

Peer Review

# Review of: "Black Female Counseling Students' Experiences of Racial Microaggressions at a Southern University"

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Hi Scholars,

I believe this work has a lot of potential and that it has a long way to go in its preparation process. My notes are bulleted below.

- The abstract is missing the number of participants in the study, a sentence about its unique contribution to the literature, and the use of Torres-Harding et al.'s racial microaggressions themes to lay out your findings.
  - Right now, the unique contribution is not very clear. However, if the research is as limited as the authors state, the findings are important for counseling programs to consider as they train students to help reduce harm and thus should not be causing harm. This point needs to be made much more clearly and authoritatively because it is important.
  - Additionally, how are students' experiences in the South different from those in other parts of the country? This is extremely interesting. This point thus needs to be further developed in this paper. I believe this point also makes the paper unique, but it is currently not clear enough.
- There is no introduction / The introduction is missing important background information about racial microaggressions, Black women in graduate counseling education, and the purpose of the paper.
  - Personally, I would move the microaggressions information below to introduce the section on racial microaggressions and then write an introduction to the paper that includes all of the usual aspects of an introduction section.

- After the racial microaggressions section in the literature review, I would change the title of the next section from Campus Climate to Racial Experiences of Black Women Counseling Students (or something of the sort) and really dive deeper into any research on this topic. I see the claim that there is little research in this area, but maybe look into studies on the topic in other countries or topics that are remotely related. They are likely out there, and this literature review section needs to include them. You mentioned the article below and wrote how women expressed being discriminated against; please unpack this article more.
  - Cartwright AD, Stark MD, Boswell JN, Oller ML (2021). "Black female doctoral students' mentorship experiences in counselor education." *Journal of Counselor Leadership & Advocacy*. 8(2): 87–99. doi:10.1080/2326716X.2021.1961642.
- Results/Discussion: The use of Torres–Harding et al.'s racial microaggressions themes to lay out your findings needs to be much clearer, linking each theme they discussed to your findings.
  - If Torres–Harding et al.'s work is more of a framework, I would consider adding a theoretical framework's section and discussing their work there.
- The discussion section is lacking connections back to existing research, but that is because the literature review section is lacking discussion of existing studies. The discussion section should include how the results compare to extant literature and what, if any, differing or unique information this study uncovered.
- Discussion: In this section, you state, “Several clusters of meaning identified in this study corroborate racial microaggression themes identified by Torres–Harding et al.”
  - Please add more detail here. Tell us how.
- On Page 14, you say, “This is especially important for counselor education programs because some may assume these types of experiences could not or would be less likely to happen in a counseling program”
  - Please elaborate on why someone would make such an assumption. What about counseling education would make someone assume this? This needs to be clear.
- On Page 14, you say, “Despite CACREP [26] standards and the American Counseling Association (ACA, 2014) emphasizing multicultural competence as an important part of being a professional counselor, there exists a large gap in between proposed best practices and the knowledge and skills necessary for addressing the experiences and unique needs of racially diverse students in higher education.”

- Writing this point is desperately needed in your abstract and introduction. It helps make a case for your study. This information, linked with extant research on your topic and an urgency to uncover and address racism in counseling education, needs to be at the center of your paper, as it seems that is what it is about, though it is not how it reads.
- Limitations
  - You said, “Some of the stories were uncomfortable to share, and some participants were concerned about being identified by their experiences.”
    - Please explain why and how this is a limitation.
  - Also, I would consider any possible limitations associated with the fact that some of the researchers were connected/students of the program and state them.
- Implications
  - The importance of mentoring should be linked back to what it means for the students' experiences with microaggressions. Are you suggesting that mentoring would help mitigate the impacts of racial microaggressions?
- The overall writing is okay but needs some work.
  - There were some words that were bolded randomly. However, if there is a reason for them to be bolded, it should be stated.
  - When discussing results from various other studies, it is suggested that authors use the present perfect tense. (Example: Page 2: The criminality theme involves being treated as if one is aggressive, dangerous, or a criminal [16]. This theme ~~was reported~~ (has been reported) by both men and women)

Ultimately, with some existing literature assessment and discussion, restructuring, and definitive study purpose/unique contribution arguments, I think this paper can be great!

It was a pleasure to be a reviewer.

Thank you,

Laura Arias

## **Declarations**

**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.