archives of sexual behavior, 48*(5), 1505-1517.
- Falk, G., Carter, J. A., Nicchitta, I. A., Nyhof, E. C., & Romero, P. D. (2020). Unemployment rates during the COVID-19 pandemic: In brief. *Congr Res Serv, 2*-16.
- Follins, L. D., Walker, J. N. J., & Lewis, M. K. (2014). Resilience in Black lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals: A critical review of the literature. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health, 18*(2), 190-212.
- Galupo, M. P., & Resnick, C. A. (2016). Experiences of LGBT Microaggressions in the Workplace: Implications for Policy. *Sexual Orientation and Transgender Issues in Organizations, (pp. 271–287)*. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-29623-4_16
- Gandy, I. (2019). The U.S. supreme court decided to ignore black hair discrimination. Rewire News. <https://rewire.news/ablc/2018/05/16/u-s-supreme-court-ignoring-black-hair-discrimination/>
- Glassdoor. (2019). *Diversity & inclusion study 2019*. Glassdoor. <https://about-content.glassdoor.com//app/uploads/sites/2/2019/10/Glassdoor-Diversity-Survey-Supplement-1.pdf>
- Goodstein, R. (2008). What's missing from the dialogue on racial microaggressions in counseling and therapy. *American Psychologist, 63*(4), 276–277. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.63.4.276>
- Harris, C. I. (1993). Whiteness as property. *Harvard law review, 1707*-1791.
- Harris, R. S., Jr. (2008). Racial microaggression? How do you know? *American Psychologist, 63*(4), 275–276. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.63.4.275>

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

- Harvey, J. (1981). The impostor phenomenon and achievement: A failure to internalize success, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.
- Holder, A., Jackson, M. A., & Ponterotto, J. G. (2015). Racial microaggression experiences and coping strategies of Black women in corporate leadership. *Qualitative Psychology, 2*(2), 164–180. <https://doi.org/10.1037/qup0000024>.
- Holder, A. M., & Nadal, K. L. (2016). Systemic and workplace micro-aggressions and the workplace. *Talking about structural inequalities in everyday life: New politics of race in groups, organizations and social systems*, (pp. 47-64).
- Hollingsworth, D. W., Cole, A. B., O'Keefe, V. M., Tucker, R. P., Story, C. R., & Wingate, L. R. (2017). Experiencing racial microaggressions influences suicide ideation through perceived burdensomeness in African Americans. *Journal of counseling psychology, 64*(1), 104-111. doi: 10.1037/cou0000177
- Huber, L. P., & Cueva, B. M. (2012). Chicana/Latina testimonios on effects and responses to microaggressions. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 45*(3), 392-410.
- Joshi, A., & Mangette, H. (2018). Unmasking of Impostor Syndrome. *Journal of Research, Assessment, and Practice in Higher Education, 3*(1), 3.
- Kolligian Jr., J., & Sternberg, R. J. (1991). Perceived fraudulence in young adults: Is there an "Imposter Syndrome"? *Journal of Personality Assessment, 56*(2), 308. https://doi-org.ez.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/10.1207/s15327752jpa5602_10
- Komisarchik, M., Sen, M., & Velez, Y. (2020). The Political Consequences of Ethnically Targeted Incarceration: Evidence from Japanese-American Internment During Wwii. SSRN Electronic Journal. doi:10.2139/ssrn.3656485

