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Deciphering Microaggressions: Advancing a Theoretical Framework for Scholarly Inquiry

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Abstract: Microaggressions (MA) are said to be a subtle everyday form of discrimination where, in some cases, the perpetrators are not even aware that they are acting in a discriminatory manner. There seems to be interest from scholars regarding MA, with several authors attempting to understand the underlying theory that explains MA behaviour. The main objective of this study was to critically review and systematically organise the literature that sought to explain the theoretical underpinning of MA. This was necessary for structuring future studies so that they would contribute to the existing body of knowledge. A comprehensive systematic literature review was utilised to screen, select, and organise the literature written on the theories behind MA from 2014 to 2024. The aim was to identify and rank the theories regarding MA. The findings indicated that most articles referred to critical race theory, followed by social identity theory and social domain theory when explaining the existence of MAs. Most theories focused on explaining racial MAs. Based on the findings of this research, the most valuable contribution to the body of knowledge could be made by adding to critical race theory. However, as explaining MA was not solely race-related, a collective view that includes social identity theory and social domain theory could provide a theoretical framework for future empirical research.

Keywords: Microaggressions, critical race theory, social identity theory, subtle discrimination, scholarly inquiry.

1. Introduction

While microaggressions (MAs) was introduced by Pierce as a topic worthy of empirical investigation in 1970, some scholars still consider research in the field of MA to be an emerging field of study; that is, microaggression as terminology was only recently included in both the Merriam-Webster and Oxford English-language dictionaries (Spanierman et al., 2021). Considered an unknowing everyday subtle form of verbal and non-verbal discrimination, MA has been shown to have a significant impact on the individual, employee, and organisational processes (Sue, 2010; Sue et al., 2007; Williams, 2020). MA can be experienced by racial and ethnic minorities, women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, and more (LGBTQIA+) people, religious minorities, individuals with mental illnesses, and people from other historically marginalised groups (Torino et al., 2018). An examination and understanding of the underlying theoretical framework are considered important departure points towards understanding, testing, and validating scientific inquiries (Lederman & Lederman, 2015). In the field of MA, the application of theoretical lenses to understand the operations and functioning of MA has been neglected (Lilienfeld, 2017).

Given that diverse groups of minorities have been included in several MA studies (Spanierman et al., 2021), it would be reasonable to expect a wide range of theories to be applied to understand MA, but it would also be expected that there would be a general MA theory. Preliminary findings indicated that no general theory existed. Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate prevailing and dominant theories applied in MA studies. Seeing that MA is still considered an emerging field of study, the identification or development of sound general theoretical frameworks would be a

critical step. A sound theoretical framework as a foundation of scientific inquiry should not be underestimated or neglected during any form of research (Grant & Osanloo, 2014), and the presence of a comprehensive theory would greatly aid in the development of a cohesive and integrable body of MA research.

1.1 Problem statement

Research on MA behaviours has recently gained more traction, predominantly aimed at creating a better understanding of subtle forms of discrimination (Harris-Haman, 2023). Conversely, a review of commonly published literature reveals an unbalanced focus on racial minority groups as the primary targets of MA (Spanierman et al., 2021). While scholars acknowledge that MA can affect any marginalized group in society or workplace environments (Nadal, 2019; Williams, 2021), research has largely overlooked other vulnerable groups, such as those marginalised based on religion, health conditions, or other demographic characteristics (Bakshi, 2024; Berman et al., 2021).

This racial dominance in MA research creates a significant challenge in developing a thorough understanding of MA experiences. A strong theoretical foundation is essential for unpacking the mechanisms of MA behaviours (Heale & Noble, 2019; Lederman & Lederman, 2015). However, investigations into racial MA often begin with Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Desai & Abeita, 2017; Taylor, 2022), potentially sidelining other theoretical perspectives that explain wider social group formations and intergroup dynamics. Theories such as Social Identity Theory (SIT: Tajfel & Turner, 2019) and Faultline Theory (Daskalova, 2018; Lau & Murnighan, 1998) provide fundamental insights into group cohesion, shared ideologies, and even discriminatory behaviours. Yet, these frameworks remain underutilised in the MA discourse. Given that MAs impact a diverse range of minority groups, it is critical to consider all relevant social group theories rather than defaulting to race-centred frameworks. This gap in the literature presents an opportunity to systematically investigate the numerous theoretical lenses that contribute to understanding MA prevalence in both societal and workplace settings.

