Lonely and ready to leave: experiences of racial microaggressions among employees of Asian ethnicity

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Abstract

A significant percentage of employees in Australian organisations was born overseas, and nearly 14% are from an Asian ethnic background. Following strong anti-discrimination legislation, overt and explicit acts of discrimination have become a rare occurrence in most Australian workplaces. However, racial microaggressions or subtle acts of discrimination toward people in minority groups are still prevalent, and employees of Asian ethnicity more than any other are likely to be the recipients of these racial microaggressions. Racial microaggressions have a negative impact on the psychological well-being of individuals. Most previous research on racial microaggressions has focused on schools/universities and other social settings. Only a few studies have focused on racial microaggressions experienced in the workplace and no previous study has examined the experience of racial microaggressions among employees of Asian ethnicity in Australia. Drawing on the conservation of resource theory, this study examined how employees of Asian ethnicity responded to the experience of racial microaggressions in the workplace.

The data for this study were collected using a two-wave survey from 201 employees of Asian ethnicity working in Australia. The participants were either born in an Asian country, that is, Northeast Asia (e.g., Mainland China, Japan, Korea), Southeast Asia (e.g., Cambodia, Indonesia, Vietnam) or Southern Asia (e.g., Bangladesh, India, Nepal), or had one or both parents who were born in one of these countries. The study investigated the impact of racial microaggressions shown by supervisors, co-workers, or customers on employees' psychological states (i.e., work engagement, workplace loneliness) and withdrawal behaviours (i.e., absenteeism, turnover intentions, and job search behaviours). Moreover, it considered the buffering effect of social support (i.e., perceived supervisor and co-worker support) and social group identity (i.e., identification as someone of Asian ethnicity) on the relationship between racial microaggressions and these outcomes.

Employees of Asian ethnicity reported experiencing racial microaggressions at work, with women, young and unskilled employees reporting higher levels of racial microaggressions compared to others. The results of regression analyses showed that these employees' experience of racial microaggressions was associated with increased withdrawal outcomes. Employees who experienced racial microaggressions reported increased absenteeism, turnover intentions, and job search behaviours. Results also showed that microaggression incidents were

linked to an increased level of workplace loneliness among employees of Asian ethnicity. However, results for the impact of racial microaggressions on the work engagement level of employees of Asian ethnicity were not significant. Hierarchical regression analyses showed that social support from supervisors and co-workers, and social group identity did not moderate the relationship between racial microaggressions and these outcomes in most instances.

This study is the first to examine experiences of racial microaggressions among employees of Asian ethnicity in Australian workplaces. It adds to the body of emerging research evidence on workplace racial microaggressions. It specifically examines the negative impact of racial microaggressions from different social groups (i.e., supervisors, co-workers, customers) on employee behaviours. It documents the first evidence on the relationship between racial microaggressions and the increased experience of loneliness in the workplace. Organisations and managers are likely to miss subtle negative behaviours, such as racial microaggressions that still exist in the workplace. This study highlights the need to be vigilant about such subtle negative behaviours and their outcomes, if organisations wish to retain employees from ethnic minority groups, in particular employees of Asian ethnicity.

Declaration

I declare that:

This thesis presents work carried out by myself and does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; to the best of my knowledge, it does not contain any materials previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; and all substantive contributions by others to the work presented, including jointly authored publications, is clearly acknowledged.



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1 Introduction

Many Australian organisations have ethnically diverse workforces. Approximately 31.3% of employees in Australian organisations were born overseas, and nearly 14% of employees are from an Asian ethnic background (Austrade 2017). According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2016, 2019), the number of Asians migrating to Australia has been consistently increasing since 2012. For example, those of Chinese heritage remains the second largest overseas-born group in the Australian population, with the proportion increasing from 2.2% to 2.7% (ABS, 2016, 2019). The number of Australians of Indian heritage has increased from 1.9% in 2012 to 2.6% in 2019. Other Asian countries that are in the top ten list of the Australian population born overseas are the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka. Individuals from all Asian countries make up approximately 10.3% of the Australian population (Chang 2017).

Research has shown that people of Asian ethnicity in Australia are more disadvantaged compared to the Whites (Borooah & Mangan 2002; Junankar, Paul & Yasmeen 2010) and they are more likely to face discrimination and racism compared to other ethnic groups (Collins 2013; Syed 2008). This is not an issue observed only in Australia. A study of Asians living in the US has demonstrated that Asians are often considered a marginalised group. Because of visible and demographic differences, they are likely to face more racial discrimination compared to some other ethnic groups (Gee et al. 2007). Studies have found that applicants of Asian ethnicity must submit twice the number of applications to receive calls for an interview compared to White applicants (Berman 2008; Booth, Leigh & Varganova 2012). Employees from a non-English speaking background are paid less compared to Whites in Australia (Lee 1999), fewer of them are promoted to senior positions in organisations (Berman 2008), and many face multiple barriers in career development (Syed 2008). The Australian government works hard to attract skilled individuals to fill gaps in the labour market; however, the ability of organisations to retain their skilled ethnic minority employees is questionable (Halvorsen, Treuren & Kulik 2015). The turnover rate for employees from a non-English speaking background is 33% higher than employees born in Australia (Shah 2009). This evidence clearly shows that employees of Asian ethnicity are discriminated against, which leads to organisations struggling to engage and retain employees of Asian ethnicity.

Racial discrimination is on the rise in Australia; the average level of discrimination 'for the first five Scanlon Foundation surveys (2007-2012) was 11.8% and for the last six surveys (2013–2018) a much higher 18.3%' (Markus 2018, p. 71). Racial discrimination can be triggered by several factors, including current events. For example, there have been reports of several discriminatory incidents happening in Australia due to COVID-19 that have affected people of Asian ethnicity (Tan 2020). According to a report by Markus (2018), discrimination based on skin colour, ethnic origin, or religion was at a peak in 2018.

Racial discrimination is likely to take a subtle form in Australian workplaces. There is a range of anti-discrimination legislation that covers overt discrimination based on demographic differences: Sex Discrimination Act 1984, Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986, Disability Discrimination Act 1992, Age Discrimination Act 2004, and specifically Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Australian Human Rights Commission 2014). Nowadays, overt workplace racial discrimination is unacceptable and illegal. Organisations take these issues seriously because of the severe consequences they face when they ignore overt discrimination. Therefore, the most prevalent form of racial discrimination in the workplace tends to be subtle and unobtrusive (Leiter 2013) (e.g., racial microaggressions). Racial microaggressions are subtle intentional or unintentional negative acts that are generally targeted towards people from a racial minority group (Nadal 2011; Sue, Capodilupo et al. 2007). Research focusing on discrimination in the workplace has shown that the most common and persistent discriminatory behaviours are racial microaggressions (Williams 2015). These racial microaggressions occur more commonly in the workplace compared to overt or old fashioned discrimination (Preston 2013).

Racial microaggressions can have negative implications for both the employee and the organisation (Gosine & Pon 2011). Broader microaggression research suggests that racial microaggressions can negatively affect the psychological well-being of individuals from minority groups (Nadal et al. 2015; Nadal et al. 2017; Wang, Leu & Shoda 2011). This body of research highlights individual reactions/responses, which include anger, stress, fatigue, and low self-esteem (Nadal et al. 2017; Sue, Buceri et al. 2007). The handful of studies that have investigated racial microaggressions in the workplace show that experiences of racial microaggressions are associated with decreased job satisfaction (Marshall 2016), decreased job commitment, and increased burnout (Lee 2009).

No study has yet investigated the relationship between racial microaggressions in the workplace and organisational level outcomes. However, conceptual articles on this topic suggest that if racial microaggressions are not effectively managed, they can deteriorate the relationships between employees in the workplace (Otuyelu, Graham & Kennedy 2016) and can lead to a hostile work environment (Marshall 2016). Prieto et al. (2016) argued that the issue of racial microaggressions and its harmful effects might escalate if the employees feel their claims are being ignored or not being acted upon. Nguyen (2020) argued that these subtle forms of racial microaggressions could be quite costly for organisations. That is, these racial microaggressions can affect an organisation's financial performance through increased turnover and decreased performance levels over time. Employee turnover can be very costly for organisations in terms of repeated advertisements, recruitment, and training of new hires. Focusing on incivility (another type of workplace mistreatment similar to racial microaggressions), Porath and Pearson (2013) highlighted that organisations bear the direct and indirect cost of low engagement in the form of compromised work quality and low productivity levels when employees experience incivility. Employees who experience incivility spend more time and energy on protecting themselves from the negative incident rather than using that energy to fully engage and perform to meet organisational goals (Porath & Pearson 2013). Porath and Pearson (2013) describe how Cisco estimated the cost related to incivility to be over $12 million a year, leading them to create Cisco's global workplace civility program (p. 15). To limit these negative experiences, it is of great importance that organisations are ready to address negative work behaviours such as racial microaggressions.

While a strong body of research has focused on racial microaggressions, most of this work has examined the issue in schools/universities and other social contexts (Zesiger 2013), with only a few recent studies focusing on racial microaggressions in the workplace (Kim, Block & Nguyen 2019; Kim, Block & Yu 2020). The few studies that have looked at racial microaggressions in the workplace mostly use qualitative methods (Shoshana 2016; Sue, Bucceri et al. 2007). At the time this study was designed, there was only one other study on the racial microaggressions experienced by employees of Asian ethnicity in the workplace (Her, 2017). Her (2017) used a qualitative method and interviewed 10 Asian managers working in the US. A qualitative angle can provide a participant's perspective; however, quantitative research will help us capture a broader picture (Regoli 2019). Since 2019, there have been four

studies that have investigated racial microaggression experiences of Asian employees[1] (Kim, Block & Nguyen 2019; Kim, Block & Yu 2020; Li 2019; Nguyen 2020). These emerging studies use experimental designs and include student samples (Kim, Block & Nguyen 2019; Kim, Block & Yu 2020). There is a crucial need for a quantitative study that can help us better understand the effects of racial microaggressions, drawing on the everyday experiences of employees of Asian ethnicity.

The current study uses survey research to examine racial microaggression experiences of employees of Asian ethnicity working in Australia. Racial microaggressions can occur during different workplace interactions and can originate from different agents (Marshall 2016). Incivility literature shows that the severity of experiencing incivility at work may differ, dependent on the agents. For example, a supervisor's incivility can have a more serious impact on an employee compared to a co-worker's or customer's incivility (Schilpzand, Pater & Erez 2016). Similarly, Chiaburu, Harrison and Zedeck (2008) highlighted the importance of co-workers; co-workers' behaviours were found to have a strong connection with employees' withdrawal behaviours and attitudes. Customer and employee interactions may not have as strong an impact as those between a supervisor and employee but they are still important. Consequently, negative behaviours (such as incivility) from customers can negatively affect employees and organisations (Kern, Grandey & Tetrick 2009). Overall, there is a dearth of research on workplace racial microaggressions with no examination of the impact of microaggression experiences initiated from different agents in the workplace. This study examines racial microaggression initiated by three different groups (i.e., supervisors, co-workers, and customers) separately.

Racial microaggressions in the workplace are not well studied, and we do not fully understand racial microaggressions and their impact on different outcomes experienced by employees of Asian ethnicity. The current study examines the consequences related to the experiences of racial microaggressions. More specifically, the focus will be on withdrawal behaviours, both psychological withdrawal and physical withdrawal (Hanisch & Hulin 1990). For example, employees who experience racial microaggressions may become disengaged (Volpone, Avery & Hurrell 2013) or physically leave their workplace (Li et al. 2016). When employees face racial microaggressions from their workgroup, they will distance themselves from those

[1] These studies were published after data collection started for current research.

unpleasant experiences (Ozcelik & Barsade 2011). Therefore, they are likely to experience loneliness in the workplace (Lee & Bierman 2018). Consequently, this study will focus on the psychological withdrawal state (i.e., work engagement), physical withdrawal behaviours (i.e., turnover intention, job search behaviour, and absenteeism), and workplace loneliness among employees who experience racial microaggressions.

Social support can be helpful in stressful times (such as when employees experience racial microaggressions) (Tucker et al. 2018). Social support (e.g., supervisor or co-worker support) may be able to buffer the negative impact of racial microaggressions. No previous study in the racial microaggressions literature has looked at the moderating effect of social support (i.e., supervisors and co-worker support) between employee experience of racial microaggressions in the workplace and their withdrawal outcomes. Studies on incivility and discrimination have found that strong social group identity results in the increased negative impact of stressors (e.g., discrimination and incivility) on employee outcomes (i.e., depression, job-related exhaustion, and stress) (Burrow & Ong 2010; Kern, Grandey & Tetrick 2009). This study also focuses on the moderating effects that the social group identity of employees of Asian ethnicity can have on the relation between the experience of racial microaggressions and employee psychological and behavioural outcomes.

This study makes three contributions that can extend our understanding of racial microaggressions in the workplace. First, the present study extends the literature by examining racial microaggressions stemming from three different agents (i.e., supervisors, co-workers, customers/clients) in the workplace. Second, it examines withdrawal outcomes and experiences of loneliness associated with the experience of racial microaggressions. This study investigates whether these outcomes are different when racial microaggressions are initiated by managers, employees, or customers. Third, it investigates factors that can moderate the relationship between racial microaggressions and withdrawal behaviours and loneliness. The findings from the study can also inform organisational practice by highlighting how organisations can develop plans to handle microaggressions in the workplace and avoid their potential negative consequences. This information will be particularly valuable to organisations, as they can then implement better strategies that help to reduce the negative effects of racial microaggressions. Organisations need to understand that racial microaggressions and subtle discriminations are still very much pervasive in the workplace. Tackling racial microaggressions in the workplace will help organisations deal with employee

withdrawal behaviours and their experience of loneliness, enhancing their ability to attract, engage and retain employees of Asian ethnicity, an important demographic group in Australian workplaces.

2 Literature Review

In this literature review section, I will first explain how the focus of microaggression studies has moved beyond racial to examine the impact on other minority groups (e.g., women, LGBTs). Second, I will compare racial microaggressions in the workplace with other related workplace mistreatments. Third, I will describe forms of racial microaggressions, racial microaggressions in the workplace, and their consequences. Fourth, I will present the conceptual framework that supports this study. In the later sections, I focus on how employees of Asian ethnicity might react to experiencing racial microaggressions and the factors that can moderate the relationship between racial microaggressions and their outcomes.

2.1 Historical evolution of the racial microaggressions construct

The construct 'racial microaggressions' was originally used to describe discriminatory behaviours of White Americans towards African Americans (Pierce 1970). This definition was later redefined as 'subtle, stunning, often automatic, and nonverbal exchanges which are "put-downs" of blacks by offenders' (Pierce et al. 1977, p. 65). Social scientists further extended this concept of racial microaggressions as 'stunning, automatic acts of disregard that stem from unconscious attitudes of White superiority and constitute a verification of Black inferiority' (Davis 1989, p. 1576). In 1998, it was defined as 'subtle insults (verbal, nonverbal, and visual) directed toward people of colour, often automatically or unconsciously' (Solorzano 1998, p. 60). Early definitions referred to subtle non-verbal acts, but recent definitions also include subtle verbal behaviours. Today, the most widely used definition of racial microaggressions, and the one that will be used in this study, defines it as:

> brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults that potentially have a harmful or unpleasant psychological impact on the target person or group (Sue, Capodilupo et al. 2007, p. 72).

This definition fully captures the main aspects related to racial microaggressions, which are subtle uncivil behaviours; which can be intentional and unintentional; and can have a negative impact on the recipient.

Recently, this construct has been applied more broadly, referring to microaggressions occurring within other minority groups based on other demographic dimensions such as gender or sexual orientation. Williams (2015) argued that 'microaggressions' is an umbrella term that can be used for different forms of indignities or incivilities shown to anyone from a minority group. For example, Basford, Offermann and Behrend (2014) looked into microaggression experiences of women in the workplace, where they were a minority. The term 'gender microaggressions' refers to behaviours or statements which are intended to explicitly or implicitly insult, hurt or disgrace women or men who are in the minority (Basford, Offermann & Behrend 2014, p. 341). Exploring observations of gender microaggressions in the workplace, Basford, Offermann and Behrend (2014) observed that women face more microaggressions than men and that these microaggressions have a stronger impact on women compared to men. A study by Holder, Jackson and Ponterotto (2015) focused on Black American women in the corporate sector and found that they faced different forms of microaggressions (e.g., microinsult, microinvalidation). Marshall (2016) explained that African women in America faced microaggressions in three ways: harsh comments due to stereotypes and different culture, isolating behaviour, and different treatment compared to White women.

Resnick (2016) focused on LGBT employees and reported that microaggressions in the workplace create risks to the well-being and security of LGBT employees. Moreover, LGBT employees explained that they experienced microaggressions because their identities were sexualised and tokenised in organisations (Galupo & Resnick 2016). In summary, this body of research suggests that microaggressions are subtle unintentional or intentional negative acts. And when individuals are in the minority, whether based on gender, race or sexual orientation, they can be more vulnerable to microaggressions.

