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The Effects of Microaggressions on Self-Efficacy in the Workplace Among Latinos

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Marriage and Family Therapy

By

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to Dolores Carmona, Lauren Palius, and Linda Palius. You have given me the motivation and support to complete my education. I truly believe that without you very powerful and wonderful women in my life, I could have never accomplished this feat.
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ABSTRACT

The Effects of Microaggressions on Self-Efficacy in the Workplace Among Latinos

By

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Racial microaggressions are a relatively new form of racism and have been found to have negative effects on their victims. However, little research has been done with regard to microaggressions and their effects on the Latino community and this study had an even harder time locating research regarding microaggressions and their effects on self-efficacy. With the Latino community constituting such a large portion of the American population and workforce, it was thought that research in this area was long overdue.

This study analyzed the relationship between experienced racial microaggressions, their effects on the self-efficacy of Latinos, and how workplace racism might have increased the negative effects of the racial microaggressions. For this study, 102 students from a Southern California university were surveyed and a Multiple Regression statistical equation was used to analyze the data.

The researcher hypothesized that the experience of racial microaggressions would be negatively correlated with a person’s self-efficacy and that the experience of racism at work would increase the predictability of low self-efficacy due to microaggressions.
However, the results indicated a much different outcome. It was found that there was no relationship between the experience of racial microaggressions and self-efficacy and that the experience of racism at work had no significant change on that relationship. This is not to infer that Latinos do not experience racism and its negative effects. Instead, it might suggest that the interplay between microaggressions, self-efficacy, and work experience may be more complex than previously thought.
Chapter 1

Introduction

Picture a heavily populated area in California that is also an extremely diverse one. There, many races, cultures, religions, and people of various backgrounds intermingle and live within close proximity to one another. Now imagine a grocery store located in this area with a store clerk and a customer having a social exchange. This interaction occurs millions of times every day, but in this situation the element of racism is present. With a quiet voice and calm demeanor, a white customer makes it very clear to a Latino store clerk that his “bagging abilities” are subpar and that people “like him” don’t know how to bag because of where he comes from. In this example, the customer essentially pronounced that she and the clerk are racially different and attached a stereotype that affects that person and his workplace. Difference is the basis of most prejudice, and in fact, a study conducted by Orbe and Camara (2010) found that there is significant evidence to support this claim. However, what was evident in this exchange was the way in which the racism was delivered. It was not an outright racial epitaph accompanied with an angry face, elevated voice, or overt discrimination. Instead, it was said very calmly, in an almost innocuous manner. The store clerk experiences hours of shame, anger, and sadness following the interaction and he is unable to perform adequately. Unfortunately, this is not the first time that the clerk has experienced this and it is quite possible that he will in fact experience this type of event again. The phenomenon that this exchange illustrates is how racism manifested into a covert, subtle form of discrimination since the days of the Civil Rights Movement.
In America’s recent history, racism has transformed from overt acts of physical and verbal aggression to subtle, covert forms of racism referred to as microaggressions (DeVos, & Banaji, 2005). Although the use of microaggressions is often not outwardly hostile, this new form of racism can cause a number of problems in a victim. Symptoms range from psychological difficulties such as depression (Lambert, Herman, Bynum & Ialongo, 2009) to physiological problems such as high blood pressure (Fang & Myers, 2001). However, the most disturbing part of the microaggression is its possible long-term effects. Jennifer (2009) documented that victims of perceived racism can develop long-term psychological difficulties such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and that continual perceived racism will contribute to the maintenance of the PTSD symptoms.

Latinos in an effort to integrate into the American culture have experienced many instances of racism, but it is a phenomenon that has been hard to measure.

**Statement of the Problem**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2011), by March 2010, Latinos accounted for more than 16 percent (50.5 million people) of the total U.S. population. Their individual and collective experiences have been documented in a few overt racism research articles, but less has focused on the covert effects of microaggressions on Latino groups, with even less emphasis on the experiences had in the workplace.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to analyze the effects of racial microaggressions on the self-efficacy of Latinos and how this might impact their experience in the workplace. This is important because Latinos constitute the second largest workforce by race in
America (U.S. Census, 2010) and their ability to perform effectively and work in a safe environment can have a significant impact on the economy and society as a whole.

**Hypothesis**

The experience of racial microaggressions and perceived discrimination in the workplace will negatively affect the self-efficacy of Latino workers.

**Definition of terms**

Microaggression: brief behavioral, verbal, or environmental indignities, which commonly occur in daily interactions, can be intentional or unintentional, and convey derogatory and hostile insults towards an oppressed or minority group. There are three forms of microaggressions: microinvalidations, microassaults, and microinsults. (Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal & Esquilin, 2007)

Microinvalidation: actions that disregard, invalidate, and deny the feelings, thoughts, and internal or external experiences of minority groups. (Sue, Nadal, Capodilupo, Lin, Torino & Rivera, 2008) For example, a Pakistani couple receives bad service at a car dealership and then shares their experience with their white friends. The response from their friends is to “Not be so sensitive”. That response is negating the couple’s important and very real racial experience.

Microassault: humiliating verbal or nonverbal attacks that are meant to offend and upset the intended victim. (Sue et al., 2007) This is accomplished through actions such as calling someone a racial epithet, displaying racially insensitive insignias, or by outwardly avoiding people from a different racial or ethnic background. This form of microaggression is along the lines of more “traditional” racism. They are also more likely to be deliberate.
Microinsult: conveys insensitivity and impoliteness and demeans a person’s culture or racial identity. (Sue et al., 2007) The microinsult is subtle and often unknowingly committed by the perpetrator. References to programs such as affirmative action fall under this category. The premise of the insult being that a person of color could not have achieved a certain educational degree or employment position without government regulation.

Self-Efficacy: the belief a person has about their own abilities to accomplish a certain task. (Lunenburg, 2011)

Latino/s: in this paper Latino/a will refer to persons whom were either born, or have ancestral roots, in South America, Central America, Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Dominican Republic.

Acculturation: a cultural modification of a person or group by adapting to or borrowing characteristics from another culture (Merriam-Webster, 2012). Acculturation could be specifically sought by the individual or group, or can happen organically as a result of prolonged contact to the hosting culture.

Marginalized: refers to a person or group that is not fully accepted by the culture which they are trying to assimilate into or by the culture that makes up their racial and ethnic background.

Lingualism: as it is used in this paper, lingualism will refer to the legislation and rhetoric that calls for the usage of English Only (EO) policies in American schools and in the American workforce.
Bridge to remaining Chapters

The chapters have been organized so that in chapter two I will discuss the three variables that this study will be analyzing: Latinos, microaggressions, and self-efficacy. Next, chapter three will review the methods used to recruit the participants, how the data was collected, and which instruments were used to measure microaggressions and self-efficacy. Chapter four will present the statistical analysis of the data collected. Finally, in chapter five I will discuss the implications of the results and the limitations of the study.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Latinos

The Latino population is the largest minority group in America (U.S. Census (2010). To determine this, the 2010 Census included question regarding both Hispanic origins and race. That meant a person can be of Latin background as well as White, Black, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American or any other race. The responses were based on self-identification as Hispanic or Latino. This meant that a person’s Hispanic/Latin origin was based on heritage, nationality, lineage, birthplace of the individual or that individual’s parents and or ancestors. As defined in the 2010 U.S. Census (2010), “Hispanic or Latino” refers to individuals whom identify as Cuban, Puerto Rican, Mexican, Central American, South American, and any Spanish culture regardless of a person’s race. The Census found that more than half of the increase in the population of the United States that occurred from 2000 to 2010 was attributed to Latin/Hispanic population growth. There are more than 50 million Latinos in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011) and in addition to that figure, it is estimated that there are approximately seven million undocumented Latino immigrants residing there as well (Organista, 2007).