While multiple theories can be used to explain a phenomenon (Grant & Osanloo, 2014), MA research has often failed to thoroughly engage with its theoretical foundations (Lilienfeld, 2017). This issue was evident in recent examinations of MA definitions, typologies, and measurement tools, which tend to focus primarily on the biographical characteristics of victims (McCallaghan & Steyn, 2024). Such an approach deviates from established methodological best practices, which emphasise the necessity of well-developed theoretical blueprints to systematically examine constructs and their relationships (Bless, 2021; Grant & Osanloo, 2014; Lovitts, 2005; Oyewobi et al., 2024). Thus, this study seeks to address this research gap by systematically reviewing and integrating various theoretical frameworks to provide a more inclusive and generalisable understanding of MA behaviours across different marginalised groups.

1.2 Research questions

The primary aim of this research was to identify and organise applicable academic research on theories that could explain MA. A comprehensive and organised compilation of theories related to MA would allow an appropriate analysis of the theories and contribute to the body of knowledge on MA, as it could inform future MA examinations and contribute to an integration of this body of knowledge. The specific objectives were as follows:

- To compile a comprehensive list of theories explaining the existence of MA.
- To report on the prevalence of different theories applied.
- To assess the efficacy of the theories as an inclusive or a general theory of MA.
- To propose an inclusive or a general theory of MA (that could be applied in future empirical research).

1.3 Literature review

The literature review served as the basis for selecting the most appropriate theory to explain MA. A theory is a collection of logically connected statements and assertions that articulate the relationships between various constructs, observations, and ideas (Cozby & Bates, 2018; Kerlinger & Lee, 2000; Varpio et al., 2020). Theories offer structures for comprehending intricate occurrences, influencing research and practical application, and directing further investigation and examination (Creswell, 2003; Weyant, 2022). A theory can be best described as seeing, understanding, and establishing insight on a selected concept (Bless, 2021; Heale & Noble, 2019; Lynch et al., 2020).

The explanation of a certain concept also does not have to be from a single theoretical perspective; the explanation can include multiple theoretical views (Varpio et al., 2020). Academic theories are essential for increasing knowledge in different areas (Creswell, 2003). Theories, and especially theoretical frameworks, are critical to formulate an understanding when examining and interpreting results (Bless, 2021; Kivunja, 2018). Theories can be descriptive by naming and characterising a selected phenomenon or observation. Theories can also be explanatory, where a selected relationship can be simplified or explained. Emancipatory theory is a framework primarily focused on the emancipation of individuals or communities from systems of oppression, inequity, or dominance. This paradigm emphasises critical consciousness and societal change. Disruptive theories aim to extend the existing knowledge on specific subject matter or, in some cases, repudiate it, while predictive theories seek to predict an outcome based on selected inputs (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000; Varpio et al., 2020).

Furthermore, theories can vary in their levels of descriptive influence or power. There are "grand theories that are highly abstract and that tend to be concerned with broad natural or social patterns (e.g., Marxist theories of society), middle-range theories that address more specific aspects of human interactions (e.g., actor-network theory), and micro theories that focus on individual-level phenomena (e.g., symbolic interactionism)" (Varpio et al., 2020, p. 990).

In essence, the examination and subsequent understanding of a theoretical framework should be the starting point for a researcher (Bless, 2021; Kivunja, 2018). It requires a thorough interrogation of literature in order to formulate a clear understanding of the origins of a selected phenomenon or observation (Bless, 2021). A theoretical framework is a rationally constructed and interconnected system of concepts and premises derived from one or more theories that a researcher establishes to support a study (Varpio et al., 2020). To establish a theoretical framework, the researcher needs to clearly describe the concepts and theories that will form the basis of the research, connect them logically, and demonstrate how these notions are relevant to the study being conducted. A theoretical framework is a representation of the researcher's use of a theory in a specific subject. It provides the framework and foundation for the rationale, problem statement, purpose, importance, and research questions of a study (Grant & Osanloo, 2014).

