

EXAMINING PERCEIVED RACIAL MICROAGGRESSIONS AND BURNOUT IN
HELPING PROFESSION GRADUATE STUDENTS OF COLOR

by

ELIZA MAREE WELLS

(Under the Direction of Edward Delgado- Romero)

ABSTRACT

The present study aims to examine the psychological well-being of helping profession students of color in relation to their experience with racial microaggressions throughout various aspects of their graduate training. This research specifically investigated the influence of perceived racial microaggressions on graduate student levels of professional burnout. Social support was also explored as research suggested that social support may serve as a buffer for experience with discrimination. The sample included 106 self-identified students of color (male and female), representing students from Social Work, Education, Counseling/ Clinical/Counseling/ and School Psychology, master's and doctoral programs across the US. Researchers hypothesized that higher perceived racial microaggressions would significantly predict high levels of burnout and vice versa. In the same regard, higher social support was predicted to significantly reduce the level of perceived racial microaggressions.

Results of this study suggested that social support was not a significant predictor of racial microaggressions or burnout. Racial microaggressions, however, were a significant predictor of burnout. Results were also provided for the analysis of an interaction effect using social support, racial microaggressions and burnout. The current research represents an important first step in a strategic approach to dealing with burnout as well as microaggressions in graduate training. The ability to identify developing problems early on, before they become more serious and pervasive,

can enable timely, preventive solutions. It points to the possibility of being able to customize interventions to specific student populations. Implications for helping profession graduate training are discussed, as well as recommendations for future research.

INDEX WORDS: Racial Microaggressions, Burnout, Students of Color, Graduate Students, Helping Profession

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DEDICATION

And now the work begins, and now the joy begins.
Now the years of preparation, of tedious study, and exciting learning are explained.
The jumble of words and tangle of great and small ideas
begin to take order and this morning you can see
a small portion, of the large plan of your futures.
Your hours of application, the hopes of your parents, and the labor of your instructors,
have all brought this moment into your hands.
And now that you have shown that you are capable of manufacturing
that most wondrous virtue, you must now be asking yourselves,
What will I do with it?
Be assured that question is in the minds of your elders, your parents, and strangers
who do not know your names.

Your fellow students who next year, or in the years to come will sit, where you sit today,
And will ask the question, what will you do?
Are you prepared to work
to make this country, our country
more than it is today?
For that is the job to be done.
Look beyond your tasseled caps and gowns, and you will see injustice.
At the end of your fingertips, you will find cruelties,
Irrational hate, bedrock sorrow, and terrifying loneliness.

There is your work. Make a difference.
Use this degree which you have earned to increase virtue in your world.
Your people, all people, are hoping that you are the ones to do so.
You will be surprised that in time,
the days of single-minded research and the nights of crimping and cramming
will be soon forgotten.
You will be surprised that these years of sleepless nights and months of uneasy
days will be rolled into an altering event called the
"Good old days."
And you may not be able to visit them even with an invitation.
Since that is so you must face your present.
You are prepared. Go out and transform your world.

Welcome to your graduation.
*This dissertation and degree is dedicated to the legacy that has been in preparation for me for
over 300 years...prepared so that I may one day...THIS DAY...pass it on.
Thank you....FOR MY GRADUATION.*

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“But I have promises to keep.
And miles to go before I sleep,
and miles to go before I sleep.”

-Robert Frost

Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation consists of five chapters. Chapter One will provide an overview of the present research. Constructs are defined, and primary research questions are introduced. Chapter Two reviews existing literature relevant to this study. Previous research efforts and findings relevant to this study are reported. Chapter Three describes the methodology employed to answer the research questions, including methods used to select a sample, collect the data, and analyze the data. Research questions will be presented, with attention focused on the data analysis used for the investigation. Chapter Four reports the findings of the study, and Chapter Five discusses the implications of the findings and suggestions for future research.

Purpose of the Study

The present study aims to examine the psychological well-being of helping profession students of color in relation to their experience with racial microaggressions throughout various aspects of their graduate training. This research will specifically investigate the influence of perceived racial microaggressions on student levels of professional burnout. The current research represents an important first step in a strategic approach to dealing with burnout as well as microaggressions in graduate training. The ability to identify developing problems early on, before they become more serious and pervasive, can enable timely, preventive solutions. It points to the possibility of being able to customize interventions to specific student populations.

The researcher predicts that graduate students of color in the helping professions are at high risk for burnout as a result of microaggressions experienced throughout their graduate training. Burnout not only has detrimental consequences on the graduate student at the training level, but on their experience once they enter the profession. Implications for this study may be useful in assisting graduate departments in creating consciousness about racial/ethnic disparities and discrimination perceived by students, thus raising multicultural awareness among faculty, staff, and students regarding the nature and impact of such experiences on the student as well as the clients that will receive services.

Significance of the Problem

The recruitment, retention, and training for students of color in graduate programs have been an area of concern for many years across several fields of study, more specifically in the helping professions (Rogers & Molina, 2006). As the helping profession aims to become more multi-culturally competent, this concern has extended to the research agendas of many faculty and students nationwide. Helping profession graduate programs are seeking to increase the representation of ethnically and culturally diverse service providers, educators, and researchers with an aim of producing a more representative group of professionals that best represents the population served. With this aim in mind, it becomes imperative that graduate programs begin to examine the many aspects of the graduate training experience, especially relating to the training of students of color. It appears as though recruitment rates have increased over the past ten years, though research has shown that the retention rates for graduate students of color have significantly decreased (Maton et al., 2006). There are several possible explanations for this disconnect.

One is the possibility of an unsafe racial climate for students of color while in graduate training (this includes the student's academic department, experiences at the university, courses, direct services experiences, experience with other university administrators, etc). From the researchers own professional experience, it has been observed that students report feeling isolated and alienated within their academic departments because of their race/ethnicity. Students have also noted that they sometimes experience covert racial discrimination from multiple sources of their training in a manner that the effects are often felt only after being in the programs for some period of time. These experiences have eventually led some students to leave their programs prematurely, without the support or motivation to return for completion. Students often will question their purpose in their respective fields, and contemplate other areas of focus that might be more "comfortable". While these reported experiences may not represent the experience of all graduate students of color, it is important to examine the experiences of some, as this may mirror those of others who may feel voiceless in identifying their own unique struggles.

Another explanation for the low retention rates and reports of "academic fatigue" for students of color could be the lack of identifiable social support throughout their academic careers. Social support is considered the sense of belonging, increased sense of self-worth, and security that one may receive from external sources (Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006). Social support has also been described as the physical and emotional comfort given to us by our family, friends, co-workers and others. It is knowing that we are part of a community of people who love and care for us, and value and think well of us (Shwitzer et al., 1999). For students of color who are often in the racial/ethnic minority of their graduate programs, social support may be limited within their departments, as students have reported feeling as though "there was no one to turn to

when they were experiencing challenges” or feeling fearful of negative evaluation if support was sought within the department (Lett & Wright, 2003).

Furthermore, for students of color who experience racial discrimination from their graduate program, social support from peers, family, and friends could become more necessary than for the typical graduate student. Given that the demands of graduate training, especially in clinical fields, are rigorous and demanding at a basic level, a student’s experience with racial discrimination might further compound the stress and or challenges already associated with being a graduate student, thus possibly exacerbating the symptoms that might have been able to have been remediated earlier on. It is important for the researcher in regards to the present study, to examine the presence of social support in the lives of students of color, as this element may shed light on some of the responsibility graduate programs have in better supporting or providing support resources for all students, but most especially students of color.

Departments and graduate programs in various institutions may not know how to create education and training environments that are perceived as welcoming and sustaining by students of color. With the rapidly diversifying US population and the acknowledgement of the APA guidelines that call for cultural competence, which includes training people of color, it has become even more imperative that we examine the various factors involved in the training of students of color, especially their mental health. It has been well-documented that students of color face unique and varied challenges (i.e., racial insensitivity, isolation, invisibility) associated with their minority status at the university level (Cheatham & Berg-Cross, 1992; Franklin, 1999; Hughes, 1987; Schwitzer, Griffin, Ancis, & Thomas, 1999). Furthermore, racism, discrimination, and minority status concerns are consistently reported in the students of color experience (Lackland, McLeod-Bryant, & Bell, 1998).

Past research on students of color has generally been very limited and focused on the traditional undergraduate population; however, this study focuses on the experiences of graduate who identify as students of color. Various factors can create a sense of alienation and stress that affect not only their academic success and career development, but also the psychological well-being of the graduate student. Helping professionals should incorporate knowledge of mental health needs into programming and retention efforts to enhance graduate students' overall experiences throughout their training.

Research has sought to examine the prevalence and experience of racial and ethnic discrimination in graduate education. The effects of perceived discrimination are far reaching, affecting individuals on multiple levels (Rogers & Molina, 2006). Banks and Kohn- Wood (2007) found that exposure to racial discrimination is related to increased reporting of psychiatric problems, feelings of resignation, and hopelessness. These effects over time could potentially cause long-lasting and detrimental effects to those involved. The need for further examination of the presence of discrimination in the lives of individuals who not only receive it, but those who actively engage in it, is imperative. Though racial discrimination is widely known to have such negative effects on individuals, groups, and systems, it is implicated that it is rarely reported (Constantine, Reddington, & Owens, 2008).

One effect that has been identified as significant for students in helping profession graduate programs is the presence of a high level of stress and reduced positive coping strategies, which this researcher suggests could ultimately lead to burnout (Kim, 2002). The present study proposes that social support may presently serve as a positive coping strategy in buffering the potential detrimental effects of racial discrimination or microaggressions. Further examination of other factors is also recommended.

There has been little research focused on the specific experiences of discrimination in the form of racial microaggressions for graduate students of color. Furthermore, there is minimal research to support or oppose to the idea of a possible consequence of microaggressions being professional burnout. The purpose of this study was to examine the psychological well-being of helping profession students of color in relation to their experience with racial microaggressions throughout various aspects of their graduate training. This research will specifically investigate the influence of perceived racial microaggressions and the impact of social support on student levels of professional burnout.

Research Questions

The formulation of research questions or hypotheses is typically the culmination of the secondary research process. Research questions are appropriate when a topic has received minimal previous study and the researcher is predicting outcomes for the research to be conducted (Hertzog, 2008). Johnson and Christensen (2008) define a research question as a “formally stated question intended to provide indications about a particular variable relationship”. The research questions also serve to narrow the focus of the inquiry to a pragmatic level.

The literature cited in the current and following chapters provides the basis for the research questions developed for this study. The study focuses on three questions which are fundamental to an investigation of burnout as a possible effect of microaggressions.

Research Question 1

To what degree does Social Support predict one’s perception/experience of Racial Microaggressions during graduate training?

Research Question 2

To what degree does perceived Racial Microaggressions predict levels of Burnout (Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment)?

Research Question 3

To what degree does Social Support predict levels of Burnout (Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment)?

Research Question 4

Is there a relationship between race/ethnicity, gender, graduate degree program and experience with Racial Microaggressions and Burnout (as measured by the Emotional Exhaustion subscale)?

CHAPTER 2

EXAMINING PERCEIVED RACIAL MICROAGGRESSIONS AND BURNOUT IN HELPING PROFESSION GRADUATE STUDENTS OF COLOR

Graduate Students and Training

Graduate students are traditionally underrepresented in the research literature on burnout. However, over the past 10 years, researcher have sought to understand burnout as a construct that is applicable to the graduate student population (Miles & Chitooran, 2001; Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006; Fives et al., 2007; Howard- Hamilton, et al., 2008) Students training to become helping professionals are exposed to not only the demands of graduate study, but also the demands of the profession as they receive experience in teaching and providing direct service (Thompson & Neville, 2003). It is suggested that the individuals who are at highest risk for burnout are those who feel a lack of control over their environment, have unclear expectations placed on them (sometimes self-imposed), receive little recognition, and lack adequate social support, all while having high expectations placed on them (Maslach & Leiter, 2005).

It is further suggested that these risk factors are a reality for many graduate students. For graduate students of color, there is the concept of being exposed to not only the rigorous demands of graduate study and clinical work, but also to the little acknowledged effects of experiencing prejudice and discrimination while working towards receiving the degree (Locke & Kiselica, 1999). Issues of marginalization, tokenism and a lack of role models may also compound the issue for graduate students of color.

Psychology/ Clinical Focused programs

Research suggests that psychology students, similar to many other graduate students, are not often prepared for the stress that accompanies the combination of graduate school and client work (Clark et al., 2009). Many students struggle to balance their personal and professional lives, while simultaneously working to provide the same services to clients. Previous research (Franklin, 1999) has focused on the predictors of burnout and career choice satisfaction for counseling psychology students, in attempt to explore some of the potential effects of burnout experienced in graduate training. Franklin identified global stress, role conflict, social support, and sense of community as concepts that were essential to examine.