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

- Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Zongrone, A. D., Clark, C. M., & Truong, N. L. (2018). *The 2017 National School Climate Survey: The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Youth in Our Nation's Schools*. Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN). New York, NY.
- Langford, J., & Clance, P. R. (1993). The imposter phenomenon: recent research findings regarding dynamics, personality and family patterns and their implications for treatment. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, 30(3), 495-501. doi: 10.1037/0033-3204.30.3.495
- Leary, M. R., Patton, K. M., Orlando, A. E., & Wagoner Funk, W. (2000). The impostor phenomenon: Self-perceptions, reflected appraisals, and interpersonal strategies. *Journal of Personality*, 68(4), 725–756. doi:10.1111/1467-6494.00114
- Lewis, J. A., & Grzanka, P. R. (2016). *Applying intersectionality theory to research on perceived racism*. In A. N. Alvarez, C. T. H. Liang, & H. A. Neville (Eds.), *Cultural, racial, and ethnic psychology book series. The cost of racism for people of color: Contextualizing experiences of discrimination* (pp. 31–54). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/14852-003>
- Lewis, J. A., & Neville, H. A. (2015). Construction and initial validation of the Gendered Racial Microaggressions Scale for Black women. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 62(2), 289–302. doi:10.1037/cou0000062
- Lewis, J. A., Mendenhall, R., Harwood, S. A., & Browne Hunt, M. (2016). “Ain’t I a Woman?” *The Counseling Psychologist*, 44(5), 758–780. doi:10.1177/0011000016641193

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

- Lige, Q. M., Peteet, B. J., & Brown, C. M. (2017). Racial identity, self-esteem, and the impostor phenomenon among African American college students. *Journal of Black Psychology, 43*(4), 345-357. doi: 10.1177/0095798416648787
- Lilienfeld, S. O. (2017). Microaggressions: Strong claims, inadequate evidence. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 12*(1), 138-169. doi: 10.1177/1745691616659391
- Martin, J. L. (2018). Factors contributing to microaggressions, racial battle fatigue, stereotype threat, and impostor phenomenon for nonhegemonic students: Implications for urban education. *Microaggression Theory: Influence and Implications, 102-120*. doi: 10.1002/9781119466642.ch7
- McClain, S., Beasley, S., Jones, B., Awosogba, O., Jackson, S., & Cokley, K. (2016). An Examination of the impact of racial and ethnic identity, impostor feelings, and minority status stress on the mental health of Black college students. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 44*(2), 101-117. doi: 10.1002/jmcd.12040
- McHorney, C. A., Ware, J. E., Jr., Rogers, W., Raczek, A. E., & Lu, J. F. R. (1992). The validity and relative precision of MOS short- and long-form health status scales and Dartmouth COOP charts. *Medical Care, 30*, MS253–MS265. doi: 10.1097/00005650-199205001-00025
- McLoughlin, W. G. (2014). *After the Trail of Tears: The Cherokees' struggle for sovereignty, 1839-1880*. UNC Press Books.
- Mercer, S. H., Zeigler-Hill, V., Wallace, M., & Hayes, D. M. (2011). Development and initial validation of the Inventory of Microaggressions Against Black Individuals. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 58*(4), 457–469. doi:10.1037/a0024937

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

- Meyer I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: conceptual issues and research evidence. *Psychological bulletin*, *129*(5), 674–697. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.5.674>
- Moody, A. T., & Lewis, J. A. (2019). Gendered racial microaggressions and traumatic stress symptoms among black women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *43*(2), 201
- Nadal, K. L. (2011). The Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS): Construction, reliability, and validity. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *58*(4), 470–480.
doi:10.1037/a0025193
- Nadal, K. L. (2013). *That's so gay! Microaggressions and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community*. American Psychological Association.
- Nadal, K. L. (2019). Queering and Browning the Pipeline for LGBTQ Faculty of Color in the Academy: The Formation of the LGBTQ Scholars of Color National Network. *Journal of Critical Thought and Praxis*, *8*(2). doi:10.31274/jctp.821
- Nadal, K. L., Erazo, T., & King, R. (2019). Challenging Definitions of Psychological Trauma: Connecting Racial Microaggressions and Traumatic Stress. *Journal for Social Action in Counseling & Psychology*, *11*(2), 2–16. doi:10.33043/jsacp.11.2.2-16
- Nadal, K. L., Erazo, T., Schulman, J., Han, H., Deutsch, T., Ruth, R., & Santacruz, E. (2017). Caught at the intersections: Microaggressions toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people of color. *LGBT psychology and mental health: Emerging research and advances* (pp. 133-152). Praeger.
- Nadal, K. L., Griffin, K. E., Wong, Y., Davidoff, K. C., & Davis, L. S. (2017). The injurious relationship between racial microaggressions and physical health: Implications for