A theoretical framework helps in developing and supporting a study and also establishes the framework for determining how any study will approach the final product after completing an inquiry (Bless, 2021; Cozby & Bates, 2018; Kivunja, 2018; Oyewobi et al., 2024). In principle, a theoretical framework is a structured guide for how a study is based on a formal theory (Heale & Noble, 2019; Lynch et al., 2020). It is developed utilising a well-established, cohesive explanation of specific occurrences and relationships (Creswell, 2003; Lovitts, 2005). The theoretical framework consists of the selected theory or theories that underpin the researchers' comprehension of, and research methodology for, the issue, as well as the relevant concepts and terminology from that theory (Creswell, 2003; Lovitts, 2005; Weyant, 2022). A theoretical framework should also meet several requirements for the application or development of theory in any research project, which should be suitable, logically interpreted, thoroughly understood, and in line with the research objectives (Grant & Osanloo, 2014; Weyant, 2022). In summary, a theoretical framework logically

describes the concepts, variables, and connections in a study, steering the research process and positioning findings within existing theories to contribute towards knowledge creation (Heale & Noble, 2019; Lynch et al., 2020; Oyewobi et al., 2024).

2. Methodology

The study employed a systematic review methodology to achieve the objectives and address the research issues (Harris et al., 2014). According to Snyder (2019), the systematic review should adhere to four distinct phases to achieve the stated objectives: (1) formulate the review; (2) execute the review; (3) evaluate the findings; and (4) document or compose the review. The review design involved the development of a research topic, the creation of a search strategy that included identifying relevant databases, and the establishment of inclusion and exclusion criteria to maintain quality control.

2.1 Search strategy, retrieval, and databases

Only trustworthy and dependable databases were employed. The databases included EBSCOhost, Academic Search Complete, APA PsycArticles, Business Source Complete, Education Research Complete, Health Business Elite, Hospitality & Tourism Complete, Humanities International Complete, and the Psychology and Behavioural Sciences Collection. Following the initial search, a supplementary search was conducted on Google Scholar to maximise the comprehensiveness of the investigation. The references of all discovered papers were also examined to identify any articles that might have been omitted from the database search. The terms "theory," "theoretical framework," and "microaggressions" were used interchangeably during searches across the databases.

2.2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The following inclusion criteria were established for measures to be incorporated into the present study: (1) only studies published in peer-reviewed journals were included; (2) only studies that explicitly examined the theoretical understandings of MA were included; and (3) studies conducted between 2014 and 2024 were considered during the review. Studies on MA prior to 2014 predominantly focused on defining and categorising MA instead of theoretical focus (Lilienfeld, 2017). Given the present study's objective to understand the theoretical underpinnings of MA, studies prior to 2014 were excluded. The present study did not include book reviews, dissertations, or any media-related publications. The initial search found (n=158) studies covering the period from 2014 to 2024. After removing duplications (n=23), the following items were removed: studies not published in peer-reviewed journals (n=3), studies not explicitly examining underlying MA theory (n=109), and dissertations or book reviews (n=2). A total of (n=21) studies was included in the final analysis.

2.3 Results analysis and guidelines

Screening of abstracts provided the initial indication of the content within the identified research items. Only research items that demonstrated sufficient evidence of MA theory and theoretical frameworks were included in the final analysis. Research items had to demonstrate sufficient evidence of the underlying theory, why the specific theory was considered, and a sufficient theoretical connection. The initial focus was on sourcing and examining the four most prominent theories within MA research. Both authors conducted a search, screened abstracts, and eliminated studies due to exclusion criteria.

3. Presentation of Results

A total of 21 articles were analysed. The subsequent sections present the primary discoveries based on the theoretical framework employed in MA investigations. The results are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: *Findings of primary theoretical frameworks applied in MA research*

