An Exploration of Black/White Biracialism and Suicidal Ideation



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An Exploration of Black/White Biracialism and Suicidal Ideation

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Abstract

Black/White Biracial individuals in the United States are stained by a bloody history of both master and slave. This study works to explore the relationship between Black/White Biracial identities and suicidal ideation, responding to the question: how do American Biracial individuals experience suicidal ideation in the context of their racial identity? Participants were recruited via Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Participants had to have one parent who is Black and one who is White. Participants were given three surveys to measure suicidal ideation, Black/White Biracial identity, and racial socialization. Participants also responded to one qualitative question: How did your parents talk to you about race? There were two hypotheses for the present study: (1) Black/White Biracial individuals who experience the world through a Monoracial lens will be at a higher risk for suicidal ideation, (2) Black/White Biracial individuals who experienced less racial socialization according to the total global racial socialization score will also be at a higher risk for suicidal ideation. Hypothesis (1) was unable to be tested and results did not support hypothesis (2). A thematic analysis was conducted for the qualitative question where 5 themes were derived: Silence about race, Warnings about racial inequalities, Colorblind approaches, Mistrust in Black or White communities, and Pride in being a person of color. Although there were no significant findings, this study should be viewed as the stepping stone for future research in Black/White Biracial communities.

Keywords: Black, White, Biracial, suicidal ideation, racial socialization, racial identity

It is common knowledge that the institution of slavery has and still does plague the lives of Black Americans to this very day. People who owned slaves oftentimes raped the women and forced them to bear Biracial children, bringing the United States to the one-drop rule which states that even one drop of "Black blood," (Black ancestry) equates an individual to the status of a slave (*The "One Drop Rule" in America, a story*, n.d.). Slavery led to the Jim Crow laws which then led to the start of the Civil Rights Movement in 1955 (*Civil Rights Era - Timeline - Jim Crow Museum - Ferris State University*, n.d.). With the first Black child to initiate desegregation in schools, Ruby Nell Bridges Hall, being only 66 years of age at the present time; it is no surprise that effects of Black marginalization, discrimination, and abuse still heavily affect the mental health of Black Americans daily (Chae et al., 2011). Until 1967, it was considered unlawful for a White citizen to have relations with or engage in marriage with a Black citizen (Head, 2019). The legalization of mixed race marriages did little to stop the onslaught of adverse social reactions to the mixing of races. Hundreds of years of history dictate the experiences of Black/White Biracial individuals as well as the parenting skills employed by each Monoracial parent during childhood (McClurg, 2004). Today, Biracial individuals go understudied in Psychology despite their ever growing population. What is known is that Biracial individuals with a high degree of depressive symptoms and self-reflective actions are more likely to endure suicidal ideation (Cheref et al., 2015). Moreover, individuals who are Biracial, but do not acknowledge this part of their identity, experience lower levels of self-esteem and higher rates of depression (Lusk et al., 2010). Further, others' perceptions of Black/White Biracial individuals as Monoracial can further influence Biracial individuals' own relationship to their race. This Black/White Biracial identity erasure is exemplified in the U.S. with President Obama being renowned as the first Black president when he is, in all reality, America's first Black/White

Biracial president. Previous research acknowledges depressive symptoms but does little to explore the effect that Black/White Biracial identities may have on suicidal ideation specifically. The present study works to fill this gap in the research by investigating the impact of racial identity and racial socialization on suicidal ideation among Black/White Biracial individuals.

For the purposes of this study the term *Biracial* will be used in reference to individuals with two monoracial parents, one Black parent and one White parent. I will be utilizing the term mixed race when referring to marriages between a White and Black individual. Furthermore, the term African American insinuates that Black citizens today had the choice to come from Africa and choose to go through the naturalization process. As that is not the case for the vast majority of Black Americans, I will instead be using the term Black to encompass American descendants of the slave trade.

Family Socialization of Racial Identity

Socialization refers to the process where individuals, usually children, "are taught the skills, behavior patterns, values, and motivations needed for competent functioning in the culture in which the child is growing up," (Grusec et al., 2015). A major part of socialization is preparing children to be a member of larger social groups such as gender, race, and sexuality. Parents are the first and most long lasting source of socialization and identity development for most children. The goal of socialization is for the child to be self-reliant and social in adulthood.