Latino Identity and Culture

Dominant groups in society frequently define subordinate races or ethnicities based on stereotypical categories related to physical characteristics (Kibria, 2000). In America, the terms Latino/a and Hispanic are used to describe individuals who were born, or have ancestral roots, in countries located in South and Central America, Mexico,
and areas such as Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic (Chicanos/as also fall under this category). However, McGoldrick, Giordano, and Garcia-Preto (2005) found that within their own countries of origin, Latinos/Hispanics would never refer to themselves as such. The researchers go on to say that although these groups are similar with regards to a common language (Spanish, except Brazil which speaks Portuguese) and a history of violent colonization and ruthless conquest, Latinos do not think of themselves as being Latino or Hispanic, rather, they think of themselves as being from a separate country with distinct cultures, values, traditions, and histories. According to one of the designers of the term Hispanic (a label established by the Department of Education in the 1970s), it actually refers to the fact that there is a blood lineage to Spain in what was the colonized areas of the Americas (Flores-Hughes, 1996). The term Latino/a is thought to be less offensive then the term Hispanic, and even though it refers to the land that was oppressed by various nations in the past, it considers the indigenous cultures of that land (McGoldrick et al., 2005).

Currently, the Latino identity is undergoing change in America. In a study conducted by Gonzalez (2010) at the Florida International University, it was found that students do not fit into what would normally be considered their respective stereotypical ethnic categories. Essentially, the researchers found that the ethnic groups studied (Cubans and non-“Hispanics”) are undergoing what they referred to as a “transculturation”, and in some cases even swapped cultural characteristics. The components examined were food, cultural appreciation and conflict, and language. With regard to food, Latino participants avoided categorizing themselves into an umbrella term such as Hispanic or Latino. Rather, they specifically labeled themselves as Cuban and
emphasized the importance of traditional foods in their lives as well as an appreciation for American holidays, such as Thanksgiving, and the foods that are associated with those holidays. From the cultural appreciation and conflict perspective, many of the Latino participants both appreciated their heritage and traditions, while at the same time rejected some of the values that are less in line with American customs, such as female independence. The language component seemed to be a source of stress for the Latino group. Some Latino students reported that the expectation to know and speak Spanish bothered them. Those Latinos whom had a problem with language were unable to speak Spanish. They had grown up in America and did not learn Spanish, so the cultural expectation that all Latinos in America had to know Spanish contributed to their conflict.

Something to consider when discussing the development of a person’s ethnic identity is the interplay between the developmental stages that a person is experiencing and the perceived racism that that individual may encounter during that developmental stage. Torres and Ong (2010) sought to examine the correlation between Latino identity development, racial discrimination, and negative psychological effects. What they found was that when an individual was in the Exploration Stage (attempting to increase knowledge of one’s cultural history) of their ethnic identity development, and they received discriminating messages at work, school, or in a public setting, they experienced increased psychological distress. Conversely, when an individual was in the Commitment Stage (possessing strong feelings of belonging to one’s cultural heritage) of their ethnic identity they experienced less stress-related psychological effects when confronted with racial discrimination in the three previously mentioned social environments. In another study Torre, Yznaga, and Moore (2011) described how long-
term exposure to U.S. mainstream culture lessened the effects of discrimination experienced by someone in the exploration stage, unless that discrimination was in the form of a microaggression. Walton and Cohon (2009) found that the uncertainty inherent in covert racism triggers an ethnic self-evaluation in relation to the culture at large and causes increased stress linked to interracial exchanges. Even in situations where individuals had a strong sense of connectedness to, and support from their families, the negative effects of discrimination continued to increase (Ayón, Marsiglia, & Bermudez-Parsai, 2010).

According to Torres et al., the process of identity development was found to continue into adulthood (2012). Of the participants examined in their study, 35% revisited their cultural and ethnic identities when life circumstances changed and significant life events occurred. One story described how an individual at a young age developed an identity of Chicana – she felt that she did not fit into the “stereotypes” of what it meant to be Mexican. However, after she married, she began to identify as a Latina. She attributes the change to her marriage with a man of a different ethnic background and her need to both appreciate her own culture while simultaneously validating another person’s heritage. Yet, when it comes to identifying as an American, Latinos are still perceived as less American than their Caucasian counterparts (Devos, Gavin, and Quintana, 2010). A study conducted to observe the ethnic and national American identity of Caucasian-Americans and Latino-Americans found that Caucasian-Americans are perceived as having both a stronger ethnic and national American identity. Both the Latino and Caucasian participants in that study perceived Latinos as being less American than Caucasians. The researchers attributed this to the idea that Caucasians are
thought to be “prototypically” American – that Caucasians are perceived as embodying all of the traditions, culture, and values of America. However, when the researchers did not differentiate between ethnicities, similar high “American-ness” was reported for both Caucasians and Latinos. The researchers pointed to this as evidence that when race is considered, Caucasians are more readily considered to equal American. The researchers went on to say that the right to nationally identify as American is not equally available to all citizens of the United States. In addition, if a person is not perceived as fitting into the prototypical definition of American, it is possible that they will be marginalized.

The 2000 U.S. Census might have hinted at a changing identity of Latinos in America. Researchers examining the fair treatment of smaller Latino groups (Dominicans, Ecuadorians, Columbians, and Peruvians) were concerned that government resources and representation had been undercut for these groups when the 2000 U.S. Census was the basis for decision making (Chun, 2007). The researchers were not suggesting that specific Latino groups had simply not been counted; rather, they were concerned that the numbers for these groups were being added to the statistics of a general Latino or Hispanic population. In fact, when comparing the 1990 U.S. Census with the 2000 Census, Cresce, and Ramirez (2003) found a large increase in respondents whom identified with more general racial terms (Hispanic, Latino, Spanish) and a decrease in respondents whom identified with a specific origin (Mexican, Cuban, Salvadorian, etc.). They determined that the 93.6 percent of Hispanic respondents whom identified with a specific origin in the 1990 Census fell to 83.9 percent. However, it has been asserted that one reason for this decline in identifying with a specific nation of origin resulted from question design changes between the two censuses (Martin, 2002).
Martin surmised that the absence of the word “Origin” from the 2000 Census led respondents to assume that a more general term was sufficient when answering the race question regarding Hispanics and Latinos. In addition, Martin noted that examples of specific Latino and Hispanic responses were left out of the “other” question in the 2000 Census, again, possibly conveying to the respondents that a more general term was sought or was sufficient. Chun (2007) suggests that it could be possible that Hispanics/Latinos are starting to develop a Pan-Latin identity. She points to facts regarding interethnic marriage and how currently almost 30% of individuals whom identify as Mexican are married to non-Mexicans (Suárez-Orozco, M. M., & Páez, M. M. (2002). These researchers believe that it is contributing to a more collective identity, but there is still very little evidence to support this idea.

**Latino Acculturation**

Latino acculturation is an important subject, because acculturation itself implies that a person’s or group’s culture is undergoing changes as a result of being exposed to other cultures. Acculturation can occur naturally or it can be forced upon a population. In this study’s research, we will concentrate on the more deleterious effects that acculturation can have on a person or group. Acculturation can happen at any point in a person’s life, and regardless of age, problems can manifest as a result of acculturation. In a study conducted on over 1,000 Southern Californian “Hispanic” youths, it was found that as acculturation increased, so did the likelihood that females experienced increased depressive symptoms, as well as increased smoking behavior (Lorenzo-Blanco, Unger, Ritt-Olson, Soto, & Baezconde-Garbanati, 2011). In a Florida study which included 850 Latinos, the link between depression and acculturation was also assessed (Rivera, 2007).
The researcher found that as acculturation increased, so did depression. Rivera (2007) surmised that a lack of family support (caused by conflicting cultural values) contributed to the increased depression. Whether or not family support played a role in acculturation linked depression, the fact remains that the experience of having to acculturate can cause mental and emotional difficulties.