Author	Title	Theoretical framework
Midgette and Mulvey (2024)	White American students' recognition of racial microaggressions in higher education	Social domain theory
Rolón-Dow and Bailey (2022)	Insights on narrative analysis from a study of racial microaggressions and microaffirmations	Critical race theory
Nishi (2021)	It's only micro when you don't experience it: Stealth racist abuse in college algebra	Critical race theory
Smith et al. (2023)	Ethnicity, race, and gender in engineering education: The nuanced experiences of male and female Latinx engineering undergraduates targeted by microaggressions	Critical race theory
Gay et al. (2022)	"From all sides": Black-Asian Reddit communities identify and expand experiences of the multiracial microaggression taxonomy	Critical race theory
Desai and Abeita (2017)	Institutional microaggressions at a Hispanic serving institution: A Diné (Navajo) woman utilizing tribal critical race theory through student activism	Critical race theory
Nadal et al. (2016)	Microaggressions toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and genderqueer people: A review of the literature	Microaggression theory
Robinson-Wood et al. (2020)	"What is it going to be like?": A phenomenological investigation of racial, gendered, and sexual microaggressions among highly educated individuals	Resistance theory
Elias et al. (2017)	Ethnic identity as a predictor of microaggressions toward Blacks, Whites, and Hispanic LGBs by Blacks, Whites, and Hispanics	Social identity theory
Reynolds-Vassar et al. (2021)	Qualitative exploration of black middle-class males' experiences in suburban schools	Critical race theory
Lilly et al. (2023)	A "totally, acceptably racist environment": Examining anti-black racism in a school of social work	Critical race theory
Cornish (2023)	When racism, poverty, power and prestige collide in social work education and practice: A case study of a working class, mixed-race female student studying at a prestigious white university in South Africa and employed in England as a social worker	Critical race theory
Ayón and Philbin (2017)	"Tú no eres de aquí": Latino children's experiences of institutional and interpersonal discrimination and microaggressions	Critical race theory
Briscoe et al. (2022)	Black student leaders on campus: Stories of race and racism during the COVID-19 pandemic	Critical race theory
Joshi et al. (2015)	Visceral geographies of whiteness and invisible microaggressions	Critical race theory
Swann et al. (2016)	Validation of the Sexual Orientation Microaggression Inventory in two diverse samples of LGBTQ youth	Critical race theory
Lander and Santoro (2017)	Invisible and hypervisible academics: The experiences of black and minority ethnic teacher educators	Critical race theory

Doharty et al. (2021)	The university went to "decolonise" and all they brought back was lousy diversity double-speak! Critical race counter-stories from faculty of colour in "decolonial" times	Critical race theory
Branco and Jones (2021)	Supporting black, indigenous, and people of color counselors: Considerations for counselor skills training and practice	Critical race theory
Benson (2014)	The freedom to believe and the freedom to practice: Title VII, Muslim women, and hijab	Critical race theory
Wallace (2017)	Distinctiveness, deference and dominance in Black Caribbean fathers' engagement with public schools in London and New York City	Critical race theory
Caraves (2018)	Straddling the school-to-prison pipeline and gender non-conforming microaggressions as a Latina lesbian	Critical race theory
Spanierman et al. (2021)	Reviewing racial microaggressions research: Documenting targets' experiences, harmful sequelae, and resistance strategies	Microaggression theory
Rathod (2017)	Caste-based discrimination in higher education: An application of microaggression theory in Indian context	Microaggression theory
Munro et al. (2019)	Overlooked and invisible: Everyday experiences of microaggressions for LGBTQ adolescents	Microaggression theory

Table 1 provides a synopsis of the various theories that have been utilised to investigate and explain MA. It can be concluded that Objective 1 of the aims of the present study is satisfied by the list of theories presented in Table 1. From Table 1, it is evident that the CRT was predominantly selected as the preferred theoretical framework for MA investigations. This was followed by microaggression theory, resistance theory, social identity theory, and social domain theory. Objective 3 cannot be achieved without a discussion of the theories identified in order to meet Objective 2. Thus, below, find a discussion of the prominent theories of MAs.

3.1 Critical race theory

Critical race theory (CRT) is considered a systematic framework that examines the interaction between race, law, and power in society and culture. CRT emerged in the United States of America (USA) in the late 1970s and early 1980s due to perceived shortcomings in discussions around civil rights and the need for racial or ethnic equality (Stefancic, 2015). The main purpose and objective of CRT were to comprehend and address the laws and legal structures that upheld structural disparities between white individuals and African Americans (Christian et al., 2021; Taylor, 2022).

CRT emphasises that racism is a deeply entrenched part of the social fabric and not merely the result of individual bias or prejudice. CRT views race as a social construct, an idea created to maintain white dominance, rather than an image of ordinary, inherent differences between people. Consequently, CRT challenges the concept of a "colour-blind" legal and societal system, arguing that such a perspective overlooks the structural and historical factors that continue to benefit white individuals (Christian et al., 2021; Stefancic, 2015; Taylor, 2022).