2.2 Racial microaggressions and other types of workplace mistreatments

Racial microaggression is part of a broader group of different forms of mistreatments in the workplace. Hershcovis (2011) described the negative behaviours associated with workplace mistreatments from the perspective of the recipient. Mistreatment can occur in different forms such as racial microaggressions (Sue, Capodilupo et al. 2007), mobbing (Leymann 1990), social undermining (Duffy, Ganster & Pagon 2002), workplace bullying (Einarsen et al. 2003), incivility (Andersson & Pearson 1999), workplace aggression (Neuman & Baron 1998), emotional abuse (Keashly 1997), victimisation (Aquino & Bradfield 2000), interpersonal conflict (Leon-Perez et al. 2015), and abusive supervision (Tepper 2000, p. 499).

When these different forms of mistreatment are compared, four surface characteristics arise that help us to distinguish the differences between them: frequency, intensity, the ambiguity of acts, and the minority status of the target (see some examples in Table 1). Frequency (i.e., the number of times an incident occurs) is not a central element in all of these forms of mistreatment (Hershcovis 2011). For example, workplace bullying refers to a negative act that is repeated over a period of time (Hershcovis 2011), whereas incivility and microaggressions refer to negative behaviours that do not have to be repeated to qualify as an act of mistreatment (Hershcovis 2011). Microaggressions can happen once in a lifetime or can be repetitive (Ross-Sheriff 2012). Intensity (i.e., the strength of the aggressive act) again is different among these acts of mistreatment. Workplace bullying, abuse, and workplace aggression are more intense forms of mistreatment, compared to incivility and racial microaggressions. While bullying behaviour in the workplace is not ambiguous or subtle, incivility and microaggressions often are and they can be intentional or unintentional (Hershcovis 2011) (see Table 1). Microaggressions are targeted towards people in minority groups (e.g., based on race as in the case of this study, gender, age, etc. in broader studies of microaggressions.) (Sue, Capodilupo et al. 2007; Nadal 2011). In contrast, bullying and incivility can be targeted towards anyone who may not be in the minority (Andersson & Pearson 1999; Einarsen et al. 2003).

Table 1: Similarities and differences between racial microaggressions and other types of workplace mistreatments

Workplace Mistreatments	**Characteristics**			
	Frequency	Intensity	Ambiguity of acts	Minority status of the target
Bullying	Yes	Low-High	No	No
Incivility	No	Low	Yes	No
Microaggressions (racial)	No	Low	Yes	Yes

Social dominance theory (SDT) (Sidanius & Pratto 1999) states that oppression and discrimination are the ways by which groups establish and organise their social hierarchy.

Individuals of the dominant group acquire an unbalanced stake in resources (e.g., power, benefits, and critical resources), while individuals from the minority group stay unprivileged (Sidanius & Pratto 2012). Through a SDT lens (Sidanius & Pratto 1999), when different types of mistreatments are compared on the basis of these four characteristics (i.e., frequency, intensity, the ambiguity of acts, and the minority status of the target), it is clear that racial microaggressions are closest to incivility as a construct, but there are some differences. The major difference is that incivility can be directed at most employees at any level. In contrast, microaggressions are behaviours that are directed at employees who are in low power minority groups (e.g., ethnic or racial groups, females/males, migrants, or LBGTs) (Brooks 2020). Employees of Asian ethnicity constitute a minority group in Australia, and they can easily experience racial microaggressions from dominant ethnic groups. In the next section, I will fully focus on different forms of racial microaggressions in more detail.

2.3 Forms of racial microaggressions

Sue, Capodilupo et al. (2007) identified three forms of racial microaggressions (see also Basford, Offermann & Behrend 2014; DeAngelis 2009; Offermann et al. 2014; Williams 2015):

1. Microassault
2. Microinsult
3. Microinvalidation

Microassault is an overt and explicit form of racial discrimination and is mainly shown through verbal or non-verbal means, such as name-calling/swearing, excluding, and ignoring. Microassaults are 'old fashioned' racial discriminations which are most probably consciously done in private moments shared between the agent and recipient (Sue, Capodilupo et al. 2007, p. 274). For example, Palestinian professionals who were in the minority, working in organisations in Israel, often heard the term 'Arab' in conversations. This was associated with negative expressions such as 'Watch out for him: he turns into an Arab when he gets angry' (Shoshana 2016, p. 1053). Microassault is less frequent in today's workplaces, as this form of overt racial discrimination/racism is unacceptable and illegal (Leiter 2013).

Microinsult is described as a subtle form of racism, where interactions either disrespect or humiliate an individual because of their identity and ethnic background. In cases of microinsult,

the agent unintentionally says or does something offensive to an individual of a minority group (Sue, Capodilupo et al. 2007). For example, if a person comments to an African American that he/she speaks well and clearly, while the statement may look like a compliment, the African American person can perceive this as an insult that he/she is seen as speaking well *regardless* of being Black (DeCuir-Gunby & Gunby 2016).

Microinvalidation is a form of microaggression where agents discount and reject the beliefs or obvious existence of a person of another race. For example, an Asian who is born and raised in America can be subject to microinvalidations such as being asked about where they were born; in short, denying them their American heritage and indirectly showing that they will always be considered outsiders (DeAngelis 2009; Sue, Capodilupo et al. 2007; Williams 2015). These days overt forms of discrimination (i.e., microassaults) are not acceptable. But subtle and covert forms of discrimination are prevalent. So, the current study focuses on the subtle forms of racial microaggressions (i.e., microinsults and microinvalidations) that occur in workplaces.

2.4 Racial microaggressions in the workplace

Most research on racial microaggressions has focused on broader social settings where these interactions take place. Only a handful of studies in the last decade have documented microaggressions against racial minorities in *the workplace*. In one study in Canada, participants selected were Black workers working in child welfare agencies. Racial microaggressions that participants faced on a routine basis included sarcastic comments, being subject to suspicion without any substantial reason and having their work more carefully monitored compared to their White peers (Gosine & Pon 2011). Another study explored the impact of racial microaggressions on African American educators in the workplace and found a negative impact on job satisfaction (DeCuir-Gunby & Gunby 2016). Research examining the intersection of race and gender suggests that racial microaggressions can happen to people at any level in the organisation. For example, Holder, Jackson and Ponterotto (2015) reported that no matter how successful senior Black women were in their organisations, they continued to face racial microaggressions and subsequently suffered negative consequences. Shenoy-Packer (2015) looked into racial microaggressions faced by migrant professionals working in the US and found that migrants experienced racial microaggressions through different verbal and attitudinal incivilities. Her (2017) conducted semi-structured interviews with Asian women working in the US and found that the racial microaggressions experienced in the workplace are manifested in 10 different ways, including stereotypes, workplace relationships, tokenism, etc.

Studies focusing on employees specifically of Asian ethnicity experiencing racial microaggressions in the workplace are scarce (Nguyen 2020). Recently, Kim, Block and Nguyen (2019) focused on Asian students working part-time in the US. They found that White employees with high colour blindness (i.e., the denial, distortion, or minimization of race and racism, p. 4) did not understand that their subtle forms of racial microaggressions could make Asians feel invisible. Kim, Block and Yu (2020) used the online research panel, Mturk. They examined the impact of positive stereotypes on the ability of Asians to recognise the negative effects of racial microaggressions. Li (2019) exclusively focused on Chinese migrant workers in Australia. Li (2019) did 38 interviews and examined their processes of job search, experiences of racial microaggressions, and their interpretations and reaction to racial microaggressions. It is argued that there is inequality in employment structure and factors such as migrant status, being foreigner and human capital plays a role in the unequal employment system and racial microaggression experiences (Li 2019). No field study of employees of Asian ethnicity was found that considered a broader group of employees of Asian ethnicity (i.e., Northeast Asian, Southeast Asian, Southern Asian) facing racial microaggressions in Australia. Considering that Asians, as an ethnic minority group, are more likely to face racial microaggressions in the workplace compared to other ethnic groups (Junankar, Paul & Yasmeen 2010; Syed 2008), this study focuses on employees of Asian ethnicity in Australia.

2.5 Agents of racial microaggressions

Literature on racial microaggressions in the workplace is limited, and the impact of racial microaggressions from different agents (i.e., supervisors, co-workers, customers) in the workplace is still largely unknown. Focusing on migrants as a minority group, Estacio and Saidy-Khan (2014) interviewed migrant nurses who faced racial microaggressions from their patients and co-workers and they experienced frustration and anger. The broader literature on incivility in the workplace suggests that incivility from supervisors, co-workers, and customers are different experiences (Jawahar & Schreurs 2018; Kern, Grandey & Tetrick 2009; Sliter, Sliter & Jex 2012) and often associated with different outcomes. A literature review by Schilpzand, Pater and Erez (2016) on workplace incivility argued that it is likely that someone experiencing incivility from their supervisor will show a higher level of negative outcomes compared to someone who experiences incivility from co-workers. For example, a study tested incivility from supervisors and co-workers as moderators and found that supervisor incivility exacerbated the negative impact of job stressors on physical health more than co-worker

incivility (Oore et al. 2010). This is because these employees feared that their supervisors' incivility may also be reflected in annual performance evaluations, bonuses, promotions, etc. Moreover, even if incivility shown from supervisors is less frequent than incivility from co-workers, it can have a more harmful effect on employees because it is difficult for employees to defend themselves against their supervisors' incivility (Cortina, Magley & Tetrick 2009; Oore et al. 2010). Similarly, incivility shown from co-workers may result in a higher level of harmful effects compared to customer incivility. Employees interact with their co-workers more frequently than customers. This means that employees can experience repeated incivility in the workplace from co-workers as opposed to customers (Schilpzand, Pater & Erez 2016). These findings provide evidence that we can expect racial microaggressions from different agents to have different associations with outcomes. Consequently, this project focuses on racial microaggressions shown by different agents (i.e., supervisors, co-workers, and customers/clients).

2.6 Consequences of racial microaggressions in the workplace

A few studies that examine the consequences of racial microaggressions report negative outcomes at the individual employee level and argue that these outcomes can impact organisational level phenomena. In the following section, individual-level outcomes related to mistreatment literature and outcomes related to microaggressions from broader literature will be discussed. Then I will explain individual level outcomes related to racial microaggressions in the workplace. The implications for organisations related to mistreatment literature and racial microaggressions will also be discussed.

Broader workplace mistreatment literature suggests that employee psychological outcomes as consequences of workplace mistreatments are stress, burnout and anxiety (Loi, Loh & Hine 2015). Employees' behavioural reactions to mistreatment can include lower task performance, counter workplace behaviours (CWBs), and withdrawal (Giumetti et al. 2013; Penney & Spector 2005; Sliter, Sliter & Jex 2012). Findings from broader literature on microaggressions (not specific to race) have shown that these microaggressions, either intentional or unintentional, are harmful (Desouza, Wesselmann & Ispas 2017). A study in the broader racial microaggressions literature has noted that the emotional states often described by the target individuals experiencing racial microaggression include 'belittlement, anger, rage, frustration, alienation, and of constantly being invalidated' (Sue, Bucceri et al. 2007, p. 77). Physical health conditions that resulted from the experience of racial microaggressions included pain, low

energy levels, fatigue, and other general health problems (Nadal et al. 2017). These studies in broader social settings have also found that microaggression experiences resulted in increased stress (Ross-Sheriff 2012; Zambrana et al. 2017).

Regardless of racial microaggressions being subtle and covert, the broader literature on microaggressions as well as specific studies of racial microaggressions in the workplace finds that they have a detrimental effect on the psychological and physical well-being of employees/individuals (Desouza, Wesselmann & Ispas 2017; Lee 2009; Sue, Capodilupo & Holder 2008). In a study of racial microaggressions in the workplace, Holder, Jackson and Ponterotto (2015) found that employees who experienced racial microaggressions reported confusion, lack of confidence, low self-esteem, feeling overburdened, embarrassment, and increased stress levels (Marshall 2016). Furthermore, studies of racial microaggressions in the workplace have found that employees show less engaged work behaviours (DeCuir-Gunby & Gunby 2016), increased burnout, turnover, decreased job commitment (Lee 2009), and decreased job satisfaction (Marshall 2016) when they experience racial microaggressions.

Organisational level outcomes related to racial microaggressions in the workplace have not yet been fully examined. Research on other workplace mistreatment suggests that there are organisational level outcomes such as decreased efficiency, lower productivity, decreased customer satisfaction, and increased costs (Paice & Smith 2009; Yildirim 2009) when employees experience mistreatments at work. In a study of incivility, Hur, Kim and Park (2015) explained that incivility in the workplace is associated with increased emotional exhaustion and, as a result, lowers employees' job performance, which can ultimately affect organisational profitability. Similarly, a few studies have discussed the implications for organisations when their employees experience racial microaggressions. Targets of racial microaggressions often perceived these negative behaviours as intentional, which resulted in a hostile work climate (Marshall 2016). Zambrana et al. (2017) studied racial microaggressions experienced by ethnic minority groups in the education system, and supported the argument that microaggressions can promote a hostile climate in organisations.

On reviewing studies on racial microaggressions and their consequences, it is clear that this is a serious problem for employees who are from a racial minority group in the workplace, and that it can have detrimental outcomes (Sue, Capodilupo & Holder 2008). Researchers have also recommended further investigation into the consequences of racial microaggressions in the

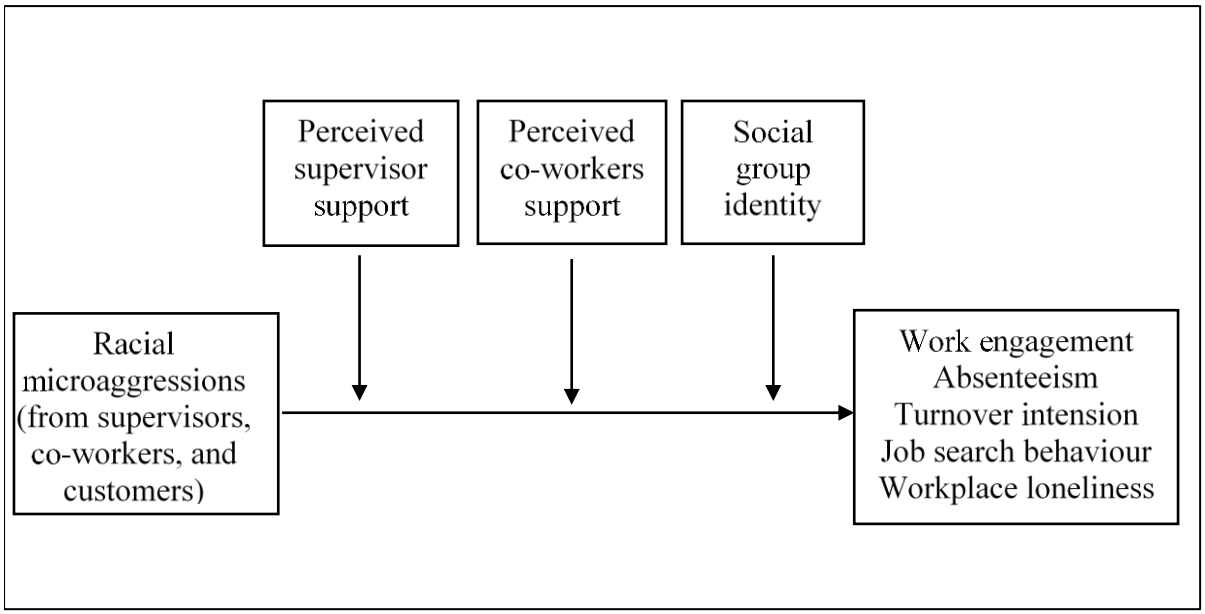
workplace to have a better understanding of their impact (Lee 2009; Nguyen, 2020; Young, Anderson & Stewart 2015). Research on racial microaggressions has not examined some important withdrawal outcomes. Moreover, we have a very limited understanding of what resources can buffer the negative impact of racial microaggressions in the workplace. The current study aims to address these limitations and extend our understanding of the experience and the impact of racial microaggressions in the workplace. Figure 1 summarises the conceptual framework of the current study.

2.7 Research questions

This study will investigate the experience of racial microaggressions by employees of Asian ethnicity working in Australia. The research questions of this study are:

- What impact will racial microaggressions from supervisors, co-workers, and customers/clients have on employees of Asian ethnicity?
- Can workplace social support from supervisors and co-workers buffer the effects of workplace racial microaggressions? How will social group identity influence the impact of workplace racial microaggressions?

Figure 1: Conceptual model



3 Theoretical background

3.1 Conservations of resources theory (COR)

COR (Hobfoll 1988) is a stress theory that includes two main principles and four corollaries. The first principle is that individuals try to gain and protect their existing resources (i.e., what individuals perceive as valuable and important to attain their goals) (Halbesleben et al. 2014). Resources can be objects (e.g., food, home), conditions (e.g., having financial support or social support from family, friends, co-workers, supervisors), and energies (e.g., positive moods, emotions) (Hobfoll 1988; Halbesleben et al. 2014). The second principle is that stress is expected when individuals either foresee losing or actually lose their perceived resources (Hobfoll 1988).