Parents' involvement in socialization does not end in childhood and changes overtime with social context. In childhood, socialization often consists of reinforcement in which parents reward desired behavior and punish undesired behavior in an attempt to create good habits (Grusec et al., 2015). Alongside reinforcement, parents engage in socialization through conversations and modeling behaviors. Racial socialization has experienced plenty of change as

societal perceptions of race have evolved. The goal of racial socialization is to adequately prepare children for the role of race in society and in their own lives (Zucker & Patterson, 2018). Racial socialization of children relies, in part, on the race of the parent. White parents tend to avoid engaging in conversations about race as they may deem them uncomfortable and unnecessary for White children. When White parents do engage in racial socialization, it is often through the use of a colorblind lens in which one ignores race as an impactful identity and instead attempts to see past race to the character of the individual (Zucker & Patterson, 2018). Colorblind ideologies are problematic due to their failure to acknowledge the history and cultural values attributed to race and the impact that race has on the daily lives of people of color.

Even though Black/White Biracial individuals occupy a strange position in the U.S. racial hierarchy, the experience of Biracial individuals in the United States varies depending upon how they identify racially. Racial identification stems from the representation of race presented to Biracial children (Coleman & Carter, 2007). Further, racial identification appears to be a product of racial socialization. This racial socialization is especially difficult in families with Monoracial parents and Biracial children as the parents are unable to relate to the plights of their Biracial children (Csizmadia et al., 2014). Franco and McElroy-Heltzel (2019) recruited a sample of self-identified multiracial individuals in order to examine primary caregiver humility, operationalized in this study as openness and respect towards varied racial experiences, and its effect on racial identity and mental health. There were 399 participants with a mean age of 30 and various mixed racial identities. They found that higher levels of respect for the racial expression of a Biracial child by the caregiver are associated with more positive mental health outcomes in adulthood, specifically, less depressive symptoms.

In another study consisting of 61 participants with a mean age of 28, researchers used a modified version of the Survey of Biracial Experiences (SBE) to measure racial identification and societal pressure and found that Biracial individuals who were validated in their Biracial identity experienced lower levels of anxiety and depression (Coleman & Carter, 2007). The results of this study imply that identifying as Biracial rather than Monoracial, Black or White, may prove to be better for mental health than trying to "see past color," given that color determines the way others perceive you and, in turn, how you perceive yourself. For Biracial individuals, accepting both components of one's racial identity is associated with improved psychosocial development (Lusk et al., 2010).

In a study performed by Csizmadia et al., (2014), researchers found that Monoracial parents of Black/White Biracial children who socialized their child as White, were less likely to engage in discussions relating to heritage as opposed to parents who socialized their child as Black. Essentially, parents decide how to racially socialize their child based upon how marginalized they perceive their child to appear. Further, perceived proximity to Whiteness of the child may lead to a potential false privilege of socializing the child as Monoracially White as a means to avoid future marginalization (Csizmadia et al., 2014). This false privilege of proximity to Whiteness is a possible explanation for the lack of discussions relating to heritage held by parents who socialized their Black/White Biracial child as White. Furthermore, by not racially socializing their children, Monoracial parents are leaving their children unprepared for potential future marginalization and discrimination.

Another study on the effects of identity denial on physiological and self-reported stress and naturalistic behavioral responses found that Minority/White Biracial individuals who were denied their White identity reported greater stress and were more likely to reassert their identity

(Albuja et al., 2019). In this study, from a sample of N =171, 43% of participants identified as White/Asian, 30% White/Latinx, 15% White/Black, and 12% identified as White/other racial backgrounds. These findings suggest that when Minority/White Biracial individuals are questioned and denied parts of their identity in various areas of their lives, they are more likely to experience stress. Different racial socialization is a possible solution to better prepare Biracial individuals when experiencing identity denial. Further, this consistent identity denial may be a gateway into doubt and suicidal ideation in the context of their racial identity.

Lived Experiences with a Biracial Identity

Biracial individuals often experience ostracization from one or both of their racial groups (Milan & Keiley, 2000), tied to the racist history between Black and White Americans. This history is sticky and is one of the leading reasons for the apparent lack of psychological research on Black/White Biracial people in the United States. Historically, Black/White Biracial people were immediately perceived as Black by all communities, but as our understanding of colorism and the contentious relationship between the Black and White communities grows, it appears that both communities have cast their Biracial counterparts to the side (Csizmadia et al., 2014). Further, colorism, the social phenomenon that privileges lighter skinned people of color over darker-skinned individuals, has an impact on the racial self-identification of Black/White Biracial individuals (Harris, 2018). One study examining perceptions of Biracial individuals compared to their Monoracial counterparts found that interviewers for minority scholarship worthiness rated Biracial individuals as more cold, less competent, and less qualified for the minority scholarships (Sanchez & Bonam, 2009). These findings suggest that disclosing one's Biracial identity makes Biracial individuals vulnerable to negative feedback and perception from those around them. If people are prone to negative perceptions of Biracial individuals, it is

possible that Biracial individuals also have a negative perception of themselves, which may connect to a risk for suicidal ideation.