284 psychology doctoral students from the US were surveyed on several different areas of their life with results indicating that neither social support nor sense of community were able to buffer the effects stress causes on burnout. Global stress, advisor support, and sense of community were predictors of burnout. Sense of community was also a strong indicator of career choice satisfaction (Franklin, 1999). It was suggested that a heightened awareness of the critical role that advisors play in the life of graduate and doctoral level students is warranted. The author also speculated that though there were significant findings in relation to burnout and career choice satisfaction, it was more likely that there are several smaller factors at work as opposed to fewer more powerful ones. It was recommended that programs attempt to instill a sense of community by providing social and academic support programs for their students. Increasing the interaction of students amongst each other as well as amongst the faculty in both social and more formal occasions could increase a student's sense of community.

Education/ School Related fields

Professional school counselors are asked to perform multiple duties as part of their daily work. As a result, school counselors are constantly asked to make decisions about how to best perform their jobs. Previous research has indicated that school counselors oftentimes feel pulled in many directions and report high levels of stress (Miles & Chitooran, 2001). Previous research in the area of school counseling trainees has sought to examine what, if any, role demographic, intrapersonal, and organizational factors play in burnout, particularly in the areas of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. By researching all of these potential mitigating factors, authors have hoped to better develop a more comprehensive understanding of burnout in school counselors, as the need for professionals in this area continues to increase (Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006).

Researchers have found that along with emotional exhaustion as a main area for concern in regard to burnout, demographic, intrapersonal, and organizational factors, when tied together, were significant indicators of burnout among school counselors (Wilkerson & Bellini, 2006). This particular research provides a more comprehensive look at school counselors and the potential factors contributing to burnout. The authors recommend replicating this study to ensure results can be extrapolated over the general population. Particularly with regard to intrapersonal dynamics of the school counselor role, the authors suggest pressing further into this area of research. Developing professional programs for school counselors to better develop their counseling skills and stress management. Also, the authors implore stronger working alliances between school counselors, teachers, and the administration.

Racial Microaggressions

Research has indicated that more traditional forms of racism (i.e., overt acts, such as cross burnings and racial segregation) have become more subtle in nature, often times giving the impression that racism is becoming a thing of the past. However, this less obvious form of racism is known as *aversive racism*. Aversive racism is characterized by Whites' harboring of unconscious or preconscious negative racial feelings and beliefs toward people of color, despite the fact that they may perceive themselves as egalitarian, fair, and nonracist (Thompson & Neville, 1999).

A common form of aversive racism frequently is expressed via racial microaggressions. Racial microaggressions refer to subtle and commonplace exchanges that somehow convey insulting or demeaning messages to people of color (Franklin, 1999). These exchanges can be viewed by some people as being harmless and innocuous (Sue and Sue, 2003), but they frequently result in the communication of denigrating messages to people of color because of their racial or ethnic group membership (Constantine, 2007). People who engage in racial microaggressions often are unaware of their behaviors or the potential effects of those behaviors on people of color. Because racial discrimination within an academic department may be more covert in nature, it is often perceived in the form of microaggressions.

Racial microaggressions specifically refer to subtle, commonplace, and even automatic exchanges that may convey something insulting or demeaning to people of color (Constantine, 2007). In a study examining the experience of microaggressions in counseling, findings revealed that greater perceived racial microaggressions by African American clients were predictive of a weaker therapeutic alliance with White therapists, which, in turn, predicted lower ratings of general and multicultural counseling competence. Greater perceived racial microaggressions also

were predictive of lower counseling satisfaction ratings. In addition, African American clients' perceptions of racial microaggressions had a significant indirect effect on these clients' ratings of White counselors' general and multicultural counseling competence through the therapeutic working alliance (Constantine, 2007).

Research has sought to examine the effects of discrimination and racial microaggressions on Asian Americans (Sue et al., 2007). Although it is generally accepted that African Americans and Latino/Hispanic Americans experience both overt and covert forms of prejudice and discrimination, Asian Americans are frequently viewed as a model minority who have made it in this society and experience little in the form of racism (Wong & Halgin, 2006). Despite the long documented history of racism toward Asian Americans, there has been a lack of attention paid to prejudice and discrimination directed against them (D. W. Sue & D. Sue, 2003).

One reason may be that many White Americans tend to dichotomize racial issues in Black and White terms (Liang, Li, & Kim et al., 2004). As a result, the psychological needs of Asian Americans arising from racism are often overshadowed by the experiences of Whites and Blacks, and research findings for these racial groups are often assumed to speak to the experiences of Asian Americans as well (Sue & Sue, 2003).

Sue and Sue (2003) examined the experience of Asian Americans with racial microaggressions. Findings of their study revealed strong support that microaggressions are not minimally harmful and possess detrimental consequences for the recipients. Participants in the study described strong and lasting negative reactions to the constant racial microaggressions they experienced from well intentioned friends, neighbors, teachers, co-workers, and colleagues. They described feelings of belittlement, anger, rage, frustration, alienation, and of constantly being

invalidated. Common comments from the groups were they felt trapped, invisible, and unrecognized.

Although the purpose of the study was to more clearly identify how the Asian American participants behaviorally responded to what they perceived as a racial microaggression, the strategies they used to deal with it, and the impact it had on them, the focus group members spent the majority of time (a) describing microaggressive events, (b) interpreting what the message meant to them, and (c) talking about the intent of the perpetrator. This research suggests the critical need of examining the effects and potential consequences of perceived microaggressions on the recipient, thus providing support for the present study and its possible findings.

The term microaggressions can also refer to daily attacks on one's race/ethnicity that can be further described as unintentional slights that can create an atmosphere of invisibility, or hostility in the environment the person of color is a part of (Sue and Sue, 2003). As a result, an individual may experience a host of psychological and emotional difficulties including isolation, anxiety, and depression. A particularly salient effect of microaggressions for graduate students in the helping professions is *burnout*.

Research reveals that overt racial discrimination is identified as one of the potential social risk factors of mental illness, is related to physical and psychological well-being, and contributes to stress, depression, and anger in its victims (Chakraborty & McKenzie, 2002; Kim, 2002). For example, in a survey of studies examining racism, mental health researchers found that higher levels of discrimination were associated with lower levels of happiness, life satisfaction, self-esteem, and mastery or control (Williams, Neighbors, & Jackson, 2003). These findings provide potential implications for the experience of discrimination in graduate training, as the present

study suggests that the psychological wellness of graduate students of color is essential in the successful graduate training and subsequent entry into their respective helping profession.

African- American graduate students have traditionally been a well researched minority group when discussing experience with racial discrimination across various settings. Though the present research aimed to examine many racial/ethnic groups, review of existing literature is important in understanding the experience of discrimination. Lett and Wright (2007) focused on the different ways African-Americans identify with their own race, discrimination, and the mental health outcomes that are associated with them. More specifically how racial identity profiles play a part, if any, in the relationship with discrimination. The authors used the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI) to outline four different racial profiles: nationalist, oppressed minority, assimilationist, and humanist. The nationalist believes in taking pride in the differences of being African-American, the oppressed minority believes in taking a look at the similarities between other oppressed groups, the assimilationist takes a look at how similar African-Americans are to the rest of America, while the humanists focus more on the similarities between all humans.

Results indicated that students belonging to the nationalist group were less likely to have depressive symptoms as a result of discrimination. Conversely, students who identified more closely with assimilationists were more likely to feel the depressive symptoms brought on by discriminatory behavior. The authors suggest taking a look with a more longitudinal study to better understand the differences between the racial profiles and their role in buffering depressive symptoms based on discrimination (Lett & Wright, 2007).

This research suggests that one's identification to their racial/ethnic group may have an impact on the magnitude of negative effect that racial discrimination may have on an individual's

well-being. Racial/ethnic identity has emerged as a unique construct for exploration when studying racial discrimination. Future research on graduate students of color should examine racial/ethnic identity as it relates to burnout and racial microaggressions as explored in the current study.

In a review of literature on racial/ethnic identity and mental health, the authors point out a few different hypotheses (Yip et al., 2008). Buffering is the idea that the ethnic identity would protect a person of color from discrimination in terms of their mental health. There is also exacerbating, which is the direct counterpoint to buffering. Ethnic identity actually makes discrimination worse in terms of mental health. There is also a chance that age has a role in either buffering or exacerbating discrimination or ethnic identity. Also, the status of where someone is born may play a role in regard to ethnic identity and discrimination (Sue and Sue, 2003).

In a study exploring racial discrimination among Asian Americans (Yip et al., 2008), authors took into account socioeconomic status, education background, gender, age of immigration, etc. It was found that age and nativity played a role in ethnic identity and the perception of discrimination. The younger groups were found to have a lower ethnic identity while older groups had a higher ethnic identity. The perception of discrimination also declined with age. Ethnic identity acted as a buffer for those adults in the 41-50 age range while the other groups found ethnic identity to exacerbate discrimination (yip et al., 2008).

The authors suggest further research include more indicators of ethnic identity in surveys and interviews. They also suggest taking a more longitudinal approach to researching this area as to account for social era phenomenon. In regard to graduate training, racial/ethnic identity as a construct could be integrated into coursework, clinical experiences, and program curriculum

for all graduate students, as it points to an area of professional/personal growth on a level that could be meaningful for not only the students, but the faculty involved in facilitating the discussion.

Social Support

It is reported that social support is often gained from friends, colleagues in graduate school, as well as family (Clark et al., 2007). One of the types of social support, *sense of community*, focuses on the sense of belonging and togetherness. One's sense of community is may provide a buffer of sorts when facing difficult times and feelings of discrimination in graduate training.

Social support has also been referred to as the various types of support (i.e., assistance/help) that people receive from others and is generally classified into two (sometimes three) major categories: emotional, instrumental (and sometimes informational) support. Emotional support refers to the things that people do that make us feel loved and cared for, that bolster our sense of self-worth (e.g., talking over a problem, providing encouragement/positive feedback); such support frequently takes the form of non-tangible types of assistance. By contrast, instrumental support refers to the various types of tangible help that others may provide (e.g., help with childcare/housekeeping, provision of transportation or money). Informational support represents a third type of social support (one that is sometimes included within the instrumental support category) and refers to the help that others may offer through the provision of information.

While the present study will examine social support on a more global level, future research could include a closer look at the different categories as individuals in the academic environment may rely on more informational or emotional support from their programs.

Burnout

Burnout is a psychological syndrome that can occur among individuals who work with others and has been defined as a syndrome of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion that begins gradually and becomes progressively worse (Maslach & Jackson, 1981a). A key aspect of the burnout syndrome is increased feelings of **emotional exhaustion** – as emotional resources are depleted, workers feel they are no longer able to give of themselves at a psychological level. Another aspect of the burnout syndrome is the development of **depersonalization**, which is negative, cynical attitudes and feelings about one's clients. A third aspect of the burnout syndrome, reduced **personal accomplishment**, refers to the tendency to evaluate oneself negatively, particularly with regard to one's work with clients. According to Maslach and colleagues, high scores on the emotional exhaustion scale, high scores on the depersonalization scales and low scores on the personal achievement scale constitute burnout as measured by the MBI (Maslach et al., 1996).

Human service workers (e.g., counselors, other mental health workers), student affairs professionals, and educators who are engaged in work with people have traditionally been the primary focus of burnout research given the amount of human contact and emotional stress of their professions. Past research has also been largely conducted on White populations. In fact, in the development of the Maslach Burnout Inventory, there is no description of the role of race or ethnicity in burnout when discussing its demographic norms (Maslach et al., 1996).

The consequences are potentially very serious for workers, their clients, and the larger institutions in which they interact (Maslach & Jackson, 1981b). On an individual level burnout is a detrimental process that is related to physical exhaustion, headaches, insomnia, and increased use of alcohol and drugs, marital and family problems (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). At the

institutional level burnout can lead to a physical and psychological withdrawal, diminished quality of work, workplace conflict, job turnover, and low morale among students. Due to the rigors of graduate training, especially in the helping profession, burnout at the institutional level can be even more consequential to a student's experience in a training program. One significant consequence of burnout relevant to graduate training and applicable to the present study is the possible termination of a graduate student from their training program prematurely.

Demographic variables have been linked to the presence and/ or absence of burnout. Women have been found to score slightly higher than men on the emotional exhaustion subscale when examining sex differences and men higher on depersonalization and personal accomplishment (Cordes & Dougher, 1997). Specifically relevant to the present study is past research that promotes age, marital status, and social support as factors in the presence of burnout. Younger people have been found to be more prone to burnout; married people less prone than non- married individuals, not including partnered individuals or people in a committed relationship (Maslach et al., 1996) Social support was identified as a protective factor when considering experience with burnout, in that, a strong social support network can enable individuals with the ability to more effectively manage and cope with sever work demands (Maslach et al., 1996). Graduate student age, relationship status, and social support will be specifically examined in the present study.