Physical difficulties resulting from acculturation have also been documented. In a study conducted on 2,553 Latinos, acculturation was actually linked to physical discomfort (Bui, Doescher, Takeuchi, & Taylor, 2011). Both U.S.-born and undocumented immigrant Latinos were evaluated for chronic neck and back pain and then assessed for their degree of acculturation. After adjusting for physical health, mental health, English proficiency, and a number of other variables, the researchers found that chronic neck and back pain was significantly higher among more acculturated Latinos, independent of the person’s experience with depression, health standing, and/or weight. In another study of 470 pregnant “Hispanic” women, it was found that those born in the U.S. had a higher likelihood of experiencing depressive symptoms (Ruiz et al, 2012). Acculturation was significantly related to the hormonal levels of the women who participated in the study. The researchers noted that acculturation predicted depression and the level of estriol and progesterone present in the participants, which in turn predicted the cases of pre-term births. This study illustrates the very damaging effects that acculturation could have a minority population.

Finally, despite the negative effects that acculturation has been shown to have on youths and adults in a more social context, when it comes to the workplace, a large body of research has shown that minorities with higher acculturation have exhibited higher job
satisfaction (Ea, Griffin, L'Eplattenier, & Fitzpatrick, 2008; Leong, 2001; Peeters, & Oerlemans, 2009). That is however, until discrimination is experienced. Research has shown that even when acculturation is high and job satisfaction is high, the introduction of discrimination into a person’s work experience has a negative impact on their workplace satisfaction (Valdivia, & Flores, 2012; Dawson, 2009). This illustrates how discrimination can negatively impact a person’s experience in society.

**Social oppression and Discrimination**

Despite the fact that in the United States, individuals with “Spanish” origins predate most other people of European descent (Kilty, & de Haymes, 2000), Latinos have endured a long history of social oppression and violent racism in the U.S. Latinos have dealt with stolen land, conquest, and slavery-like working conditions since the inception of America (Criollo, 2010). In the 1830s, Manifest Destiny, or the divine right of the Anglo-Saxon race to conquer North America, was the beginning of the Latino experience with oppression in the U.S. This period was fraught with wars, “land-grabs”, and the displacement of Latinos.

Preceding the Great Depression, there was a push to encourage “cheap” Mexican labor to migrate into America for farm and factory jobs (Betten, & Mohl, 1973). However, once the Great Depression had begun, the Latino was “scape-goated” and hundreds of thousands of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans were gathered, removed from places that they had lived for years, and “repatriated” back to Mexico (Balderrama, 2005). Some twenty years later, this process repeated itself. When American citizens were joining the United States Military so that they could contribute to the war effort in the 1940s, agricultural businesses, with the help of the Mexican government, actively
recruited Mexicans nationals to work in American fields (Hernández, 2006). However, a shortage of low wage laborers started to develop within Mexico. The Mexican and American governments immediately began to implement strict laws prohibiting undocumented entry into the United States, but availability of jobs in America could not stop the influx of migrant workers. For nearly a decade following WWII, migrant workers faced brutal mistreatment and extreme dislocation – being relocated far from their homes of origin – for simply filling jobs that they were offered to them in America. By 1952, “Operation Wetback” (already active for two years) officially became the model for the border patrol agents across the South West (Hernández, 2006). It primarily focused on raiding immigrant communities, and by 1954 Operation Wetback had apprehended and relocated over one million undocumented Mexican migrant workers.

During this same period, Latinos also experienced various forms of social oppression in the Northern part of America (Betancur, 1996). In his article focusing on the settlement of Chicago by Mexicans and Puerto Ricans during the 1920s and then later in the 1960s, Betancur (1996) documents segregation and discrimination aimed specifically at Latinos. The researcher notes that Latinos were forced to live in deteriorating areas under horrible conditions, because the real estate industry found it profitable to manipulate where Latinos lived and controlled how much Latinos paid for rent. During this time, Latinos where denied upward mobility, and as a result, the majority of Latinos in Chicago still reside in these declining areas. Although the geographic area that Latinos inhabited had expanded during the 1960s and beyond, the resulting “White Flight” has contributed to the decline of the newly populated areas.
In 1940s Los Angeles, racial discrimination and interracial tension finally reached a climax with what is known as the Zoot Suit/Sailor Riots (Mahan, 2002). The Zoot Suit was worn by Latino youths and it was a symbol of rebellion against the deplorable conditions that Latino youths saw their communities suffering (Howard, 2010). The suit eventually became associated with crime and antiestablishment, so the U.S. government actually created laws that designated the zoot suit an illicit item, and made them a crime to wear (Alford, 200). The suit was thought to be an affront on American values, and in June of 1943, Naval Reservists attacked and stripped young zoot suitors whom still chose to wear the zoot suit (Pagan, 2000). What followed was more than a week of thousands of military personal from surrounding bases evading Los Angeles and violently attacking anyone wearing a zoot suit – the media labeled the attacks as just and deserved.

Later in the century, the oppressive working conditions that plagued the Latino experience for many years had been confronted. One sector that was challenged head on by Latino organizers was the farming industry. In 1962, Cesar Chavez founded The National Farmworkers Association, which would later be named The United Farm Workers (Araiza, 2009). This union directly confronted corporate powers and addressed the concerns that Latino farm workers had with their working conditions. There were many complaints regarding how farm workers were treated, which included insufficient compensation, hiring practices that were seen as unfair, and unsafe working conditions.

Another form of oppression that has taken aim at the Latino experience in America targets language. Lingualism, as it is used in this paper, refers to the legislation and the rhetoric that calls for the usage of English Only (EO) policies in American schools and in the American workforce. In 1996, the United States Congress passed a
bill declaring that English would be the official language of America - it was not passed in the Senate. However, this was just one of many attempts to symbolically acknowledge English as the “Dominate” language in America. According to research conducted by Mora and Davila (2002), half of the states in America have passed some form of English Only legislation as of the year 2000. In their study, they found that EO laws did in fact contribute to high fluency rates in “Hispanics” whom resided in the states subscribing to this ideology. Yet, it also had the effect of lowering the immigrant labor population who chose to work and live in these EO areas/states. Mora and Davila (2002) noted that EO laws had the effect of causing the non-English speaking, skilled labor population to leave the EO areas for non-EO areas. Whether or not this was an intended outcome, some people argue that xenophobia is the core motivation behind the proponents of EO laws (Galindo, 2011). Another consequence of the implementation of these EO rules concerns financial security. While examining the incomes of “Hispanics”, Zavodny (2000) found that the annual earnings of Hispanics with low English proficiency fell by 12%, when compared to workers whom were proficient in English, after states adopted EO laws. Zavodny (2000) went on to say that low English proficiency workers experienced a decline in their weekly hours worked and that the possibility for these workers to find employment at all declined as well.

What’s more surprising is that these EO laws and rulings are even found in states and cities where a large portion of the population speaks both English and Spanish or Spanish only. In Los Angeles vs. Gutierrez, the Supreme Court “vacated” a Ninth Circuit ruling that upheld the rights of court clerks to speak both English and Spanish in the workplace (miscellany, 1989). This means that the Los Angeles courts were allowed to
mandate that their employees speak English only. The Supreme Court did not however answer the question as to whether or not requiring employees to speak English only in the workplace was legal or illegal. They simply stated that the Ninth Circuit's ruling was “moot”, which is what the Los Angeles Municipal Court argued based on the fact that the plaintiff, Gutierrez, had retired during the time that the Ninth Circuit made its ruling. Despite the fact that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission states in their guidelines that EO workplace rules violate Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, unless the rules are deemed a necessity of the business, judges will be increasingly more willing to support EO rules based on this “business rationale” (Speicher, 2002). What is probably most salient in the recommendations for implementing “fair” EO policies (Fink, Robinson, & Wyld, 1996) and in the legal cases that involve EO law suites (Groff, 1997), is that punishment is condoned under certain circumstances for speaking a native tongue. Whether it is Spanish or any other language, in America, there is a movement to prohibit other people from contributing economically to the strength of the country and to the security of their families, simply for speaking another language. An inability to perform one’s job function is never cited as a problem resulting from speaking Spanish in the workplace. From the articles included in this study’s literature review of lingualism, the most common reason for enacting EO policies in the workplace was to alleviate the discomfort that non-Spanish speaking individuals felt when in the presence of a Spanish speaking person.