Suicidal Ideation

When suicidality is mentioned, the thought that usually comes to mind is of successfully completed suicides. This is because of the devastating nature of those events alongside the large amount of research on successful and attempted suicide. In 2016, nearly 45,000 U.S. deaths were attributed to suicide and more than half of people with completed suicides had no known mental health condition at the time of death (CDC, 2018). Moreover, suicide is one of the leading causes of death among American college students (Farabaugh et al., 2012). Due to the alarming rate of successful and attempted suicides, it is integral that researchers understand the risk factors associated with suicide. Some notable risk factors include: mental illness, hopelessness, depression, and impulsivity.

The larger body of research on completed suicides and suicide attempts has left the nonlethal level of suicidality, suicidal ideation, under-explored (Jobes & Joiner, 2019). Suicidal ideation is defined as having thoughts related to suicidal behavior. From 2009-2015, the prevalence of suicidal ideation increased from 7.0% to 10.0% among those aged 18-20 years old and from 5.4% to 7.3% among those aged 21 to 25 years old (Han et al., 2018). Previous research suggests that suicidal ideation is heavily associated with depressive symptoms in American college students (Garlow et al., 2008). Yet there is a lack of research connecting suicidal ideation or suicidality to the Black/White Biracial experience. This is disconcerting due to the evidence suggesting that simply experiencing more negative thoughts may be a risk factor for suicidal thoughts and behaviors (Rogers & Joiner, 2018); and Black/White Biracial

individuals are likely to experience negative thoughts related to racial group affiliation (Coleman & Carter, 2007).

In some cases, suicidal ideation is followed by non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI). Hinton (2019) examined how individuals who are in a racial minority experience NSSI. The study consisted of eight participants between the ages of 18-24. In order to meet the requirements for this study, participants had to not be actively suicidal at the time of the interview and had to have been at least six months without suicidal ideation and/or self-harming behaviors. Interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and were conducted utilizing a semi-structured interview process. Themes of these interviews included: Coming into one's racial identity, exploration of NSSI, and lack of support. This study suggests that suicidal ideation and NSSI behaviors may be related to finding one's racial identity and having an insufficient support group. Further, suicide is one of the leading causes of death for Black youth in the U.S. and Latinx youth are at an elevated risk for depression and suicidal ideation (Goodwill, 2021; Boyas et al., 2019). The high proportion of suicidality among marginalized groups like Black and Latinx peoples makes it imperative that other marginalized communities, like Black/White Biracial individuals, be studied. The present study works to fill in the gap in the literature for Black/White Biracial experiences of racial identity and its relation to suicidal ideation.

Present Study

In the present study I plan to investigate the relationship between racial identity and suicidality. Specifically, how do American Black/White Biracial individuals experience suicidal ideation in the context of their racial identity? I will explore this through the use of a series of quantitative questionnaires targeted at Biracial young adults in the United States. Racial identity is, at least in the early years of life, an observed idea (McClurg, 2004). For this reason, the

present study includes one qualitative question targeting racial socialization. My first hypothesis is that Biracial individuals who experience the world through a Monoracial lens will be at a higher risk for suicidal ideation compared to Biracial individuals who endorse other racial identities. My second hypothesis is that Biracial individuals who experienced less racial socialization according to the total global racial socialization score will also be at a higher risk for suicidal ideation.

Method

Participants

Participants were gathered using Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). In order to participate in this study, one had to have one parent who is Black and one who is White. Participants received $1.00 upon completion of the study. There were a total of (*N*=39) Black/White Biracial participants who met the criteria for inclusion in this study. Age ranges for participants included: 18-25 years old (28.21%), 26-30 years old (28.21%), 31-35 years old (25.64%), 36-40 years old (5.13%), 41-45 years old (5.13%), 46-50 years old (2.56%), and "None of the above" (5.13%). Participant's location in the United States: Northeast (28.21%), South (30.77%), Midwest (23.08%), West (17.95%).

