# CHAPTER TWO

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Previous Study

A theoretical framework is a conceptual framework or model that is used to comprehend, analyze, and interpret a certain occurrence or issue. It is a collection of interconnected concepts, theories, assumptions, and propositions that guide and shape research or analysis in a particular field of study. To support this research, here are some journals that writer have found related to microaggressions analysis.

| No. | Writer | Title | Method, Approach & Theory | Findings |
|-----|--------|-------|---------------------------|----------|
| 1. | Thomas, M. D. (2021) from Baruch College, The City University of New York | *Racial Microaggressions Against Black Women in the Workforce* | Used quantitative survey collection and qualitative semi-structured interviews, Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Psychological approach by Dr. Derald Wing Sue (1970). | Based on survey statistics from 103 respondents of various nationalities, the research shows the differences in treatment that black women face in the workplace. The interview methods showed that they faced prejudice and micro-treatment in their work. |
| 2. | Trazo, Acaylar, T.A., & Kim, W. (2019) from University of California, Los Angeles & University of Oxford | *Where Are You From?': Using Critical Race Theory to Analyze Graphic Novel Counter-Stories of the Racial Microaggressions Experienced by Two Angry Asian Girls* | Used quantitative and qualitative methods, & Critical Race Theory (CRT) and counter-storytelling, and Sociolinguistic approaches. | This paper found the racial microaggressions aspects: lack of recognition, erasure of identity, and stereotyping. In the cases analyzed, experiencing microaggressions from white perpetrators whose power oppresses people of color caused intense feelings of pain and anger. |
| 3. | Zakrisson, J. (2020) from Umeå University | *"New Money Trash, Meet "Dope Bitch" An Intersectional Analysis of Identity in Such a Fun Age Novel* | Used qualitative method and intersectionality theory by (Crenshaw 1989; McCall 2005). | This analysis emphasizes the need for both characters to acknowledge their respective social identities. Emira's awareness of the darkness of her skin and its social implications, |

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| | | | | and Alix's recognition of her whiteness and privilege. |
| 4. | Olkin, R., Hayward, H., Abbene, M. S., & VanHeel, G. (2019) from Alliant International University | *The Experiences of Microaggressions against Women with Visible and Invisible Disabilities* | Used mixed methods, quantitative & qualitative. Psychology and sociological approach, including critical disability studies theories, intersectionality, and ableism. | Four frequent microaggressions are: 1. someone underestimates the impact of disability; 2. someone assumes a person with a disability needs help; 3. praised for doing almost everything; 4. the right to equality is denied. Then, the most disturbing are 1 and 4. |
| 5. | Basford, T. E., Offermann, L. R., & Behrend, T. S. (2014) | *Do You See What I See? Perceptions of Gender Microaggressions in the Workplace* | Used quantitative method & Microaggressions Theory by Sue et al. (2007). | This paper found that women tend to be more sensitive to detecting discrimination in major cases that are subtle in their gender. In addition, women are better able to anticipate this action than men. |

The first study, Thomas, & Della, M. (2021) conducted the research entitled *Racial Microaggressions Against Black Women in the Workforce* which aims to outline the problems of racial microaggressions against Black American women in the workforce. A mixed-methods strategy is used in this study to gather data on participants' experiences with microaggressions through the use of qualitative semi-structured interviews and quantitative survey collection. Thus, the research explores how problematic workplace racism is for Black American women even after decades of struggle for racial equality.

The second study, Trazo, Acaylar, T.A., & Kim, W. (2019) conducted the research entitled *"Where Are You From?": Using Critical Race Theory to Analyze Graphic Novel Counter-Stories of the Racial Microaggressions Experienced by Two Angry Asian Girls* used critical race theory (CRT) to analyze two stories about racial

microaggressions from *Where are you from?* novels. The researcher wrote and illustrated a graphic novel about being Asian in America. In their research, the researcher has examined two stories of microaggressions in relation to institutional and structural racism and the intersection of race, gender, and power dynamics between faculty of white people and Asian students. In addition, the researcher proposes that Where are you from? functions as a counter-space where stories silenced by institutions can exist. In addition, as a means through which two angry Asian girls voice against racism on a predominantly white campus.