The four corollaries (Hobfoll 1988, 2001) are:

1) When individuals possess more resources, they are more likely to gain more resources, whereas individuals with fewer resources can be disadvantaged and are expected to lose more resources. For example, an employee who has healthy relationships in the workplace is expected to have a positive support system in the workplace, and when an employee has abusive supervisors, she/he experiences an increased level of emotional exhaustion, and as a result, avoids feedback from supervisors as a coping strategy so that they can avoid the experience of any further abusive behaviour. In this example, the employee already has low resources (i.e., lack of support from the supervisor) and, by avoiding feedback, may lose further resources (e.g., role clarity, clear information) necessary for his/her improvement (Whitman, Halbesleben & Holmes 2014).
2) When individuals possess few resources and these are threatened, they lose more resources as a result. For example, employees with increased workload and low job security experience emotional exhaustion (i.e., loss of emotional energy resource) and increased pressure. These employees stay stressed even when they reach home (e.g., they are not able to eat or sleep well when at home), which further leads to increased exhaustion. The initial loss of resources spirals over time, leading to further losses (i.e., a loss spiral) (Demerouti, Bakker & Bulters 2004).
3) When individuals possess more resources, they can invest their existing resources and gain even more resources. For example, a study using daily diary methods found that when employees have support from their supervisors, they show a high level of engagement, which in return has a positive effect on the financial gains of employees

(Xanthopoulou et al. 2009). These employees who have more resources in terms of supportive supervisors are able to gain further resources (i.e., high engagement, financial gains). The gain of resources spirals upward over time (i.e., a gain spiral) (Mäkikangas et al. 2010; Xanthopoulou et al. 2009).

4) When individuals lose valued resources and fail to regain them, they use strategies such as withdrawal to save their remaining resources. For example, emotionally exhausted employees try to protect their remaining emotional energy resources; thus, they invest fewer resources in performance and citizenship behaviours towards their organisations (Halbesleben & Wheeler 2011) with the hope of conserving their emotional energy and avoiding further depletion of resources.

3.2 Experience of racial microaggressions through COR lens

Unpleasant workplace interactions act as a significant source of social stress for employees. Based on COR theory (Hobfoll 1988), in the case of racial microaggressions, employees of Asian ethnicity will feel their energy has been drained because they are stressed and frustrated about the unpleasant interactions (Lee 2009; Marshall 2016; Nadal et al. 2017). Studies have shown that negative workplace behaviours (i.e., incivility) are associated with increased stress, burnout, emotional exhaustion, anxiety, or strain (Beattie & Griffin 2014; Hur et al. 2015; Rhee, Hur & Kim 2017).

According to corollaries of COR theory, when an employee experiences unpleasant behaviour within their social groups, the employee will feel emotional exhaustion and to save his/her individual emotional resources, the employee will use withdrawal as a coping strategy to retain their remaining resources (Sliter, Sliter & Jex 2012; Taris, Schreurs & Van 2001). Withdrawal behaviour is defined as ‘actions intended to place physical or psychological remoteness between employees and their workplace’ (Carmeli 2005, p. 179). Hanisch and Hulin (1990) described withdrawal behaviours as having two components: 1) physical withdrawal, when individuals try to physically remove themselves from a particular organisation or physically withdraw from jobs by employing behaviours such as tardiness (Volpone, Avery & Hurrell 2013), absenteeism (Volpone, Avery & Hurrell 2013), turnover (Li et al. 2016) or early retirement (Hanisch & Hulin 1990); and 2) psychological withdrawal, when individuals psychologically withdraw from their work, such as disengaging (Volpone, Avery & Hurrell 2013), or depersonalising (Taris et al. 2004). Research on the experience of loneliness in the workplace reveals that employees will distance themselves from social groups showing

negative behaviours (Ozcelik & Barsade 2011) leading to increased workplace loneliness (Lee & Bierman 2018).

In this study, I will focus on racial microaggressions from supervisors, co-workers, and customers and their impact on both psychological (i.e., work engagement) and physical withdrawal behaviours (i.e., turnover intention, job search behaviour, and absenteeism) and loneliness in the workplace. Based on COR theory, if employees of Asian ethnicity face racial microaggressions in the workplace, they are likely to exhibit withdrawal behaviours (Holder, Jackson & Ponterotto 2015; Lee 2009). These withdrawal outcomes are discussed in detail in the following section.

3.3 Employee reactions associated with racial microaggressions

When co-workers show uncivil behaviours to their fellow employees, these behaviours consume the targets' cognitive and emotional resources, leaving them with less strength and resources to perform productively (Rhee, Hur & Kim 2017). Based on COR theory, it is expected that when individuals with few resources feel their existing resources are threatened, they will try to conserve their existing resources and use withdrawal strategies to cope with the threat (Hobfoll 2001). Broader research on workplace mistreatment suggests that employees engage in counterproductive work behaviours (CWBs) when they experience mistreatment (Penney & Spector 2005). However, it is unlikely that employees of Asian ethnicity will engage in CWBs or lower their performance because of the difficulties they experience in finding employment (Stier & Levanon 2003). Therefore, when employees of Asian ethnicity face racial microaggressions from supervisors and co-workers (with the loss of social support resource), they are more likely to use withdrawal as a coping strategy to conserve their remaining resources (Sliter, Sliter & Jex 2012). Consequently, this study will focus on a range of withdrawal behaviours (i.e., work engagement, absenteeism, turnover intention, job search behaviour) and the experience of workplace loneliness. Due to limited research on racial microaggressions in workplaces, I will also draw on research evidence on withdrawal outcomes with regards to incivility, a closely related construct (see section 2.2 above) in the next section.

3.3.1 Work engagement

'Work engagement means a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption' (Schaufeli et al. 2002, p. 74). When employees are

highly involved, enthusiastic, and passionate about their work, they are described as having high levels of work engagement (Attridge 2009; Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova 2006).

In a conceptual paper, Prieto et al. (2016) explained that if employees sense that they are targets of microaggressions, they might be less engaged in work, which will further affect their overall performance. Supporting this argument, two other studies have found that racial microaggressions can result in less engaged work behaviours (Lee 2009; Marshall 2016). A literature review of incivility in the workplace by Schilpzand, Pater and Erez (2016) cited two studies that looked at the impact of incivility on work engagement levels. In one study, Chen et al. (2013) found that incivility in the workplace decreased work engagement levels and disconnected employees from their jobs. Giumetti et al. (2013) explored incivility shown to employees through emails and found a negative impact on their work engagement level and overall performance. When employees of Asian ethnicity experience social stressors in the form of racial microaggressions, they will be emotionally drained, which reduces emotional energy resources (Hobfoll 1988); as a result, it is expected that employees of Asian ethnicity will withdraw from their work and therefore show decreased work engagement levels. These incidents of microaggression can take place in their interactions with their supervisors, co-workers, and customers. Therefore, I hypothesise that:

Hypothesis 1: Racial microaggressions from supervisors, co-workers, or customers will be negatively related to work engagement.

3.3.2 Absenteeism

Absenteeism is where an individual employee physically withdraws from work. It is one of several forms of withdrawal behaviours which include turnover intention and tardiness (Blau & Guion 1985; Volpone, Avery & Hurrell 2013). The current study will focus on unplanned absenteeism, defined as 'the number of unscheduled (unplanned) leaves taken' (Kumar et al. 2017, p. 3) by an employee.

My review of the literature found no previous studies that had examined the relationship between racial microaggressions in the workplace and absenteeism. The literature on workplace incivility shows that incidents of incivility create an environment where targets of these behaviours use absenteeism as a coping strategy in order to avoid these stressful situations (Porath & Pearson 2012; Sliter, Sliter & Jex 2012). Research has shown that incivility in the

workplace leads to increased absenteeism (Everton, Jolton & Mastrangelo 2007), as does discrimination (Volpone, Avery & Hurrell 2013). When employees of Asian ethnicity experience racial microaggressions in the workplace from supervisors, co-workers, or customers, they lose valued emotional resources prompting them to use absenteeism as a coping strategy to save their remaining resources (Hobfoll 1988). Taken together, this body of research leads me to hypothesise that:

Hypothesis 2: Racial microaggressions from supervisors, co-workers, or customers will be positively related to unplanned absenteeism.

3.3.3 Turnover intention

Turnover intention refers to the plans that employees make to leave a job, indicating their likelihood of quitting (Kaur & Pankaj 2013). Turnover intention is one of the strongest predictors of actual turnover (Ahuja et al. 2007; Gabriel et al. 2018; Vandenberg & Nelson 1999).

It is argued that social relations on the job can play a critical role in actions leading to turnover intention (Felps et al. 2009). Unhealthy interpersonal relationships can directly influence employees' emotional reactions to their job or organisation that, as a result, can influence their turnover intentions (Lachman & Diamant 1987). For example, the bullying literature has suggested that bullying behaviours in the workplace are distressing and create a difficult work environment for employees (Houshmand et al. 2012). A review of the literature on racial microaggressions surfaced a study on African American employees by Lee (2009) who found that racial microaggressions in the workplace lead to increased turnover intentions. When individuals face stressors, they try to protect and conserve existing resources (Hobfoll 1988; Halbesleben et al. 2014). Racial microaggressions in the workplace from supervisors, co-workers, and customers are social stressors. It is expected that these unpleasant experiences will lead to a loss of emotional energy resources and will be associated with increased turnover intentions among employees of Asian ethnicity as a withdrawal coping strategy. This leads me to hypothesise that:

Hypothesis 3: Racial microaggressions from supervisors, co-workers, or customers will be positively related to turnover intentions.

3.3.4 Job search behaviours

Job search behaviours are 'specific behaviours through which effort and time are expended to acquire information about labour market alternatives' (Bretz, Boudreau & Judge 1994, p. 7). Bretz, Boudreau and Judge (1994) explained two groups of predictors of job search behaviours: 1) push factors are related to circumstances of life and work causing discomfort and dissatisfaction associated with increased job search behaviour, and 2) pull factors are related to market conditions regarding availability and probability of getting a new job that lead to increased job search behaviour (such as good job opportunities and better salary packages) (Bretz, Boudreau & Judge 1994). Racial microaggressions constitute the first option—a push factor. When employees of Asian ethnicity experience racial microaggressions in the workplace, they are pushed towards other job options.

A study focused on racial minority groups showed that the social environment has a strong positive impact on the job search behaviours of minority employees (Van et al. 2004). Taylor et al. (2017) argued that a hostile work environment (i.e., uncomfortable environment due to negative behaviours) can lead to increased burnout which can result in increased job search behaviours. Similarly, Megeirhi, Ribeiro and Woosnam (2020) reported that incivility leads to increased job search behaviours. Based on the COR theory (Hobfoll 1988), it is expected that when employees of Asian ethnicity experience racial microaggressions from supervisors, co-workers, or customers, they will anticipate losing their existing resources (Hobfoll 1988); as a result, they will attempt to leave the organisation as a withdrawal coping strategy. Therefore, I hypothesise that:

Hypothesis 4: Racial microaggressions from supervisors, co-workers, or customers will be positively related to job search behaviours.

3.3.5 Workplace loneliness

Workplace loneliness is defined as 'distress caused by the perceived lack of good quality interpersonal relationships between employees in a work environment' (Wright 2005a, p. 63). Studies have mainly examined outcomes of workplace loneliness, with only a few having looked at predictors (Wright 2005b) or moderators of workplace loneliness (Lam & Lau, 2012). Researchers have highlighted the importance of exploring loneliness by focusing on vulnerable populations (such as individuals/groups with low power, women, or other minority groups) (Wright 2005a).

Wright and Silard (2020) reported that when employees experience socially aggressive behaviours, they will distance themselves from these instigators in the workplace. Employees who experience workplace loneliness feel that they are distant from other co-workers and other employees in the workplace, which can lead to low levels of attachment and decreased affective commitment (Ozcelik & Barsade 2011). In contrast, employees who have strong social relationships in the workplace show high commitment levels not only to their organisations but also to their co-workers (Ayazlar & Guzel 2014). Individuals who experience discrimination in their daily interactions can experience increased loneliness (Lee & Bierman 2018).

In an interview-based study of racial microaggressions in the workplace, Marshall (2016) reported how participants explained that as a result of racial microaggressions, they ended up distancing themselves from their co-workers. One of the participants explained that racial microaggressions created such a hostile work environment that she kept herself locked inside her office, away from her co-workers, avoiding any interactions with them. Similarly, many other participants reported how they stayed away from their co-workers in order to avoid interactions with the agents of racial microaggressions (Marshall 2016). It is clear from this study that when employees experience unpleasant interactions in the workplace, they will experience distress, motivating them to stay away from these groups. This can then result in the employee experiencing loneliness in the workplace. Therefore, it is argued that when employees of Asian ethnicity experience a negative social interaction with their supervisor or co-workers, they will try to avoid further interactions with them to conserve their valued resources (Hobfoll 1988). As a result, they will experience increased workplace loneliness. Here, I have not hypothesised a link to racial microaggressions from customers. Workplace loneliness is experienced due to a lack of quality relationships among employees in the workplace (Wright 2005a; Wright, Burt & Strongman 2006) and customer racial microaggressions are not expected to be associated with the experience of loneliness in the workplace. Therefore, I hypothesise that:

Hypothesis 5: Racial microaggressions from supervisors or co-workers will be positively related to the experiences of workplace loneliness.

3.4 Moderating effects

In explaining resources, a critical component of COR theory, Hobfoll et al. (1990) stated that supportive social ties can be a significant resource. Social support in the workplace is a form of job resource, as it plays a critical role in achieving personal and organisational goals. Support from co-workers and supervisors has been shown to increase employee engagement and reduce turnover intentions and other withdrawal behaviours (Saks 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker 2004). Individuals from minority groups inevitably have less social support both inside and outside the workplace. Therefore, social support from supervisors and co-workers will be even more important for employees of Asian ethnicity working in Australia, compared to employees of majority groups.

Supervisors and co-workers are seen by employees as social support resources, but if they show uncivil behaviours instead of support, they can threaten an employee's resources (Sliter, Sliter & Jex 2012). Racial microaggressions shown from supervisors and co-workers can act as social stressors for employees of Asian ethnicity. Reich, Hershcovis and Chen (2015) state that negative events (e.g., co-workers or supervisor incivility) counter basic norms in the workplace, which is to work together as a team and to support each other in achieving individual as well as organisational goals. Racial microaggressions can have negative emotional consequences because they violate employees' expectations of working together as a team. Rhee, Hur and Kim (2017) found that social stressors like incivility from co-workers cause depletion of emotional resources and result in increased emotional exhaustion. Moreover, they argued that incivility shown by supervisors and other stakeholders can result in multiple negative outcomes (such as emotional exhaustion and lower job performance). Kern, Grandey and Tetrick (2009) argued that employees of racial minority groups can expect to face incivility from customers because of their surface-level characteristics. Customers may not personally know the employee, but they may still make some assumptions about a certain race or ethnicity (Kern, Grandey & Tetrick 2009).

Westman et al. (2004) supported the notion that loss of resources is one of the main reasons for stress, and employees try to cope with loss and stress by stopping further losses and acquiring new resources. COR (Hobfoll 1988) theory focuses on how individuals gain, protect, and maintain resources. COR theory reiterates that supportive relationships or personal resources can protect existing resources and assist with providing new resources. For example,

a positive relationship in the workplace acts as a resource to an employee (Hobfoll 1988). It can be argued that positive social ties can protect employees from resource depletion and can help them to regain resources. For example, support from social groups in the workplace can provide emotional support and energy to deal with social stressors. As Wright (2005b) suggested, the social and psychological health of employees depends upon the supportive interpersonal relationships and environment of the workplace.

3.4.1 Perceived supervisor support

Perceived supervisor support describes 'the degree to which employees form impressions that their superiors care about their well-being, value their contributions, and are generally supportive' (Dawley, Andrews & Bucklew 2008, p. 238). Support from supervisors helps employees to manage their emotions and in turn, influence employee behaviours and attitudes (Dawley, Andrews & Bucklew 2008; Maertz et al. 2007). Supervisors directly influence the day-to-day work experiences of employees compared to senior management because they interact with employees more frequently and can influence them positively through care and encouragement (Eisenberger et al. 1986). Tucker et al. (2018) argued that supervisors can guide how employees deal with workload and stress, and supervisor support can buffer the effects of workplace stress. Supervisor support as a resource can diminish employee feelings of loneliness at work (Erdil & Ertosun 2011) when employees face stressful situations at work.