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

- social work. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, 26(1-2), 6-17. doi: 10.1080/15313204.2016.1263813
- Nadal, K. L., Griffin, K. E., Wong, Y., Hamit, S., & Rasmus, M. (2014). The impact of racial microaggressions on mental health: Counseling implications for clients of color. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 92(1), 57-66. doi: 10.1037/e531132007-001
- Nadal, K. L., Issa, A. N. N. E., Griffin, K. E., Hamit, S., & Lyons, O. B. (2010). Religious microaggressions in the United States. *Microaggressions and marginality: Manifestation, dynamics, and impact* (pp. 287-310) John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Nadal, K. L., King, R., Sissoko, D. R. G., Floyd, N., & Hines, D. (2021). The Legacies of systemic and internalized oppression: Experiences of microaggressions, imposter phenomenon, and stereotype threat on historically marginalized groups. *New Ideas in Psychology*.
- Nadal, K. L., Mazzula, S. L., Rivera, D. P., & Fujii-Doe, W. (2014). Microaggressions and Latina/o Americans: An analysis of nativity, gender, and ethnicity. *Journal of Latina/o Psychology*, 2(2), 67. doi: 10.1037/lat0000013
- Nadal, K. L., Skolnik, A., & Wong, Y. (2012). Interpersonal and systemic microaggressions toward transgender people: Implications for counseling. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, 6(1), 55-82. doi: 10.1080/15538605.2012.64858
- Nadal, K. L., Wong, Y., Griffin, K. E., Davidoff, K., & Sriken, J. (2014). The adverse impact of racial microaggressions on college students' self-esteem. *Journal of College Student Development*, 55(5), 461-474. doi: 0.1037/e647562012-001
- Nadal, K. L., Wong, Y., Sriken, J., Griffin, K., & Fujii-Doe, W. (2015). Racial microaggressions and Asian Americans: An exploratory study on within-group

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

differences and mental health. *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, 6(2), 136-144.

doi: 10.1037/a0038058

Neblett, E. W. J., White, R. L., Ford, K. R., Philip, C. L., Nguyễn, H. X., & Sellers, R. M.

(2008). Patterns of racial socialization and psychological adjustment: Can parental communications about race reduce the impact of racial discrimination? *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 18(3), 477-515. doi:10.1111/j.1532-7795.2008.00568.x.

O'Fallon, B. D., & Fehren-Schmitz, L. (2011). Native Americans experienced a strong population bottleneck coincident with European contact. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 108(51), 20444-20448.

O'Keefe, V. M., Wingate, L. R., Cole, A. B., Hollingsworth, D. W., & Tucker, R. P. (2015).

Seemingly harmless racial communications are not so harmless: Racial microaggressions lead to suicidal ideation by way of depression symptoms. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 45(5), 567-576. doi: 10.1111/sltb.12150

Pager, D. (2003). The mark of a criminal record. *American journal of sociology*, 108(5), 937-975. doi: 10.4324/9781315245423-9

Papageorge, N. W., Gershenson, S., & Kang, K. M. (2018). *Teacher expectations matter* (No. w25255). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Peteet, B. J., Montgomery, L., & Weekes, J. C. (2015). Predictors of imposter phenomenon among talented ethnic minority undergraduate students. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 84(2), 175-186. doi: 10.7709/jnegroeducation.84.2.0175

Peteet, B. J., Brown, C. M., Lige, Q. M., & Lanaway, D. A. (2015). Impostorism is associated with greater psychological distress and lower self-esteem for African American students. *Current Psychology*, 34(1), 154-163. doi: 10.1037/e614802013-001