One final note on lingualism is its broad reach into culture and society. Even at the primary educational level, lingualism is strong. Laws like California’s Proposition 227 restrict teachers from educating students in their native tongue before teaching them
English. It is thought that if a child is taught to read and write in their own language first, the transition into the second language will be less stressful (Arellano-Houchin, Flamenco, Merlos, & Segura, 2001). Laws like Proposition 227 do not allow for the teacher to decide the best course of action for educating the English-learning student. Proponents of these restrictive laws suggest that the absence of a child’s primary language in the classroom will help them assimilate quicker to the English language, therefore aiding in their learning of the curriculum. However, Cline and Necochea (2004) found that even six years after Proposition 227 was passed, English-learning students whom were attending EO public schools still lagged behind their peers. It is also important to consider the impact on the development of the English-learners racial identity. Adamek (2004) describes a person’s identity as being inextricably linked to their language. He goes on to say that the forcing of a mono-linguistic culture suggests that there are two groups in society: the acceptable and the unacceptable. If a person views their language, and ultimately their identity, as unacceptable, this can have damaging effects on their racial identity.

More recently, Latino racism and oppression in America have increased towards Latinos who are non-U.S. citizens. In 1994, Governor Pete Wilson introduced a California initiative (Proposition 187) to deny immigrants the access to health care and education. Researchers found that support for this type of government intervention was divided along racial lines (Alvarez, R., & Butterfield, T. L. (2000). They found that California residents whom were opposed to the legislation were racially similar to the immigrants that the law was designed to effect (Latinos). Among non-Latinos, support for the initiative was high. The researchers went on to say that Latinos had essentially
been “scape goated” and had been blamed for the harsh economic environment at that
time. Hovey, Craig Kain, and Magana, (2000) reviewed instances that occurred days
after Prop 187 was passed, in which Latinos were threatened with citizen’s arrest,
because they were unable to produce green cards “on the spot”. The researchers referred
to this behavior as “anti-diversity”. They were concerned that this anti-diversity
sentiment would perpetuate throughout the country, and in fact, two years later President
Bill Clinton enacted the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation
Act of 1996, which included many of the same anti-immigrant ideas found in Proposition
187 (O'Connor, 2001). It is important to note that even though Latinos were the socially
acknowledged targets of anti-immigration sentiment in the 1990s, Asian immigrants
constituted 30% of all immigration in the last decade of the 20 century (Kilty et al.,
2000).

Recently, in Arizona a bill titled the Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe
Neighborhoods Act of 2010 (Arizona Senate Bill 1070) was passed. The bill required
police officers to ascertain the legal status of a person’s citizenship if that individual fits
the description of a person whom is likely to be an undocumented immigrant – in the case
of Arizona, Latino (London, 2010). The paper goes on to say that there is a similarity
between this law and the racial profiling epidemic that has accrued with other groups in
the United States.

Microaggressions

In the 1970s the concept of racial microaggressions was born (Pierce, Carew,
Pierce-Gonzalez & Wills, 1977). Researchers started documenting a new and far more
subtle form of racism. This “new racism” had moved away from the overt acts of
violence and blatant disrespect to covert and indirect attitudes and actions. During this time, Pettigrew (1979) found that white Americans had contradicting thoughts and behaviors with regard to race relations. On one hand, White Americans may not have outwardly expressed racism, but their actions displayed something else. When asked if they would welcome equally educated and employed Black Americans into their neighborhoods, the majority of Whites said that they would have no problem with such change. However, the majority of Whites also opposed laws that would prohibit the discrimination of Blacks in housing, clearly showing a contradiction between their statements and actions. Pettigrew (1979) also found that White respondents reported leaving areas at a significant rate based on the fact that blacks were increasingly moving into their neighborhoods.

The gradual shift in how racism manifested itself was referred to as “symbolic racism” (Kinder & Sears, 1981). The status quo of racism was allowed to continue by attributing Black social and economic non-success to deficient morals and values. Researchers documented that White participants claimed to not feel directly threatened by or averse to Blacks, but felt that Blacks were violating traditional American values and work ethic, which therefore contributed to the Black plight and underachievement in education and employment – institutional racism was never acknowledged. Ten years later a study was conducted to examine if the idea of violating traditional values did in fact influence the White perception of Black Americans. Sniderman, Piazza, Tetlock and Kendrick (1991) found that Whites were more likely to support government aid for Blacks that followed and adhered to what Whites perceived as traditional American values. This exemplified the role that values and morals played in the new racism. No
longer was racism and discrimination based on the emphasis of a person’s skin color, but on a person’s culture and values.

In more recent research, Sue et al. (2007) found that microaggressions were often unconsciously perpetrated. Another study that documented the Asian American experience with microaggressions found that many perpetrators actually thought their behaviors and remarks had a positive effect on victims. (Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal & Torino, 2009) In addition, these perpetrators were often reported as being close to the victim, such as a friend, co-worker, neighbor, and even supervisor. A study conducted by Constantine (2007) illustrated how microaggressions can easily come from sources close to a victim. She found that perceived racial microaggressions often occurred between minority clients and White psychotherapists. Another study found that Microaggressions also arise in other important and sensitive situations such as employment interviews. Dovidio and Gaertner (2000) found that covert racism/discrimination had played a role in higher rejection rates for minority applicants. These results were from self-report data collected from White persons in a position to higher or supervise. However, it should be noted that the discrimination was not present if the minority applicant was “appropriately” more qualified than the White applicant.

**Identifying Microaggressions**

Adding to the complexity of microaggressions is determining whether or not one has been committed. During focus groups, Sue, Capodilupo, and Holder (2008) found that the interpretations of microaggressions fell into five distinct communication categories: “You are not trustworthy,” “You are abnormal,” “You are intellectually inferior,” “You do not belong,” and “You are all the same.” They also found that the task
of identifying microaggressions created what he referred to as a “catch 22” or a “damned if you do, damned if you don’t” thought process (2004). They asserted that due to the covert nature of microaggressions a person is left to determine if what was perceived was in fact a racial affront. If decided that a message did contain a racial connotation, the victim must then elect to either respond to the microaggression or remain silent. In essence, the victim must either risk looking paranoid and sensitive or they must suffer through muteness and deny their awareness of racism. Sue et al. (2004) suggested that the emotional energy required in detecting, analyzing, and responding to a microaggression is taxing on the recipients.

Another study that sheds light on the confusion that microaggression victims experience was conducted by Mendes, Major, McCoy and Blascovich (2008). When examining the physiological effects that racial discrimination (in the form of ambiguous social rejection) has on minority victims, they were able to measure increased cardiovascular reactivity when victims were confronted with interracial discrimination. Furthermore, the victims overwhelmingly reported having been aware of their increasingly activated physiological state during what they felt was race-based ostracism. Mendes et al (2008) showed that while logically the victim is trying to determine if racism had been experienced, physically the victim’s body was already indicating that in fact racism had occurred. This study, along with Sue’s (2004) catch 22 phenomenon, illustrated the underlying sources of confusion that a person might experience after a microaggression. Although Sue et al. (2008) found that microaggressions occurred in almost every interracial encounter due to the analysis of those encounters, Hernandez, Carranza, & Almeida (2010) found that the process also included the victim
understanding that even though they knew racism existed, they reminded themselves that not every situation should be interpreted as racially significant.

Lastly, it should be noted that the inability to identify microaggressions is not exclusively the problem of individual victims or perpetrators of microaggressions. Institutions can be unable to identify microaggressions as well. In a study conducted by King et al. (2011) it was found that out of 1000 federal court cases dealing with racial discrimination, courts were far less likely to award a favorable decision to plaintiffs if the original complaint was based on microaggressions. The rulings which favored the plaintiffs were more likely to include “traditional racism”, meaning that there was a clear intention to harm the plaintiff along racial lines.