When an individual's resources are threatened, they try to preserve and regain resources (Hobfoll 2001). Supervisor support is a social resource that will help employees sustain their existing resources and acquire new resources (Hobfoll et al. 1990). In the case of co-worker or customer racial microaggressions, employees will try to conserve against further loss of resources using withdrawal coping strategies. However, having supervisor support resources will help them deal with these stressors differently. Supervisors can provide emotional support, or they can provide guidance on how to deal with such unpleasant behaviours, which in return will buffer the negative effect of racial microaggressions on employee withdrawal reactions and the experience of loneliness. Therefore, I hypothesise that:

Hypothesis 6: Perceived supervisor support moderates the relationship between co-worker or customer racial microaggressions and work engagement, turnover intentions, job search behaviours, absenteeism, and workplace loneliness, such that the association is weak when perceived supervisor support is high.

3.4.2 Perceived co-worker support

Support from co-workers can be shown in mainly two ways: a) instrumental support, where co-workers help in activities related to the job, and b) emotional support, where co-workers show empathy and understanding (Beehr et al. 2000). Any type of support from co-workers is a valued resource for an employee (Chiaburu, Harrison & Zedeck 2008; Hayton, Carnabuci & Eisenberger 2012). Support from co-workers is a significant resource for employees that can help them deal with stressful workplace events. Co-workers are often greater in number and more accessible to employees compared to any other source of social support (such as supervisor support). Co-worker support decreases stress and increases the satisfaction level of their peers or cohorts (Babin & Boles 1996). Social support from different sources can help in dealing with stressful events such as racial microaggressions (Hobfoll et al. 1990). So, co-worker support is a critical resource for an employee who experiences racial microaggressions in the workplace.

In the case of supervisor or customer racial microaggressions, employees of Asian ethnicity will withdraw as a coping strategy. However, with support from co-workers, the relationship between racial microaggressions and withdrawal outcomes can change. Co-worker support will help to buffer the negative impact of these social stressors on withdrawal outcomes and workplace loneliness. Therefore, I hypothesise that:

Hypothesis 7: Perceived co-worker support moderates the relationship between supervisor or customer racial microaggressions and work engagement, turnover intentions, job search behaviours, absenteeism, and workplace loneliness, such that the association is weak when perceived co-worker support is high.

3.4.3 Social group identity

Social group identity is defined as 'that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from [their] knowledge of [their] membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that membership' (Tajfel 1974, p. 69). Racial group identity means the degree and the type of connection an individual has with his/her ethnic group (Phinney & Fowler 1996). Two individuals from the same ethnic group can have different levels of identification or sense of group identity. One can be more committed to and strongly identify with his/her ethnic group compared to another (Phinney & Fowler 1996). COR theory

highlights how individuals gain, protect, and maintain resources (Hobfoll 1988). A valued racial identity is a psychological resource for individuals (Harrison 1999; Hughes, Kiecolt & Keith 2014; Phinney 2003), and the racial identity of employees of Asian ethnicity can be a resource.

Yoo, Lee and Mallinckrodt (2008) explained the moderating effect of racial/ethnic identity on racial discrimination and its outcomes. They argued that although some studies have shown that ethnic identity protects against threats shown in the form of racism or discrimination (Phinney & Fowler 1996; Yoo, Lee & Hansen 2005), these findings are equivocal (Yoo, Lee & Mallinckrodt 2008). In their literature review, Brondolo et al. (2009) also found that there are mixed findings on the buffering impact of racial identity against perceived racism and its consequences. A strong racial identity can protect an individual and provide coping strategies when a specific racial identity is not targeted. According to Hughes, Kiecolt and Keith (2014), a strong racial identity buffers the effect of stressors when stressors are not directed towards minority group members because of their racial identity. In their study, for example, the racial identity of African Americans buffered the impact of financial stress on depression.

Social group identity threats are defined as 'experiences appraised as indicating potential harm to the value, meanings, or enactment of an identity' (Petriglieri 2011, p. 644). Studies have shown that the threat to ethnic identity can lead to increased negative psychological outcomes (Yoo, Lee & Mallinckrodt 2008). Moreover, individuals who strongly identify with their racial/ethnic group are more likely to show exacerbated effects as a result of identity threat, compared to those who have low identification with their racial group (Yoo, Lee & Mallinckrodt 2008). In their study, Kern, Grandey and Tetrick (2009) found that strong racial identity intensifies the relationship between incivility and job burnout for employees who are in the minority. Employees with a strong racial identity who perceived that ambiguous negative behaviours (i.e., incivility) were shown because of their race reported higher burnout, and individuals with weak racial identity who did not perceive incivility as a result of their race and showed lower burnout. Similarly, Burrow and Ong (2010) found that racial discrimination towards African Americans with a strong racial identity resulted in intense psychological outcomes such as negative affect, depression, and anxiety. Overall, this body of research suggests that the threat to a valued racial identity exacerbates the impact of racism on employee reactions.

According to COR theory, individuals adopt coping strategies when they fear resource depletion (Hobfoll 1988). Social identity threat literature shows that individuals will use coping strategies (e.g., withdrawal) if their valued identities are threatened (Fischer, Haslam & Smith 2010; Kern, Grandey & Tetrick 2009). For example, individuals use disengaging as a coping strategy in immediate response to identity threat (Steele, Spencer & Aronson 2002). Taken together, I argue that the social group identity of employees of Asian ethnicity is a threatened resource in the case of racial microaggressions. When employees of Asian ethnicity have a strong ethnic group identity, and when racial microaggressions are shown to employees, the strength of social group identity can exacerbate the impact of racial microaggressions on withdrawal outcomes and the experience of workplace loneliness.

Hypothesis 8: Social group identity moderates the relationship between supervisor, co-worker or customer racial microaggressions and work engagement, turnover intentions, job search behaviours, absenteeism, and workplace loneliness, such that the association is strong when the social group identity is strong.

Drawing on the COR theory, these hypotheses were tested via a field study which focused on employees of Asian ethnicity working in Australia. A two-wave survey design was used for data collection. The methodology and results are discussed in detail in the next chapters.

4 Methodology

In this chapter, I will explain the methodology used for data collection. First, I will explain how I identified and recruited participants, and then I will explain the instruments and processes used to carry out a two-wave data collection. Second, I will present all the measures for predictors, outcomes, and moderating variables. Lastly, I will present the control variables that were used in the study.

4.1 Sample

Participants of this study comprised of employees of Asian ethnicity, who were working (either full-time or part-time) in Australia. Drawing on the ABS (2008) classification of ethnicity, participants' country of birth and/or their parents' country of birth were used to identify employees of Asian ethnicity. Employees who were born in one of the following Asian regions, that is, Northeast Asia (e.g., Mainland China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea), Southeast Asia (e.g., Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam), Southern Asia (e.g., Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan), or had one or both parents who were born in the aforementioned Asian countries were invited to participate in the study.

A range of strategies were used to recruit potential participants. Both traditional (e.g., flyers) and social media (e.g., Facebook) avenues were used to connect with Asian ethnic groups. A recruitment flyer (Appendix 1) was distributed to potential participants through taxi drivers, Asian grocery stores, and other stores that people of Asian ethnicity were expected to visit. Ethnic social groups/organisations (e.g., the Adelaide Marathi Mandal and the Indian Australian Association of South Australia) were also contacted in Adelaide and Melbourne to help with participant recruitment. The study was also advertised in the Bharat Times which is a 23 year-old newspaper that targets Indian Australians living in Australia (Appendix 2). An electronic flyer was distributed via the Facebook pages of different Asian community groups. A paid Facebook advertisement was used to target the Asian population living in Australia. University of South Australia postgraduate students who were studying in a business research course were also invited to participate. Data were collected from August 2019 to December 2019 (before the COVID-19 related restrictions and work changes). Participants who completed both waves of the study were entered into a lucky draw, with the chance of winning one of two $200 supermarket e-gift cards.

4.2 Survey design procedure

Ethics approval for this study was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of South Australia. To maximise the response rate, both online and hard copy surveys were used to collect data. An information sheet (see Appendix 3) was included with each questionnaire, which briefly explained the purpose of the study. To reduce common method bias, I ensured that the survey items were simple and clear (Podsakoff, Mackenzie & Podsakoff 2012). Podsakoff, Mackenzie and Podsakoff (2012) explained that when data are collected from the same participant at the same time for both predictor and outcome variables, participants are able to recall and make a link between the measures, leading to common method bias. To avoid such common method bias, Podsakoff, Mackenzie, and Podsakoff (2012) suggested separating the data collection for predictor and outcome variables. Therefore, a two-wave survey design was used, where data for the predictors and moderators were collected in the first wave (Wave 1 survey, Appendix 4), and data for the outcome variables were collected in the second wave (Wave 2 survey, Appendix 5) with an approximate 30-day gap between waves. Sakurai and Jex's (2012) study of co-worker incivility also used a two-month gap between wave one and two. A two-wave design enables the robust evaluation of the effect of racial microaggressions on withdrawal outcomes (e.g., absenteeism, turnover intentions, job search behaviours).

Flyers encouraged potential participants to contact me via email. Those who registered interest were then screened for participation criteria: being born in an Asian country or having one or both parents who were born in an Asian country, and working in Australia. Those who met these criteria were then invited to participate in the study. For Wave 1, approximately 700 potential participants were contacted and invited to participate: 256 provided complete surveys (35% response rate). A 35% response rate for the first wave is consistent with other studies of similar phenomena (e.g., incivility). Sakurai and Jex (2012) reported a 26.8% response rate for the first wave of their workplace incivility survey, and Demsky et al. (2019) reported a 31% response rate for a similar survey. Those who completed the first survey were invited to participate in the second survey. With both surveys, participants were sent up to three reminder emails over several weeks to encourage them to complete the surveys. Wave 2 had a response rate of 208 (81% on Wave 1). Seven incomplete surveys were removed from Wave 2. Altogether, a total of 201 employees of Asian ethnicity completed surveys across both Wave 1 and 2.

4.3 Measures

4.3.1 Predictor variables

- *Racial microaggressions*

A comprehensive search of the literature on microaggressions scales was undertaken. The 45-item Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS) (Nadal 2011) was deemed the most relevant measure for the current research project for two reasons. First, most other measures do not focus specifically on the experience of racial microaggressions in the workplace. Their focus is on the general experience of racial microaggressions in everyday life (e.g., Revised 28-item Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale, Forrest-Bank, Jenson & Trecartin 2015). Second, the only other microaggressions measure that focused on the workplace, the Microaggressions Experiences at Work Scale (MEWS) (Resnick 2016), was designed specifically to capture the microaggression experiences of LGBT employees. In contrast, the REMS was chosen because it also contains a subscale that focuses specifically on *racial* microaggressions experienced in the workplace, which is relevant to the current study.

The REMS consists of six subscales:

1) *Assumptions of Inferiority*: people of minority groups are considered to be inferior, e.g., 'Someone assumed that I would have a lower education because of my race'.
2) *Assumptions of Criminality*: stereotyping people in a minority group as more likely to commit criminal acts, e.g., 'Someone assumed that I would physically hurt them because of my race'.
3) *Microinvalidations*: excluding and negating people of minority groups, e.g., 'Someone told me that people should not think about race anymore'.
4) *Assumptions of Similarity*: all people in minority groups are assumed to be the same, e.g., 'Someone told me that all people in my racial group are all the same'.
5) *Environmental Microaggressions*: portrayal of people from minority groups in media and other social settings such as politics and organisations, e.g., 'I observed people of my race portrayed positively on television'.
6) *Workplace and School Microaggressions*: describe microaggressions shown to people in a minority group at school or in the workplace, e.g., 'I was ignored at school or at work because of my race'.

Several of the items from the first five subscales of the REMS (i.e., Assumptions of Inferiority, Criminality, Similarity, Microinvalidations, and Environmental Microaggressions) were not

relevant to the current study as these items focus on experiences of racial microaggressions outside the workplace (e.g., society, media, etc.). Therefore, for the current study, the 'Workplace and School Microaggressions' subscale was selected. Then the items were rephrased to move the focus from schools to the workplace. For example, the item 'I was ignored at school or at work because of my race' was adapted to 'I was ignored at work because of my ethnicity' (see Table 2).

Three items from two other subscales (Assumptions of Similarity and Assumptions of Inferiority) that were suited to the workplace-related microaggression experiences were also selected (see items in Italic font in Table 2). The three items were 1) 'Someone did not believe me when I told them I was born in the US', 2) 'Someone acted surprised at my professional education', and 3) 'Someone told me that all people in my ethnic group look alike'. These were then adapted to the current study sample (i.e., people of Asian ethnicity in Australia). For example, one item from the Assumptions of Similarity subscale stated: 'Someone did not believe me when I told them I was born in the US'. This was adapted to 'Your (supervisor/co-workers/customers) did not believe you when you told them you were born in Australia'. Moreover, the word 'race' in items was replaced by 'ethnicity' as it is the term generally used in studies done in Australia and will be familiar to respondents (see Liu 2004; Parr & Alwis 2019).

Table 2: Adapted racial microaggressions scale

Section 1: *Supervisors and co-workers*
1. Acted surprised at my professional education. 2. Told me that all people in my ethnic group look alike. 3. Was unfriendly or unwelcoming toward me because of my ethnicity. *4. Overlooked my opinion in a group discussion because of my ethnicity.* 5. Ignored me at work because of my ethnicity. 6. Assumed that my work would be inferior to people of other ethnic groups. 7. Treated me differently compared to White co-workers. 8. Did not believe me when I told them I was born in Australia.
Section 2: *Customers/clients*
1. Acted surprised at my professional education. 2. Told me that all people in my ethnic group look alike. 3. Was unfriendly or unwelcoming toward me because of my ethnicity. 4. Ignored me at work because of my ethnicity. 5. Assumed that my work would be inferior to people of other ethnic groups. 6. Treated me differently compared to White co-workers. 7. Did not believe me when I told them I was born in Australia. *8. Assumed that I held a lower status job.* 9. *Assumed that I spoke a language other than English*.

The 8-item racial microaggressions scale adapted from the REMS was used to measure racial microaggressions from both supervisors and co-workers (see section 1, Table 2). A 9-item racial microaggressions scale adapted from REMS was used to measure racial microaggressions from customers/clients (see section 2, Table 2).

There are two differences between the scale for racial microaggressions for supervisors and co-workers and the scale to examine racial microaggressions from customers. The scale for racial microaggressions from customers included two different items (see Table 2). Co-workers and supervisors would usually know whether an employee of Asian ethnicity could speak English, and they would also be aware of their job and its status. A customer, however, might make assumptions about an employee of Asian appearance (e.g., assume that they could not speak English). Therefore, the two items 'Assumed that I spoke a language other than English' and

‘Assumed that I held a lower status job’ were included in the racial microaggressions scale for customers only. One item that was on the scale for supervisor and co-worker microaggression scale was excluded from the racial microaggressions scale from the customers: ‘Overlooked my opinion in a group discussion because of my ethnicity’. It is unlikely that the customers’ interactions with employees would include group discussions. The adapted REMS measure was pilot tested using an online research panel (i.e., Microworkers); 100 participants of Asian ethnicity who worked in an Australian or US-based organisation participated in the pilot test supervisor racial microaggressions $\alpha = 0.87$; co-worker racial microaggressions $\alpha = 0.91$, and customer racial microaggressions $\alpha = 0.87$. No items needed to be changed as a result of the pilot test.

The questions related to customer racial microaggressions were only posed to participants who had customer contact as part of their jobs. The customer contact was established by including the question, ‘In your job, do you interact with customers or clients?’ in the Wave 1 survey. Only those who replied ‘yes’ to this question were requested to respond to the items related to racial microaggressions from customers. The final sample size for customer racial microaggression experiences included 165 participants.

When the REMS was developed, Nadal (2011) measured the frequency of racial microaggression experiences in the preceding six months using a Likert scale that ranged from 1 = Did not experience this event in the past six months, to 5 = Experienced this event ten or more times in the past six months, as response options. Frequency of occurrence is not an essential criterion for a behaviour to be defined as an act of racial microaggression in the workplace (Hershcovis 2011). However, research on workplace mistreatments suggests that it is important to capture the frequency of uncivil behaviours as the number of times such an incident takes place within a certain time period can affect the severity of the employee experience (Cortina, Magley & Tetrick 2009). Employees who experienced uncivil behaviours more frequently showed an increased level of negative outcomes (Cortina, Magley & Tetrick 2009). Therefore, in the current study, participants were asked to report how frequently they had experienced racial microaggressions (from their supervisors, co-workers, and customers/clients) in the previous six months, using a Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Never to 5 = Very frequently. Wave 1 survey racial microaggressions scales for supervisors ($\alpha = 0.91$), co-workers ($\alpha = 0.92$) and customers ($\alpha = 0.89$) were found to be highly reliable.

4.3.2 Outcome variables

- *Work engagement*

The 9-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale was used to measure work engagement (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova 2006). Sample items included, 'At my work, I feel bursting with energy', 'I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose', and 'Time flies when I am working'. Responses were indicated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Never to 7 = Always; α = 0.92.