Procedure

Through MTurk, participants were first given an informed consent form to read through on their own and sign electronically via a button stating that they did or did not give their informed consent. Next, participants saw a short demographic questionnaire in which they were asked to provide their age, racial identity, parents' racial identity, and the region of the U.S. in which they reside. After demographics, participants took the Teenager Experience of Racial Socialization (TERS) scale to measure the extent to which they experienced racial socialization

by their parents (Stevenson et al., 2002). Participants then took a component of the Survey of Biracial Experiences (SBE) called the Biracial Self-Identification Measure (BSIM) (Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2002). To measure suicidal ideation, the Negative Suicidal Ideation portion of the Positive and Negative Suicidal Ideation Inventory (PANSI) was given after the BSIM (Osman et al., 1998). Participants then responded to one qualitative question: How did your parents talk to you about race? At the completion of the study, participants were provided with a debriefing form. Attached to the debriefing form was a list of resources for those struggling with suicidal ideation and negative mental health in general.

Materials

Demographic Information

Participants were asked to provide their age, racial identity, parents' racial identity, and the region of the United States to which they reside (Northeast, South, Midwest, or West).

Biracial Self-Identification Measure (BSIM)

The BSIM is a one-item portion of the Survey of Biracial Experiences (SBE) developed by Rockquemore and Brunsma (2002). The BSIM specifically targets racial identification choice. This item consists of one multiple choice question: (a) "I consider myself exclusively Black," (b) "I consider myself exclusively White," (c) "I consider myself exclusively Biracial (neither Black nor White)," (d) "Depending on the situation, I consider myself Black, White, or Biracial," (e) "I consider myself Biracial, but I experience the world as a White person," (f) "I consider myself Biracial, but I experience the world as a Black person," (g) "I do not consider myself a member of any racial category. Racial identity is insignificant." Coding of these measures will be similar to that of Coleman & Carter (2007) wherein the choice of (a) or (b)

will indicate a monoracial identity, choice of (c) will indicate a validated Biracial identity, (e) or (f) will indicate an invalidated Biracial identity, (d) is indicative of a protean or versatile identity, and the choice of (g) indicates a transcendent identity.

Positive and Negative Suicidal Ideation Inventory (PANSI)

To measure suicidal ideation, the Negative Suicidal Ideation portion (PANSI-NSI) of the Positive and Negative Suicidal Ideation Inventory (PANSI) was utilized. The PANSI is a 14-item scale with two subscales, the Negative subscale (PANSI-NSI) consisting of 8-items to assess the vulnerability to suicidal ideation, and the Positive subscale (PANSI-PSI) consisting of 6-items to assess protective factors to suicidal ideation (Osman et al., 1998). The PANSI-NSI was employed because this study solely assessed vulnerability to suicidal ideation. To develop and validate the PANSI, two studies were conducted by Osman et al. (1998). Their findings suggest that this is a reliable self-report measure to assess the frequency of suicidal ideation. Reliability of this measure in the present sample was strong, $\alpha = .97$. The PANSI-NSI is rated from a minimum score of 8 to a maximum of 40, with a higher score indicating a higher frequency of suicidal ideation.

Teenager Experience of Racial Socialization (TERS)

The Teenager Experience of Racial Socialization was created to examine adolescent's experiences with racial socialization. Participants respond in a 3-point frequency format (never, a few times, lots of times; Fatimilehin, 1999). The total global racial socialization experiences score was used with a score ranging from a minimum of 40 and a maximum of 120 with the higher the score indicating more experiences of racial socialization (Stevenson et al., 2002). Reliability of this measure in the present sample was strong, $\alpha = .94$.

Design

The present study is a correlational, cross-sectional design exploring the relationship between suicidal ideation, racial identity, and racial socialization.

Data Analysis Plan

Statistical analyses were conducted in *JASP*. To examine the relationship between Biracial identity and suicidal ideation, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare levels of suicidal ideation between individuals who endorse different racial identities (i.e., the five racial identity categories of the BSIM). Pearson's (r) was conducted to examine the relationship between suicidal ideation and racial socialization. Descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, and correlations of all relevant study variables were conducted.

Results

Suicidal Ideation and Racial Socialization

It was hypothesized that participants who experienced less racial socialization according to the TERS (Stevenson et al., 2002) global racial socialization measure would experience higher risk for suicidal ideation. When scoring the TERS, there is a minimum score of 40, indicating a low experience of racial socialization, and a maximum score of 120, indicating a high experience of racial socialization. The majority of participants were almost exactly in the middle ground between low and high experiences of racial socialization (M = 83.05, SD = 15.83). The PANSI-NSI (Osman et al., 1998) measure of suicidal ideation has a minimum score of 8, indicating low levels of suicidal ideation, and a maximum score of 40, indicating high levels of suicidal ideation. The majority of participants reported low levels of suicidal ideation (M = 13.26, SD = 7.37). A Pearson correlation found no significant relationship between suicidal ideation and racial socialization (r = -.04, p = .83).