**Perceived Racism and its Effects on Health and Emotions**

While developing the *Race-Related Events Scale (RES)*, researchers noted that as participants scored higher on the PTSD symptom scale, they also reported experiencing significantly more negative race-related events (Waelde et al, 2010). Some of the reported emotions that occurred during a “race-related event stressor” were horror, fear, and hopelessness. A similar finding accrued when researchers were testing the validity of the *Race-Related Stressor Scale (RRSS)*. Researchers found that Asian military veterans whom experienced racism during their tour of duty experienced up to 20% more PTSD symptom severity than that which could be normally accounted for by exposure to combat or individual rank held in their branch of service (Loo et al, 2001). The researchers found that perceived prejudice, bicultural conflict, and a racist environment contributed to the increased severity of PTSD symptoms. In a study carried out on minority police officers, it was discovered that Hispanic police officers were more
susceptible to PTSD than their Black and White counterparts (Pole, Best, Metzler, & Marmar, 2005). Results indicated that an increased perception of racism was a very important variable in explaining higher levels of PTSD symptoms in Hispanic officers. These studies illustrate the negative impact that perceived racism can have on a person’s emotional wellbeing while working in their professional capacity.

In another academic setting, African American students reported psychological stress responses due to what they perceived as constant surveillance by police and the community (Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007). The students attributed the increased surveillance to the fact that they were African American. The study ultimately illustrated how the perception that one is being oppressed can increase psychological stress. Among some of the stress responses, shock, anger, helplessness, and hopelessness were included. Among culturally diverse college students, perceived discrimination was even linked to higher reports of suicidal ideation (Hwang & Goto, 2009). In a study conducted on another college population, Blume, Lovato, Thyken, and Denny (2011) found that college students whom attended traditionally predominant White educational institutions experienced racial microaggressions at a much higher level than their European-American counterparts. They also found that the greater number of microaggressions that a student of color endured increased the possibility of experiencing physical symptoms such as stress and anxiety. In addition, these students were found to have partaken in disproportionate amounts of underage binge drinking. Ziersch, Gallaher, Baum and Bentley (2011) documented another coping method in a study on Australian aboriginal people. They found that situational avoidance was common. When recounting here familial experience with avoiding social situation, one participant
described how she thought that she might have inherited an aversion for “going out” from her parents. She had come to surmise that her parents avoided social situation due to racism throughout that participant’s childhood. This story illustrates the generational effects that come with experiencing racism. Sue et al. (2008) documented that the harmful psychological effects of perceived racism lasted days, weeks, months, and years. In addition, the participants in their study actually reported feelings of anger, sadness, frustration, and emotional turmoil when reliving the experiences.

**Self-Efficacy**

Self-efficacy has grown to become a very large part of human psychological study. Its inventor, Albert Bandura, is thought to be one of the most important psychologists in history (Haggbloom et al., 2002). Bandura also ranks among the most cited researchers in psychological texts (Knapp, 1985) and within the past 30 years self-efficacy has been the focus of over 10,000 studies. Self-efficacy can affect many aspects of a person’s life. As it relates to this thesis, self-efficacy can play an integral role in workplace performance and workplace satisfaction. It is too simple to say that self-efficacy is merely the view of one’s own personal abilities; rather, it has been documented that self-efficacy can directly affect a person’s work performance. Barling and Beattie (1983) found that employees who felt capable of performing particular task actually preformed those tasks better and those who did not feel capable performed worse. Further strengthening the argument for self-efficacy and performance was that fact that the outcome expectation, or size of reward, had little effect on performance and self-efficacy was positively correlated with work outcome.
In Bandura’s (1986) research regarding task completion, he examined the link between participants and strenuous and challenging activities. Participants were given one of four feedback responses that were preselected (markedly failed, moderately failed, minimally failed, or exceeded expectation). Those participants who were categorized as markedly or moderately short of the standard had lower self-efficacy scores. Their motivation was then measured and those with lower self-efficacy had significantly lower motivation. Bandura asserted that individuals who have low self-efficacy will in turn have low motivation which can possibly lead to terminating efforts early and ultimately failing on given tasks.

In addition to motivation, self-efficacy also affected the acquisition and implementation of skills (Mitchell, Hopper, Daniels, George-Falvy, & James, 1994). These researchers found that when learning a new skill, self-efficacy played a major role in the performance of participants in their study. As the trials continued and the skills were strengthening, self-efficacy played a lessor role in performance; past experience became the greater predictor of task performance. However, because low self-efficacy was correlated with lower performance in the initial trials, this led to lower expected performance in later trials. Essentially low self-efficacy led to low performance which led to a lower achieved skill level.

In addition to its impact on job performance, self-efficacy can also play a role in an individual’s drive to even attempt a particular task altogether. In a study examining incentives and their ability to counteract aversion to both non-fear evoking (skills) tasks and fear evoking (behavior) tasks, Kirsch (1982) found that (1) for non-fear evoking tasks many participants reported that they would not even attempt the most difficult task and
that hypothetical incentives did nothing to change this response and (2) in the absence of incentives (i.e. monetary compensation) participants were not willing to attempt the fear evoking task. This avoidant behavior was extinguished only after the hypothetical incentive was equal to the participant’s level of aversion to the fear evoking situation.

First, reports from the participants revealed that a lack of perceived abilities kept the participants from attempting the most difficult non-fear evoking task. Second, a fear of negative consequences was the major reason reported for not wanting to attempt the fear evoking behavioral task. The researcher attributed the low efficacy observed in the fear evoking task to anticipation of the fearful stimulus and that contact with the stimulus would lead to even greater fear. Bandura (1983) later addressed Kirsch’s analysis, suggesting that the situational avoidant behavior seen in the participants was not due some much to a fear of the task, but due more in part to the participants perceived “inefficacy” to handle any potentially dangerous circumstances that may come out of a situation that the participant fears. Bandura went on to say that in some potentially aversive situations people with low self-efficacy actually experience anxiety, imagined very negative and potentially dangerous consequences, and can display an avoidance behavior that can be categorized as phobic.

The type of outcome that an individual expects in a given situation is based upon how well they think they would perform in a high stress situation. This discussion on avoidance highlights the fact that self-efficacy can influence whether or not an individual attempts a difficult task or confronts an uncomfortable or challenging situation.

In a review of the literature there were some examples of looking at this issue with diverse populations. Lu, Chang, and Lai (2011) studied 310 factory workers in
Taiwan and found that Self-efficacy was what they referred to as a “double edged sword”. In their article Lu et al. (2011) found that high stress work situations among workers resulted in their having a lack of autonomy. In their study, higher self-efficacy was found to be linked with lower job satisfaction. Yet, with regard to production and performance, individuals with higher self-efficacy more than doubled the output of their low Self-efficacy counterparts. The researchers suggested that workers with high self-efficacy experienced more stress when put in low autonomy situations due to a perceived lack of control over their work environment. As a result, workers compensated for the psychological discomfort were measured to be more productive. This was thought to bolster the workers’ beliefs in their capabilities to be successful at work. Similarly, when African American youths were surveyed regarding career decision and career task self-efficacy, stressful situations involving perceived racism during the course of a person’s life were found to not have a negative impact on self-efficacy (Rollins, Valdez, 2006). The researches cited past evidence that factors such as a higher “ethnic identity” and higher social economic status contributed to higher self-esteem and psychological adjustment in young adults of color. These two studies involved situations were self-efficacy was not significantly damaged by stressful life situations and illustrate how both personal and interpersonal factors are relevant.