Literature on burnout has explored other professions than counselors and mental health workers. There has been information provided on factors affecting student affairs professionals as well. Levels of burnout in the area of gender differences supported that of past findings across the two professional roles. More specifically in previous analyses on student affairs workers, women reported higher levels of emotional exhaustion and stress from job related activities than

men because they worked long hours and still had to juggle family responsibilities (Howard-Hamilton et al., 1998).

Maslach and Leiter (2008) examined early predictors of burnout in an effort to identify more preventive intervention strategies that could be employed in various job settings for employees identified to be at-risk. Their study revealed that people who are likely to actually shift toward burnout can be identified in advance by two indicators: an early warning sign of inconsistent scores and the tipping point experience of job–person incongruence. Significant to the present study is the area of job-person incongruence, which refers to the demands of the job exceeding the capacity of the individual to cope effectively, or a situation where the person’s efforts are not reciprocated with equitable rewards. Research on the graduate experience of students of color suggests a parallel between job-person incongruence and burnout and their experience in a training program. This parallel is most evident in the form of social and academic support while completing their degree. Themes such as insufficient faculty and peer support as well as experience with invalidation for accomplishments and efforts were identified as predictors of dissatisfaction with graduate training (Rogers & Molina, 2006).

Goals and Objectives of the Present Research

The present study aims to investigate the relationship between experienced racial microaggressions during graduate training and professional burnout among students of color. As indicated in previous research, burnout has been associated with various forms of negative responses to the job, including job dissatisfaction, low organizational commitment, absenteeism, intention to leave the job, and turnover (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Graduate training in the helping profession represents a unique setting in which the demands of direct service coupled with the coursework component can mirror that of a job setting. In this manner, burnout research

related to job performance, job satisfaction, and other job components could possibly be generalized that of the helping profession graduate programs.

The current research represents an important first step in a strategic approach to dealing with burnout as well as microaggressions in graduate training. The ability to identify developing problems early on, before they become more serious and pervasive, can enable timely, preventive solutions. It points to the possibility of being able to customize interventions to specific student populations.

The researcher predicts that graduate students of color in the helping professions are at high risk for burnout as a result of microaggressions experienced throughout their graduate training. Burnout not only has detrimental consequences on the graduate student at the training level, but on their experience once they enter profession. Implications for this study may be useful in assisting graduate departments in creating consciousness about racial/ethnic disparities and discrimination perceived by students, thus raising multicultural awareness among faculty, staff, and students regarding the nature and impact of such experiences on the student as well as the clients that will receive services.

This study may also have further implications regarding education, research, training, policy, and program development that are specifically geared towards building multicultural sensitivity and raising coping self- efficacy of students of color against discriminatory practices in order to maintain and complete their academic program and enter academia and/or clinical practice with greater success.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

This chapter describes the procedures used to investigate the present research. The discussion of research methodology focuses on the following components: the method of data collection and procedures, information on the sample, description of survey instrumentation, research design, data collection procedures, and data analysis used in this study.

Description of the Research Sample

The criteria for participation in the study included graduate students who self-identified as students of color (i.e. African American, Latino/a, Asian American/ Pacific Islander, Native American, Bi/Multi-Racial, and other minority racial/ethnic groups) that were currently enrolled in graduate training programs in helping professions identified as having direct practice components. This direct practice component was defined by the researcher as practica, internship, student teaching, assessment, and/or service provided to an agency or organization.

The researcher identified the following degree programs to be included in the study: Social Work, Counseling, Psychology (Clinical, Counseling, and School), and Education. Students were recruited from United States universities utilizing the masters, doctoral, and specialist Programs. Participants were not asked to identify their institution, only the region of the country in which it was located. The researcher identified four regions in which to classify graduate programs: South/Southeast, Midwest, North/Northeast, and West. Of the participants included in the final sample, no respondents indicated that they were enrolled in a Specialist or Certificate program, so this category was excluded from the analysis. A more detailed

description of the demographic information considered will be discussed in the description of survey instruments.

Description of Survey Instruments

A web-survey link was included an email announcing the details of the survey, researcher information, and IRB approval information. Participants were asked to access the survey link and read the informed consent statement provided before the survey could begin. Web survey included the combination of the following measures: the *Maslach Burnout Inventory –MBI* (Maslach, 1981), an adapted *Racial Microaggressions Scale* (Constantine, 2007). The *Social Provisions Scale-SPS* (Cutrona & Russell, 1987) and a *demographic questionnaire*. The sequence of these measures in the complete survey was counterbalanced to control for order effects.

Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) was used to measure aspects of participant burnout. The MBI consists of 22 questions that are divided into three subscales: Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Depersonalization (DP), and Personal Accomplishment (PA). Emotional Exhaustion is measured by nine items (e.g., "I feel emotionally drained from my work"), and measures the extent to which respondents report being emotionally overextended or exhausted by work. Depersonalization is measured by five items (e.g., "I feel I treat some friends as if they were impersonal objects"), and measures the extent to which there is an impersonal or uncaring response to the people one serves in the work environment. Personal Accomplishment is measured by eight items (e.g., "I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work"), measures feelings of competence and achievement, and is negatively correlated to burnout.

For the purposes of the present research, terms used were adapted to fit the characteristics of the participant make-up and research design. The term “job” was changed to “graduate program” or “practicum/internship/student teaching”. The terms “clients” and “work” remained the same as they were applicable to the present use of the instrument.

Because there is no overall burnout score, the three subscales should be examined only as separate components (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). Each item is rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (*Never*) to 6 (*Every Day*). Possible score ranges are 0 to 54 for EE, 0 to 30 for DP, and 0 to 48 for PA. High burnout is reflected in high scores on EE and DP and in low scores on PA. Maslach et al. (1996) reported Cronbach’s alphas of .90 for the Emotional Exhaustion scores, .79 for the Depersonalization scores, and .71 for the Personal Accomplishment scores. The MBI manual provides normative scores and suggested categorizations (low, moderate, and high) of subscale scores by selected demographic variables and professions. A more detailed discussion on the MBI score profile can be found in the results section of this paper.

The MBI is a well instrument used to measure burnout, and it has been cited for the strength of the three scales (Cordes, Dougherty & Blum, 1997; Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996). The MBI has consistently demonstrated stable factor structure, convergent, construct, and discriminant validity and is considered internally reliable.

Racial Microaggressions Scale

The Racial Microaggressions in Counseling Scale (RMCS) for the purposes of this study was adapted to include terms appropriate for examining graduate students experience while in a helping profession training program. The RMCS is a 10-item, 3-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (*This never happened*) to 2 (*This happened and I was bothered by it*). The RMCS

measures respondents' perceptions of racial microaggressions that they have experienced in the context of counseling, along with the perceived impact of these microaggressions on them. Scores for the RMCS can range from 0 to 20, with higher scores being associated with greater perceived number and impact of microaggressions (Constantine, 2007). The instrument used for the present study can be found in Appendix B.

Items developed by Constantine's (2007) study on microaggressions in counseling and (2007) study on microaggressions in supervision utilizing a checklist were combined, modified, and used to measure participants' perceived experience with microaggressions in their graduate training. In this study, the term "counselor" was replaced with "faculty", illustrating the various roles faculty play in a training program including major professors, course instructors, training directors, etc. In combining both instruments from Constantine's work, 15 total items were used in this scale, changing the score range to 0-30, with higher scores still being associated with greater perceived number and impact of microaggressions.

Questionnaire format to assess the presence of racial microaggressions was originally adapted from the twelve categories identified in the Constantine (2007) study on racial microaggressions in counseling. Twelve racial microaggression categories were identified from focus group discussions aimed to examine perceived racial microaggressions (Constantine, 2007). These microaggressions included (a) colorblindness, (b) overidentification, (c) denial of personal or individual racism, (d) minimization of racial– cultural issues, (e) assignment of unique or special status on the basis of race or ethnicity, (f) stereotypic assumptions about members of a racial or ethnic group, (g) accused hypersensitivity regarding racial or cultural issues, (h) the meritocracy myth, (i) culturally insensitive treatment considerations or

recommendations, (j) acceptance of less than optimal behaviors on the basis of racial– cultural group membership, (k) idealization, and (l) dysfunctional helping or patronization.

Social Provisions Scale (SPS)

Social support is well established as a protective factor. The Social Provisions Scale (SPS) was used to examine the degree to which participant’s social relationships provide various dimensions of social support. This instrument was also chosen because it is based in theory, has good psychometric properties, contains simply worded questions, and is relatively brief.

The instrument contains 24 items, four for each of the following: Attachment (emotional closeness), Social Integration (a sense of one’s belonging to a group of friends), Reassurance of Worth (recognition of one’s competence), Reliable Alliance (assurance that others can be counted on in times of stress), Guidance (advice or information), and Opportunity for Nurturance (providing assistance to others). Half of the items describe the presence of a type of support and the others describe the absence of a type of support. According to Weiss (1974), these provisions reflect what we receive from relationships with other people.

Using the Social Provisions Scale, scores can be derived for each of the six provisions as well as for a global social support score. Research previously conducted has supported the reliability and validity of the Social Provisions Scale, as well as the factor structure of the measure (Cutrona & Russell, 1998). Scores on the measure have been shown to predict adaptation to stress among a wide variety of populations, including post-partum women, spouses of cancer patients, the elderly, and individuals working in stressful job situations.

Demographic Questionnaire

The Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix) includes questions for the participant to answer regarding her or his personal identification (e.g., racial and/or ethnic self-identification,

gender, age, relationship status), Type of graduate degree program and degree type (i.e. Master's, Doctorate), US region that graduate institution is located, years spent in graduate program, hours spent engaged in leisure and self-care activities weekly, hours spent completing school related work weekly, and previous experience with racial/ethnic discrimination.

Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

Validity

Internal validity addresses whether the treatment produced a change in the outcome. Since there was no treatment in this study there were no foreseeable threats to internal validity. External validity refers to the variables, populations, and settings, to which the results be generalized. The characteristics of the participants and the volunteers who agreed to participate in this study may not be representative of all graduate students of color. Furthermore, since this study was conducted at the response of participants recruited through collegial and professional assistance, the results may not be generalizable to other populations, settings, or regions (Isaac & Michael, 1997).

Reliability

Reliability refers to the accuracy of measurement by a test (Isaac & Michael, 1997). Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed to assess the reliability of the instruments utilized in this study. More detailed information regarding reliability of the study instruments can be found in the results section of this paper.

Procedures

Participants were recruited via various student involved email listservs nationwide. Student participants were informed of the opportunity to voluntarily participate in the study email correspondence. A web-based survey using an online survey program was utilized to provide more opportunity for the researcher to gather a more diverse sample used. Participants

were informed via web survey email announcement, inviting them to participate in a study that would examine the possible effects of perceived racial microaggressions on their overall experience in their respective training programs.

Participants were asked to read and sign informed consent (time approximated: 5 minutes). They were then asked to complete online survey (time approximated: 20-25 minutes). There were no deceptive, embarrassing, or discomforting procedures. The complete process was suggested to have taken participants between 20-30 minutes. All participants were given the option to choose their location for online study participation. This could have included a computer lab, their office, their home, a coffee shop, etc.

Participants were made aware that their participation was voluntary, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without consequences of any kind, and that they could skip any item they wish. However, participants were made aware that Internet communications are insecure and there is a limit to the confidentiality that can not be guaranteed due to the technology itself. Participants were then given the option to print and mail the survey to the researchers if uncomfortable with the limits to internet confidentiality. They were also provided with the phone number /email contact of the principal investigator if questions regarding study participation arise that were not addressed in the informed consent materials.

Proposed Analysis for Research Questions

Research Question 1

To what degree does Social Support predict one's perception/experience of Racial Microaggressions during graduate training?

To investigate the effect of a predictor variable on a criterion variable, a linear regression analysis was used. The predictor variable for this analysis was social support, and the criterion variable was racial microaggressions (as measured by an assigned total score).

Research Question 2

To what degree does perceived Racial Microaggressions predict levels of Burnout (Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment)?

To investigate the effect of a predictor variable on multiple criterion variables, a multiple regression analysis was used. The predictor variable for this analysis was racial microaggressions. The criterion variables were Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment.

Research Question 3

To what degree does social support predict levels of burnout (Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment)?

To investigate the effect of a predictor variable on multiple criterion variables, a multiple regression analysis was used. The predictor variable for this analysis was social support. The criterion variables were Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment.