- *Absenteeism*

A single item was used to measure absenteeism of employees of Asian ethnicity. Respondents were asked how many days they had missed in the previous six months (whole days of work) for any reason, not including scheduled annual leave days or holidays (Volpone, Avery & Hurrell 2013).

- *Turnover intention*

A 3-item scale was used to measure turnover intentions (Mitchell et al. 2001). Items included, 'Do you intend to leave the organisation in the next 12 months?' (1 = Not at all to 5 = Very much), 'How strongly do you feel about leaving the organisation within the next 12 months?' (1 = Not very strong to 5 = Very strong), and 'How likely is it that you will leave the organisation in the next 12 months?' (1 = Very unlikely to 5 = Very likely); α = 0.94.

- *Job search behaviour*

A 14-item scale was used to measure the job search behaviours of participants (Chen & Lim 2012) and the respondents were asked to what extent they engaged in job search behaviours in the previous 3 months. Sample items included, 'I read classified ads in newspapers, journals or professional magazines', and 'I prepared/ revised my resume'. Responses were indicated on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree; α = 0.96

- *Workplace loneliness*

A 16-item workplace loneliness scale was used to measure the participants' experience of workplace loneliness (Wright, Burt & Strongman 2006). Sample items included, 'I often feel alienated from my co-workers', and 'There is no one at work I can talk to about my day to day work problems if I need to'. Responses were indicated on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree; α = 0.92.

4.3.3 Moderators

- *Social group identity*

A 14-item scale of the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) (Sellers et al. 1997) was used to measure the social group identity. The items of MIBI can be adapted for different ethnic groups (Fuligni, Witkow, & Garcia 2005). Sample items included, 'Overall, being a member of my ethnic group has very little to do with how I feel about myself (reverse coded)', and 'In general, being a member of my ethnic group is an important part of my self-image'. Responses were indicated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree; $\alpha = 0.82$.

- *Perceived supervisor support*

A 5-item scale (Eisenberger et al. 1986) was used to measure perceived supervisor support. Sample items included, 'My supervisor shows very little concern for me (reverse coded)', and 'My supervisor strongly considers my goals and values'. Participants responded to a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree; $\alpha = 0.82$.

- *Perceived co-worker support*

A 4-item scale of perceived co-worker support was used to measure co-workers' support (Hayton, Carnabuci & Eisenberger 2012). Sample items included, 'My co-workers strongly consider my goals and values', and 'My co-workers take pride in my accomplishments at work'. Responses were indicated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree; $\alpha = 0.91$.

4.3.4 Control variables

Research has shown that demographic differences can affect the responses of employees who experience incivility and other types of mistreatments in the workplace (Miner & Eischeid 2012; Robinson & O'leary-Kelly 1998). As studies have reported that women experience more incivility than men (Cortina et al. 2002; Gabriel et al. 2018), I controlled for gender, coded as male (0) and female (1). As younger employees are more likely to experience job stressors compared to older employees (Aquino & Bommer 2003; Chen et al. 2013), age was included as a control variable, stratified into six groups: (1) 18 – 24 years, (2) 25 – 34 years, (3) 35 – 44 years, (4) 45 – 54 years), (5) 55 – 64 years, and (6) Over 65 years. Education was also controlled for, as less-educated individuals are more likely to experience workplace mistreatments (Arasli, Namin & Abubakar 2018; Berdahl & Moon 2013; Miner & Eischeid 2012). The level of education was coded as year 11 or less (1), year 12/Victorian certificate of education (VCE)/

higher school certificate (HSC) (2), technical college/technical and further education (TAFE) course (3), undergraduate degree (4), honours (4th year)/graduate diploma/graduate certificate (5), a masters degree (6), and doctorate (7). Research has also shown that negative affectivity can impact the relationship between job stressors (such as incivility) and employee attitudes and behaviours (Miner & Eischeid 2012; Penney & Spector 2005; Walker, van Jaarsveld & Skarlicki 2014). Negative affectivity was measured using a 10-item scale from the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule and respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they generally felt each emotion (such as feeling scared, afraid, upset, etc.) on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Very slightly or not at all, to 5 = Extremely (Watson, Clark & Tellegen 1988).

In the next chapter, I will describe statistical analyses to test the hypothesised relationship between predictors, outcomes and moderating variables. I will then present the results of the analyses.

5 Results

In the following chapter, first, I present demographic differences in racial microaggression experiences among employees of Asian ethnicity. Next, I present the results of the correlation analysis and descriptive statistics. Then results of the regression analysis conducted to test the impact of predictors (i.e., racial microaggressions from supervisors, co-workers, customers) on outcome variables (i.e., work engagement, absenteeism, workplace loneliness, turnover intention, job search behaviour) are described. Finally, findings of hierarchical regression analyses conducted to test moderating hypotheses are reported.

5.1 Demographic differences in the experience of racial microaggressions

The data for the current study were collected from employees of Asian ethnicity working in Australia. In total, 201 people completed two waves of surveys. The respondents were 50.7% female and 49.2% male, and 74% of respondents were in the age brackets of 25 to 34 and 35 to 44 years. Out of 201 respondents, 54.7% had a masters degree, 19.9% had a postgraduate degree, and 15.9% had an undergraduate degree. The participants of the current study were 81% of Southern Asian ethnic background, 12.4% Southeast Asian and 6.5% Northeast Asian of ethnic background. A series of t-tests and one-way ANOVA analyses to examine differences in the experiences of racial microaggressions among different demographic groups within the sample were conducted. In the following section, I explain some of the significant results and present bar charts to display the findings graphically. A summary of this information is presented in Table 17, Appendix 6.

Gender

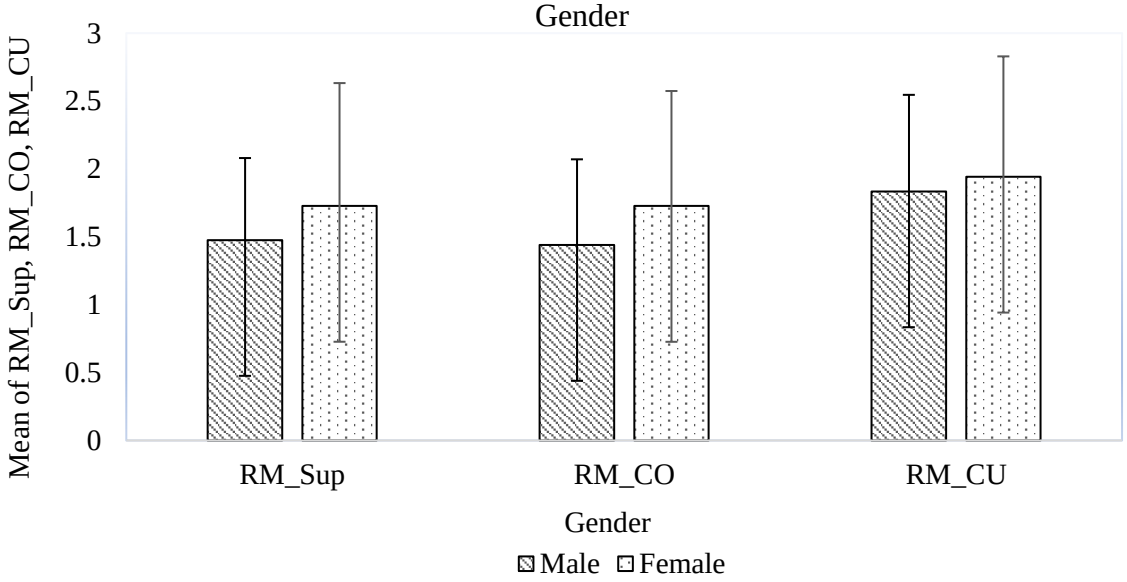
Women reported experiencing higher levels of microaggressions compared to men, whether from supervisors (mean women 1.74, men 1.48), co-workers (mean women 1.73, men 1.44), or customers (mean women 1.94, men 1.83). A t-test was conducted to assess whether the differences in the experiences between male and female participants were statistically significant. The results of the t-test showed that the differences between racial microaggression experiences stemming from supervisors and co-workers among male and female employees were statistically significant. However, differences in the experience of racial microaggressions from customers between male and female employees were not significant (see Table 3 and Figure 2).

Table 3: Summary of t-tests for gender and racial microaggressions

Variables	Male		Female		t-test		
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.	t	df	Sig
Racial microaggressions from supervisors	1.48	.61	1.74	.91	-2.43	199	.016
Racial microaggressions from co-workers	1.44	.63	1.73	.85	-2.71	199	.007
Racial microaggressions from customers	1.83	.71	1.94	.89	-.85	163	.395

N for male = 99 and N for female = 102 for racial microaggressions from supervisors and co-workers,
N for male = 82 and N for female = 83 for racial microaggressions from customers

Figure 2: Differences in the experience of racial microaggressions: Gender



Note: RM_Sup = racial microaggressions from supervisors, RM_CO = racial microaggressions from co-workers, RM_CU = racial microaggressions from customers

Age

Age categories were compared to investigate whether experiences of microaggressions were different among participants of different ages. Results showed that on average younger employees (i.e., those in the age categories of 18 to 24 and 25 to 34) reported experiencing a higher level of racial microaggressions from supervisors (18 to 24, M = 1.70 and 25 to 34, M = 1.75), co-workers (18 to 24, M = 1.74), and customers (18 to 24, M = 2.18) compared to employees in the middle-aged cohorts (i.e., those in the age categories of 35 to 44 and 45 to 54): supervisors (35 to 44, M = 1.47 and 45 to 54, M = 1.24), co-workers (45 to 54, M = 1.32),

and customers (45 to 54, M = 1.69). Interestingly, participants in the age category 55 to 64 age category also reported a higher level of racial microaggressions from supervisors (M = 2.37), co-workers (M = 2.11), and customers (M = 2.83) compared to middle-aged participants. As there were only five respondents in this category, I did not include this group in the comparisons with other age groups. A one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference across age categories: racial microaggressions from supervisors ($F = 3.74$, $p < .01$) and customers ($F = 3.07$, $p < .05$) (see Tables 4 and 6). But no significant results were found between age categories and racial microaggressions from co-workers ($F = 1.58$, $p = .182$) (see Table 5). This comparison is also presented using the bar chart below (see Figure 3).

Table 4: One-way ANOVA – age and racial microaggressions from supervisors

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	8.77	4	2.19	3.74	.006
Within Groups	114.75	196	.58		
Total	123.52	200			

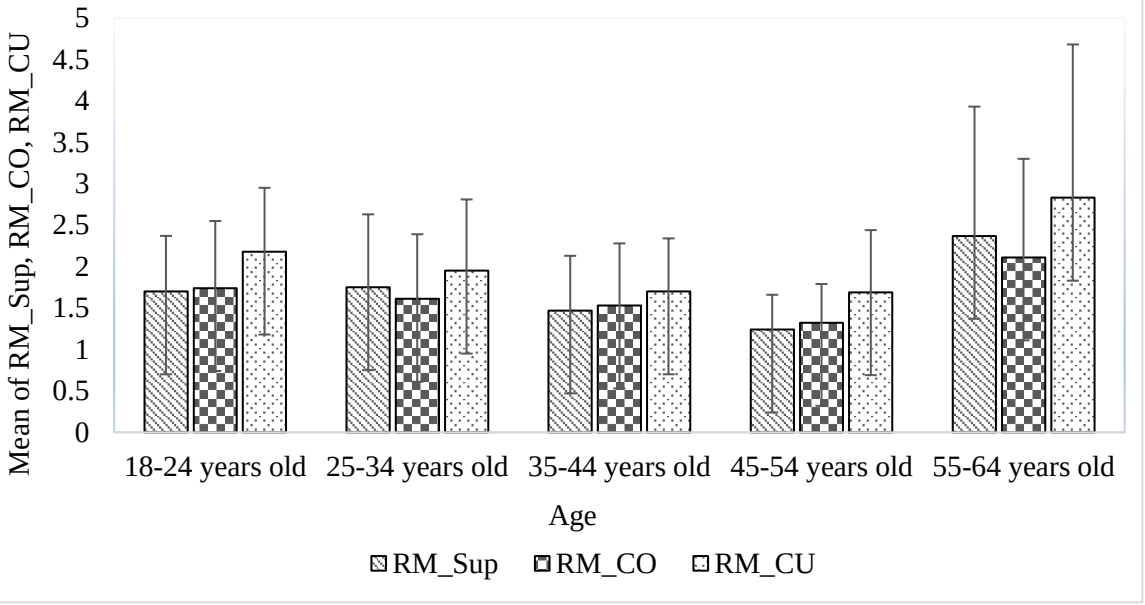
Table 5: One-way ANOVA – age and racial microaggressions from co-workers

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	3.65	4	.91	1.58	.182
Within Groups	113.17	196	.58		
Total	116.81	200			

Table 6: One-way ANOVA – age and racial microaggressions from customers

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	7.64	4	1.91	3.07	.018
Within Groups	99.54	160	.62		
Total	107.18	164			

Figure 3: Differences in the experience of racial microaggressions: Age



Note: RM_Sup = racial microaggressions from supervisors, RM_CO = racial microaggressions from co-workers, RM_CU = racial microaggressions from customers

Ethnic background

For ethnic background, results showed that employees from Southeast Asia (i.e., born or having a parent born in Southeast Asia, e.g., Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam) were more likely to experience racial microaggressions from supervisors, co-workers, and customers than employees from Northeast Asia (i.e., born or having a parent born in Northeast Asia, e.g., Mainland China, Hong Kong, Japan), and Southern Asia (i.e., born or having a parent born in Southern Asia, e.g., Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan). Participants of Southeast Asian ethnic background reported the highest mean level of racial microaggressions from supervisors (M = 1.70), co-workers (M = 1.65), and customers (M = 2.26) compared to participants of Northeast Asian ethnicity: supervisors (M = 1.56), co-workers (M = 1.38), and customers (M = 1.97). Similarly, participants of Southern Asian ethnicity also reported a low mean level of racial microaggressions from supervisors (M = 1.60), co-workers (M = 1.59), and customers (M = 1.83). A one-way ANOVA showed no significant differences in the ethnic background in racial microaggression experience scores reported (see Table 17, Appendix 6).

Occupational group

Results showed that employees who worked in semi-skilled, unskilled, clerical and secretarial jobs were more likely to experience racial microaggressions compared to employees in managerial, professional, technical, and scientific jobs. They reported higher mean levels of

racial microaggressions from supervisors (M = 2.12), co-workers (M = 1.91), and customers (M = 2.25), compared to other occupational groups (e.g., employees in managerial jobs reported the lowest levels of racial microaggressions from supervisors, M = 1.45, co-workers M = 1.51, and customers M = 1.79). An independent between-groups ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference in mean racial microaggressions from supervisors based on occupational groups (F = 3.15, p <.01), but no significant differences in mean scores of racial microaggressions were observed from co-workers and customers across occupational groups (see Tables 7, 8 and 9).

Table 7: One-way ANOVA – occupational groups and racial microaggressions from supervisors

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	7.46	4	1.87	3.15	.015
Within Groups	116.05	196	.59		
Total	123.52	200			

Table 8: One-way ANOVA – occupational groups and racial microaggressions from co-workers

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	4.60	4	1.15	2.01	.095
Within Groups	112.22	196	.57		
Total	116.81	200			

Table 9: One-way ANOVA – occupational groups and racial microaggressions from customers

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	2.50	4	.62	.95	.434
Within Groups	104.68	160	.65		
Total	107.18	164			

5.2 Descriptive statistics and correlations between variables

Results in Table 10 show descriptive statistics and correlations between the control, predictors, moderators, and outcome variables. Negative affectivity had a significant positive association with all three predictor variables, that is racial microaggressions from supervisors (r = .46, p < .01), from co-workers (r = .35, p < .01), and customers (r = .34, p < .01). Gender also had a

strong positive correlation with racial microaggressions from supervisors ($r = .17$, $p < .05$) and co-workers ($r = .19$, $p < .01$), but no significant association with racial microaggressions from customers ($r = .07$, $p = .39$).

Significant correlations were found between the predictors and outcome variables. Racial microaggressions from supervisors ($r = .47$, $p < .01$) and co-workers ($r = .53$, $p < .01$) had a strong positive association with workplace loneliness. Racial microaggressions from supervisors ($r = .34$, $p < .01$), co-workers ($r = .30$, $p < .01$), and customers ($r = .36$, $p < .01$) also had a positive association with turnover intentions. Furthermore, racial microaggressions from supervisors ($r = .35$, $p < .01$), co-workers ($r = .31$, $p < .01$) and customers ($r = .45$, $p < .01$) were also positively correlated with job search behaviour. However, the correlations between racial microaggressions from all three agents (i.e., supervisors, co-workers, and customers) were not significantly associated with work engagement or unplanned absenteeism (see Table 10).