Another very important factor impacting self-efficacy is Performance Ambiguity, which is defined as the uncertainty regarding the actual status of one’s own performance. However, its influence is counterintuitive. Schmidt and DeShon (2010) investigated Self-efficacy and its relationship to performance under two separate conditions: ambiguous feedback and unambiguous feedback. Participants attempted a series of tasks
and had their Self-efficacy measured before each trial. During these tasks the unambiguous group was given feedback (informed of the number of possible correct answers in each trial) and the other group was not. The unambiguous group had positive correlations: participants with low Self-efficacy had lower results and the participants with higher self-efficacy had better results. However, with regard to the ambiguous condition, researchers found that the higher an individual’s self-efficacy the lower that individual performed on the task, and as expected, the lower the self-efficacy the better the performance. Researchers surmised that the performance ambiguity (absence of discernible, objective information regarding the true level of a person’s performance) caused participants with high self-efficacy to overestimate their efforts and ultimately put forth less effort. In contrast, participants with low self-efficacy possibly assumed that the efforts they were investing in the task were substandard and as a result they increased their efforts. This study illustrates how factors outside of Self-efficacy, in this case motivation, can influence performance.
Chapter 3

Methodology

Participants

One hundred and fifty-nine students from a State University located in Southern California participated in the study. They all attended the 2012 Spring semester. One hundred and two student data surveys were actually included in the statistical results. The median age was twenty two years. All but two on the participants were American Citizens. Participants were surveyed in various classes including courses from within the Chicano Studies department as well as clubs on the campus. Only the information of participants whom identified themselves as falling under this study’s definition of Latino were included.

Instruments

The study utilized three instruments: a data collection sheet, the Racial and Ethnic Microaggression Scale-Checklist (REMS-Checklist), and the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE). The data collection sheet included questions regarding the persons age and sex as well as questions about the racial background of the participants’ place of work or volunteer site (see appendix 1). There were also questions regarding the participants experience with discrimination at their place of work.

The REMS-Checklist was chosen because it was a standardized questionnaire that has been tested and validated (Nadal, 2011). The test is comprised of 45 questions designed to ascertain the degree to which a person has experienced racial microaggressions (see appendix 2). The 45 questions are randomly divided into six subscales: (1) Assumptions of inferiority, (2) Second Class Citizen and Assumption of
Inferiority, (3) Microinvalidations, (4) Exoticization/Assumptions of Similarity, (5) Environmental Microaggressions, and (6) Workplace and School Microaggressions. This checklist is classified as an orthogonal measure, in that it measured different aspects (i.e. microinvalidations or assumptions of inferiority) of a single higher order factor (microaggressions). Each of the 45 questions had four possible responses and were assigned a number and ordered as follows: 0 = “Never”, 1 = “Hardly Ever”, 2 = “Sometimes”, and 3 = “Always”.

The GSE is a ten question survey that assesses a person’s perceived self-efficacy, with the idea that it can predict the ability to cope and adapt to daily stressful life experiences (see appendix 3). It is suggested that the ten questions be mixed in with random questions that have a similar response format. There are four responses to choose from and are numbered as follows: 1 = “Not at all true”, 2 = “Hardly true”, 3 = “Moderately true”, and 4 = “Exactly true”.

**Design and Procedures**

The survey included the three instruments previously discussed. The REMS-Checklist was altered so that the number of possible responses equaled that of the GSE. It was thought that this would create consistency throughout the survey. The data was collected from two Latino clubs on the campus and from five Chicano Studies classes. The presidents of the clubs and the professors were contacted and asked if they would allow their members and students to be surveyed. If they agreed, the surveys were handed out at the beginning of the meeting or class. The participants were verbally informed that the completion of the survey was entirely voluntary and that they reserved the right to stop participation at any point in time. Once the class agreed to participate,
the surveys along with a consent form were distributed to each student. Upon completion, the researcher walked to each participant and collected the questionnaire and signed consent form.

The researcher reported that there seemed to be some reluctance and suspicion from some participants as they were completing the survey. In fact, one participant who began the survey stopped after the second page and returned the survey back to the researcher. As the participant was returning the survey, she looked flustered and almost offended. This could have been a result of the nature of the questions. Next, the surveys were scored. There were three requirements for the survey to be included in the analysis: participants had to (1) complete the survey in its entirety, (2) identify as what this study defines as Latino/a, and (3) report that they had either worked or volunteered currently or in the past. Forty three participant surveys were dropped because respondents did not identify as Latino. Another fourteen participant surveys were dropped due to incomplete questionnaires. During the scoring we reversed the number of component five on the REMS-Checklist so that everything in the analysis was additive. Once scoring was completed it was entered into an Excel spreadsheet and later transferred to SPSS for analysis.

**Maintaining Confidentiality**

In the administration, data collection, storage of data, the utmost effort was given to assure confidentiality was maintained. All identifiable information that was collected was removed and replaced with a code. A list linking the code and the identifiable information was kept separate from the research data. All of the research data was stored electronically on a secure computer that was password protected. The surveys were kept
secure in a locked cabinet. Only the researcher and faculty advisor had access to the study records.
Chapter 4

Results

Data

Out of the 102 participant surveys that were included in the final analysis 37 were male and 65 were female. The range of ages was 18 to 33. There were eight different descriptors for ethnicities/cultures reported: Chicano/Mexican-American ($n = 20$), Mexican ($n = 30$), Salvadorian ($n = 3$), Latino ($n = 27$), Hispanic ($n = 17$), Bi-Racial with Latino ($n = 3$), Central American ($n = 1$), and Venezuelan ($n = 1$). All 102 participants had directly experienced racial microaggressions. Slightly more than half of the participants (males = 18, females = 35) had heard, at their place of employment, someone speaking negatively about another person’s race. There was other noteworthy information that was gathered, but not necessarily used in the statistical analysis: almost one third of the participants ($n = 30$) had heard someone speaking negatively about another person’s religion; almost one third of the participants ($n = 34$) had heard someone speaking negatively about another person’s sex; almost half of the participants ($n = 44$) had heard someone speaking negatively about another person’s culture; almost half of the participants ($n = 42$) had heard someone speaking negatively about another person’s sexual orientation. With regard to safety, almost half of the participants ($n = 30$) feared for other peoples’ safety at work as a result of microaggressions and almost a quarter of the participants ($n = 23$) experienced stress as a result of witnessing that behavior. However, very few participants reported fearing for their own safety or experiencing an inability to do their job ($n = 12$ and $n = 18$ respectively) as a result of witnessing
microaggressions. With a range of 0 to 40 on The GSE Scale, 80 percent of participants (n = 81) in the study scored 30 or higher.

Meeting Assumptions

The evaluation of assumptions was performed using SPSS Regression. No multivariate or univariate outliers were identified. There were no issues with multicollinearity, as no correlation among the variables was above 0.9. Upon examination of the residual scatter plots it was determined that the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity were met. No impossible scores were identified and there was a range of scores indicating no abnormalities with regard to responses (univariate assumptions). Utilizing Mahalanobis distance, no outliers were identified (multivariate assumption). After satisfying the assumptions it was determined that no scores needed to be dropped. The number of cases were just slightly below the recommended number for analysis, but it was determined that the data was sufficient.

Statistical Analysis

The evaluation of analysis was performed using SPSS Regression. A four stage model sequential regression was used to determine if the variables of the six microaggression components, workplace racism, sex, and age could have predicted self-efficacy in Latinos. The six microaggression components and age were labeled as nominal variables. The witnessed racism at work question and sex were labeled as scaled variables. First, model one consisted of the six components of the REMS-Checklist (Component 1 = Assumptions of inferiority, Component 2 = Second Class Citizen and Assumption of Inferiority, Component 3 = Microinvalidations, Component 4 = Exoticization/Assumptions of Similarity, Component 5 = Environmental
Microaggressions, and Component 6 = Workplace and School Microaggressions). These six components were run as independent variables (IVs) and self-efficacy as the dependent variable (DV). The decision to run these variables ahead of the others was made because this study’s primary concern was the interplay between microaggressions and self-efficacy and the fact that the components had come from the same, tested and validated study. Next, in models two, three, and four, we added witnessing racism at work, sex, and age, in succession. These IVs were run in sequential order to determine if any of these variables would add to the predictability of the DV.