Suicidal Ideation and Biracial Self-Identification

It was hypothesized that participants who experience the world through a Monoracial lens would be at a higher risk for suicidal ideation than participants who endorse other racial identities. In this sample, there was only one participant who reported to experience the world through a Monoracial lens. Five racial labels from the BSIM (Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2002) were used to categorize participant's racial identification: Monoracial identity, validated Biracial identity, invalidated Biracial identity, Protean/Versatile identity, and Transcendent identity. In order to conduct a one-way ANOVA, racial identity categories with fewer than two participants were excluded. In this study, that meant that Monoracial and Transcendent identities were not examined and the specific hypothesis related to Monoracial identities was not testable. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare suicidal ideation and the other three Biracial identities. Results of this ANOVA indicated no significant differences between any Biracial identity on levels of suicidal ideation, $F(2, 34) = .09$, $p = .91$.

Racial Socialization and Biracial Self-Identification

An additional one-way ANOVA was conducted to identify any differences between the Biracial identities on levels of racial socialization. Results indicated no significant differences between the Biracial identities in their reported levels of racial socialization, $F(2,34) = 1.00$, $p = .38$.

Additional Analyses with Age

Additional analyses were performed to explore relationships between age and (1) racial socialization and (2) suicidal ideation, and (3) Biracial self-identification. Pearson correlations indicated no significant relationship between racial socialization and age ($r = -.29$, $p = .07$) or suicidal ideation and age ($r = -.17$, $p = .29$). A one-way ANOVA was conducted to analyze the

relationship between Biracial self-identification and age. Results of the ANOVA revealed no significant associations between age and Biracial self-identification, $F(2, 34) = .31$, $p = .74$.

Thematic Analysis

Themes were developed from participant responses to one qualitative question: "How did your parents talk to you about race?" Responses were coded into five themes, based on themes identified on the APA website (Gaskin, 2015) in an article on Black families and racial socialization in the United States. Some themes found in this article have been slightly modified to represent Black/White Biracial racial socialization. The first and most prevalent theme amongst participants in this study was silence about race and racial socialization, with 56% of responses noting this racial socialization method. This racial socialization method indicates no overt talk about race or racial socialization by parents. Some examples of this theme included: no memory of any amount of race talk or lack of race talk from just one of the Black or White Monoracial parents.

The second most prevalent theme was warnings about racial inequalities in which parents explain the difficulties their children may face as a person of color in the United States. Of participant responses, 26% revealed warnings about racial inequalities. Examples included: being mindful of the race(s) of those around you, having to work harder to achieve goals due to your race, and historical implications of race.

The next most frequently occurring theme was a colorblind approach to racial socialization with 20.5% of participants reporting this experience. A colorblind approach involves ignoring racial identity as a salient part of one's identity and instead seeing past color as a means to ensure equality (Neville et al., 2000). As noted previously, this approach is harmful because it fails to acknowledge the impact that race has on daily life. Examples of the colorblind

approach were teaching that all races are equal, claiming to not see color, and minimizing race as only a small part of one's identity.

One of the infrequently occurring themes was also a theme that was slightly modified from its original version as provided by the APA. This theme was originally called mistrust of other ethnic groups. For this study, this theme was modified to specifically target racial socialization that attempted to establish mistrust of either Black or White people. This modification was made because responses did not indicate mistrust of other racial or ethnic groups. For those reasons, this theme was deemed negative speak on Black or White communities or people. In this study, 13% of participants wrote of this negative speak with experiences including: negative stereotyping of Black people (thieves, untrustworthy, dangerous) by White parents and Black parents/families ridiculing the White parent or White people in general.

Finally, the least prevalent theme with only 8% of participants endorsing it was pride in being a person of color. This theme was also slightly modified from the APA version in which it was labeled pride in being Black. Some examples of pride in being a person of color include: positive education on heritage and its impact as well as household elements that instilled racial pride.

