

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Study

Racism is a form of prejudice that assumes that members of a racial category have different characteristics. (Gulo & Amelia, 2022) stated that racism can be seen when there is difference and power within a person and a situation. These differences result in some racial groups being inferior to others, in other words belief that one's own race is superior. However, Horton (2003) in a question-and-answer session on California Newsreel explained the difference between racism and prejudice. He explained that prejudice can apply to many things, not just race. But racism is based on the assumption that race is an indicator of character traits. This means that if people know a person's race, they can know more than just that person's race. In fact, they can tell how the person thinks, how they react, their tendencies, their physical abilities, and so on. In some situations, racism is not always easy to recognize and it can be hidden through the language people use to disguise their beliefs or prejudices.

Racism still exists today, and manifests in various forms globally. Racial problems still matter for people of the world and humanity. African-Americans today are still affected by racial issues especially in the United States of America. Despite increased awareness and activism following the death of George Floyd in 2020 and the prominence of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, racism continues in the United States. The movements and protests that followed Floyd's death drew attention to systemic issues of racial injustice, police brutality and social inequality.

Then, this study expects that the readers gain understanding about systemic racism, empathy, and awareness toward this issue, which referred to as microaggressions.

Microaggressions are brief and commonplace verbal, behavioural or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative insults towards people who are not classified under (normative) standards (Johnson & Johnson, 2019). Sue (2010) defines microaggressions as brief and commonplace verbal that communicates the negative sexual orientation, gender, racial, and religious insults to the target person or group. The terms of microaggressions first appeared by Psychiatrist and Harvard University Emeritus Professor Chester M. Pierce in the 1970s. He coined the term to describe the insults he often witnessed non-black Americans towards those of African American descent. Lilienfeld (2017) in his article entitled *Microaggressions: Strong Claims, Inadequate Evidence* argues that microaggressions rest on five core premises, such as (1) microaggressions are operationalized and can be identified on the basis of pathological ethnic or racial stereotypes; (2) microaggressions are interpreted negatively by most or all minority group members; (3) microaggression reflect implicitly prejudicial and implicitly aggressive motives, correlated to symbolic racism, modern racism, and color-blind racial attitudes; (4) microaggressions can be validly assessed using only respondent's subjective reports; (5) microaggressions exert an adverse effect on recipients' mental health.

There are three examples of microaggressions. Firstly, Gender Microaggressions which are defined as commonplace verbal, behavioural and everyday environmental insults that communicate derogatory attitudes, negative sexist insults towards women and hostility. Secondly, Sexual Orientation Microaggressions which explore the experience of different aspects of microaggressions against lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer (LGBQ), gender non-conforming people (TGNC) and transgender. Thirdly, Racial Microaggressions which are sometimes perceived as degrading, harmful, or negative racial reproach against people of colour. Then, this research will focus on the issues of Racial Microaggressions.

Racial Microaggressions are brief and commonplace everyday verbal, behavioural, or environmental actions, both intentional and unintentional, that communicate negative racial attitudes of hostility and contempt towards people of colour. A person or group of people who engage in microaggressions are often unaware that they are engaging in such communication when they interact with racial/ ethnic minorities (Sue et al. 2007). Racial Microaggressions issues can be found in the work of literature, such as novels. One of them is found in the novel by Kiley Reid entitled *Such a Fun Age*.

Such a Fun Age novel is the work of Kiley Reid which was published in 2019. The novel tells the story of the main character, Emira, a young African-American woman who works as a babysitter for a wealthy white family. The novel depicts the struggle of the main character working under capitalism, who has to face the challenges of her life in a white environment. Meanwhile, her white employers, Alix Chamberlain and Peter Chamberlain were described as wealthy and privileged

individuals. Alix is pursuing a career as a blogger and influencer, while Peter is working as a successful entrepreneur.

This research focuses on the racial microaggressions which are impacting the African-American character in the novel *Such a Fun Age*. This story occurs in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S which touches on issues of race, privilege, and identity, particularly the character of Kelly Copeland, a young black man who is falsely accused of a crime by a white security guard at a grocery store. This case highlights how modern racism affect the lives of people of colour. Especially when people of colour are seen as a threat or out of place in predominantly white places. Emira, the main character, in this novel has undergone such kind oppression from the wealthy family in which she works. This condition can be considered that the novel refers to microaggression issues.

This research will be empowered by Sociological Approach to see what is in the context of social since this is social matter, and use the Microaggressions Theory by Dr. Wing Sue. According to Sue's microaggressions theory, there are three examples of microaggressions, such as gender microaggressions, sexual orientation microaggressions, and racial microaggressions as well as the issues analyzed in this research. Then, this research will be entitled *Racial Microaggressions Against Women in Such a Fun Age Novel by Kiley Reid*. This research lies on its ability to contribute to the ongoing discussion around racial problem, since this problem still matter for people of the world and humanity.

1.2 Research Question

In order to explain the purpose behind conducting this research, this study uses questions as a means of framing the problem, as follows;

How is racial microaggressions against women delineated in *Such a Fun Age* Novel by Kiley Reid?

1.3 Research Objective

The objective of this research is to focus on delineated racial microaggressions in the *Such a Fun Age* Novel by Kiley Reid.

1.4 Use of the Study

This research aims to delineate the form of racial microaggressions against women in *Such a Fun Age* Novel by Kiley Reid.

1.4.1 Theoretical Use

This research is used to enrich knowledge about racial microaggressions which are ideas that are actually applied in literary works in the form of novels, which will support other researchers to have the same interest in seeing racial microaggressions issues.

1.4.2 Practical Use

This research is used to provide an understanding of the forms of microaggressions in *Such a Fun Age* Novel. This is intended so that people not only understand the existence of forms of microaggressions, but also racial microaggressions. In addition, the use of this study on the issue can be used as a basis for further research to conduct deeper analysis of racial microaggressions.

1.5 Scope of Study

This research is focused on the ideas of delineating racial microaggressions in *Such a Fun Age* Novel by Kiley Reid. Thus, this study limits the discussion of the issues of racial microaggressions occurs to the main character in the novel which take place in Philadelphia. Philadelphia is a diverse urban center with a complex racial history. This background creates an atmosphere where racial dynamics are very much present. Racial discrimination continued after the war. The 1950s was a boom decade that prioritized the preservation of an all-white community.