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

- Pierce, C. (1995). Stress analogs of racism and sexism: Terrorism, torture, and disaster. *Mental health, racism, and sexism* (pp. 277-293). Taylor & Francis.
- Pierce, C. M., Carew, J. V., Pierce-Gonzalez, D., & Wills, D. (1977). An Experiment in Racism. *Education and Urban Society, 10*(1), 61–87.
doi:10.1177/001312457701000105
- Purdie-Vaughns, V., & Eibach, R. P. (2008). Intersectional invisibility: The distinctive advantages and disadvantages of multiple subordinate-group identities. *Sex Roles, 59*(5-6), 377-391. doi: 10.1007/s11199-008-9424-4
- Ritvo, P.G., Fischer, J. S., Miller, D. M., Andrews, H., Paty, D.W., & LaRocca, N. G. (1997). *Multiple Sclerosis Quality of Life Inventory: A user's manual*. National Multiple Sclerosis Society.
- Roberts, D. E. (2003). The social and moral cost of mass incarceration in African American communities. *Stan. L. Rev., 56*, 1271.
- Ross, S., & Krukowski, R. (2003). The imposter phenomenon and maladaptive personality: type and trait characteristics. *Personality and Individual Differences, 34*(3), 477–484.
doi:10.1016/s0191-8869(02)00067-3
- Ross, S. R., Stewart, J., Mugge, M., & Fultz, B. (2001). The imposter phenomenon, achievement dispositions, and the five-factor model. *Personality and Individual Differences, 31*(8), 1347-1355. doi: 10.1016/s0191-8869(00)00228-2
- Russell, S. T., & Fish, J. N. (2016). Mental health in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth. *Annual review of clinical psychology, 12*, 465-487.
- Sadika, B., Wiebe, E., Morrison, M. A., & Morrison, T. G. (2020). Intersectional Microaggressions and Social Support for LGBTQ Persons of Color: A Systematic

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

- Review of the Canadian-Based Empirical Literature. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 16(2), 111–147. doi:10.1080/1550428x.2020.1724125
- Schacht, T. E. (2008). A broader view of racial microaggression in psychotherapy. *American Psychologist*, 63(4), 273. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.63.4.273>
- Sheatsley, P. B. (1966). White attitudes toward the Negro. *Daedalus*, 217-238.
- Singh, A. A., & McKleroy, V. S. (2011). “Just getting out of bed is a revolutionary act” the resilience of transgender people of color who have survived traumatic life events. *Traumatology*, 17(2), 34-44.
- Solorzano, D., Allen, W. R., & Carroll, G. (2002). Keeping race in place: Racial microaggressions and campus racial climate at the University of California, Berkeley. *Chicano-Latino Law Review*, 23, 15-11
- Solorzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. (2000). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate: The experiences of African American college students. *Journal of Negro Education*, 69(1), 60-73. doi: 10.17763/haer.79.4.m6867014157m7071
- Stokes, E. K., Zambrano, L. D., Anderson, K. N., Marder, E. P., Raz, K. M., Felix, S. E. B., Tie, Y. & Fullerton, K. E. (2020). Coronavirus disease 2019 case surveillance—United States, January 22–May 30, 2020. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 69(24), 759.
- Su, D., Irwin, J. A., Fisher, C., Ramos, A., Kelley, M., Mendoza, D. A. R., & Coleman, J. D. (2016). Mental health disparities within the LGBT population: A comparison between transgender and nontransgender individuals. *Transgender Health*, 1(1), 12-20. doi: 10.1089/trgh.2015.0001

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

- Sue, D. (2017). Microaggressions and “evidence”: Empirical or experiential reality? *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 12*(1), 170-172. doi: 10.1177/1745691616664437
- Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., & Holder, A. (2008). Racial microaggressions in the life experience of Black Americans. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 39*(3), 329-336. doi: 10.1037/0735-7028.39.3.329
- Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A. M., Nadal, K. L., & Esquilin, M. E. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for counseling. *American Psychologist, 62*(4), 271-286. doi: 10.1002/j.1556-6678.2008.tb00517.x
- Sue, D. W., Nadal, K. L., Capodilupo, C. M., Lin, A. I., Torino, G. C., & Rivera, D. P. (2008). Racial microaggressions against Black Americans: Implications for counseling. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 86*(3), 330-338. doi: 10.1002/j.1556-6678.2008.tb00517.x
- Tesler, M., & Sears, D. O. (2010). *Obama's race: The 2008 election and the dream of a post-racial America*. University of Chicago Press.
- The Guardian, (2018). *The Counted*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2015/jun/01/the-counted-police-killings-us-database>
- Thomas, K. R. (2008). Macrononsense in multiculturalism. *American Psychologist, 63*(4), 274–275. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.63.4.274>
- Torino, G. C., Rivera, D. P., Capodilupo, C. M., & Nadal, K. L. (2018). *Microaggression theory: Influence and implications*. Wiley.