Discussion

The goal of the present study was to examine how American Black/White Biracial individuals experience suicidal ideation in the context of their racial identity. To examine Black/White Biracialism, participants responded to surveys on Biracial self-identification and racial socialization. There were two initial hypotheses: (1) Black/White Biracial individuals who experience the world through a Monoracial lens will be at a higher risk for suicidal ideation than

individuals who endorse other racial identities, and (2) Black/White Biracial individuals who experienced less racial socialization according to the global racial socialization score will be at a higher risk for suicidal ideation. Additionally, analyses were conducted exploring relationships between age and (1) racial socialization and (2) suicidal ideation, and (3) Biracial self-identification. Racial socialization was further examined through the qualitative question, "How did your parents talk to you about race?" Hypothesis (1) was unable to be tested, although a related analysis showed no significant associations between Biracial self-identity and suicidal ideation. Hypothesis (2) was not supported and the additional analyses with age did not show any significant relationships.

Biracialism and Suicidal Ideation

The first aspect of biracialism examined in this study was racial socialization. It was hypothesized that Black/White Biracial individuals who experienced less racial socialization according to the global racial socialization score would be at a higher risk for suicidal ideation was not supported. No correlation between racial socialization and suicidal ideation was found. There are a plethora of possibilities as to why these results occurred. One explanation comes from the racial socialization survey utilized, the teenager experiences of racial socialization (TERS;Stevenson et al., 2002). This survey was designed specifically for Black teenagers and may not be a reliable measure of racial socialization of the Black/White Biracial experience. Black/White Biracial individuals experience racial socialization through both the lens of a Black and White parent who cannot fully identify racially with the child as opposed to Monoracial Black people with their socialization occurring from Monoracial Black parents who are more likely to racially experience the world in the same way. The mismatch of the TERS measure being designed for teenagers and the ages of participants in this study will be further discussed in

the limitations section. Further, participant responses to the qualitative question oftentimes contradicted their global racial socialization scores from the TERS (e.g., some participants with high TERS scores would then report silence around race/racial issues for the qualitative question). This contradiction may have occurred because of fatigue by the time participants reached the qualitative question leading to short responses such as "they didn't," in order to complete the study. If these methodological issues are improved, it is still expected that racial socialization and suicidal ideation would be related.

The next aspect of biracialism examined in this study was racial self-identity. It was hypothesized that Black/White Biracial individuals who experience the world through a Monoracial lens would be at a higher risk for suicidal ideation. Unfortunately, in response to the Biracial Self-identification Measure (BSIM; Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2002), in which participants self-identify into one of five biracial identity categories, only one participant identified as Monoracial, leading to the inability to test this hypothesis. There are a few reasons that this may have occurred. One reason is the long-standing racism in the United States. Historically, due to the "one-drop" rule, Black/White Biracial people were mostly categorized with Black people unless they were phenotypically White (Novkov, 2003). This historical grouping with the Black community may deter Black/White Biracial people from identifying as Monoracial White. Another reason there was a lack of Monoracial identification may be the absence of acceptance by Black, White, or both communities. Statements from participants that did not fit into the themes established in the thematic analysis suggested feelings of shame and ostracization from both racial communities. In an interview study of Black/White Biracial British individuals, Campion (2019) explains this rejection of Black/White Biracial's racial claim to either race by their Monoracial counterparts as horizontal hostility. This study further argues that

horizontal hostility plays an integral role in Biracial peoples' understanding of their position in both Black and White spaces. This study supports the possibility that feeling like an outsider discourages Black/White Biracial individuals from identifying as Monoracial Black or White.

As there was only one participant who identified as Monoracial and one who identified as Transcendent in identity, there were three racial identities left to explore in relation to suicidal ideation and racial socialization. There were no specific hypotheses related to the remaining racial identities, Invalidated Biracial identity, Validated Biracial identity, and Protean/Versatile identities, so all analyses were exploratory. Results suggested no significant differences between these three Biracial identities in their suicidal ideation. As previously mentioned, across all identities and ages, the suicidal ideation scores were low with no significant differences found between suicidal ideation and Biracial self-identification. Again, a possible explanation for this is that the suicidal ideation measure as well as the racial socialization measure used were not culturally appropriate.

Although all quantitative findings were nonsignificant, additional information can be gathered from the thematic analysis. The least prevalent theme from the thematic analysis was pride in being a person of color. One study suggests that parental endorsement of messages about cultural pride predicted less childhood anxiety for Black children in urban areas (Bannon et al., 2018). This suggests that pride in being a person of color is an important aspect of racial socialization for parents to promote. Further, the most prevalent theme, silence about race and racial issues, is troubling because, in not talking about race to children whose race will most likely affect their daily lives, parents are not preparing their children for future race-based experiences. Although the next most prevalent theme was warnings about racial inequalities, there was a 30% difference between those who experienced silence about race and those who

experienced warnings indicating that it is more common to provide silence as a form of racial socialization.