Research Question 4

Is there a relationship between race/ethnicity, gender, graduate degree program, and other demographic variables and experience with racial microaggressions and burnout (as measured by the Emotional Exhaustion subscale)?

Means for each domain were obtained utilizing one way ANOVA. A Pearson Product-Moment correlation was also used to determine whether there was a statistically significant relationship between the variables.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study examined (a) the demographic variables that may influence the level of perceived microaggressions, social support, and burnout in graduate students of color in identified helping professions, and (b) the impact that microaggressions and social support have on levels of burnout. This chapter will provide information about the results of the analyses conducted for this study. Analysis of the demographic data is presented first, so that a description of the sample can be best illustrated. Next, a preliminary statistical analysis is presented, participant profiles for the three instruments administered using the demographic variables most relevant to the research questions: Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Graduate Degree Program type. Lastly, the results of the research questions and hypotheses tested are presented, with implications provided through the addition of a supplemental research question and analysis.

Sample Size

The optimal sample size for the quantitative data was determined by using an a priori power analysis. The power analysis involved three variables: power, an alpha coefficient, and an effect size (Mukhopadhyay, 2005). Multiple Regression sample size tables were used to determine the sample size for the current study. Using an alpha of .05, power of 80%, and an effect size of .15, it was determined that approximately 76 participants were needed for inclusion in this study utilizing the proposed statistical analyses.

Study participants were excluded from analysis if they indicated that they were not currently enrolled in a graduate training program. The researcher identified 5 participants who

were not currently enrolled, and they were excluded. Participants who did not include any demographic information, or did not respond completely to at least one instrument (n =7) were also excluded from analysis. After exclusion of non-qualified respondents, the sample included 106 participants.

Demographic Data

Participants were 106 graduate students (81 female, 25 male) from various US institutions. Researcher classified graduate institutions using four regions, and participants represented the following: 16% from the Midwest (n= 17), 46% from the South/Southeast (n=48), 14% from the East/Northeast (n=15), and 24% from the West (n=25). Participants indicated that they had been enrolled in their current graduate program years ranging from 1-7 years (M=3.00, SD=1.49). Eighty percent of participants (n= 85) indicated that they had or were currently completing the direct practice component of their respective program, while 15% (n= 16) indicated that they had not yet started this component. Five percent (n=5) indicated their graduate program did not include a direct practice component in the curriculum. These participants are believed to be the individuals representing the “Other” category in the degree program classification, as those programs are more research focused than practice oriented.

Participants identified themselves as 46% African Americans (38 females, 10 males), 22% Latino/as (19 females, 4 males), 18% Asian American (10 females, 7 males), 4% American Indian/Alaska Native (3 females, 0 males), 6% Bi/Multiracial (6 females, 0 males), and 5% as “other” (5 females, 3 males). The “other” category included mostly participants who were from underrepresented groups but who did not identify as U.S. minority groups (e.g. “Black African-not African American”, “West Indian”, “Armenian”, and “Israeli”). Table 4.1 provides layout of participants by race/ethnicity.

Table 4.1
Participants by race/ethnicity

| Race/Ethnicity | N | Percentile |
|-------------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| African American | 48 | 46% |
| Latino/a | 23 | 22% |
| Asian American | 17 | 18% |
| American Indian/Alaska Native | 3 | 4% |
| Biracial/ Multiracial | 6 | 6% |
| Other | 8 | 5% |

(N=105, 1 participant did not identify race/ethnicity)

In regards to relationship status, 42% of participants (n=45) identified as Single/Never married, 40% (n=42) as Married/Partnered, 13% (n= 14) in a Committed Dating relationship, and 5% (n= 5) as Divorced/Separated.

Participants ranged from 22 to 49 years (M=29.04, SD=4.58). In terms of degree programs, 49% of participants were in Counseling Psychology (n=52), 5% in Social Work (n=5), 17% in Clinical Psychology (n=18), 5% in Education (n=6), 7% in School Psychology (n=8), 9% in Counseling (n=10), and 7% in “Other programs” (n=7). The “other” category included participants from programs such as “Child and Family Development”, “Educational Psychology”, “Experimental Psychology”, “Family Relations”, “Forensic Psychology”, “Social Psychology”, and “Vocational Education”. Table 4.2 provides detail on participants by graduate degree program.

Table 4.2
Participants by graduate degree program

| Graduate Degree Program | <i>n</i> | Percentile |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Counseling Psychology | 52 | 49% |
| Social Work | 5 | 5% |
| Clinical Psychology | 18 | 17% |
| Education | 6 | 5% |
| Counseling | 10 | 9% |
| School Psychology | 8 | 7% |
| Other | 7 | 7% |

Eighty six percent of participants identified as being in Doctoral programs (n=91), while 14% (n = 15) indicated that they were in Master’s programs. An item was included on the demographic questionnaire for participants to identify if they were working on Specialist/Certificate degrees, but no participants indicated as such.

Thirty-six percent of participants (n=38) indicated that they were employed in non-school related positions in addition to their academic obligations, while 64% (n=67) only worked in school-funded positions (i.e., assistantships, grant-funding). Of the individuals that indicated that they were working outside of school, 27 participants indicated that they were working part-time, while 10 were employed at full-time status. 58% of participants (n=61) indicated that they currently held a graduate, teaching, or research assistantship, while 42% (n= 25) indicated that they did not currently have an assistantship.

Fourteen percent of participants (n=15) indicated that they engaged in *0-3 hours* of leisure/recreational and self- care activities on a weekly basis. 53% (n=56) indicated they engaged in these activities *4-7 hours* per week, 19% (n=20) at *8-10 hours* per week, and 14% (n=15) indicated that they spent *11 or more hours* engaging in these activities.

In terms of time spent completing course assignments, papers, projects, research and/or other graduate program related work, 9% of participants (n=9) indicated that they spent *0-4 hours* on these activities per week, 11 % (n=12) at *5-8 hours* a week, 27% (n=29) at *9-12 hours* a week, and 52% (n=55) at *13 or more hours* a week.

The researcher included a category asking participants to identify the extent to which they had experienced racial/ethnic discrimination in any setting prior to entering their current graduate program. These settings could included work, community, social, church, previous academic programs, and so forth. 12% of participants (n= 13) indicated that they had experienced *no* racial/ethnic discrimination prior to their current graduate program, 47% (n=50) indicated that they had experienced *minimal* discrimination, 26% (n= 28) indicated that they had experienced *moderate* discrimination, while 14% of participants (n=15) indicated that they had *many* previous experiences with racial/ethnic discrimination.

Summary of Demographic data

Descriptive analysis (based on comparison of means) indicated that the model participant was female, single/never married, Counseling Psychology, and a doctoral student attending school in the South/Southeast region of the United States. The majority of participants had been in their current programs for on average 3 years. On average, most participants were in the process of or had already completed the practica/direct service component of their programs and were not employed in non-school related positions (in addition to school funded positions). Most participants indicated that they engaged in 4-7 hours a week of leisure/self- care activities, and 13 or more hours a week of academic assignments, projects, and other work. Lastly, the majority of participants had experienced a moderate level of racial discrimination prior to entering their current graduate programs.

Preliminary Statistical Analysis

The table below (4.3) provides information on means, standard deviations, and Cronbach alpha levels of each of the scales used in the present research. Burnout, as measured by Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment is identified as the dependent variables, while social support (as measured by the summation of the six subscales) and racial microaggressions are identified as the primary predictor variables.

Table 4.3
Means, standard deviations, and Cronbach alpha levels of instrument scales

| Variables | Number of Items | Possible Score Range | M | SD | α |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------|-----|----------|
| <i>Dependent Variables</i> | | | | | |
| Emotional Exhaustion | 9 | 0-54 | 21.28 | 8.4 | .77 |
| Depersonalization | 5 | 0-30 | 12.03 | 4.3 | .74 |
| Personal Accomplishment | 8 | 0-48 | 27.58 | 6.2 | .80 |
| <i>Primary Predictors</i> | | | | | |
| Microaggressions | 15 | 0-30 | 11.90 | 8.6 | .91 |
| Social Support Total | 24 | 0-96 | 83.29 | 8.3 | .90 |
| Attachment | 4 | 0-16 | 14.45 | 1.9 | .81 |
| Social Integration | 4 | 0-16 | 13.59 | 1.8 | .73 |
| Reassurance of Worth | 4 | 0-16 | 13.67 | 1.8 | .65 |
| Reliable Alliance | 4 | 0-16 | 14.62 | 1.7 | .73 |
| Guidance | 4 | 0-16 | 14.36 | 1.9 | .81 |
| Opportunity for Nurturance | 4 | 0-16 | 12.59 | 2.3 | .70 |

Descriptive Statistics

Burnout

Burnout was measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Maslach, 1981). Participants received a score for each of the three subscales of the MBI. Mean scores and measure of standard deviation were as follows: Emotional Exhaustion (M=21.28, SD= 8.4), Depersonalization (M=12.03, SD= 4.3), and Personal Accomplishment (M=27.58, SD= 6.2). In the MBI manual, authors suggest the use of score ranges for each subscale to define three levels of burnout (low, moderate, and high). These ranges were created after the initial study using the scale was conducted (Maslach et al., 2001). The table below (4.4) provides score ranges for these classifications. For the purpose of the present study, participants’ score ranges will be compared to the ranges identified in the MBI manual.

Table 4.4
Score ranges for burnout subscales

| | Low | Moderate | High |
|-------------------------|-----|----------|------|
| Emotional Exhaustion | <13 | 14-20 | >20 |
| Depersonalization | <4 | 5-7 | >8 |
| Personal Accomplishment | >34 | 33-29 | <28 |

Emotional Exhaustion

Race/Ethnicity

The Emotional Exhaustion subscale mean scores were assessed by participants race/ethnicity, these scores were as follows: African American (n=46, M=20.50, SD=9.3, High Range), Latino/a (n=23, M=22.87, SD=6.0, High range), Asian American/ Pacific Islander (n=15, M=22.67, SD= 7.8, High range), American Indian/Alaskan Native (n=2, M=16.00,

SD=7.1, Moderate Range), Biracial/Multiracial (n=6, M=17.17, SD=6.2, Moderate Range), and Other (n=8, M=12.87, SD=11.2, Low range).

Gender

Emotional Exhaustion scores were assessed by gender and were as follows: Male (n=23, M=21.79, SD= 9.1, High Range), Female (n=77, M=21.11, SD=8.2, High Range).

Graduate Degree Program

Emotional Exhaustion scores assessed by graduate degree program were as follows: Social Work (n=5, M=21.60, SD=13.4, High Range), Education(n=5, M=22.20, SD=11.7, High Range) , Counseling (n=8, M=21.44, SD=8.8, High Range) , Clinical Psychology (n=18, M=17.78, SD= 6.6, Moderate Range), Counseling Psychology (n=49, M=22.53, SD=8.1, High Range), School Psychology (n=8, M=22.37, SD= 6.5, High Range), and Other (n=7, M=19.14, SD=9.4, Moderate Range).

Depersonalization

Race/Ethnicity

The Depersonalization subscale mean scores were assessed by participants race/ethnicity, these scores were as follows: African American (n=46, M=11.41, SD=5.4, High Range), Latino/a (n=23, M=12.65, SD=2.55, High Range), Asian American/ Pacific Islander (n=15, M=11.47, SD= 4.2, High Range), American Indian/Alaskan Native (n=2, M=11.50, SD=.7, High Range), Biracial/Multiracial (n=6, M=13.17, SD=1.5, High Range), and Other (n=8, M=14.00, SD=2.9, High Range).

Gender

Depersonalization scores were assessed by gender and were as follows: Male (n=23, M=12.75, SD= 4.5, High Range), Female (n=77, M=11.81, SD=4.2, High Range).

Graduate Degree Program

Depersonalization scores assessed by graduate degree program were as follows: Social Work (n=5, M=11.80, SD=5.06, High Range), Education(n=5, M=8.20, SD=7.7, High Range), Counseling (n=8, M=12.11, SD=4.8 , High Range), Clinical Psychology (n=18, M=12.39, SD=2.0, High Range), Counseling Psychology (n=49, M=12.12, SD= 4.4, High Range), School Psychology (n=8, M=13.75, SD=4.3, High Range), and Other (n=7, M=11.42, SD=3.8, High Range).

Personal Accomplishment

Race/Ethnicity

The Personal Accomplishment subscale mean scores were assessed by participants race/ethnicity, these scores were as follows: African American (n=46, M=26.56, SD=7.3, High Range), Latino/a (n=23, M=28.22, SD=4.8, High Range), Asian American/ Pacific Islander (n=15, M=28.20, SD= 5.2, High Range), American Indian/Alaskan Native (n=2, M=22.00, SD=12.7, High Range), Biracial/Multiracial (n=6, M=29.00, SD=2.3, Moderate Range), and Other (n=8, M=31.12, SD=4.4, Moderate Range).