The correlations between racial microaggressions from supervisors, co-workers, and customers were also found to be positive and significant. Racial microaggression from supervisors ($r = .78$, $p < .01$) and co-workers ($r = .65$, $p < .01$) had a strong positive association. Similarly, racial microaggressions from co-workers were also found to be strongly associated with racial microaggressions from customers ($r = .64$, $p < .01$). Furthermore, job search behaviours had a strong positive correlation with turnover intentions ($r = .64$, $p < .01$). This correlation was high because these constructs of job search behaviours and turnover intentions are related constructs (see Blau 1994). Variance inflation factors (VIF) were calculated in the regression analyses to identify any multicollinearity issues. All VIF scores were below 5, the usual benchmark for multicollinearity (Yu, Jiang & Land 2015), with the highest value being 2.31 for the predictor variable, racial microaggressions from co-workers. These values indicated that multicollinearity was not a major problem in the analyses.

Table 10: Means, standard deviations, and correlations

Variables	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Controls																	
1. Gender	.51	.50	-														
2. Age	2.48	.93	-.11	-													
3. Education	5.34	1.04	-.03	.21**	-												
4. Negative affectivity	1.80	.77	.03	-.09	-.15*	-											
Predictor variables																	
5. RM supervisors	1.61	.78	.17*	-.11	.11	.46**	-										
6. RM co-workers	1.54	.70	.19**	-.07	.10	.35**	.78**	-									
7. RM customers	1.89	.81	.07	-.13	.10	.34**	.65**	.64**	-								
Moderators																	
8. Supervisor Support	5.28	1.22	-.04	.05	-.04	-.32**	-.58**	-.54**	-.40**	-							
9. Co-worker Support	5.16	1.33	-.10	.05	-.04	-.19**	-.41**	-.48**	-.20*	.59**	-						
10. Social group identity	3.48	.53	-.04	-.02	-.05	-.24**	-.14*	-.03	-.02	.23**	.08	-					
Outcome variables																	
11. Work engagement	5.06	1.04	-.11	.15*	.15*	-.09	-.13	-.12	-.14	.28**	.19**	.08	-				
12. Absenteeism	3.23	3.46	-.06	.11	.09	-.06	.12	.11	.01	-.21**	-.08	.09	-.16*	-			
13. Workplace loneliness	2.54	.91	.15*	-.11	.12	.29**	.47**	.53**	.27**	-.57**	-.55**	-.11	-.24**	.08	-		
14. Turnover intention	2.58	1.28	-.12	-.17*	.02	.21**	.34**	.30**	.36**	-.38**	-.27**	-.03	-.31**	.20**	.39**	-	
15. Job search behaviour	3.69	1.66	-.15*	-.24**	.06	.24**	.35**	.31**	.45**	-.31**	-.25**	-.07	-.27**	.20**	.38**	.64**	-

N = 201, *p<.05, **p<.01
RM = Racial microaggressions

5.3 Hypotheses testing

I conducted hierarchical regression analyses to test my hypotheses. All predictor and moderating variables were mean centred before regression analysis, as mean centring is one of the ways to reduce multicollinearity (Yu, Jiang & Land 2015). In the first step of regression analysis, control variables were added (i.e., gender, age, education, and negative affectivity). In the second step, the mean centred predictor variables were entered (i.e., racial microaggressions from supervisors, co-workers, and customers). These steps were repeated for each predictor and outcome variable (i.e., work engagement, absenteeism, workplace loneliness, turnover intention, and job search behaviour).

Work engagement

Hypothesis 1 suggested that racial microaggressions from supervisors, co-workers, or customers would be negatively related to work engagement. The beta coefficients for the second, third, and fourth model were (β = -.14, p = .16), (β = -.10, p = .20), and (β = -.13, p = .12), respectively (see Table 11). These findings were not significant. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was not supported. However, the direction of the results was consistent with the hypothesis. The negative sign of beta showed a negative relationship between racial microaggressions from all three agents and work engagement.

Table 11: Impact of racial microaggressions on work engagement

	Model 1 β	Model 2 β	Model 3 β	Model 4 β
Controls				
Gender	-.09	-.07	-.07	-.06
Age	.11	.10	.11	.12
Education	.12	.14	.13	.13
Negative Affectivity	-.06	-.01	-.03	-.01
Predictor variables				
Racial microaggressions from supervisors		-.14		
Racial microaggressions from co-workers			-.10	
Racial microaggressions from customers				-.13
R^2	.05	.06	.06	.06
Change in R^2		.01	.01	.01
Sig	.03	.16	.20	.12

Outcome Variable: Work engagement
N = 201 for racial microaggressions from supervisors, N = 201 for racial microaggressions from co-workers, N = 165 for racial microaggressions from customers
Change in R^2 for other models is calculated by comparing them to model 1.

Absenteeism

Hypothesis 2 proposed that racial microaggressions from supervisors, co-workers, or customers would be positively related to unplanned absenteeism. In the second model, the predictor variable racial microaggressions from supervisors was entered, and the results were significant ($\beta = .20$, $p < .01$). In the third model, the predictor variable racial microaggressions from co-workers was entered, and the results were significant ($\beta = .16$, $p < .05$). These findings were consistent with the hypothesis that when racial microaggressions from supervisors and co-workers increase, unplanned absenteeism among employees of Asian ethnicity also increases. In the fourth model, the predictor variable racial microaggressions from customers was entered. These results were not significant ($\beta = .04$, $p = .65$) (see Table 12). With significant results only for racial microaggressions from supervisors and co-workers, hypothesis 2 was partially supported.

Table 12: Impact of racial microaggressions on absenteeism

	Model 1 β	Model 2 β	Model 3 β	Model 4 β
Controls				
Gender	-.05	-.08	-.08	-.04
Age	.09	.11	.10	.07
Education	.07	.03	.04	.04
Negative Affectivity	-.04	-.14	-.10	-.06
Predictor variables				
Racial microaggressions from supervisors		.20**		
Racial microaggressions from co-workers			.16*	
Racial microaggressions from customers				.04
R^2	.02	.05	.04	.01
Change in R^2		.03	.02	.00
Sig	.36	.01	.04	.65

Outcome Variable: Absenteeism, *p<.05, **p<.01
N = 201 for racial microaggressions from supervisors, N = 201 for racial microaggressions from co-workers, N = 165 for racial microaggressions from customers
Change in R^2 for other models is calculated by comparing them to model 1.

Turnover intention

Hypothesis 3 proposed that racial microaggressions from supervisors, co-workers, or customers will be positively related to turnover intentions. The results of hierarchical regression analysis are presented in Table 13. The results for the second, third, and fourth model were significant: ($\beta = .33$, $p < .001$), ($\beta = .29$, $p < .001$), and ($\beta = .33$, $p < .001$) respectively. These findings were consistent with the hypothesis that when racial microaggressions from supervisors, co-workers, and customers occur, the turnover intentions of employees of Asian ethnicity also increase. Therefore, hypothesis 3 was supported.

Table 13: Impact of racial microaggressions on turnover intentions

	Model 1 β	Model 2 β	Model 3 β	Model 4 β
Controls				
Gender	-.14*	-.19**	-.19**	-.19**
Age	-.18**	-.15*	-.16*	-.11
Education	.09	.02	.04	.07
Negative Affectivity	.21**	.05	.10	.08
Predictor variables				
Racial microaggressions from supervisors		.33***		
Racial microaggressions from co-workers			.29***	
Racial microaggressions from customers				.33***
R^2	.09	.17	.16	.18
Change in R^2		.08	.07	.09
Sig	.00	.00	.00	.00

Outcome Variable: Turnover intentions, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
N = 201 for racial microaggressions from supervisors, N = 201 for racial microaggressions from co-workers, N = 165 for racial microaggressions from customers
Change in R^2 for other models is calculated by comparing them to model 1.

Job search behaviour

Hypothesis 4 argued that racial microaggressions from supervisors, co-workers, or customers would be positively related to job search behaviours among employees of Asian ethnicity. The results for the second, third, and fourth model were ($\beta = .31$, $p < .001$), ($\beta = .28$, $p < .001$), and ($\beta = .40$, $p < .001$), respectively (see Table 14) and showed that these findings were significant and consistent with hypothesis 4. Therefore, hypothesis 4 was supported.

Table 14: Impact of racial microaggressions on job search behaviours

	Model 1 β	Model 2 β	Model 3 β	Model 4 β
Controls				
Gender	-.18**	-.23***	-.23***	-.18**
Age	-.27***	-.24**	-.25***	-.20**
Education	.15*	.09	.10	.09
Negative Affectivity	.24***	.09	.14	.09
Predictor variables				
Racial microaggressions from supervisors		.31***		
Racial microaggressions from co-workers			.28***	
Racial microaggressions from customers				.40***
R^2	.16	.23	.22	.27
Change in R^2		.07	.06	.13
Sig	.00	.00	.00	.00

Outcome Variable: Job search behaviours, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
N = 201 for racial microaggressions from supervisors, N = 201 for racial microaggressions from co-workers, N = 165 for racial microaggressions from customers
Change in R^2 for other models is calculated by comparing them to model 1.

Workplace loneliness

Racial microaggressions from supervisors or co-workers were expected to increase the experience of workplace loneliness among employees of Asian ethnicity as per hypothesis 5. In the second model, the predictor variable, i.e., racial microaggressions from supervisors, was entered. The results for the impact of racial microaggressions from supervisors on workplace loneliness were significant in the second model ($\beta = .38$, $p < .001$). In the third model, the predictor variable, i.e., racial microaggressions from co-workers was entered, and the results of the third model were also significant ($\beta = .45$, $p < .001$) (see Table 15). Therefore, hypothesis 5 was supported. I did not hypothesise that racial microaggressions from customers would influence participant experience of workplace loneliness. As explained in the literature review, workplace loneliness is experienced when employees lack supportive relationships with their fellow employees (Ozcelik & Barsade 2011).

Table 15: Impact of racial microaggressions on workplace loneliness

	Model 1 β	Model 2 β	Model 3 β
Controls			
Gender	.14*	.08	.06
Age	-.10	-.07	-.08
Education	.19**	.11	.11
Negative Affectivity	.31***	.12	.14*
Predictor variables			
Racial microaggressions from supervisors		.38***	
Racial microaggressions from co-workers			.45***
R^2	.14	.25	.31
Change in R^2		.11	.17
Sig	.00	.00	.00

Outcome Variable: Workplace loneliness, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
N = 201 for racial microaggressions from supervisors, N = 201 for racial microaggressions from co-workers
Change in R^2 for other models is calculated by comparing them to model 1.

5.4 Hierarchical regression analysis to test moderation

For moderation, I hypothesised that perceived supervisor and co-worker support will buffer the negative impact of racial microaggressions on outcomes (i.e., hypotheses 6 and 7). I also suggested that social group identity will exacerbate the negative impact of racial microaggressions on outcomes (i.e., hypothesis 8). In testing for moderation, control variables (i.e., gender, age, education, and negative affectivity) were added in the first step. In the second step, each mean centred predictor variable (e.g., racial microaggressions from supervisors) was added. Lastly, the mean centred moderating variable (e.g., co-worker support) and the interaction term (e.g., racial microaggressions from supervisors x co-worker support) were added in step 3.

Results of moderation tests

Based on the hierarchical regression analysis, there was little evidence found of the effect of moderators (i.e., perceived supervisor support, perceived co-worker support, and social group identity) on the relationships between racial microaggressions (i.e., from supervisors, co-workers, and customers) and outcome variables (i.e., work engagement, absenteeism, turnover intentions, job search behaviours, and workplace loneliness) except in the case of one relationship. A table summarising the results of hierarchical regression analysis is presented

below (see Table 16). Hypotheses for the moderating effects of perceived supervisor support (i.e., hypothesis 6) and social group identity (i.e., hypothesis 8) were not supported. Hypotheses for the moderating effects of perceived co-worker support (i.e., hypothesis 7) was only partially supported. Perceived co-workers support moderated only in the case of racial microaggressions from customers and work engagement (see Table 16). According to COR theory, support from social groups can help to manage and maintain resources (Hobfoll 1988). Resources (such as having finances, social support, positive emotions, etc.) are critical to managing stressful events (Hobfoll et al. 1990), such as the experience of racial microaggressions in the workplace. Most of these moderation results were not consistent with the COR theory and previous empirical literature.

Table 16: Summary of hierarchical regression analysis – test for moderation effects

Outcomes	Predictors	Moderators	Hypotheses	β for interaction (Standard error)
Work engagement	Racial microaggressions from supervisors	Co-workers support	H-7a	-.05 (.06)
		Social group identity	H-8a	.02 (.20)
	Racial microaggressions from co-workers	Supervisor support	H-6a	.00 (.07)
		Social group identity	H-8f	.01 (.19)
	Racial microaggressions from customers	Co-workers support	H-7f	.18* (.07)
		Supervisor support	H-6f	.15 (.07)
		Social group identity	H-8k	.07 (.22)
Absenteeism	Racial microaggressions from supervisors	Co-workers support	H-7b	.01 (.20)
		Social group identity	H-8b	.05 (.66)
	Racial microaggressions from co-workers	Supervisor support	H-6b	-.06 (.25)
		Social group identity	H-8g	.03 (.63)
	Racial microaggressions from customers	Co-workers support	H-7g	-.07 (.23)
		Supervisor support	H-6g	-.02 (.24)
		Social group identity	H-8l	.03 (.73)

Outcomes	Predictors	Moderators	Hypotheses	β for interaction (Standard error)
Workplace loneliness	Racial microaggressions from supervisors	Co-workers support	H-7c	.11 (.04)
		Social group identity	H-8c	-.02 (.16)
	Racial microaggressions from co-workers	Supervisor support	H-6c	.06 (.05)
		Social group identity	H-8h	-.06 (.14)
Turnover intentions	Racial microaggressions from supervisors	Co-workers support	H-7d	-.02 (.07)
		Social group identity	H-8d	-.01 (.23)
	Racial microaggressions from co-workers	Supervisor support	H-6d	-.04 (.08)
		Social group identity	H-8i	-.07 (.22)
	Racial microaggressions from customers	Co-workers support	H-7h	-.00 (.08)
		Supervisor support	H-6h	-.01 (.09)
		Social group identity	H-8m	-.04 (.26)
Job search behaviours	Racial microaggressions from supervisors	Co-workers support	H-7e	.07 (.09)
		Social group identity	H-8e	-.00 (.29)
	Racial microaggressions from co-workers	Supervisor support	H-6e	.10 (.11)
		Social group identity	H-8j	-.02 (.27)
	Racial microaggressions from customers	Co-workers support	H-7i	.03 (.09)
		Supervisor support	H-6i	.04 (.10)
		Social group identity	H-8n	.00 (.31)

*p<.05, N = 201 for racial microaggressions from supervisors, N = 201 for racial microaggressions from co-workers, N = 165 for racial microaggressions from customers

*Numbers in parentheses are standard errors

6 Discussion

This chapter will first briefly discuss the findings of the current research and its theoretical contribution and practical implications. I will then explain the limitations of the current study and discuss future research recommendations. Finally, a brief conclusion will be presented.

Racial microaggressions are subtle intentional or unintentional negative acts towards individuals in racial minority groups. Racial microaggressions occur more commonly in the workplace compared to overt or old-fashioned racial discrimination (Preston 2013). The goal of the current study was to investigate the experiences of racial microaggressions among employees of Asian ethnicity working in Australia. Racial microaggressions can be shown by different social groups in the workplace, such as supervisors, co-workers, and customers/clients (when employees work in client or customer-facing roles). I investigated the impact of racial microaggressions from these different agents (i.e., supervisors, co-workers, and customers/clients), drawing on data from 201 employees of Asian ethnicity who completed two surveys with an approximate gap of 30 days between surveys.

Only a handful of studies have examined racial microaggressions in the workplace (Kim, Block & Nguyen 2019). Emerging evidence from the last two years suggests that the experience of microaggressions at work is likely to lead to more proximal outcomes (such as emotional distress, ability to concentrate on work) compared to distal outcomes (such as organisational commitment, actual turnover) (Kim, Block & Nguyen 2019; Nguyen 2020). Subtle micro-aggressive behaviours can create confusion as to how an employee should react to aggressors, whether they should confront the aggressor or not, and what the consequences will be of such confrontations (Nguyen 2020). Nguyen (2020) suggested examining proximal outcomes, which contribute to withdrawal outcomes and decreased productivity and performance. This study focused on both proximal psychological outcomes, i.e., work engagement and the experience of workplace loneliness, and more distal physical withdrawal behaviours, i.e., turnover intention, absenteeism, and job search behaviour. The results showed a significant impact of racial microaggressions on withdrawal behaviours (i.e., turnover intentions, absenteeism, and job search behaviours) and experience of workplace loneliness.