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

- Torres-Harding, S. R., Andrade, A. L., Jr., & Romero Diaz, C. E. (2012). The Racial Microaggressions Scale (RMAS): A new scale to measure experiences of racial microaggressions in people of color. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 18*(2), 153–164. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0027658>
- Torres, L., Driscoll, M. W., & Burrow, A. L. (2010). Racial microaggressions and psychological functioning among highly achieving African-Americans: A mixed-methods approach. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 29*(10), 1074-1099. doi: 10.1521/jscp.2010.29.10.1074
- Triana, M. D. C., Jayasinghe, M., & Pieper, J. R. (2015). Perceived workplace racial discrimination and its correlates: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 36*(4), 491-513. doi: 10.1002/job.1988
- United States Census. (2017, July). *Quick Facts*. Retrieved from: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045217>
- Veit, C. T., & Ware, J. E. (1983). The structure of psychological distress and well-being in general populations. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 51*(5), 730–742. doi:10.1037/0022-006x.51.5.730
- Velez, B. L., Cox, R., Jr., Polihronakis, C. J., & Moradi, B. (2018). Discrimination, work outcomes, and mental health among women of color: The protective role of womanist attitudes. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 65*(2), 178–193. doi: 10.1037/cou0000274
- Velez, B. L., Moradi, B., & Brewster, M. E. (2013). Testing the tenets of minority stress theory in workplace contexts. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 60*(4), 532. doi: 10.1037/a0033346
- Wallace, M. (1970). The uses of violence in American history. *The American Scholar, 81*-102.

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

- Walls, M. L., Gonzalez, J., Gladney, T., & Onello, E. (2015). Unconscious biases: Racial microaggressions in American Indian health care. *The Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine*, 28(2), 231-239. doi: 10.3122/jabfm.2015.02.140194
- Wang, M. T., Henry, D. A., Smith, L. V., Huguley, J. P., & Guo, J. (2020). Parental ethnic-racial socialization practices and children of color's psychosocial and behavioral adjustment: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *American Psychologist*, 75(1), 1.
- Williams, P. J. (1991). *The alchemy of race and rights*. Harvard University Press.
- Williams, D. R. (1999). Race, socioeconomic status, and health the added effects of racism and discrimination. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 896(1), 173-188. doi: 10.1111/j.1749-6632.1999.tb08114.x
- Williams, M. T. (2019). Microaggressions: Clarification, eEvidence, and impact. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 15(1), 3–26. doi:10.1177/1745691619827499
- Williams, S. L., Job, S. A., Todd, E., & Braun, K. (2020). A critical deconstructed quantitative analysis: Sexual and gender minority stress through an intersectional lens. *Journal of Social Issues*, 76(4), 859–879. doi:10.1111/josi.12410
- Williams, D. R., Priest, N., & Anderson, N. B. (2016). Understanding associations among race, socioeconomic status, and health: patterns and prospects. *Health Psychology*, 35(4), 407. doi: 10.1037/hea0000242
- Williams, J., & Wilson, V. (2019). *Black workers endure persistent racial disparities in employment outcomes*. Economic Policy Institute.
<https://www.epi.org/publication/labor-day-2019-racial-disparities-in-employment/>

MICROAGGRESSIONS AND IMPOSTER

Wong, G., Derthick, A. O., David, E. J. R., Saw, A., & Okazaki, S. (2014). The what, the why, and the how: A review of racial microaggressions research in psychology. *Race and*

social problems, 6(2), 181-200. doi: 10.1007/s12552-013-9107-9

X, M., & Haley, A. (1965). *The autobiography of Malcolm X*. Grove Press.