Gender

Personal Accomplishment scores were assessed by gender and were as follows: Male (n=23, M=27.87, SD= 5.8, High Range), Female (n=77, M=27.49, SD=6.3, High Range).

Graduate Degree Program

Personal accomplishment scores assessed by graduate degree program were as follows: Social Work (n=5, M=26.80, SD=7.8, High Range), Education(n=5, M=25.20, SD= 9.2, High Range), Counseling (n= 8, M= 28.67, SD= 5.8, High Range), Clinical Psychology (n=18, M=28.72, SD=4.1, High Range), Counseling Psychology (n=49, M=28.18, SD=5.8, High

Range), School Psychology (n=8, M=27.12, SD=7.7, High Range), and Other (n=7, M= 21.86, SD=7.5 , High Range).

Burnout Results Summary

Results of the analysis on burnout indicated that in regards to race/ethnicity, Latino/as scored highest in the subscale Emotional Exhaustion (M=22.87), the *Other* category of participants scored highest on Depersonalization, and Biracial/Multiracial participants scored highest on Personal Accomplishment (M=29.00). In regards to gender, males had higher mean scores on all aspects of the MBI: Emotional Exhaustion (M=21.79), Depersonalization (M=12.75), and Personal Accomplishment (M=27.87). In regards to graduate degree program, Counseling Psychology ranked highest in Emotional Exhaustion (M=22.53), School Psychology on Depersonalization (M=13.75), and Clinical Psychology on Personal Accomplishment (M=28.72). In summary, Latino individuals, males, and students from Counseling Psychology programs report the highest levels of burnout.

It is important to note that there was little distinction between mean scores across all groups, as each racial/ethnic category, gender, and degree program ranked on average in the high range across all burnout subscales. Table 4.5 provides mean scores for the three levels of burnout as reported by race/ethnicity, gender, and graduate degree program.

Table 4.5

Burnout mean scores by participant race/ethnicity, gender, and graduate degree program

| Burnout | <i>n</i> | Emotional Exhaustion | | Depersonalization | | Personal Accomplishment | |
|---------------------------------|----------|----------------------|------|-------------------|-----|-------------------------|------|
| | | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD |
| <i>Race/Ethnicity</i> | | | | | | | |
| African American | 46 | 20.50 | 9.3 | 11.41 | 5.4 | 26.56 | 7.3 |
| Latino/a | 23 | 22.87 | 6.0 | 12.65 | 2.5 | 28.22 | 4.8 |
| Asian American/Pacific Islander | 15 | 22.67 | 7.8 | 11.47 | 4.2 | 28.20 | 5.2 |
| American Indian/Alaskan Native | 2 | 16.00 | 7.1 | 11.50 | 0.7 | 22.00 | 12.7 |
| Biracial/Multiracial | 6 | 17.17 | 6.2 | 13.17 | 1.5 | 29.00 | 2.3 |
| Other | 8 | 12.87 | 11.2 | 14.00 | 2.9 | 31.12 | 4.4 |
| <i>Gender</i> | | | | | | | |
| Male | 23 | 21.79 | 9.1 | 12.75 | 4.5 | 27.87 | 5.8 |
| Female | 77 | 21.11 | 8.2 | 11.81 | 4.2 | 27.49 | 6.3 |
| <i>Graduate Degree Program</i> | | | | | | | |
| Social Work | 5 | 21.60 | 13.4 | 11.80 | 5.1 | 26.80 | 7.8 |
| Education | 5 | 22.20 | 11.7 | 8.20 | 7.7 | 25.20 | 9.2 |
| Counseling | 8 | 21.44 | 8.8 | 12.11 | 4.8 | 28.67 | 5.8 |
| Clinical Psychology | 18 | 17.78 | 6.6 | 12.39 | 2.0 | 28.72 | 4.1 |
| Counseling Psychology | 49 | 22.53 | 8.1 | 12.12 | 4.4 | 28.18 | 5.8 |
| School Psychology | 8 | 22.37 | 6.5 | 13.75 | 4.3 | 27.12 | 7.7 |
| Other | 7 | 19.14 | 9.4 | 11.42 | 3.8 | 21.86 | 7.5 |

Racial Microaggressions

Participants' experience with racial microaggressions was measured using an adapted version of the Racial Microaggressions in Counseling Scale (RMCS) (Constantine, 2007).

Participants received an overall score for the scale, which included a possible range of 0-30.

Higher scores (>10) are associated with greater number of experiences with microaggressions.

Mean score for the overall sample was 11.90, SD= 8.6. No range classifications were offered in the creation of the RCMS. Future research could include a more detailed classification and subsequent interpretation of scale scores.

Racial Microaggressions and Race/Ethnicity

Mean scores were also assessed by participants race/ethnicity, these scores were as follows: African American (n=46, M=15.85, SD=8.7), Latino/a (n=23, M=10.90, SD=7.6), Asian American/ Pacific Islander (n=15, M=14.61, SD= 10.2), American Indian/Alaskan Native (n=2, M=21.50, SD=.70), Biracial/Multiracial (n=6, M=10.00, SD=4.8), and Other (n=8, M=12.87, SD=11.2).

Racial Microaggressions and Gender

Racial microaggression mean scores were assessed by participant's gender, these scores were as follows: Male (n=23, M=8.33, SD= 7.3), Female (n=77, M=12.67, SD=8.8).

Racial Microaggressions and Graduate Degree Program

Racial microaggression scores assessed by graduate degree program were as follows: Social Work (n=5, M=9.60, SD=7.6), Education(n=5, M=6.00, SD= 5.6), Counseling (n= 8, M= 10.25, SD= 10.2), Clinical Psychology (n=18, M=10.82, SD=8.7), Counseling Psychology (n=49, M=12.57, SD=8.9), School Psychology (n=8, M=12.71, SD=9.2), and Other (n=7, M= 12.57, SD=8.6).

Summary of results on Racial Microaggressions

Results of the analysis indicated that African American participants, female participants, and participants from Counseling Psychology and *Other* graduate degree programs ranked highest in perceived microaggressions (M=15.85 , M=12.67, and M=12.57 respectively). There was a significant mean difference between females and males, suggesting that in contrast to females, males perceive microaggressions at lower levels than female students of color. Table 4.6 provides descriptive detail of the means and standard deviations for the microaggression mean scores.

Table 4.6
Mean scores and standard deviation for racial microaggressions by demographic variables

| Racial Microaggressions | <i>n</i> | M | SD |
|---------------------------------|----------|-------|------|
| <i>Race/Ethnicity</i> | | | |
| African American | 46 | 15.85 | 8.7 |
| Latino/a | 23 | 10.90 | 7.6 |
| Asian American/Pacific Islander | 15 | 14.61 | 10.2 |
| American Indian/ Alaskan Native | 2 | 21.50 | .70 |
| Biracial/Multiracial | 6 | 10.00 | 4.8 |
| Other | 8 | 12.87 | 11.2 |
| <i>Gender</i> | | | |
| Male | 23 | 8.33 | 7.3 |
| Female | 77 | 12.67 | 8.8 |
| <i>Graduate Degree Program</i> | | | |
| Social Work | 5 | 9.60 | 7.6 |
| Education | 5 | 6.00 | 5.6 |
| Counseling | 8 | 10.25 | 10.2 |
| Clinical Psychology | 18 | 10.82 | 8.7 |
| Counseling Psychology | 49 | 12.57 | 8.9 |
| School Psychology | 8 | 12.71 | 9.2 |
| Other | 7 | 12.57 | 8.6 |

Social Support

Social support was measured using the Social Provision Scale (SPS) (Cutrona & Russell, 1987). Participants received an overall score for the scale, which included a possible range of 0-96. Mean score for the total sample was 83.29, SD=8.3, indicating that on average, participants reported high levels of social support. Individual subscales for the SPS were assessed for means, standard deviation, and Cronbach alpha levels but were not considered as central to the primary research analysis. This report can be found in Table 2.0. Previous research has shown that the total score for the SPS provides more information as a predictor than the individual scales (Russell, 1998). Future research could include an analysis of the SPS subscales as predictor variables.

Social Support and Race/Ethnicity

Social support mean scores were assessed by participants race/ethnicity, these scores were as follows: African American (n=46, M=82.70, SD=9.0), Latino/a (n=23, M=84.22, SD=7.4), Asian American/ Pacific Islander (n=15, M=82.81, SD= 8.0), American Indian/Alaskan Native (n=2, M=84.50, SD=6.4), Biracial/Multiracial (n=6, M=87.67, SD=2.6), and Other (n=8, M=80.75, SD=10.9).

Social Support and Gender

Social support mean scores were assessed by participants' gender, these scores were as follows: Male (n=23, M=82.62, SD= 8.2), Female (n=77, M=83.50, SD=8.4).

Social Support and Graduate Degree Program

Social support scores assessed by graduate degree program were as follows: Social Work (n=5, M=81.25, SD=9.6), Education(n=5, M=74.33, SD= 4.0), Counseling (n= 8, M= 88.37, SD= 5.1), Clinical Psychology (n=18, M=84.23, SD=6.9), Counseling Psychology (n=49, M=82.88, SD=8.3), School Psychology (n=8, M=84.00, SD=9.9), and Other (n=7, M= 82.00, SD=11.32).

Summary of results on Social Support

Results suggest that in regards to social support African American (M=82.70), female (M=83.50) graduate students and Counseling Psychology programs (M=82.88) report the highest levels, with Education (M=74.33) rating the lowest of all programs observed. It is important to note that all of the scores were in the range of 74-88, and are considered in the High Range for perceived social support. Counseling Psychology also represented the majority of the research sample, and this may have been a factor in the mean range calculated. The main source of Reliable Alliance, which is the assurance that others can be counted on in times of stress, This

seems to be of high value for all demographic variables observed, this subscale of the measure of social support provided the highest individual subscale mean (M=14.62).

Table 4.7
Means and standard deviation for social support scores

| Social Support | N | M | SD |
|---------------------------------|----|-------|-------|
| <i>Race/Ethnicity</i> | | | |
| African American | 46 | 82.70 | 9.0 |
| Latino/a | 23 | 84.22 | 7.4 |
| Asian American/Pacific Islander | 15 | 82.81 | 8.0 |
| American Indian/ Alaskan Native | 2 | 84.50 | 6.4 |
| Biracial/Multiracial | 6 | 87.67 | 2.6 |
| Other | 8 | 80.75 | 10.9 |
| <i>Gender</i> | | | |
| Male | 23 | 82.62 | 8.2 |
| Female | 77 | 83.50 | 8.4 |
| <i>Graduate Degree Program</i> | | | |
| Social Work | 5 | 81.25 | 9.6 |
| Education | 5 | 74.33 | 4.0 |
| Counseling | 8 | 88.37 | 5.1 |
| Clinical Psychology | 18 | 84.23 | 6.9 |
| Counseling Psychology | 49 | 82.88 | 8.3 |
| School Psychology | 8 | 84.00 | 9.9 |
| Other | 7 | 82.00 | 11.32 |

Basic Assumptions Regarding Multiple Regression

Johnson and Christensen (2008) suggest that there are five basic assumptions related to multiple regression models: a) The relationship between the dependent variables and the independent variables is linear; b) errors are distributed with equal variance; c) errors are independent of one another; d) errors are normally distributed; and e) predictor variables are not correlated. This final assumption refers to multicollinearity. If multicollinearity occurs, particularly in studies with small sample sizes, it becomes more likely that a Type I error will occur. To determine whether multicollinearity exists between the independent variables of a

regression model, a common practice is to examine the correlations between the variables for coefficients greater than or equal to .80.

To investigate the multicollinearity in the presence of the regression models of this study that employed more than one independent variable, Pearson Product Moment Correlations were calculated and examined for scores equal to or greater than .80. None of the correlation values of the variables exceeded .80 indicating that the assumption of multicollinearity had not been violated in this study. A more detailed description of these correlation values can be found in Table 4.8, which illustrates the correlation matrices for the independent variables of race/ethnicity, gender, and graduate degree program type used to address Research Question 4 of this study.

Table 4.8
Correlation matrices for demographic variables

| Variable | Race/Ethnicity | Gender | Graduate Degree Program |
|-------------------------|----------------|--------|-------------------------|
| Race/Ethnicity | _____ | .029 | -.012 |
| Gender | .029 | _____ | -.037 |
| Graduate Degree Program | -.012 | -.037 | _____ |

Analysis of Primary Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1

To what degree does social support predict one’s perception/experience of Racial Microaggressions during graduate training?