Supportive relationships in the workplace can protect existing resources and provide ways to acquire new resources (Hobfoll 1988). Social support groups can buffer the impact of

workplace stressors on employees (Leiter 2013; Tucker et al. 2018). If employees of Asian ethnicity get support from their supervisors and co-workers, the impact of racial microaggressions on their psychological and behavioural outcomes may be weakened. I examined the moderating effect of support from supervisors and co-workers, but the findings did not show any significant moderating impact except in one instance where perceived co-worker support moderated the relationship between racial microaggressions from customers and work engagement (see Table 16). The quality of supervisor and co-worker social support of employees can depend on the duration of these workplace relationships (Sias 2005). The relationship between supervisors and their employees takes time to develop (e.g., in the first 6 to 12 months both parties are still assessing each other) (Jokisaari & Nurmi 2009). In the current study, 78% of participants were new to their workplaces: 85.5% of employees of Asian ethnicity only had a short tenure (i.e., 0 to 3 years), and 78% had only known their co-workers for less than 3 years. This may explain the non-significant results for moderating effects of support from supervisors and co-workers that were observed.

This study's results did not support the hypothesis that strong social group identity will exacerbate the relationship between racial microaggressions from different agents (i.e., supervisors, co-workers, customers) and their outcomes. These findings are not consistent with research that suggests that strong identification with racial identity can exacerbate the negative effect of stressors (Burrow & Ong 2010; Kern, Grandey & Tetrick 2009). I hypothesised that employees of Asian ethnicity would perceive racial microaggression as a threat to their valued identity resource (Kern, Grandey & Tetrick 2009). So, participants with a strong social group identity will report an intensified impact of racial microaggressions on their behaviours. Although the mean values of social group identity for the study were above average (i.e., M = 3.48), the strong ethnic group identity did not strengthen the negative impact of racial microaggressions on employee outcomes. Positive stereotyping of employees of Asian ethnicity at the workplace can hinder the ability of individuals to recognise subtle forms of racism (Kim, Block & Yu 2020). This might mean that employees of Asian ethnicity at times may not perceive racial microaggression experiences as direct threats to their ethnic group identity.

6.1 Theoretical contributions

The findings of this study make three contributions that can extend our understanding of racial microaggressions in the workplace. First, the current study provides research evidence of racial

microaggressions from different agents (i.e., supervisors, co-workers, customers/clients) in the workplace experienced by employees of Asian ethnicity (i.e., Northeast Asian, Southern Asian, Southeast Asian) in Australia. While a strong body of research on racial microaggressions has developed over the last two decades (Nadal et al. 2015, Sue, Capodilupo et al. 2007; Sue, Bucceri et al. 2007), the majority of these studies have examined racial microaggressions in broader social settings and contexts outside of the workplace (e.g., educational institutions) (Her 2017; Kim, Block & Yu 2020; Nguyen 2020). Few have focused on racial microaggressions and their outcomes in the workplace (DeCuir-Gunby & Gunbys 2016; Shoshana 2016). While incivility literature suggests the need to examine incivility instigated by supervisors, co-workers, and customers separately (Cortina et al. 2017), racial microaggression research has not examined racial microaggressions from the three different social groups. The results of this study have shown that racial microaggressions can stem from different groups in the workplace and show different outcomes (impact on these outcomes are discussed below in detail). The findings from the current study extend our understanding of racial microaggressions in the workplace and draw our attention to the impact of microaggressions from different social groups.

Second, the findings of the current study highlight that the intersection between racial minority status and other factors, such as gender, age, and the occupational group, can influence employees' experience of workplace mistreatments such as racial microaggressions. Findings of the current study showed that women were more likely to experience racial microaggressions compared to men. Younger employees (between 18 to 34 years of age) and older employees (between 55 to 64 years of age) were more likely to report experiences of racial microaggressions compared to employees who were middle-aged (between 35 to 54 years of age). Results also showed that employees of Asian ethnicity in low status employment (i.e., those who work in unskilled, semi-skilled, or clerical and secretarial jobs) are more likely to experience racial microaggressions compared to employees in managerial, professional, and technical groups. It is important to note that employees of Asian ethnicity who are women, from younger or older age groups and are in unskilled work are even more vulnerable because they have less power compared to other employees. These findings are consistent with social dominance theory (SDT) which states that individuals of dominant groups inflict dominance on underprivileged groups (Sidanius & Pratto 2012). Cortina et al.'s (2017) work on incivility in the workplace also highlighted that women and those in low-status jobs report more frequent experiences of incivility compared to men and those in high-status jobs. Results of the current

study adds to the evidence of racial microaggressions in the workplace and demonstrate that the interaction of certain demographic factors (i.e., age, gender, and occupational group) with racial minority status can make some sub-groups within racial minority groups more vulnerable to racial microaggressions.

The third contribution of the current study is that it adds to the evidence on the impact of microaggressions on employees' psychological experience and their behavioural reactions. Results of regression analyses of this study showed a significant impact of racial microaggressions from supervisors and co-workers on employee turnover intentions, absenteeism, and job search behaviours. Moreover, results showed a significant impact of racial microaggressions from customers on employee turnover intentions and job search behaviours. These findings are consistent with COR theory (Hobfoll 1988), which states that when individuals experience negative behaviours or social stressors (such as racial microaggressions) in the workplace, they become concerned about losing valued resources. It will prompt them to use withdrawal strategies as coping mechanisms to save their remaining resources. These results are also extending the handful of studies on racial microaggressions in the workplace. Olsen (2019), using an online panel (i.e., Mturk), looked at various ethnic groups in America and found a significant association between racial microaggressions and turnover intentions. In another study by Shoshana (2016), Palestinian professionals in Jewish organisations reported that as a result of racial microaggression experiences, they felt confused and wanted to leave their organisations. DeCuir-Gunby and Gunbys (2016) looked at African Americans and found that racial microaggressions led to a decreased level of job satisfaction. Recently, Nguyen (2020) looked at Asian Americans and found that racial microaggressions resulted in decreased job satisfaction and organisational commitment and increased turnover intentions and burnout. This study reinforces the findings of these studies that demonstrate the association between racial microaggressions (from supervisors, co-workers, and customers) and turnover intention. Furthermore, this study adds to this evidence by examining the strong association between racial microaggressions (from supervisors, co-workers, and customers) and job search behaviours. Also, adding to this evidence by examining the strong association between racial microaggressions (from supervisors and co-workers) and absenteeism. Employees of Asian ethnicity face more difficulty in finding jobs in Australia (Berman 2008; Booth, Leigh & Varganova 2012). Therefore, they are more likely to engage in absenteeism and job search behaviours and are more likely to have turnover intentions which are precursors to actual leaving or turnover (Hughes, Avey & Nixon 2010; Vandenberg & Nelson 1999).

At the time of writing, this study was the first to investigate the impact of racial microaggressions from supervisors and co-workers on workplace loneliness. Based on the COR theory (Hobfoll 1988), I hypothesised that when employees of Asian ethnicity experience negative social interactions in the form of racial microaggressions in the workplace, they will try to avoid further interactions with the agents of racial microaggressions and will experience loneliness. In the current study, a strong positive relationship was found between racial microaggressions and workplace loneliness (from supervisors ($\beta = .38$, $p < .001$) and co-workers ($\beta = .45$, $p < .001$). These results add to the evidence on racial microaggressions in the workplace and highlight how employees of Asian ethnicity withdraw from their workgroups and experience an increased level of workplace loneliness when faced with racial microaggressions. Furthermore, these findings also contribute to the literature on workplace loneliness. Researchers have been encouraged to examine predictors for workplace loneliness (Wright 2005b) since most previous work has only examined outcomes of workplace loneliness. Racial microaggression experiences could be a predictor of workplace loneliness among those in a racial minority group in the workplace.

6.2 Practical implications

Employees of Asian ethnicity in Australian organisations experience racial microaggressions in their interactions with supervisors, co-workers, and customers. Among this group of employees, women, young and older employees, and those in unskilled jobs are more likely to experience racial microaggressions. Racial microaggression experiences can lead to loneliness, absenteeism, job search behaviours, and increased intentions to leave. If organisations and managers want to retain employees of Asian ethnicity, they will need to adopt strategies to prevent and manage incidents of racial microaggressions.

Employees are likely to under-report racial microaggressions, and in some instances, supervisors, co-workers, and customers may not even realise that they have shown any microaggressions, as these acts can be unintentional (Sue, Capodilupo et al. 2007). Despite the results of the current study indicating that employees of Asian ethnicity reported only occasional experiences of racial microaggressions, these experiences still had a serious and negative impact on their withdrawal behaviours and experience of loneliness in the workplace. It is often difficult for employees to recognise the subtle forms of behaviours, compared to the blatant forms of racial discriminatory behaviours (Kim, Block & Yu 2020). Previous research

on racial microaggressions and discrimination suggests that positive stereotyping can often influence employee reports of negative behaviours related to ethnicity. Often, positive stereotyping (e.g., reinforcing a positive stereotype by saying that Asians are more hardworking compared to other ethnic groups) hinders the ability of Asians to recognise racial microaggressions (Kim, Block & Yu 2020). Therefore, it is likely that employees of Asian ethnicity are less likely to be able to recognise the acts of racial microaggressions when they occur in their workplaces and under-report their experiences. It is likely that organisations will only discover the existence of racial microaggressions in their workplace when they begin to note high absenteeism and turnover among employees of Asian ethnicity. The findings of this study suggest that there are strategies that organisations and managers can follow to minimise the occurrences of racial microaggressions and reduce their negative impact.

First, racial microaggressions are subtle behaviours, and sometimes it is difficult for recipients to recognise them and their negative effects (Kim, Block & Yu 2020; Offermann et al. 2013). The first step to reducing racial microaggressions is to create awareness (Kim, Block & Yu 2020). It is critical that employees of Asian ethnicity and their managers are aware of the existence of racial microaggressions; only then, together, will they be able to manage and reduce the experiences of racial microaggressions in the workplace (Nguyen 2020). Organisations can develop policies against discrimination and provide training which can help provide behavioural guidelines to protect employees of ethnic minority groups from racial microaggressions and their negative outcomes (Olsen 2019). Kim Block and Yu (2020) suggested training programs which promote an atmosphere of inclusion for employees of Asian ethnicity and also encouraged employees of Asian ethnicity to deal with these unpleasant behaviours by discussing them openly with their management and supervisors.

Second, the results of the current study indicate that racial microaggressions can go unnoticed until they impact employee psychological experience and withdrawal outcomes. The findings of the current research suggest that organisations or managers/supervisors need to be vigilant about the occurrence of racial microaggressions and other withdrawal behaviours. Importantly managers should be vigilant about the experience of loneliness among employees from ethnic minority groups as research has shown that an increased level of workplace loneliness is associated with a lower level of job performance (Ozcelik & Barsade 2018). Managers or supervisors can have an open-door policy for their employees, especially if employees have concerns about mistreatment in the workplace (Olsen 2019). Organisations can organise

frequent (e.g., monthly or quarterly) meetings or plan data collection using anonymous employee pulse surveys (Welbourne 2016). These strategies can help investigate if their employees are experiencing workplace loneliness. If organisations observe trends in turnover behaviours or increased absenteeism levels among employees of a specific ethnic group in the organisation, then they may recognise it as a symptom of employees of an ethnic group experiencing some subtle form of racial microaggressions. These strategies will help organisations uncover the existence of racial microaggressions early and take action to reduce their occurrence.

Employee network groups help employees of similar minority groups to stay connected, discuss their problems, share critical information (such as sharing knowledge regarding other minority groups), mentor each other and provide social support (Davis 2019; Friedman & Holtom 2002). For example, a study by Chung and Kim (2017) demonstrated that network groups can help deal with workplace social stressors by providing a platform to share negative emotions and frustrations. Employee network groups can not only help with developing connections but also provide a strong social support system for employees of Asian ethnicity in Australian workplaces. These social support systems will help to reduce the experience of loneliness in the workplace. In their article 'Coping with work-related microaggressions', Sharma and McElwain (2020) suggested that employees can talk to their trusted social groups (such as family, friends, peers, similar identity community groups) or other employees who have had similar experiences of racial microaggressions. They also suggested that if an employee is comfortable, she/he can also explain to the co-worker (who may be not aware of his/her action) about their subtle act and its negative impact. Some researchers have argued that employees may benefit from avoiding co-workers or conversations and situations which can lead to microaggressions (Jones 2020). However, such a strategy will only provide a temporary reprieve to an employee who may need to interact with co-workers, supervisors, and customers as part of their work.

6.3 Limitations and future research recommendations

Marshall (2016), in a qualitative study, argued that racial microaggressions could result in reduced work engagement among employees. This is consistent with the COR theory (Hobfoll 1988), which suggests that when individuals experience social stressors, they will lose their emotional resources, and as a result, they may withdraw from their work, showing a low level of work engagement. However, the current study found that while the results were in the

direction that was expected, the relationship between racial microaggressions and work engagement among employees of Asian ethnicity was not significant. One explanation for this could be that work engagement is about the job (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova 2006), whereas racial microaggressions are related to workplace relationships (Sue, Bucceri et al. 2007). It might be possible for an employee to have positive feelings towards his/her job despite experiencing racial microaggressions. Future research should examine employee outcomes that are more related to relationship-based experiences, such as burnout or emotional exhaustion (Nguyen 2020) in studies of racial microaggressions in the workplace.

Social support from supervisors can buffer the negative impact of stressors (Mayo et al. 2012). Supervisor and co-worker support can decrease stress and increase presenteeism (Yang et al. 2016). I also investigated the moderating impact of perceived supervisor and co-worker support. However, the results for their moderation were mostly not significant. Future research should consider a more diverse sample, including participants who have been in the same workplace for a longer period, to see whether we can gather a more accurate picture of the impact of support from these social groups in the relationship between racial microaggressions in the workplace and their outcomes.

As explained above in the discussion section that strong social group identity did not exacerbate the negative impact of racial microaggressions. There is clearly a need for future research to reassess if the strength of social group identity can exacerbate the negative impact of racial microaggressions, as shown by previous research.

ABS (2019) categorise individuals of Asian ethnicity as those originating from several regions in Asia (i.e., Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, Southern Asia). An ABS (2019) report shows that individuals from Northeast Asia form one of the largest Asian groups in the Australian population. The current study over represents employees of Southern Asian ethnic background: the sample of the current study contained mainly employees of Southern Asian ethnicity (81%) with only 12.4% Southeast Asians and 6.5% Northeast Asians. Considering the time and the scope of the study, it was difficult to collect data from a larger group and to maintain a balance of participants from all Asian ethnic groups. Moreover, there are many other ethnic groups in Australian organisations that are in the minority and may experience the adverse impact of racial microaggressions. For example, Islam and Jahjah (2001) studied attitudes towards different ethnic groups in Australia (i.e., Asian, Aboriginals, and Arabs) and found that the

least positive attitudes were towards Arabs and Asians. Future studies should include more diverse samples that include different minority groups in the workplace and aim for a representation that is reflective of the current Australian population.

6.4 Conclusion

Using a two-wave survey of 201 employees of Asian ethnicity, this study investigated the impact of racial microaggressions on withdrawal behaviours and experience of workplace loneliness. These findings are significant and critical for employees of Asian ethnicity and can have an impact on organisations that have ethnic minority employees in their workforce. Findings showed that racial microaggressions can be shown from supervisors, co-workers, and customers in the workplace. Moreover, female employees of Asian ethnicity, employees in the younger age bracket, and those working in unskilled or semi-skilled occupation groups are more vulnerable to experiences of racial microaggressions. Employees who experience racial microaggressions are lonely and ready to leave their jobs. Therefore, this research is likely to increase our understanding of racial microaggressions in the workplace, contribute to current theory, and generate significant practical benefits.

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Appendix 1

Participant recruitment flyer

University of South Australia | Business School

We need your help!

At the University of South Australia, we are conducting a research project that examines the work experiences of people of Asian ethnicity in Australia.

We are looking for people of Asian ethnicity (those who were born in, or have a parent born in, any of the following groups of countries or regions):

- **Northeast Asia** (e.g., Mainland China, Hong Kong, Japan)
- **Southeast Asia** (e.g., Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia), or
- **Southern Asia** (e.g., Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan).



Your participation will involve completing two surveys which take approximately 25 minutes. After completing both surveys, your details will be entered into a lucky draw, and **two lucky draw winners will receive a Coles/Myer gift card worth $200 each.**

For participation or if you have any questions about the project, please contact the researcher.

Ayesha Hanif
Email: ayesha.hanif@mymail.unisa.edu.au

We look forward to your participation.

This project has been approved by the UniSA Human Research Ethics Committee— Protocol Number:201818

Appendix 2

Newspaper advertisement

University of South Australia

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

At the University of South Australia, we are conducting a research project that examines the work experiences of people of Asian ethnicity in Australia. People of Asian ethnicity are those who were born or has a parent born in any of the following groups of countries or regions: **Northeast Asia (e.g., Mainland China, Hong Kong, Japan) Southeast Asia (e.g., Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia), Southern Asia (e.g., Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan).**

Your participation will involve completing two surveys
(either online or in hardcopy based on your preference).