The third study, Zakrisson, J. (2020) conducted the research entitled *"New Money Trash, Meet "Dope Bitch" An Intersectional Analysis of Identity in Such a Fun Age* using qualitative method and intersectionality theory by Kimberlé Crenshaw and Patricia Hill Collins, which explores the theme of identity in Kiley Reid's Such a Fun Age novel. Departing from intersectionality, this research concentrates on the concepts of race, social class, and privilege which rest on the general foundation of gender. It is also part of a person's social identity. This research examines and compares self-construction, how their social identities influence the construction process, and how they relate to their social identities through the main characters Emira and Alix.

The fourth study, Olkin, R., Hayward, H., Abbene, M. S., & VanHeel, G. (2019) conducted the research entitled *The Experiences of Microaggressions against Women with Visible and Invisible Disabilities,* which was specific to women with both visible and invisible disabilities. They gathered more detailed information regarding microaggression experiences in six focus groups with a total of thirty

women by using a combination of strategies to ask about the frequency and bothersomeness of such experiences. Results corroborated the preceding 10 domains, but they also discovered two new microaggressions: symptoms not being believed by medical professionals and thus delaying diagnosis, and disability being discounted by others based on looking healthy or young.

The fifth study, Basford, T. E., Offermann, L. R., & Behrend, T. S. (2014) conducted the research entitled *Do You See What I See? Perceptions of Gender Microaggressions in The Workplace,* which discuss the practical implications of their research, such as the need to develop supportive programs to assist discrimination observers who are likely to be women in cases of perceived microaggressions against women, and to increase awareness of workplace gender microaggressions, especially in their most subtle forms.

Of all the previous studies mentioned above, it explores racial microaggressions against women as well as identity analysis in the novel Such a Fun Age (2019) by Kiley Reid. The previous studies found several aspects of microaggressions, where women experienced more microaggressions, occurred frequently and were the most disturbing. This helps my research to become a reference in strengthening insight into the practical implications of research around racial microaggressions.

## 2.2 Sociological Approach

The word sociology comes from Greek and Latin which means friendship or community. Sociology is a social science study that aims to analyze and explain human society's social behaviour, relationships, and institutions. It investigates how

individuals' impact and are influenced by their social environment, which includes social structures, cultures, norms, and institutions. Similarly, Durkheim's sociology claims that the subject of sociology is social fact. A social fact, as defined in Rules, is "a category of facts which present very special characteristics: they consist of manners of acting, thinking, and feeling external to the individual, which are invested with a coercive power by virtue of which they exercise control over him" (Durkheim; 1982: 52).

Karl Marx (1818-1883), Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) and Max Weber (1864-1920) also reinforced the foundation and history of sociology as a systematic and scientific branch of knowledge. Karl Marx was interested in the economic and class struggle aspects of any social action. Weber, (1978) thought that economic factors influenced the general character of cultural aspects and social structures. Meanwhile, Emile Durkheim saw social life as a set of social facts and that these facts were nothing more than ways of thinking about society. Then, Weber stated that the basic unit underlying society is the individual.

The function of sociology is to highlight the relationship between social environments, social forces, and the drivers of human behaviour, including literary expression. A result of a social creative process is literary production. The sociology of literature is a new subfield of sociology that has recently emerged. The sociology of literature explores how a literary work and the social environment in which it is generated. It is concerned with the field of literary research. It also addresses the relationship between society and the author by looking at literary works from social, cultural, political, and economic aspects.

Weber (1994) categorized sociology as social actions which is divided into two categories and four types social actions four types, below:

1. Rational Social Actions

    a. Instrumental rational actions. These actions tend to use the reason in achieving the goals.

    b. Social value actions. These actions based on certain morals and communalities, it can be bad actions and commendable actions.