Null Hypothesis 1.1: Social support as measured by the Social Provisions Scale (SPS) will not significantly predict perceived microaggressions in graduate students of color in identified helping professions as measured by the Racial Microaggressions Scale (RMS).

The regression model using this predictor variable did not yield significant results, $F(1, 87) = 2.15$, $p = .14$ ($p < .05$) indicating that the Social Support in this model did not significantly predict Racial Microaggressions. Based on these results, it is not possible to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 4.9
Regression analysis of social support and racial microaggressions

| Variable | B | t | F (1,89) | R(squared) | p |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|----------|------------|-----|
| Racial Microaggressions | -.162 | -1.46 | 6.887 | .072 | .15 |

Research Question 2

To what degree does perceived racial microaggressions predict levels of burnout (Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment)?

According to Maslach et al. (1981), the theoretical constructs of burnout and the associated scales on the MBI are assumed to be independent. As a result, three separate regression analyses were conducted, with each MBI scale used as the dependent variable racial microaggressions used as the predictor.

Null Hypothesis 2.1: Perceived racial microaggressions as measured by the Racial Microaggressions Scale (RMS) will not significantly predict Emotional Exhaustion in graduate students of color in identified helping professions as measured by Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI).

The regression model using this predictor variable yielded significant results, $F(1, 89) = 4.72$, $p = .03$ ($p < .05$) indicating that the predictor variable (microaggressions) in this model significantly predicted Emotional Exhaustion. Additional information about this multiple regression analysis can be found in Table 4.10.

Null Hypothesis 2.2: Perceived Microaggressions as measured by the Racial Microaggressions Scale (RMS) will not significantly predict Depersonalization in graduate students of color in identified helping professions as measured by Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI).

The regression model using this predictor variable yielded significant results, $F(1, 89) = 6.89, p=.01$ ($p < .05$) indicating that the predictor variable (microaggressions) in this model significantly predicted Depersonalization. Additional information about this multiple regression analysis can be found in Table 4.10.

Null Hypothesis 2.3: Perceived racial microaggressions as measured by the Racial Microaggressions Scale (RMS) will not significantly predict Personal Accomplishment in graduate students of color in identified helping professions as measured by Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI).

The regression model using this predictor variable did not yield significant results, $F(1, 89) = 1.28, p=.26$ indicating that the predictor variable (microaggressions) in this model did not significantly predict Personal Accomplishment. Additional information about this multiple regression analysis can be found in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10
Multiple regression analysis of microaggressions and burnout

| Variable | β | T | F (1,89) | R(squared) | p |
|------------------------------|---------|------|----------|------------|------|
| Emotional Exhaustion (EE) | .212 | 2.17 | 4.72 | .050 | .03* |
| Depersonalization (DP) | .098 | 2.62 | 6.89 | .072 | .01* |
| Personal Accomplishment (PA) | .075 | 1.13 | 1.28 | .014 | .26 |

Research Question 3

To what degree does social support predict levels of burnout (Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment)?

The predictor variable for this analysis was social support. The criterion variables were Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment.

Null Hypothesis 3.1: Social support as measured by the Social Provisions Scale (SPS) will not significantly predict Emotional Exhaustion in graduate students of color in identified helping professions as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI).

The regression model using this predictor variable did not yield significant results, $F(1, 87) = 1.76, p=.19$ indicating that the predictor variable (Social Support) in this model did not significantly predict Emotional Exhaustion. Based on these results, it is not possible to reject the null hypothesis. Additional information about this multiple regression analysis can be found in Table 4.11.

Null Hypothesis 3.2: Social support as measured by the Social Provisions Scale (SPS) will not significantly predict Depersonalization in graduate students of color in identified helping professions as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI).

The regression model using this predictor variable did not yield significant results, $F(1, 87) = 0.174, p=.68$ indicating that the predictor variable (Social Support) in this model did not significantly predict Depersonalization. Based on these results, it is not possible to reject the null hypothesis. Additional information about this multiple regression analysis can be found in Table 4.11.

Null Hypothesis 3.3: Social support as measured by the Social Provisions Scale (SPS) will not significantly predict Personal Accomplishment in graduate students of color in identified helping professions as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI).

The regression model using this predictor variable yielded significant results, $F(1, 87) = 5.914, p=.02$ indicating that the predictor variable (social support) in this model significantly predicted Personal Accomplishment. Additional information about this multiple regression analysis can be found in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11
Multiple regression analysis of social support and burnout

| Variable | β | t | F (1,89) | R(squared) | p |
|------------------------------|---------|-------|----------|------------|------|
| Emotional Exhaustion (EE) | -.141 | -1.33 | 1.77 | .020 | .19 |
| Depersonalization (DP) | .017 | .417 | .174 | .002 | .68 |
| Personal Accomplishment (PA) | .168 | 2.43 | 5.91 | .064 | .02* |

Research Question 4

Is there a relationship between race/ethnicity, gender, graduate degree program, and other demographic variables and experience with racial microaggressions and Emotional Exhaustion (as a measure of burnout)?

Means for each domain were obtained utilizing the ANOVA method. A Pearson Product-Moment correlation was also used to determine whether there was a statistically significant relationship between the variables.

Null Hypothesis 4.1: There is no significant relationship between race/ethnicity, gender, and graduate degree program and experience with racial microaggressions.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation indicated that there was a statistically significant relationship between gender and racial microaggressions ($p < .05$), but not between race/ethnicity and microaggressions ($p > .05$), or between graduate degree program and microaggressions ($p > .05$). Table 4.13 provides a summary of this analysis.

Table 4.12

Pearson product moment correlations for racial microaggressions and observed demographic variables

| Variable | Pearson Correlation | Significance Value (p) |
|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Gender | -.21 | .04 |
| Race/Ethnicity | .047 | .65 |
| Graduate Degree Program | .138 | .19 |

Null Hypothesis 4.2: There is no significant relationship between race/ethnicity, gender, and graduate degree program and experience with Emotional Exhaustion.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation indicated that there was not a statistically significant relationship between race/ethnicity, gender, or graduate degree program and Emotional Exhaustion. None of the correlations yielded values lower than the .05 level of significance. Table 4.13 provides a summary of this analysis. Based on these results, it is not possible to reject the null hypothesis for this research.

Table 4.13

Pearson moment correlation of emotional exhaustion and observed demographic variables

| Variable | Pearson Correlation | Significance Value (p) |
|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Gender | .035 | .73 |
| Race/Ethnicity | -.032 | .75 |
| Graduate Degree Program | .016 | .87 |

Supplemental Analysis

According to Johnson and Christensen (2008), hierarchical multiple regression is the preferred analysis when studying social support as a moderator, a variable that alters the strength and/or direction of the relations between a predictor and an outcome variable. A moderator effect, or buffering effect, is simply an interaction in which the effect of one variable depends on the level of another (Clark et al., 2009). Because the current study looked to examine the role of predictor variables on individual constructs, separate multiple regression analyses were run for each predictor and outcome variable. In addressing the unique concept of hierarchical multiple regression in regards to this study, a moderator effect model was used in addition to the analyses run to address the original research questions.

Adding an interaction term to the regression model was used for the present study as it could possibly expand the understanding of the relationships among the variables in the model and allows more hypotheses of interest to be tested. The presence of a significant interaction indicates that the effect of one predictor variable on the response variable is different at different values of the other predictor variable. It is tested by adding a term to the model in which the two predictor variables are multiplied.

Participants' experience of burnout was analyzed in separate regressions, using hierarchical entry in three steps. First the predictor variable was entered (racial microaggressions). Second, the proposed moderator variable was entered (social support). Finally, the interaction term was entered, representing the moderation hypothesis. The interaction term was calculated by multiplying the two predictor variables (racial microaggressions and social support).

Supplemental Research Question

To what degree does social support moderate the relationship between racial microaggressions and burnout?

The hypothesis that social support would moderate the relationship between racial microaggressions and burnout was tested with a hierarchical multiple regression using MBI levels as the criterion variable. The direct effects of the predictor (racial microaggressions) and proposed moderator (social support) variables were interpreted; and tested the significance of any moderator effects (the interaction of microaggressions and social support).

Results indicated that the interaction variable (social support x racial microaggressions) was significant as a predictor of burnout. The interaction of the two predictor variables accounted for 14% of the variance in Emotional Exhaustion, $F(3, 85) = 4.44, p < .01$, 9% of the variance in Depersonalization, $F(3, 85) = 2.67, p < .01$, and 10% of the variance in Personal Accomplishment, $F(3, 85) = 3.05, p < .01$. Table 4.15 provides a detailed description of results of the hierarchical regression analysis, used to analyze the interaction of the predictor variables.

Table 4.14
Hierarchical regression analysis results

| Variable | B | t | F (3,85) | R ² | p |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|----------|----------------|-----|
| Emotional Exhaustion (EE) | -.031 | -2.63 | 4.44 | .14 | .00 |
| Depersonalization (DP) | -.006 | -1.36 | 2.67 | .09 | .05 |
| Personal Accomplishment (PA) | -.006 | -.80 | 3.05 | .10 | .03 |

Adding an interaction term to a model also drastically changes the interpretation of all of the coefficients, meaning that the original regression equations and subsequent findings take on different meanings. This causes the findings to move away from the present study's original

research questions (analyzing social support/microaggressions and microaggressions/burnout separately). If there were no interaction term, social support would be interpreted as the unique effect of racial microaggressions on burnout. While social support when held constant did not prove to be a significant predictor of burnout, its interaction with microaggressions did.

The interaction indicates that the effect of racial microaggressions on burnout is different for different values of social support; this finding may provide further support for the original proposal of social support as a buffer for one's experience with microaggressions, as the level of social support may affect one's level of burnout. Future research would utilize the use of interaction variables when analyzing multiple predictors of burnout. This may be especially important when examining the multi-faceted nature of graduate training in clinical service programs as well as the multi-dimensional nature of one's racial/ethnic identity and experience of microaggressions.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the psychological well-being of helping profession students of color in relation to their experience with racial microaggressions throughout various aspects of their graduate training. This research aimed to specifically investigate the influence of perceived racial microaggressions and the impact of social support on student levels of professional burnout.

The research questions that guided this study were: (a) To what degree does Social support predict perceived racial microaggressions for graduate students of color training in the helping professions?; (b) To what degree does perceived racial microaggressions serve as a predictor of burnout (examining the three levels: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment)?; (c) To what degree does Social support predict burnout (examining the three levels)?; and (d) To What degree do demographic variables observed (race/ethnicity, gender, and type of degree program predict experience with racial microaggressions and burnout?

Descriptive analysis (based on comparison of means) indicated that the participant sample included mostly female, single/never married, Counseling Psychology doctoral students, attending school in the South/Southeast region of the United States, and had been in their current programs for on average 3 years. Participants identified themselves as 46% African Americans (38 females, 10 males), 22% Latino/as (19 females, 4 males), 18% Asian American (10 females,

7 males), 4% American Indian/Alaska Native (3 females, 0 males), 6% Bi/Multiracial (6 females, 0 males), and 5% as “other” (5 females, 3 males). The average age of participants was 29 years old. The majority of participants had completed the practicum/internship/direct service component of their graduate program. Most participants indicated that they spent over 13 hours per week completing academic assignments and school related projects, and between 4 and 7 hours engaged in leisure and self-care activities.

Discussion

In addressing the original research questions proposed in the present research, it is important to note the findings that were significant as well as those that were not, as each result provided meaningful information for the researcher in addressing the issue of racial microaggressions and burnout in graduate training.

Does social support predict experience of microaggressions in graduate training for students of color? Results indicated that social support was not a predictor of microaggressions. There are several reasons suggestions why this could have been the outcome. Participants were asked to rate their experience with microaggressions in regards to their graduate program, and survey questions included language that was specific to the students’ experience of faculty and clinical supervisors. However, the social support measure explored an overall sense of social support, validation, and did not specifically measure the student’s view of social support within their academic program. Students rated their sense of social support on relationship dynamics including familial, romantic, and professional. Consequently, some graduate students of color may feel somewhat unsupported and isolated in their present situations within their specific graduate programs; however, when they assess their overall psychological well-being, they do not experience the same feelings in relation to their world in general.

Future research could include the creation of a social support measure that specifically examines students' experience within their program. The researcher predicts that students who feel isolated, alienated, and "on the outside" of their academic programs will be at greater risk for experiencing the negative impact of microaggressions.