After model 1, with the six microaggression components in the equation, $R^2 = .041, p < .667$. After model 2, with the experience of racism at work added, $R^2 = .051, p < .324$. The addition of witnessed racism at work with the six microaggression components did not reliably improve $R^2$. After model 3, with participant sex added, $R^2 = .083, p < .076$. The addition of the participants’ sex added to the six components of microaggressions and witnessed racism at work did not reliably improve $R^2$. After model 4, with participant age added, $R^2 = .083, p < .905$. The addition of the participants’ age to the six microaggression components, witnessed racism at work, and participant sex did not reliably improve $R^2$. The pattern of results suggests that racial microaggressions do not affect the self-efficacy of Latinos. Witnessed racism at work does not increase prediction; participant sex adds no further prediction; participant age adds no further prediction.

Regardless of the model inputted into SPSS, $R$ was not significantly different from zero at the end of each step, suggesting that self-efficacy could not be reliably predicted by any of the IVs. Furthermore, the adjusted $R^2$ value of -.007 suggests that less
than 1% of the variance of self-efficacy was explained by our independent variables.

Table 1 displays the correlations between the variables, the unstandardized regression coefficients ($B$) and intercept, the standardized regression coefficient ($\beta$), $R$, $R^2$, and adjusted $R^2$ after entry of all IVs into the final model. Table 2 shows the $s r^2$, incremental change, of each model, indicating the degree of predictability between the IVs and the DV after each successive IV was added to the models.
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<th>Comp.2</th>
<th>Comp.3</th>
<th>Comp.4</th>
<th>Comp.5</th>
<th>Comp.6</th>
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**TABLE 1** Sequential Regression of Microaggression Components, Work Racism, Sex, and Age on the Self-Efficacy of Latinos
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<tr>
<td>sr^2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>0.041</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td>0.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model 3</td>
<td>0.032</td>
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<td>Model 4</td>
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Chapter 5

Discussion

Chapter 1

In chapter one, the reader was introduced to the general ideas of racial microaggressions and how one might encounter them in everyday situations. Microaggressions were described as being a relatively new form of racism and possibly causing both long-term physical and emotional detriment to victims. It was suggested that the present problem is a lack of information regarding microaggressions and how they affect the Latino worker (second largest working population by race) in America. The reader was then familiarized with the purpose of the study: to examine the effects of racial microaggressions on the Latino workers’ perceptions of their own abilities (self-efficacy). Among the definition of terms was that of microaggressions: a brief behavioral, verbal, or environmental indignity, which commonly occurs in daily interactions, can be intentional or unintentional, and convey derogatory and hostile insults towards an oppressed or minority group (Sue et al., 2007).

Chapter 2

In chapter two, the various components of the study were discussed in more detail. Latinos were described as being the largest minority group in America and comprised of very different cultures rooted in Central America, South America, North America, and various Island Nations and territories. Due to this fact, the topic of the term Latino and Hispanic was addressed and it was put forth that these terms would not be used by individuals from these countries (McGoldrick et al., 2005) and that the terms are an American invention (Flores-Hughes, 1996). Next, an amalgamation on many different
cultures was identified. It was found that Latinos who grow up in America adopt their parents’ culture as well as the American culture within which they live (Gonzalez, 2010). The development of the Latino identity was also examined. Here it is important to note that identity development of Latinos was found to continue on into adulthood (Torres et al., 2012). Various life events can still impact how a person views their own identity at a later point in life. Finally, with regard to Latinos and racism, the oppression suffered both in the past and the present was thoroughly observed.

Next, the ideas of microaggressions and the effects of racial discrimination were covered. It was found that the 1970s may have marked the shift from overt racism to this more subtle form (Pettigrew, 1979) and that microaggressions are not always a conscious affront (Sue et al., 2007). The effects of receiving this kind of emotional trauma led to many negative health consequences. Perceived discrimination was linked with such things as psychological stress (Smith et al., 2007) and even an increase in cardio vascular blood pressure (Merritt et al., 2006). Most concerning was that facts that some of these negative effects were found to last for years (Sue et al., 2008). Lastly, self-efficacy and its role in the potential workplace was explored. Self-efficacy was not only found to be positively correlated with task performance (Kirsch, 1982; Lu et al., 2011Schmidt et al., 2010), but it was also found to be positively correlated with individual motivation (Bandura, 1986) and the acquisition and implementation of new skills (Mitchell et al., 1994).

Chapter 3

In chapter three, the participants and the methods for data collection and data analysis were discussed. One hundred and two students were included in the study.
They were all attending the 2012 Spring semester at a California State University located in Southern California. All participants included in the study identified as Latino. The instrument used to measure the experience of microaggressions was the Racial and Ethnic Microaggression Scale-Checklist (REMS-Checklist). The instrument used to measure self-efficacy was the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE). There was also a data collection sheet that gathered basic demographic information about the participants. After all of the information was collected and identified as being complete, SPSS was used for the statistical analysis.

Chapter 4

In chapter four, the statistical and numerical results were presented. With regard to the study’s hypothesis, no significant correlation was found between self-efficacy and the microaggression or workplace variables. However, it was found that every participant \((n = 102)\) has in fact experienced racial microaggressions. Of these 102 participants, half have witnessed some form of racial discrimination in the workplace. In addition, almost one-third \((n = 30)\) of the participants feared for the safety of others when these racial affronts were witnessed.

Discussion and Limitations

Although there were no significant results found, that does not suggest that there is no problem with the experience of racial microaggressions. The fact remains that Latino workers are experiencing race related discrimination, either directly or indirectly, on a regular basis. It could be possible that the experience of racial microaggressions has no effect on self-efficacy; however, it’s the opinion of this study that other factors may have influenced the outcome of the data collected. This study examined the predictability
of race related events on general self-efficacy and despite that fact that no relationship was found, there may still be correlations between race related events and other, more specific aspects of self-efficacy (i.e. a “particular task” self-efficacy or self-efficacy to approach management).

The lack of significance may also stem from the fact that traditional pen and paper, quantitative type studies cannot identify the more subtle nuances of an individual’s experiences with racial microaggressions. In their paper addressing the differences between quantitative and qualitative studies, Dobrovolny and Fuentes (2008) suggest that qualitative research is ideal for studies that consider the notion that reality can be different for everyone and that individuals construct their personal realities. This has implications when administering a survey. What one participant reads and understands may be interpreted completely differently from another participant. Therefore, it is possible the survey would not be measuring the same phenomenon.

The researchers also mention how qualitative studies are useful for developing concepts and theories even after the collection of the data is completed. Transcribing is a large part of qualitative studies and during this process the dialogue between the participant and evaluator can be scanned and analyzed for feelings, emotions, reactions, and defenses. In contrast, it might be difficult to design a quantitative study that can examine all of these factors while still measuring the desired variables. Spoken queries were found to be the most natural and easiest method for eliciting longer responses to questions and also provided an increased amount of “content-bearing” words (Crestani, & Du, 2006). It is within these words that researchers have the opportunity to identify deeper and possibly more significant meanings to a participant’s response.
Other factors could have acted as confounded variables as well. It is quite possible that age played a role in the outcome of the study. The vast majority of the participants were age twenty five or younger ($n = 92$). It is quite possible that these younger participants have an unrealistically high view of their personal abilities. This study found that there was very little variation in the data gathered on self-efficacy. Out of a possible 40 points on the self-efficacy scale, again, the vast majority ($n = 81$) scored 30 points or higher. Perhaps if a wider range of ages are included, variations can be recorded with regard to self-efficacy, and this can enhance our current understanding of the effects of microaggressions on self-efficacy.