2. Irrational Social Actions

    a. Affective social actions. These actions based on the emotional side of human being.

    b. Traditional social actions. These actions strongly with local custom and cultural traditions.

**2.3 Microaggressions Theory**

Microaggressions are more likely to occur when the perpetrator pretends to be unaware of cultural differences, hence denying any intended bias. Microaggressions refer to the subtle, everyday ways that black people experienced (Pierce, 1970). Microaggressions are depicted as more than just race, and can be expressed verbally or nonverbally, and they can be intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to targeted people based solely on their marginalized group membership. Sue (2010), added that in many cases, these hidden messages can demean the victim personally or as a group, suggesting that they do not belong to the majority group, intimidating them, and even relegating them to a lower status and treatment. This research uses the microaggressions theory by Wing Sue, because it helps identify specific examples of

microaggressions characters faced, such as the incident at the grocery store where she was questioned about her legitimacy as Briar's caregiver. This incident exemplifies how societal biases manifest in everyday interactions, allowing for detailed analysis of these subtle forms of racism.

Microaggressions can take several types, such as verbal, behavioural, and environmental. Verbal microaggressions are comments or questions that hurt or stigmatize marginalized groups or people. Behavioural microaggressions involve behaviour that is discriminatory or hurtful to minorities. Furthermore, environmental microaggressions are when subtle discrimination occurs within a community, for example, a college that predominantly has buildings named after white people, demonstrating a lack of representation of people of color (Haghighi, 2023). The targets of microaggressions are women, people of colour, people with disabilities, even LGBT and religious minorities. Some examples of microaggressions by Sue (2010) and the hidden meanings will be depicted below.

1. Gender Microaggressions

   Gender microaggression is defined as commonplace verbal, behavioural and everyday environmental insults that communicate derogatory attitudes, negative sexist insults towards women and hostility (Nadal 2010). The characteristics lies on the gender stereotypes. Where they can reinforce gender roles suggesting that certain roles are more appropriate for one gender than another. For example, a female physician wearing a stethoscope is a nurse. It depicts that women occupy nurturing and not decision-making roles, since beliefs that women are less capable than men.

2. Sexual Orientation Microaggressions

   Sexual orientation microaggressions were introduced to explore the experience of different aspects of microaggressions against lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer (LGBQ), gender non-conforming people (TGNC), and transgender (Nadal 2010). The characteristics lies on the negative stereotypes which include derogatory comments that reinforce negative stereotypes about (LGBQ). This is seen when two gay men holding hands in public and being asked not to show it. The hidden message in this case is that it is better to keep it private, as same-sex affection is considered abnormal and offensive.

3. Racial Microaggressions

   Sue, et al. (2007) defined racial microaggressions as 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 color. The example of racial microaggressions can be seen in the group of Asian Americans who were born in the United States. They are complimented for speaking "good English." From those examples, it depicts that an Asian American is not a true American, as well as a foreigner in their own country.
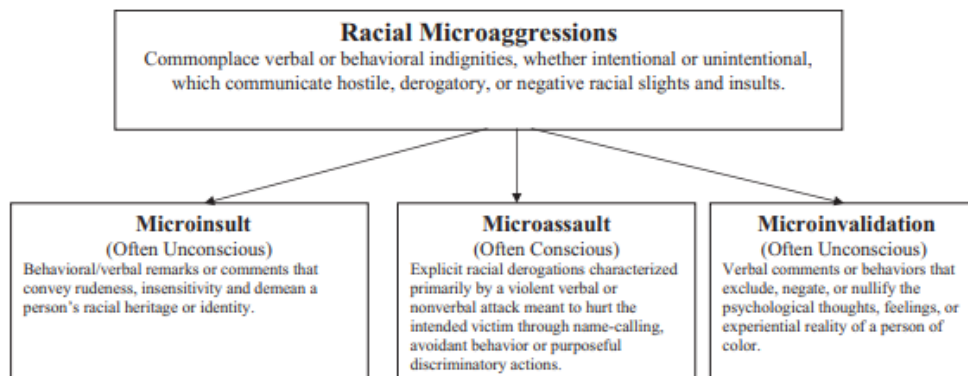
## 2.4 Racial Microaggressions