Does experience with racial microaggressions predict levels of burnout? Results indicated that experience with microaggressions was a significant predictor of burnout. Meaning, high incidents of microaggressions experienced during graduate training could suggest that students would experience higher levels of burnout and vice versa. Previous research has shown that consequences of microaggressions experienced include feelings of belittlement, anger, rage, frustration, alienation, and of constantly being invalidated (Constantine, 2007). Common comments from groups studied in previous research were they felt trapped, invisible, and unrecognized.

The term microaggressions can also refer to daily attacks on one's race/ethnicity that can be further described as unintentional slights that can create an atmosphere of invisibility, or hostility in the environment the person of color is a part of (Sue and Sue, 2003). As a result, an individual may experience a host of psychological and emotional difficulties including isolation, anxiety, and depression. A particularly salient effect of microaggressions for graduate students in the helping professions is *burnout*.

In a study on students and experiences with race-related stress in graduate programs, Kennebrew (2007) found that many participants felt positively about being their cultural identification and developed networks with other graduate students of color on their own, but were deeply affected by the acts of racism and related stress because the institution did not include diverse interests in their programming efforts, which is a form of cultural racism.

Similarly, with individual racism, students were aware of and reported incidents wherein they were intentionally excluded from various academic and social activities among departmental faculty and peers. Participants reported a heritage of perseverance because of their race, which provided them with the ability to overlook individual acts of racism.

This suggests that graduate students of color who more strongly identify with their racial/ethnic group and cultural identity might have more protection against the negative impact of racial microaggressions experienced in their programs. However, this does not minimize the occurrence of microaggressions within graduate training programs, which is still a critical issue. This concept points to the need for research that will address the prevalence of perceived microaggressions, so that academic departments will be made more aware of the issues and potential effects of these occurrences on a student's experience during their training. Departments should be held more responsible for addressing these issues head on, as research shows that over time, the experience of racial microaggressions can lead to long term, detrimental consequences (Constantine, 2007).

Also of importance is the fact that the present research did not make the distinction between a student's experience in their academic department and that student's experience at their university as a whole. Students are often engaged in courses, groups, meetings, and other academic and social situations that include students, professors, and administrators who are not related to their field of study. Their experiences with microaggressions in these situations could be very different than in department- specific situations. A student's psychological well-being within their department and program could also differ entirely from their feelings related to the wider campus community. In the larger environment, they may their ability to establish a support network wherein they could connect with other graduate students from similar racial

backgrounds who understand the race-related stressors they face whereas in their smaller program they could have the opposite experience. The reverse of this situation might be of issue as well. Students may feel well supported in their own academic programs, experience fewer microaggressions, and feel a sense of community with their peers and faculty, while outside of their programs in the larger university community they may feel extremely uncomfortable and unsafe.

Similarly this study did not address the unique components of the graduate programs beyond the program type (i.e., counseling, social work). It could be that qualities of these programs (e.g., the number of students of color, the number of faculty of color, the number of multicultural courses) could impact the perception of microaggressions.

Future research could examine this distinction with the hope of highlighting areas for individual programs to address as well as the university as a whole. This also suggests the need for a greater sense of collaboration between university administrators and academic departments to determine the best ways to create a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all students, especially students of color.

Does social support predict burnout levels? Results indicated that social support was not a significant predictor of burnout. Meaning, that one's level of social support would not affect the level to which they experienced burnout. This result was surprising to the researcher based on support from previous research that would suggest this not be the case. Social support has been shown to serve as a protective factor in preventing stress, fatigue, and consequently burnout regarding professional roles. Several hypotheses could attempt to suggest the reason for this discrepancy in the current study. The instrument used to measure social support may not have been the most effective measure in examining graduate training experience. Results indicated

that across demographic variables, participants reported high levels of perceived social support. In the same regard, participants also reported High Range levels of burnout. In accordance with the hypothesis that low levels of social support would predict high levels of burnout, the results for the current study are inconsistent. Researchers suggest further exploration of both the scale used to measure social support, as well as the implications behind the results found in the present study.

As stated earlier, a social support measure that explores aspect of a student's experience within their training program as opposed to their broad experience including their outer world might better research similar to the present study.

However, it is still believed that low levels of social support could contribute to one's experience with emotional exhaustion, as there are fewer buffers for the individual to utilize in steering away some of the impact of the intensity of graduate school. Future research would benefit from addressing the unique aspects of social support as a construct to examine its effects on levels of burnout.

Another possible issue potentially affecting the results of this study can be found in the present research is the instrument used to measure burnout. Maslach et al.(1996) used norming populations that included human service workers, educators, and college (undergraduate) students. To date, the MBI has not been normed on the graduate student population, much less on graduate students of color. The present research identified graduate programs that included a component of the training that involved professional experience in providing direct service to clients and agencies. The rationale for using the MBI (traditionally given to individuals engaged in post graduate work in their respective fields) was that graduate training involves the same type

of post-grad work, through the offering of practicum/internship/student teaching, and other experiences.

Future research would aim to look at instruments designed to explore the unique experience of graduate school training, a setting that combines the identities of student and professional simultaneously.

Is there a relationship between demographic variables such as gender, race/ethnicity, and type of degree program and experience with racial microaggressions and burnout (as measured by Emotional Exhaustion)? Results indicated that there was a significant relationship between gender and microaggressions but not race/ethnicity or graduate degree program and microaggressions. There was also a non-significant relationship between gender, race/ethnicity, and graduate degree program and Emotional Exhaustion. This means that there were virtually no differences between the demographic variables in regards to their effect on the experience of microaggressions and burnout. It was interesting that the present research found no significant relationship between gender and burnout, given the support offered by previous research. Research on the levels of burnout in the area of sex differences has previously supported the significance. More specifically in previous analyses on human service workers, women reported higher levels of emotional exhaustion and stress from job related activities than men because they worked long hours and still had to juggle family responsibilities (Howard- Hamilton et al., 1998). Based on mean scores for the present study, results indicated that men ranked slightly higher than women across all levels of burnout. This could have been specific to the participants who volunteered to participate in the study, and not necessarily to the larger population.

The availability of the sample could have affected the outcomes of the present research. Because the researcher used a convenience sample of students who were somewhat aware of the

purpose of the research (the language was changed to make the research topic seem broader), participant sample might not have been as generalizable as intended. Researcher had a pretty diverse sample of students from various degree programs across the United States, with varying degrees of experience in their program (measured in years). Also, because the MBI has not been normed on a wide range people “of color”, results should be interpreted with caution. Future research could include a more efficient manner in which to recruit the research sample so that possibly different relationship demographic variables could be observed.

Microaggressions affect students not only at the personal level, but at the institutional level. Minority students are not increasing their totals in graduate programs as steadily as the undergraduate population. There has been an increase in the number of minority faculty members in graduate programs, though the increase is marginal. There needs to be an increased vigilance in recruiting and retaining minority students in the graduate, master’s and doctoral programs. The researchers suggest developing support programs at the lower levels (undergraduate) that will continue through to the upper levels of the program (graduate training).

Previous research has examined the aspect of mentorship in graduate training to serve as a source of social support and buffer for the negative impact of microaggressions and psychological stress related to graduate training (Clark et al., 2008). Specifically similarities in ethnicity and race as well as similarities in values as a determining factor in a satisfaction have been explored. A review of the literature found limited findings in regard to the perception of the mentor/students relationship from mentors and students (Kim, 2002). Several studies have attempted to find what combinations of race and ethnicity would result in the greatest reported experience with regard to relationship satisfaction, interpersonal comfort, networking, psychosocial, and instrumental support.

Authors have found that the students of color reported they felt more psychosocial and instrumental support from and were more comfortable and satisfied with mentors who were also of color (Burrell, 1997). The mentors did not report feeling stronger toward the students due to racial or ethnic similarities. They also found that both mentors and students felt more overall satisfaction in the relationship when the two shared similar deeper level similarities. The present study suggests looking at cross gender mentor and student relationships as well as other contributing psychological mechanisms that may be at play.

Mentoring programs are being implemented in many institutions to attract graduate students of color and to retain them until graduation (Kim, 2002; Hughes, 1997). However, if these programs are ineffective, students will be unable to cope with the demands of the graduate school environment, to enhance their educational experience, and to facilitate successful adjustment to living and working in a campus setting. Some departments fail to encourage and allow them to become an integral part of programs, departments, and the university.

Unfortunately, some students are not aware of the (un)written rules, so they inadvertently depend on faculty and staff to teach them vital survival skills. Without these skills, students can experience loneliness, poor self-esteem, and value conflicts, which often influence students' decisions to leave their training programs, and sometimes change to a different degree program. Minimal mentoring efforts can lead to high dropout rates, so it may be necessary to schedule meetings and student receptions with faculty and key administrators to develop resources. These settings can incorporate informal discussions concerning departmental, college, and university culture and politics that should be avoided, roles of support staff/ resources, and procedures and protocol. These exchanges can decrease isolation and increase assimilation into the graduate school culture. Opportunities to interact with individuals throughout the community leave

students less dependent on the institutions for social and academic support. Institutions should work with community, business, and industry to identify available resources and support groups for students, as well as for their partners.

Limitations

The following were limitations in the design of this study related to the institution, sample, administration of the instruments, and participants' awareness of their experiences with race-related incidents while in their training program:

1. Some of the instruments used in this study were very lengthy, which appeared to be a deterrent to some students in completing them. Either fewer instruments or shorter instruments may increase the likelihood that students would participate and complete the research packet.
2. A large number of the research participants most likely attended universities that are predominately White (PWIs), based on the lower percentages of helping professional graduate training programs offered at Minority Serving Institutions. PWIs are known to have a culture of their own. In addition, these universities may have a history of problems with race relations, especially ethnic minority and White relations. Generalizations to other institutions and students attending those institutions may be inappropriate.
3. There is no specific assessment of personal or non-academic situations and factors that could contribute to students' experiences of racism, specifically microaggressions that could also contribute to psychological well-being while involved in graduate training.
4. Participants' prior interactions in academic training programs (undergraduate, Master's, etc) were not significantly considered as contributors to current training experiences.

5. Because there is no identified measure of being “of color”, and without a racial identity measure or indicator, a probable issue with this study is that the only measure of race/ethnicity is strictly categorical.
6. The outcome of the study may have been influenced by the fact that individuals volunteered to participate in the study. A randomly selected longitudinal design might offer the possibility to examine the experience of racial microaggressions and burnout over time.
7. A quantitative research design may not adequately examine the unique experiences of graduate students of color, as the self-report survey format may be limiting in exploring the wide range of multicultural and psychological wellness dynamics involved throughout a graduate training program. The researcher suggests that self-report questionnaires do not always adequately measure perceived microaggressions, social support, and levels of burnout.

Recommendations for future research

1. It is recommended that future researchers in this area administer research instruments at a time in the semester that may be less stressful than post midterm, spring semester, as the stress associated with this time may unduly influence responses to questions about psychological well-being.
2. It is recommended that future research in this area employ more qualitative methods of data collection as it appears that some of the impact of Racial Microaggressions or Burnout levels may not be best captured by quantitative methods. The researcher would suggest the utilization of focus groups for both students of color and White students as a

component of not only future research, but training program structure to better understand the needs and experiences of graduate students.

3. It is recommended that future research in this area include the perspective of helping profession graduate program faculty in regards to multicultural competence, microaggressions, and burnout among graduate students.
4. It is recommended that other aspects of students' lives such as spirituality, physical health, academic progress, commitments outside of school be examined to provide a fuller picture of how racial microaggressions are related to wellness and burnout, and perhaps shed light on specific aspects of graduate training.
5. Future research could also include a more detailed look at the intersection of the other demographic variables observed in the present study (i.e. relationship status, amount of self-care, and years in program) in an effort to further examine possible predictors of burnout. Demographic questionnaire could include questions that ask students to identify the scheduled length of time in years of their current graduate program in conjunction with a question asking how long they have been in the program.

Conclusion

This research represents the combination of personal reflection from the researcher's own experience and observation throughout her own graduate training, and a professional commitment to conducting meaningful research that is relevant to the community in which she is a part of. This research also represents the scholarly exploration of phenomena often discussed in peer groups, among faculty members, and in other small group settings, but not at the larger scale.

While results indicated that graduate students in the helping professions reported levels of burnout in the high range, the assumption that graduate students in other degree programs report

lower levels of burnout may not be entirely accurate. The researcher proposes; while taking into account her own graduate training experience, that all graduate students experience some levels of extreme stress or professional fatigue at different points throughout their academic journeys. An exact predictor may never be directly identified, as each individual student will have a unique combination of factors that causes them distress and feelings of being overwhelmed, but also motivates them to succeed and feel validated.