We also have to consider some possible mitigating factors effecting perceived racism on self-efficacy. As discussed in chapter two, Rollins et al., (2006) did find that career-decision self-efficacy was not affected by perceived, overt racism. He attributed this to research which found that an individual, who has a supportive home environment and is made aware of racism and prejudice by parents, has increased self-esteem and abilities to better cope with racism. It is possible that the students in the current study are quite resilient and that they possess an increased awareness and have the support of others which contributes to that resiliency. Or, the concept of ambiguity studied by Schmidt et al. (2010) could have contributed to a sort of unlikely interpretation of the participants’ own abilities. Due to the generalness of the GSE, the participants may not have known on what to base their responses. In turn, it’s possible that they automatically scored themselves higher in the self-efficacy scale. This is something Schmidt showed could be detrimental, because the unrealistically high self-efficacy led to lower performance.
Lastly, there are two things that should not be overlooked when discussing the confounding variables: (1) the fact that the participants were all Latinos attending a four year institution and (2) that the survey was only given in English. Addressing the matter of attending college, these participants may be more motivated then the average individual based simply upon the reality that they have made it into college. In addition to that, it’s possible that they may possess an increased motivation to succeed and higher self-efficacy, because they are Latino and in college. Latinos are more likely to have to overcome greater adversities (everything that comes along with growing up in a low social economic status) than their non-minority counterpart, therefore, the students studied in this survey may have higher beliefs about their abilities than the average person. With regard to the survey, the language of it may have also played a role in the findings. Although data was not collected regarding the first language spoken by the participants, it is possible that Spanish was in fact the first language that some participants may have spoken. In turn, this may have led to the misinterpretation of some questions and the context of the survey. Both the population and the language of the survey itself may have contributed to the null results.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This study recommends that a qualitative or mixed (qualitative and quantitative) approach be taken when continuing the research regarding microaggressions and self-efficacy. Also, since this study was attempting to examine the Latino experience in the workplace, future studies along these lines should either be conducted in actual places of work (including large, medium, and small businesses), and the surveys and/or interviews should be administered with instruction for the participants to assume they are in the
context of the workplace. In addition, attempts should be made to have a wide range of ages included into the study.

**Implications for Therapists**

All Marriage and Family Therapists should be made aware of the issues affecting Latinos, even issues that are work related. With regard to self-efficacy, it is important to have an understanding of a client’s perception of his or her own abilities. This may affect many facets of their life, including success in therapy. If a client feels that they cannot succeed at work, this may affect how they relate to their family members at home or even impact the client’s ability to provide economic security for their family. As discussed in this study, self-efficacy can also involve things such as decision making and task attempts. If a client is paralyzed by their low self-efficacy and cannot muster the power or motivation to move forward at work or in a relationship, it’s possible that their life satisfaction can be affected negatively. This should be identified by the therapist and explored further if possible.

It is certain that Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs) will be increasingly exposed to diverse populations. In particular, Latino clients could possibly constitute a large portion of those individuals seeking counseling by therapists in the Southern California area. Having a strong understanding of the Latino culture and identity development is invaluable for genuinely connecting with Latino clients. In addition, understanding the Latino experience at work and in the community can offer the MFT better insight into the potential discrimination and cultural assimilation challenges that Latino clients can face on a regular basis. Since racial microaggressions do occur in the workplace, and Latinos must participate and excel in the economic system, courses that
emphasize these issues should be offered in MFT programs. In addition, continuing education providers should create curriculum that will allow established MFTs to enhance their knowledge of these issues.

Other components that will aid in the service that is provided to the Latino community includes bi-lingual therapists and possibly discussion groups. Bi-lingual therapists offer a bridge between both cultures. It allows a client that is not very proficient in the English language to address his or her personal concerns in a format that is more suited to their needs. They can then take what they learn in the therapy sessions and use it within their daily lives and interactions. It is quite possible that this can mitigate some of the stress and complications that we know can arise from the process of assimilation and acculturation. Discussion groups can also be a low cost or no cost avenue for Latinos to both find and offer support. Discussion groups can provide an outlet for any unexpressed, negative emotions that a person can harbor after many discriminatory or unsavory interactions with society and/or the workplace. Since it is well known that Latinos tend to be more communal than their White counterparts, discussion groups could be well received within the Latino community.

Ultimately it is the therapist that must be aware of the fact that discrimination and all of its forms occur frequently. Discrimination could have an effect on a victim’s identity, and as discussed in the literature review, racial identity is constantly changing. It is up to MFTs and counselors to help with the mixed and negative emotions that a client may bring into the session as a result of a negative racial experience.
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Waelde, L. C., Pennington, D., Mahan, C., Mahan, R., Kabour, M., & Marquett, R.


Appendix A: Data Sheet

Survey

Age: ___  Sex: ___  Ethnicity/Culture: ___

Racial background of the community you work in: ___

Racial background of your workplace: ___

American citizen: Yes_________  No___________

Have you heard of people at your job talking negative about someone’s…

(Circle yes or no for each category)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;RACE&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;RELIGION&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;SEX&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;CULTURE&quot;</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
People who make these statements about other people…

(Circle yes or no for each category)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>…make me worry about my safety.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>…make me worry about other people's safety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>…causes me to feel stress at work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>…affects my ability to do a good job.</td>
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</table>
Appendix B: Racial and Ethnic Microaggression Scale – Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Hardly Ever</th>
<th>Never</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

63
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>customers of other racial groups.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>I observed people of my race in prominent positions at my workplace or school.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Someone wanted to date me only because of my race.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>I was told that people of all racial groups experience the same obstacles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>My opinion was overlooked in a group discussion because of my race.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Someone assumed that my work would be inferior to people of other racial groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Someone acted surprised at my scholastic or professional success because of my race.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>I observed that people of my race were the CEOs of major corporations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>I observed people of my race portrayed positively on television.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Someone did not believe me when I told them I was born in the U.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Someone assumed that I would not be educated because of my race.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
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<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Someone told me that I was “articulate” after she/he assumed I wouldn’t be.</td>
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<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Someone told me that all people in my racial group are all the same.</td>
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<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>I observed people of my race portrayed positively in magazines.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>An employer or co-worker was unfriendly or unwelcoming toward me because of my race</td>
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<td>26.</td>
<td>I was told that people of color do not experience racism anymore.</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>Someone told me that they “don’t see color.”</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>I read popular books or magazines in which a majority of contributions featured people from my racial group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Someone asked me to teach them words in my “native language.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Someone told me that they do not see race.</td>
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<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Someone clenched her/his purse or wallet upon seeing me because of my race.</td>
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<td>32.</td>
<td>Someone assumed that I would have a lower education</td>
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<td></td>
<td>because of my race</td>
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<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>Someone of a different racial group has stated that there is no difference between the two of us.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>Someone assumed that I would physically hurt them because of my race.</td>
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<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>Someone assumed that I ate foods associated with my race/culture every day.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>Someone assumed that I held a lower paying job because of my race</td>
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<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>I observed people of my race portrayed positively in movies.</td>
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<td>38.</td>
<td>Someone assumed that I was poor because of my race.</td>
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<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>Someone told me that people should not think about race anymore.</td>
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<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>Someone avoided eye contact with me because of my race.</td>
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<td>41.</td>
<td>I observed that someone of my race is a government official in my state.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>Someone told me that all people in my racial group look alike</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Hardly Ever</td>
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<tr>
<td>43.</td>
<td>Someone objectified one of my physical features because of my race.</td>
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<tr>
<td>44.</td>
<td>An employer or co-worker treated me differently than White co-workers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>45.</td>
<td>Someone assumed that I speak similar languages</td>
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</table>
Appendix C: The General Self-Efficacy Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exactly true</th>
<th>Moderately true</th>
<th>Hardly true</th>
<th>Not at all true</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>(Check only one box for each question)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I can usually handle whatever comes my way.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.</td>
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<td>3. I like to spend time day dreaming</td>
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<td>4. If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.</td>
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<td>6. I often think about having fun</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.</td>
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<td>8. I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Sometimes things are too boring</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.</td>
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<td>12. I am alert and ready</td>
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<td>13. If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.</td>
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<td>14. I get confused and frustrated</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>15. I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.</td>
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