**Figure 2.4.** Categories of Racial Microaggressions

(*Source: https://bit.ly/4eMRZIu*)

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 color (Sue, et al. 2007). Perpetrators of microaggressions are often unaware that they engage in such communications when they interact with ethnic minorities. Sue, et al. (2007) in the book entitled *Racial microaggression in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice*, categorized racial microaggressions into three primary forms, such as microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations:

1. Microassaults

   Microassaults are overt, blunt and unequivocal racial slurs characterized by both verbal and nonverbal attacks. It is intended to hurt the victim through name-calling, referring to someone as (colored) and deliberately serving white people in front of people of color, avoidant behavior, even intentional discriminatory actions such as grabbing, harassment, moving items around

certain people such as those perceived as superior or having power, or even deliberately posting offensive pictures or signs.

Microassaults allow the perpetrator to remain anonymous. In other words, the victim tends to harbor ideas of minority inferiority (the victim feels inferior) and will only show it in public when they as a victim lose control or feel safe to express it. Microassaults are quite common, and sometimes the perpetrator is unaware that they are microassaults not even realizing how serious it is. For example, when a perpetrator tells a joke that mocks/ demeans a race/ ethnicity, a person with a disability or a gender identity. Usually, the perpetrator will say "I was just kidding" (Sue, et al. 2007).

2. Microinsults

Microinsults are characterized by communication that conveys rudeness, insensitivity, and even denigration of a person's heritage or racial identity. Microinsults are insults that often go unnoticed by the perpetrator, or are subtle, but clearly convey hidden messages such as insults to victims of color. For example, the perpetrator, who is a white job recruiter, says to a job applicant of color (a) "I believe the person who should get the job, is the most qualified person, regardless of race". The recipient of the question may perceive this as "People of color are not qualified for the job, and (b) "How did you get your job?" may be perceived by the recipient of the question as "As a member of a minority group, one must have gotten the position not on merit, but through some affirmative action (a policy that privileges a particular group) or quota program." (Sue, et al. 2007).

Microinsults can occur nonverbally. For example, when a white boss avoids a conversation with an employee of color by looking away because he or she seems distracted during the conversation, or a white teacher fails to acknowledge students of color in class (Hinton, 2004). In such cases, the message white people convey to people of color is that the contributions of people of color are not important.

3. Microinvalidations

In the context of microaggressions, invalidation refers to behavior or communication that denies unique experiences related to one's culture or race. Communication that excludes, minimizes, even negates the feelings, psychological thoughts, and experiences of underrepresented people of color is the characteristics of microinvalidations (Sue, et al. (2007). For example, when Asian Americans who were born as well as raised in the United States, are asked where they are from repeatedly, and praised for speaking English well. This indicates that the perpetrator is having the effect of negating their US heritage and conveying that Asian Americans are perpetual foreigners. Later, when the Asian-American is telling the story of his or her experience when they felt disrespected, the white person interrupts by saying that people of color are not discriminated against, then the white person instead tells his or her own experience that contradicts what the person of color told.

Another example from Sue, et al. (2007) book seen when a white person tells a person of color that "I don't see skin color" or the statement "We are

all human", which means ignores individuals' racial experiences and insists that they are considered foreigners despite being born in the country. has the effect of negating the experience of people of color as racial/ cultural beings (Helms, 1992).

While all three of these three forms are related, they have a different focus and mode of delivery. Microassaults are more direct and aggressive, microinsults convey demeaning messages in a more subtle way, and microinvalidations focuses on negating the experiences and identities of individuals from minority groups.