Some students of color may also internalize racial microaggressions at a different level than other students, thus impacting their own experience in the program. Though each student is unique, especially in the manner in which they travel through the “academic pipeline”, it is still essential that faculty members and academic departments take a more proactive stance in creating safe, inclusive, and nurturing environments for all students. The ability to truly create such an environment, across all aspects of the training, will depend on the willingness to explore potential factors and/or causes of student burnout, early termination from programs, dissatisfaction with training, and other negative impacts.

Students of color often look to faculty as mentors, role models, and illustrations of what their own roles may look like once they enter the field. It might also be of importance to examine the experience with racial microaggressions and burnout among faculty members, as their experience may have direct impacts on their interactions with students, clinical work, and other facilitative roles they may serve in with students. Howard- Hamilton and Delgado-Romero (2002) examined faculty of color and burnout in an attempt to shed light on the many aspects of one’s experience as a faculty member, taking into account the unspoken obligations, commitments, personal and professional values associated with being a person of color. Students

of color in graduate programs may observe faculty of color who are “burned out”, thus impacting their own views of the profession, which could be painted in an unfavorable light.

In summary, the purpose of the present study was to examine the impact of one’s experience with Racial Microaggressions on levels of burnout during helping profession graduate training. The findings of this study provided previously unknown information about the experiences of graduate students of color training to become helping professionals and also provided multiple areas for further research.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Examining Racial Microaggressions and Burnout in Graduate Students of Color in the Helping Professions

Welcome to “Examining **Racial Microaggressions and Burnout in Graduate Students of Color in the Helping Professions**,” a web-based survey designed to examine the psychological well-being of helping profession students of color as well as their experience with racial microaggressions (also understood as racial discrimination) throughout various aspects of their graduate training. Before taking part in this study, please read the consent form below and click on the "I Agree" button at the bottom of the page if you understand the statements and freely consent to participate in the study.

Informed Consent Form

Purpose of the Study:

This is a study in counseling psychology that is being conducted by Eliza Wells, doctoral student at the University of Georgia (Athens, GA) under the supervision of Dr. Edward Delgado-Romero of the University of Georgia (Athens, GA). The present study involves a web-based survey designed to examine the psychological well-being of helping profession students of color in relation to their experience with racial microaggressions throughout various aspects of their graduate training. This study has been approved by the University of Georgia Institutional Review Board (#2009-10579-0).

What will be done:

You will complete an online survey, which will take 20-30 minutes to complete. The survey includes questions about different aspects of your experience while in graduate school. We also will ask for some demographic information (e.g., age, race/ethnicity, gender, etc) so that we can accurately describe the general traits of the group of graduate students who participate in the study.

Risks or discomforts:

No risks or discomforts are anticipated from taking part in this study. If you feel uncomfortable with a question, you can skip that question or withdraw from the study altogether. If you decide to quit at any time before you have finished the questionnaire, your answers will NOT be recorded.

Confidentiality:

All responses are treated as anonymous, and in no case will responses from individual participants be identified. Rather, all data will be pooled and published in aggregate form only. Please note that Internet communications are insecure and there is a limit to the confidentiality that can be guaranteed due to the technology itself. While the researcher may ensure the confidentiality of a participant by utilizing standard procedures (pseudonyms etc.) when we write up the final research product, the researcher cannot ensure confidentiality during the actual Internet communication procedure. If you are not comfortable with the level of confidentiality provided by the Internet, please feel free to print out a copy of the survey, fill it out by hand, and mail it to me at the address given below, with no return address on the envelope.

Attn: Eliza Wells
214 Wilder Tower
Memphis, TN 38152

Decision to quit at any time:

Your participation is voluntary; you are free to withdraw your participation from this study at anytime without penalty. If you do not want to continue, you can simply leave this website. If you do not click on the "submit" button at the end of the survey, your answers and participation will not be recorded. You also may choose to skip any questions that you do not wish to answer.

Contact information:

The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project. Participants may contact the principal investigator, Professor Edward Delgado-Romero, Training Director of the Counseling Psychology program, Department of Counseling and Human Development Services, 402 Aderhold Hall, Athens, GA 30602, or at (706) 542-0500, or Eliza Wells, MS at elizaw@uga.edu. Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu.

If you are 18 years of age or older, understand the statements above, and freely consent to participate in the study, click on the "I Agree" button to begin the survey.

APPENDIX B

Email Announcement of Research Study

Dear Graduate Student,

Hello! My name is Eliza Wells and I am a doctoral Counseling Psychology candidate at the University of Georgia. You are invited to participate in a study that is examining the graduate training experiences of students of color in the helping professions. We are specifically looking at psychological well-being and race-related experiences throughout your training program. My doctoral advisor, Dr. Edward Delgado-Romero in the Department of Counseling and Human Development Services, The University of Georgia, is supervising this project. This research is approved by The University of Georgia Institutional Review Board, Office of Human Subjects, #2009-10579-0.

Through your participation in this web-based survey, you are contributing to research that intends to examine aspects of psychological well-being and issues of race and ethnicity of helping profession students of color in relation to their training experience. Anticipated results could suggest the need for program intervention that is specifically geared towards building multicultural sensitivity and raising coping self- efficacy of students of color as well as the overall training program.

To qualify for this study, you must:

- Be currently completing a graduate or specialist degree program in any areas of Counseling, Education, Social Work, or Psychology or have completed your program *within* the last two years.
- Self-identify as a person of color.
- Be in a graduate program that includes a practicum/ internship/ direct service or other practice component that is built into the training curriculum. This could involve clinical work, student teaching, ongoing service provided to an agency, and/or assessment work.

Below is a link to the online survey. Your responses will be kept completely confidential. The maximum time needed to complete the entire survey is approximately 25 minutes. The survey includes questions about different aspects of your experience while in your graduate program and within your department.

If you are interested in participating you can access the survey by clicking this link:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=9X9ZmZlftJFhPKrTWR12Lg_3d_3d

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to email me at emwells@memphis.edu or Dr. Edward Delgado- Romero at edelgado@uga.edu.

Thank you in advance for your participation. It is greatly valued and appreciated!

Sincerely,
Eliza Wells, MS, NCC
Counseling Psychology Doctoral Candidate
Department of Counseling and Human Development Services
University of Georgia

APPENDIX C

Demographic Information

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Gender | Male | Female | Transgender | | |
| Age | | | | | |
| Relationship Status | Single | Married/Partner ed | Divorced Widowed | In a committed relationship | |
| Number of People living in household | | | | | |
| Degree Program | Social Work | Education | Counseling | Clinical/Counseling Psychology | |
| Race/Ethnicity | African American | Latina/Latino | Asian American/ Pacific Islander | American Indian/Alaskan Native | Bi/Multi -Racial |
| Type of Graduate Program | Social Work | Education | Counseling | Counseling/Clinical Psychology | |
| Degree Sought | Master's | PhD | Ed.S | | |
| Time spent on leisure/recreational activities weekly | 0-3hrs | 4-7hrs | 8-10hrs | 10 or more hrs | |
| Do you hold a graduate/teaching/ or research assistantship? | YES | NO | | | |
| Do you engage in non-school related employment? | YES | NO | PART-TIME | FULL-TIME | |
| Academic Enrollment Status | Full-time | Part-time | | | |
| Type of Graduate Institution | Predominately White Institution (PWI) | Minority Serving Institution (i.e. Historically Black College) | | | |
| Experiences with racial discrimination prior to beginning graduate school | None | Minimal | Moderate | Many | |

APPENDIX D

Maslach Burnout Inventory

Please read each statement carefully and use the scale to indicate how often the statement applies to your work experience.

| 0 (Never) | 1 (A Few times a Year or Less) | 2 (Once a month or less) | 3 (A few times a month) | 4 (Once a week) | 5 (A few times a week) | 6 (Every day) |
|---------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
|---------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|

Statements:

1. _____ I feel emotionally drained from my work.
2. _____ I feel used up at the end of the work day.
3. _____ I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day in my graduate program and/or internship/practicum/student teaching.
4. _____ I understand how students/clients feel
5. _____ I treat some students/clients as if they were impersonal objects.
6. _____ Working with people all day is a strain for me.
7. _____ I deal effectively with the problems of students/clients.
8. _____ I feel burned out from my work.
9. _____ I am positively influencing other people's lives through my work.
10. _____ I am more callous toward people since I started this graduate program and/or practicum/internship/ student teaching.
11. _____ I worry that this graduate program is hardening me emotionally.
12. _____ I feel energetic.
13. _____ I feel frustrated by my practicum/internship/student teaching.
14. _____ I am working too hard in my program and/or in my practicum/internship/student teaching.
15. _____ I do not care what happens to some students/ clients.
16. _____ Working with people directly puts stress on me.
17. _____ I create a relaxed atmosphere for students/ clients.
18. _____ I feel exhilarated after working closely with students/ clients.
19. _____ I accomplish many worthwhile things in this graduate program.
20. _____ I feel like I am at the end of my rope.
21. _____ I deal with emotional problems easily.
22. _____ I feel students/ clients blame me for some of their problems.

APPENDIX E

Racial Microaggressions in Counseling Scale (adapted)

The statements below are intended to represent some of the situations or events that may have transpired over the course of your graduate training program. The term *faculty* may encompass several types of program faculty roles throughout the training program (i.e., advisors, professors, and all other faculty members in the academic department). The term *supervisor* includes graduate assistantship supervisors, as well as practicum/internship/student teaching supervisors. Using the scale below, please rate your program with regard to the following situations or events. Please note that the term “cultural” used in each of the statements refers specifically to racial or ethnic issues.

| 0 | 1 | 2 |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| This Never Happened | This happened, but didn't bother me | This happened and I was bothered by it |

1. My faculty/supervisors sometimes avoided discussing or addressing racial or cultural issues that I thought were important.
2. At times, my faculty/ supervisors were insensitive about my racial or cultural background(s).
3. My faculty/supervisors/peers sometimes denied or minimized having racial or cultural biases or stereotypes.
4. My faculty/supervisors may have thought at times that I was overly sensitive about racial or cultural issues.
5. My faculty/supervisors sometimes seemed unaware of the realities of race and racism.
6. My faculty/supervisors/peers sometimes seemed to have unconscious racial or cultural stereotypes about me.
7. My faculty/supervisors sometimes seemed to have some unconscious racial or cultural stereotypes about my clients/students/organizations.
8. I sometimes felt offended in class, supervision, or academic meetings because of my faculty members' racial or cultural insensitivity.
9. My faculty/ supervisors at times seemed to have stereotypes about my cultural group, even if they did not express them directly.
10. My faculty sometimes minimized the importance of racial or cultural issues in throughout various areas of the program.
11. The practicum/ student teaching supervisors often were very knowledgeable about racial and cultural issues with regard to direct service.
12. My faculty/supervisors at times seemed reluctant to discuss or process racial or cultural issues with me.
13. My faculty sometimes seemed hesitant to give me challenging feedback about my performance in the program, possibly for fear of being seen as racist or discriminatory.
14. My practicum/student teaching supervisors occasionally suggested culturally inappropriate conceptualizations or strategies that may not have fully considered my clients/students/organizations racial or cultural background(s).
15. In general, I experienced feelings of mistrust in my training program because of the racial or cultural biases or insensitivities.

Adapted from the Racial Microaggressions in Counseling Scale
Constantine (2007). Racial microaggressions against African American clients in cross-racial counseling relationships. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 54, 1-16.

APPENDIX F

Social Provisions Scale

Next, I'm going to ask you about your relationships with other people. In answering the following questions, think about your current relationships with friends, family members, co-workers, community members, and so on.

Please tell me how much each statement describes your situation by using these responses. So, for example, if you feel a statement is very true of your current relationships, you would respond with a 4 (strongly agree). If you feel a statement clearly does not describe your relationships, you would respond with a 1 (strongly disagree).

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| 1. There are people I know will help me if I really need it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. I do not have close relationships with other people. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. There is no one I can turn to in times of stress. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. There are people who call on me to help them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. There are people who like the same social activities I do. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. Other people do not think I am good at what I do. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. I feel responsible for taking care of someone else. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. I am with a group of people who think the same way I do about things. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. I do not think that other people respect what I do. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. If something went wrong, no one would help me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. I have close relationships that make me feel good. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. I have someone to talk to about decisions in my life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. There are people who value my skills and abilities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. There is no one who has the same interests and concerns as me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. There is no one who needs me to take care of them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. I have a trustworthy person to turn to if I have problems. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. I feel a strong emotional tie with at least one other person. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. There is no one I can count on for help if I really need it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. There is no one I feel comfortable talking about problems with. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20. There are people who admire my talents and abilities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 21. I do not have a feeling of closeness with anyone. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 22. There is no one who likes to do the things I do. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 23. There are people I can count on in an emergency. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 24. No one needs me to take care of them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