Limitations

There were many limitations in the present study. One limitation was the small sample size ($N = 39$). The small sample size explains the inability to test hypothesis (1). Of the 39 participants, only one identified as having a Monoracial or Transcendent identity. A larger sample size could allow for the future testing of hypothesis (1).

Another limitation to this study was age. Initially, there was an age criterion for this study (18-25 years old). Participation was severely limited with this age criterion through the MTurk recruitment platform. In order to gather a more suitable sample size, the age criterion was removed. This is a limitation because it may have affected the efficacy of the racial socialization measure used, which was designed to target teenager's experiences of racial socialization. It is possible that participants who are farther from their teen years had less reliable responses for their experiences with racial socialization. Additionally, age may explain the overall low scores of suicidal ideation across participants as suicidal thoughts are less prevalent in older populations (Cooper et al., 2015).

Future Directions

Further research is needed to determine possible relationships between Black/White Biracialism and suicidal ideation. As discussed in the limitations section, future studies should gather a larger sample size and attempt to gather data exclusively from young adults. In order to accomplish this, the use of a recruitment platform other than MTurk may be necessary. One option is to recruit participants in person on multiple college campuses.

Future researchers should also look into the possible influence of colorism and skin-tone

trauma on suicidal ideation for Black/White Biracial individuals. Biracial individuals, like most people of color, exist on a spectrum of skin-tone. Those with darker skin are likely to experience skin-tone trauma or trauma as a product of colorism as those with darker skin receive worse treatment due to colorism (Landor & Smith, 2019). One study found that among Black American adults, in-group colorism was associated with a higher likelihood of any lifetime psychiatric disorder but out-group colorism was only associated with anxiety disorders (Oh et al., 2021). Since Black/White Biracial individuals are not technically "in" either racial group and are commonly rejected by both, it would be interesting to see the impact of colorism on not only suicidal ideation, but mental health overall.

Another suggestion for future research is to provide a suicidal ideation survey that does not discuss suicidal ideation quite so explicitly. People of color, Black people in particular, oftentimes grow up in a culture dedicated to stifling negative feelings/experiences (Brown, 2019). This culture has created a stigma around mental health in the Black community. It is possible that Black/White Biracial individuals are surrounded by a similar culture of emotional suppression which may have led to the overall low scores on the suicidal ideation measure with a maximum of 40 and minimum of 8 (M = 13.26, SD = 7.37). A suicidal ideation survey with more ambiguous language could be beneficial because it would be more in line with Black cultural emotional expression norms and may allow for participants to be completely honest. For example, participants with Black cultural backgrounds (like those included in the present study) may respond to a question like "There are times I feel that life is worthless," more readily than questions from the PANSI-NSI (Osman et al., 1998), where suicide is explicitly mentioned, "Thought about killing yourself because you felt like a failure in life."

Finally, future studies should consider the effect of racial socialization of Black/White

Biracial individuals who were raised by a single Monoracial parent. It is likely that being raised solely by one Monoracial parent will impact the quality and quantity of racial socialization depending on the race and gender of the single parent. It is possible that being raised by one Monoracial parent and not experiencing both sides of one's Biracial identity in the home may be related to higher levels of suicidal ideation depending on the quality and quantity of racial socialization provided.

Conclusion

Historically, psychological research has focused on the mental health of primarily White male populations (Roberts et al., 2020). This study aimed to change this by exploring Black/White Biracial individuals mental wellness, specifically in relation to racial socialization and suicidal ideation. Quantitative findings for hypothesis (2) were nonsignificant and hypothesis (1) was unable to be tested. Further research is needed to truly gain an understanding of the Black/White Biracial experience and its relation to mental health.

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Appendices

BSIM

Choose one of the following statements that most aligns with your racial identity.

1.)

a.) "I consider myself exclusively Black"

b.) "I consider myself exclusively White"

c.) "I consider myself exclusively Biracial (neither Black nor White)"

d.) "Depending on the situation, I consider myself Black, White, or Biracial"

e.) "I consider myself Biracial, but I experience the world as a White person"

f.) "I consider myself Biracial, but I experience the world as a Black person"

g.) "I do not consider myself a member of any racial category. Racial identity is insignificant."