3.2 Racial microaggressions taxonomies as theory

The seminal work of Sue and colleagues (2007) laid the foundation for many MA empirical studies. A total of four articles (n=4) found in the present study openly indicated that the theoretical background for their studies was based on the taxonomies defined and described by Sue (2010) and Sue et al. (2007). The original focus of Sue and colleagues (2007) was based on racial or ethnic MA

and included microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidation. Microinsults are considered as behavioural/verbal remarks or comments that send subtle messages of disrespect and insensitivity and degrade a person's racial heritage or identity. Microassaults are considered conscious acts or behaviours that are clear racial derogations characterised primarily by a forceful verbal or non-verbal attack to cause hurt towards the victim through name-calling, avoidant behaviour, or purposeful discriminatory actions. A microinvalidation is most often an unconscious act, such as verbal comments or behaviours that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of colour (Sue et al., 2007).

3.3 Social identity theory

The social identity theory (SIT) was used in one article (n=1) to identify the reasons why MAs might exist. According to this theory, individuals naturally gravitate towards forming social groups based on shared characteristics such as race, religion, or age (Tajfel & Turner, 2019). The challenge posed by the SIT lies in the fact that groups formed around demographic similarities tend to develop shared ideas and perspectives that may deviate from those of the broader organisation or society, potentially resulting in adverse consequences (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

Typically, individuals within the same social group exhibit a positive bias towards fellow group members and a negative bias towards those outside the group (Hofhuis et al., 2012). The importance of the SIT in terms of MA lies in the argument that groups can be formed on almost any explanatory identification, either as an intentional categorisation or a self-categorisation (Tajfel & Turner, 2019). During the formation of these groups, loyalty, allegiance, or support towards group members can be formed on these categorisations, which, in turn, may lead to discrimination (Daskalova, 2018). The loyalty and support among group members can evolve to such a level that they may also have an impact on group decision-making, with individuals manipulating group members to conform to group norms and standards (Daskalova, 2018; Jetten et al., 1996). In such cases, the motivation among individuals to uphold their smaller-group standards and norms by these self-categorised groups is greater than the general, collective, or ethically acceptable standards and norms (Jetten et al., 1996).

3.4 Social domain theory

The social domain theory (SDT) was found in one article (n=1) during the search of the present study. The SDT explains that individuals coordinate domains according to social knowledge when making social decisions. This is especially the case when individuals make decisions based on social judgements. In such cases, individuals will take three domains into consideration, namely, the moral domain, the societal domain, and the psychological domain. The moral domain revolves around matters such as fairness, justice, rights, and welfare. The societal domain involves matters such as conventions, customs, and traditions, while the psychological domain includes matters such as personal choice and individual discretion (Killen, 2007; Nucci, 2001).

3.5 Resistance theory

The resistance theory was found in one article (n = 1) in the current review as a theoretical foundation for MA. Robinson and Ward (1991) formulated resistance theory specifically for Black adolescent girls and women. The main objective was to uncover effective tactics to counteract racism, sexism, and other types of oppression. Black populations in America exhibit significantly greater rates of poverty, substance abuse, unemployment, incarceration, exposure to violence, underperforming schools, and mortality. In addition, these inequalities occur alongside discussions regarding the collective moral, physical, and intellectual inferiority of Black communities (Robinson & Ward, 1991).

Considering these popular theories within the domain of MA and the delineation of what good theory is, that is, explaining the relationships between constructs, observations, and concepts using logically related statements and assertions (Bless, 2021; Heale & Noble, 2019; Kerlinger & Lee, 2000;

Lynch et al., 2020; Oyewobi et al., 2024), one can understand why the CRT is such a popular and frequently used theoretical framework. The majority of the MA studies considered in this review fixated on racial MAs. Therefore, the CRT is a foundational theory for understanding why opposing racial perspectives may occur in societies, communities, or groups and would be a natural selection.

4. Discussion of Findings

The study reached its objectives by sourcing, organising, and disseminating information from credible scientific sources on the prevalent theories used to examine MAs.

Firstly, findings from the present study highlight the importance and frequent use of the CRT as the foremost theoretical lens or blueprint through which MAs are examined. This is consistent with wider dialogue on fundamental discrimination whereby CRT provides a foundational view to further understand implicit bias and systemic inequalities (Christian et al., 2021; Heale & Noble, 2019; Stefancic, 2015; Torino et al., 2018). It seemed that the majority of MA research was conducted through the lens of the CRT, which also stimulated more attention to, and focus on, racially based microaggressions (Barrita & Wong-Padoongpatt, 2023; Cook & O'Hara, 2020; Keum et al., 2018; Lilienfeld, 2017). In addition, it is known that MAs based on race and ethnicity have dominated research on the MA topic, which has, in a sense, dampened the topic of MAs as a science (Lilienfeld, 2017).

