Intraracial and Intraethnic Microaggressions Experienced by Korean American Internationally and Transracially Adopted Persons
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Introduction

- Microaggressions can be described as, “Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative…slights and insults towards people of color” (Sue et al., 2007a, p. 271).
- Much of the literature on microaggressions, racial discrimination, and prejudice have focused on intergroup relations and interracial conflict and differences (Marira & Mitra, 2013).
- Yet, different psychological experiences within racial/ethnic groups are equally as critical to study (Hall, 2005). Shifting the focus to intraracial will be more necessary as the U.S. population diversifies.
- One way individuals of the same race/ethnicity can have varying experiences is socialization (Hochschild & Weaver, 2007).
- Korean American internationally and transracially adopted individuals (ITAPs) with White parents can be socialized differently compared to other nonadopted Asian Americans (Lee, 2003). These differences may lead to variances in worldviews resulting in microaggressions.
- The current research developed a typology for the microaggressive experiences of Korean American ITAPs by their same race/ethnicity non adopted peers.

Method

- Participants: 8 Korean ITAPs (4 males, 4 females) between the ages of 27-38 who were adopted before the age of 2 years old and raised by White European American identified parents.
- Participants were a purposive sample chosen due to their ability to express these experiences in a meaningful way.
- Participants were recruited through individuals known to the researcher or referred through acquaintances.
- Measure: Modified questions from Sue et al. (2007b) microaggressions study. Participants were asked about: times they have felt invalidated or subtly discriminated against by others of their same race/ethnicity, ways they felt devalued due to their “expressions” of their Korean/Asian identities, stereotypical beliefs that other Koreans and Asians may have about Korean American adoptees, and times they have felt they did not “belong” with others of their same race/ethnicity. Basic details regarding the intensity and frequency of these events were also asked.
- Procedure: Focus groups via a tech-mediated method, Google Hangout, was used for data collection.
- Each focus group consisted of two sessions with the same 4 participants. All focus group sessions were audiotaped and lasted about 1.5 - 2 hours. Participants were compensated $40.

1st Session: Participants expanded upon their experiences with intraracial microaggressions with the first author as facilitator. Next, trained research assistants transcribed the interviews.

2nd Session: Five weeks later, participants were provided with preliminary themes and asked to reflect on them for one week. The next week, feedback was gathered on the themes.

- Data Analysis: A thematic analysis coding process modified from Braun & Clarke’s (2006) paradigm was used. The steps include: (1) Become familiar with the data; (2) Extract intraracial/intraethnic microaggression codes; (3) Develop subthemes with data set and submit to focus groups for verification; (4) Finalize subthemes and create overarching themes; (5) Conduct a dependability audit; (6) Interpret the data and produce the report.

Results

- Timeline: Intraracial/intraethnic microaggressions tend to occur in young adulthood when ITAP moved away from home.
- Frequency: Occurred less often than interracial microaggressions.
- Intensity: Intraracial microaggressions were more intense than interracial microaggressions.
- 6 overarching themes and 16 subthemes were culled from the transcripts.

Discussion

- Themes highlight expectations, assumptions, behaviors, and environments that subtly express and reinforce what it means to be “Korean” or “Asian.”
- Themes relate to varying exposure and adherence to traditional Asian values of collectivism and conformity and differing racial and cultural socialization.
- Findings suggest while there is more than one way of being Korean/Asian, these multiple ways of being are not equally valued. It may be significant for groups in a changing society to recognize the evolving nature of identity and how it affects intragroup interactions.

Selected References