PANSI-NSI

In the past two weeks, including today, how much of the time have you experienced the following?

1. Seriously considered killing yourself because you could not live up to the expectations of other people?

   1 None of the Time 2 A little bit of the time 3 Some of the Time 4 A lot of the Time 5 Most of the Time

2. Felt hopeless about the future and you wondered if you should kill yourself?

   1 None of the Time 2 A little bit of the time 3 Some of the Time 4 A lot of the Time 5 Most of the Time

3. Felt so unhappy about your relationship with someone you wished you were dead?

   1 None of the Time 2 A little bit of the time 3 Some of the Time 4 A lot of the Time 5 Most of the Time

4. Thought about killing yourself because you could not accomplish something important in your life?

   1 None of the Time 2 A little bit of the time 3 Some of the Time 4 A lot of the Time 5 Most of the Time

5. Thought about killing yourself because you could not find a solution to a personal problem?

   1 None of the Time 2 A little bit of the time 3 Some of the Time 4 A lot of the Time 5 Most of the Time

6. Thought about killing yourself because you felt like a failure in life?

   1 None of the Time 2 A little bit of the time 3 Some of the Time 4 A lot of the Time 5 Most of the Time

7. Thought that your problems were so overwhelming that suicide was seen as the only option to you?

   1 None of the Time 2 A little bit of the time 3 Some of the Time 4 A lot of the Time 5 Most of the Time

8. Felt so lonely or sad you wanted to kill yourself so that you could end your pain?

   1 None of the Time 2 A little bit of the time 3 Some of the Time 4 A lot of the Time 5 Most of the Time

TERS

Do your parents or any of your caregivers say to you any of the following statements now or when you were younger? Click the box beside the numbers provided below depending on how often you remember hearing any of these messages: 1 = never, 2 = a few times, 3 = lots of times. Choose only one number per question. Thank you

1. American society is fair toward Black people. 1 2 3

2. Black children will feel better about themselves if they go to a school with mostly White children. 1 2 3

3. Families who go to a church or mosque will be close and stay together. 1 2 3

4. Black slavery is important never to forget. 1 2 3

5. Relatives can help Black parents raise their children. 1 2 3

6. Religion is an important part of a person's life. 1 2 3

7. Racism and discrimination are the hardest things a Black child has to face. 1 2 3

8. Having large families can help many Black families survive life struggles. 1 2 3

9. You should be proud to be Black. 1 2 3

10. All races are equal. 1 2 3

11. If you work hard then you can overcome barriers in life. 1 2 3

12. A belief in God can help a person deal with tough life struggles. 1 2 3

13. Black children will learn more if they go to a mostly White school. 1 2 3

14. Knowing your African heritage is important for your survival. 1 2 3

15. Racism is real, and you have to understand it or it will hurt you. 1 2 3

16. You are connected to a history that goes back to African royalty. 1 2 3

17. Too much talk about racism will keep you from reaching your goals in life. 1 2 3

18. Schools should be required to teach all children about Black history. 1 2 3

19. Depending on religion and God will help you live a good life. 1 2 3

20. Families who talk openly about religion or God will help each other to grow. 1 2 3

21. Teachers can help Black children grow by showing signs of Black culture in the classroom. 1 2 3

22. Only people who are blood-related to you should be called your "family." 1 2 3

23. Getting a good education is still the best way for you to get ahead. 1 2 3

24. "Don't forget who your people are because you may need them someday." 1 2 3

25. Spiritual battles that people fight are more important than the physical battles. 1 2 3

26. You should know about Black history so that you will be a better person. 1 2 3

27. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and he will not turn away from it." 1 2 3

28. You have to work twice as hard as Whites in order to get ahead in this world. 1 2 3

29. Whites make it hard for people to get ahead in this world. 1 2 3

30. Be proud of who you are. 1 2 3

31. Going to a Black school will help Black children feel better about themselves. 1 2 3

32. You need to learn how to live in a White world and a Black world. 1 2 3

33. Never be ashamed of your color. 1 2 3

34. Whites have more opportunities than Blacks. 1 2 3

35. A Black child or teenager will be harassed just because s/he is Black. 1 2 3

36. More job opportunities would be open to African Americans if people were not racist. 1 2 3

37. Black children should be taught early that God can protect them from racial hatred. 1 2 3

38. Blacks don't always have the same opportunities as Whites. 1 2 3

39. Black children don't have to know about Africa in order to survive life in America. 1 2 3

40. Racism is not as bad today as it used to be before the 1960s. 1 2 3