Secondly, findings indicate the SIT and SDT as complementary theoretical views, improving the interpretation and understanding of MAs beyond racial or ethnic contexts. In a sense, this finding responds to the requests from Lilienfeld (2017) for MA researchers to conduct a "thoughtful examination" in an attempt to understand MAs better (p. 163). It was evident from the search that several authors did not provide adequate insight into the theoretical underpinnings for microaggressions and would rather merely repeat the well-known typology and taxonomy of MAs (microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations) as developed by Sue et al. (2007). See: Abdullah et al. (2021), Arayasirikul and Wilson (2019), Blithe and Elliott (2020), Brown and Brown (2020), Carone et al. (2022), Chaudry (2021), Comas-Díaz et al. (2019), Trusty et al. (2021), Wang et al. (2023), and Zamir et al. (2023).

Thirdly, the dominance of the CRT as the underlying theoretical lens confirms the significance of a racial or ethnic focus on MA studies and therefore confirms the views from McCallaghan and Steyn (2024) that researchers have predominantly examined ethnic minorities as target victims in MA studies (Lilienfeld, 2017). Researchers have repeatedly depended on the CRT to explain how groups within societies continue to display dominance based on race through exhibiting forms of exclusion and discrimination, even in the most supposedly unbiased interactions or environments (Christian et al., 2021; Stefancic, 2015; Taylor, 2022). Although this study's findings suggest that race is an important factor during the analysis of group interactions, alternative theories focusing on understanding different identities remain critical. Minority groups formed on identifiers such as gender, sexual orientation, religion, health and even socio-economic status should not be neglected during MA studies. In this regard, the SIT offers a worthy contribution towards understanding how groups and group memberships are formed (Daskalova, 2018; Tajfel & Turner, 2019). The SIT can be used to further understand how these group memberships can be used to initiate and influence MAs within either societal or workplace environments. In addition, the SDT provides a developmental view for MA studies on how individuals navigate several social norms and domains, which in turn can shape their approach and responses towards MA. In essence, the SDT provides an avenue to examine a more individualised approach towards understanding subtle discrimination based on group socialisation and thinking (Killen, 2007).

Finally, considering theoretical views collectively (CRT, SIT and SDT) to understand MAs provides a complete approach to formulate a better understanding of MAs. This view allows for the inclusion

of wider formal, informal and social groups when attempting to understand MA behaviours. Therefore, a critical contribution of the present study is to recognise that MAs operate and manifest within overlapping theoretical frameworks and warrant a more incorporated or integrated approach. While the CRT provides a valuable lens to examine racial MAs, the inclusion of the SIT and SDT would allow for more comprehensive and layered examinations of MAs, especially in an ever-diversifying globalised world. The theoretical extension would be critical for future research studying MAs as an integrated or inclusive theoretical framework, which in turn should facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of MAs in complex environments or societies.

5. Conclusion

The study has contributed by investigating and organising theoretical literature on MAs and proposing an inclusive theoretical model encompassing CRT, SIT, and SDT. Despite these contributions, this study has limitations. Due to the methodological approach (systematic review), the study relied on the range and availability of existing MA research. Additionally, the study focused on theoretical explanations of MAs, and future studies should emphasise empirical evidence to test these theories in practical, real-world environments.

Recommendations can be made for both practitioners and scholars. For practitioners, diversity and inclusion programmes or interventions should integrate diverse theoretical perspectives to ensure that all possible forms of MA behaviour can be understood and adequately addressed to prevent negative impacts on victims. From a research perspective, scholars should further empirically test the causes and consequences of MAs, taking into consideration the intersections of CRT, SIT, and SDT in explaining MAs. Expanding research beyond racial MAs to include other social identities would also enhance the discourse and practical applications of MA theories.

In conclusion, this study encourages more interdisciplinary engagement with MA theory. Theories such as CRT, SIT, and SDT should not be considered in isolation by scholars but rather as interconnected perspectives that jointly advance scholarly inquiry into MA behaviours. This approach would enable future studies to expand knowledge and understanding, allowing MA literature to keep pace with ever-changing societies and work environments.

6. Declarations

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