After completing both surveys, your details will be entered into a lucky draw, and
two lucky draw winners will receive a Coles/Myer gift card worth $200 each.

For participation or if you have any questions about the project, please contact the researcher.
AYESHA HANIF
Email: ayesha.hanif@mymail.unisa.edu.au

WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR PARTICIPATION.

Appendix 3

Research information sheet

What is this research about?
This study examines the work experiences of employees of Asian ethnicity in Australia.

What will my participation involve?
You will be required to complete two surveys with a one-month gap between surveys. After completing both surveys, your details will be entered into a lucky draw, and **two lucky draw winners will receive a Coles/Myer gift card worth $200 each as a token of appreciation**.

What will happen to the information I provide?
Once data collection is complete and data exported, all hard copies and information collected for this study will be retained in a secure storeroom on UniSA's City West campus for five years. After five years, all hard copies will be destroyed. Your personal information will be kept confidential. Any information leading to the identification of any organisation or individual will not be released. No information will be released to another party unless the researchers are legally required to do so.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. Your survey responses will be destroyed if you decide to withdraw from the study. The researcher will remove any identifying material as early as possible. Completion of the survey is an indication of your consent to be a respondent in this study. It is not expected that there is any risk to you in this study.

This project has been approved by the UniSA's Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any ethical concerns about the project or questions about your rights as a participant, please contact the Executive Officer of this Committee, email: humanethics@unisa.edu.au.

Will I receive feedback?
Yes, once data collection is complete, we can send you a report summarising the project's findings. Please provide an email address if you wish to receive the feedback report. If you have any questions about the project, please contact the research team (details below):

Project Title
Work experiences of employees of Asian ethnicity in Australia

Researcher Name: Ayesha Hanif
Contact Details: Email: ayesha.hanif@mymail.unisa.edu.au
Supervisor's Name: Dr Sanjee Perera
Contact Details: Email: sanjee.perera@unisa.edu.au

Appendix 4
Survey - Wave 1

Part A: Workplace relationships

1. In the last six months, how often has your **supervisor…**

Circle your responses below

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently
acted surprised at your professional education?	1	2	3	4	5
told you that all people in your ethnic group look alike?	1	2	3	4	5
was unfriendly or unwelcoming toward you because of your ethnicity?	1	2	3	4	5
overlooked your opinion in a group discussion because of your ethnicity?	1	2	3	4	5
ignored you at work because of your ethnicity?	1	2	3	4	5
assumed that your work would be inferior to people of other ethnic groups?	1	2	3	4	5
treated you differently compared to White co-workers?	1	2	3	4	5

2. In the last six months, how often has your **supervisor…**

Circle your response below

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently	Not born in Australia
not believe you when you told them you were born in Australia (if born in Australia)?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

3. In the last six months, how often have your **co-workers…**

Circle your responses below

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently
acted surprised at your professional education?	1	2	3	4	5
told you that all people in your ethnic group look alike?	1	2	3	4	5
was unfriendly or unwelcoming toward you because of your ethnicity?	1	2	3	4	5
overlooked your opinion in a group discussion because of your ethnicity?	1	2	3	4	5
ignored you at work because of your ethnicity?	1	2	3	4	5
assumed that your work would be inferior to people of other ethnic groups?	1	2	3	4	5
treated you differently compared to White co-workers?	1	2	3	4	5

4. In the last six months, how often have your **co-workers…**

Circle your response below

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently	Not born in Australia
not believe you when you told them you were born in Australia (if born in Australia)?	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

5. In your job, do you interact with customers or clients? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Note: If no, please go to Part B (Q9). If yes, please answer the following questions.

6. How often do you interact with customers or clients?

Circle your response below

Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently
1	2	3	4

7. In the last six months, how often have your **customers/clients…**

Circle your responses below

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently
acted surprised at your professional education?	1	2	3	4	5
assumed that you held a lower status job?	1	2	3	4	5
assumed that you spoke a language other than English?	1	2	3	4	5
told you that all people in your ethnic group look alike?	1	2	3	4	5
was unfriendly or unwelcoming toward you because of your ethnicity?	1	2	3	4	5
ignored you because of your ethnicity?	1	2	3	4	5
assumed that your work would be inferior to people of other ethnic groups?	1	2	3	4	5
treated you differently compared to White co-workers?	1	2	3	4	5

8. In the last six months, how often have your **customers/clients…**

Circle your response below

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently	Not born in Australia
not believe you when you told them you	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

were born in Australia
(if born in Australia)?

Part B: About your supervisor

9. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements about your supervisor.

Circle your responses below

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
My supervisor really cares about my wellbeing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My supervisor shows very little concern for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My supervisor strongly considers my goals and values.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My supervisor is willing to help me when I need a special favour.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My supervisor takes pride in my accomplishments at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. What gender does your immediate supervisor identify as?

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Gender not listed

11. How long have you worked with your immediate supervisor? (Mention years or use a fraction for months)

_____years

12. What is the ethnic background of your immediate supervisor/manager? (please give your best guess if you don't know)

Tick one option

☐ Northeast Asian (i.e., born or having a parent born in Northeast Asia, e.g., Mainland China, Hong Kong)	☐ Hispanic/Latino
☐ Southeast Asian (i.e., born or having a parent born in Southeast Asia, e.g., Indonesia, Cambodia)	☐ Indigenous/Torres Strait Islander
☐ Southern Asian (i.e., born or having a parent born in Southern Asia, e.g., Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India)	☐ Middle Eastern
☐ African/Black	☐ Pacific Islander
☐ White (any White/Caucasian origin)	☐ Other (please specify) _____

Part C: About your co-workers

13. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements about your co-workers.

Circle your responses below

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
My co-workers strongly consider my goals and values.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My co-workers take pride in my accomplishments at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My co-workers really care about my well-being.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My co-workers value my	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

contribution to
their well-being.

Note: In this study, someone of an Asian ethnicity means someone who was born or has a parent born in any of the following groups of countries or regions: Northeast Asia (e.g., Mainland China, Hong Kong, Japan) Southeast Asia (e.g., Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia), Southern Asia (e.g., Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan).

14. What percentage of employees in **your organisation** are people of Asian ethnicity?

Tick one option

☐ 100 percent	☐ 25-49 percent
☐ 75-99 percent	☐ less than 25 percent but more than 0
☐ 50-74 percent	

15. Excluding yourself, how many employees do you have in **your immediate workgroup** (the group of co-workers you work closely with and interact with on a regular basis)?

_____

16. How many employees in **your immediate workgroup** (described above) are from Asian ethnic background?

_____

Note: Your answer to item 16 should be the same as or smaller than your answer to item 15.

17. How would you describe the ethnic background of the people in your immediate **workgroup**?

Tick one option

☐ Mostly Northeast Asian (i.e., born or having a parent born in Northeast Asia, e.g., Mainland China, Hong Kong)	☐ Mostly Hispanic/Latino
☐ Mostly Southeast Asian (i.e., born or having a parent born in Southeast Asia, e.g., Indonesia, Cambodia)	☐ Mostly Indigenous/Torres Strait Islander
☐ Mostly Southern Asian (i.e., born or having a parent born in Southern Asia, e.g., Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India)	☐ Mostly Middle Eastern
☐ Mostly African/Black	☐ Mostly Pacific Islander
☐ Mostly White (any White/Caucasian origin)	☐ Mostly Other (please specify) _____

Part D: About your organisation

18. To which industry does your organisation belong to?

Tick one option

☐ Agriculture	☐ Transport, postal and warehousing
☐ Mining	☐ Information media and telecommunications
☐ Manufacturing	☐ Rental, hiring and real estate services
☐ Electricity, gas, water and waste services	☐ Professional, scientific, and technical services
☐ Construction	☐ Administrative and support services
☐ Wholesale trade	☐ Public administration and safety
☐ Retail trade	☐ Education and training
☐ Accommodation and food services	☐ Health care and social assistance
☐ Arts and recreation services	☐ Other services

19. How many employees work in your organisation?

_____

Part E: About you

20. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements about you and your ethnic group.

Circle your responses below

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Overall, being a member of my ethnic group has very little to do with how I feel about myself.	1	2	3	4	5
In general, being a member of my ethnic group is an important part of my self-image.	1	2	3	4	5

My destiny is tied to the destiny of other members of my ethnic group.	1	2	3	4	5
Being a member of my ethnic group is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.	1	2	3	4	5
I have a strong sense of belonging to people from my ethnic group.	1	2	3	4	5
I have a strong attachment to other people from my ethnic group.	1	2	3	4	5
Being a member of my ethnic group is an important reflection of who I am.	1	2	3	4	5
Being a member of my ethnic group is not a major factor in my social relationships.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel good about the people in my ethnic group.	1	2	3	4	5
I am happy that I am part of my ethnic group.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel that the people in my ethnic group have made major accomplishments and advancements.	1	2	3	4	5
I often regret that I am part of my ethnic group.	1	2	3	4	5
I am proud to be part of my ethnics group.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel that my ethnic community has made valuable contributions to this society.	1	2	3	4	5

21. Please indicate the extent to which you generally feel each emotion or how you feel each emotion on average.

Circle your responses below

	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
Scared	1	2	3	4	5
Afraid	1	2	3	4	5
Upset	1	2	3	4	5
Distressed	1	2	3	4	5
Jittery	1	2	3	4	5
Nervous	1	2	3	4	5
Ashamed	1	2	3	4	5
Guilty	1	2	3	4	5
Irritable	1	2	3	4	5
Hostile	1	2	3	4	5

22. Which occupational group best describes the kind of work you currently do at your organisation?

Tick one option

☐ Managerial, professional, technical and scientific	☐ Craft and skilled manual
☐ Clerical and secretarial	☐ Semi-skilled and unskilled manual
☐ Sales and personal service	

23. How long you have been employed in this organisation? (Mention years or use a fraction for months)

_____years

24. What is your employment status?

☐ Full-time permanent ☐ Part-time permanent

25. On average, how many hours a week do you work in your job?

_____hours

26. How long have you worked in your current department/unit? (Mention years or use a fraction for months)

_____years

27. Were you born in Australia? ☐ Yes ☐ No

28. If **not** born in Australia, in which country were you born?

_____

29. If **not** born in Australia, when did you arrive in Australia? (Mention year of arrival)

_____

30. In which country was your mother born?

_____

31. In which country was your father born?

_____

32. What is your ethnic background?

Tick one option

☐ Northeast Asian (i.e., born or having a parent born in Northeast Asia, e.g., Mainland China, Hong Kong)	☐ Hispanic/Latino
☐ Southeast Asian (i.e., born or having a parent born in Southeast Asia, e.g., Indonesia, Cambodia)	☐ Indigenous/Torres Strait Islander
☐ Southern Asian (i.e., born or having a parent born in Southern Asia, e.g., Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India)	☐ Middle Eastern
☐ African/Black	☐ Pacific Islander
☐ White (any White/Caucasian origin)	☐ Other (please specify) _____

33. What is your highest educational qualification?

Tick one option

☐ Year 11 or less	☐ Honours (4th year)/Graduate diploma/Graduate certificate
☐ Year 12/VCE/HSC	☐ Masters Degree

☐ Technical College/TAFE course	☐ Doctorate
☐ Undergraduate Degree	

34. What is your age?

Tick one option

☐ 18-24 years old	☐ 45-54 years old
☐ 25-34 years old	☐ 55-64 years old
☐ 35-44 years old	☐ Over 65

35. What is your gender? ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Gender not listed

36. What is your relationship status?

Tick one option

☐ Never married	☐ Separated but not divorced
☐ Widowed	☐ Married
☐ Divorced	☐ In a de facto relationship

Appendix 5
Survey - Wave 2

Part A: Your feelings at work

1. The following statements are about how you feel at work. If you have had this feeling, indicate how often you felt it by selecting the option.

Please circle your response to each item

	Never	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always
At my work, I feel bursting with energy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am enthusiastic about my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My job inspires me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel happy when I am working intensely.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am proud of the work that I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am immersed in my work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I get carried away when I am working.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. In the past six months, how many days have you missed (whole days of work) for any reason, not including scheduled annual leave days or holidays? *(mention number of days)*

_____

Part B: Workplace experiences

3. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about your work experience.

Please circle your response to each item

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I often feel abandoned by my co-workers when I am under pressure at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I often feel alienated from my co-workers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel myself withdrawing from the people I work with.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I often feel emotionally distant from the people I work with.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel satisfied with the relationships I have at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There is a sense of camaraderie in my workplace.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I often feel isolated when I am with my co-workers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I often feel disconnected from others at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I experience a general sense of emptiness when I am at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have social companionship /fellowship at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel included in the social aspects of work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There is someone at work I can talk to about my day to day work problems if I need to.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There is no one at work I can share personal thoughts with if I want to.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have someone at work I can spend time with on my breaks if I want to.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I feel part of a group of friends at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There are people at work who take the trouble to listen to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. Do you intend to leave your organisation in the next 12 months?

Please circle your response

Not at all	Not really	Undecided	Somewhat	Very much
1	2	3	4	5

5. How strongly do you feel about leaving your organisation within the next 12 months?

Please circle your response

Not very strong	Only slightly strong	Somewhat strong	Moderately strong	Very strong
1	2	3	4	5

6. How likely is it that you will leave your organisation in the next 12 months?

Please circle your response

Very unlikely	Unlikely	Undecided	Likely	Very likely
1	2	3	4	5

7. Indicate how strongly you disagree or agree with the following statements. In last three months I…

Please circle your response to each item

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
read classified ads in newspapers, journals or	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

professional magazines							
prepared/ revised my resume	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
read books or articles about getting a job or changing jobs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
talked to friends or relatives about possible job leads	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
spoke with previous employers or business acquaintances about possible job leads	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
used the internet to locate job openings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
posted my resumes on recruitment websites	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
sent my resumes to potential employers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
filled out a job application	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
had an interview with a prospective employer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
contacted an employment agency or an executive search firm	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

telephoned or emailed a prospective employer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
attended company recruitment talks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
attended career exhibitions or job fairs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Part C: About you

8. Were you born in Australia? ☐ Yes ☐ No

9. If **not** born in Australia, in which country were you born?

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10. If **not** born in Australia, when did you arrive in Australia? (Mention year of arrival)

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11. In which country was your mother born?

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12. In which country was your father born?

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13. What is your age?

Tick one option

☐ 18-24 years old	☐ 45-54 years old
☐ 25-34 years old	☐ 55-64 years old
☐ 35-44 years old	☐ Over 65

14. What is your gender? ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Gender not listed

15. What is your relationship status?

Tick one option

☐ Never married	☐ Separated but not divorced

☐ Widowed	☐ Married
☐ Divorced	☐ In a de facto relationship

16. Please give your email address to participate in the lucky draw.

Appendix 6

Table 17: Demographics and racial microaggressions

	Racial microaggressions from supervisors				Racial microaggressions from co-workers				Racial microaggressions from customers			
Demographics	Mean	N	s.d.	Sig	Mean	N	s.d.	Sig	Mean	N	s.d.	Sig
Gender												
Male	1.48	99	.61	.016	1.44	99	.63	.007	1.83	82	.71	.395
Female	1.74	102	.91		1.73	102	.85		1.94	83	.89	
Age												
18-24 years old	1.70	28	.67	.006	1.74	28	.81	.182	2.18	24	.77	.018
25-34 years old	1.75	77	.88		1.61	77	.78		1.95	65	.86	
35-44 years old	1.47	72	.66		1.53	72	.75		1.70	58	.64	
45-54 years old	1.24	19	.42		1.32	19	.47		1.69	15	.75	
55-64 years old	2.37	5	1.56		2.11	5	1.19		2.83	3	1.85	
Education												
Year 12/VCE/HSC	1.14	4	.16	.393	1.03	4	.07	.594	1.41	4	.31	.483
Technical College/TAFE course	1.86	7	1.08		1.55	7	.84		2.05	5	.92	
Undergraduate Degree	1.40	32	.35		1.45	32	.49		1.85	29	.68	
Honours (4th year)/Graduate	1.59	40	.81		1.65	40	.91		1.73	32	.64	
Masters Degree	1.67	110	.83		1.62	110	.76		1.94	89	.87	
Doctorate	1.71	8	1.15		1.66	8	.96		2.25	6	1.25	
Ethnic background												
Northeast Asian	1.56	13	.84	.830	1.38	13	.80	.568	1.97	12	.88	.101
Southeast Asian	1.70	25	.69		1.65	25	.71		2.26	18	.99	
Southern Asian	1.60	163	.80		1.59	163	.77		1.83	135	.77	
Employment status												
Full-time permanent	1.55	91	.73	.655	1.51	91	.73	.632	1.77	75	.68	.202
Part-time permanent	1.72	43	.86		1.64	43	.79		2.07	38	1.01	
Contract	1.58	30	.87		1.63	30	.86		1.77	22	.79	
Casual	1.66	37	.78		1.68	37	.74		2.01	30	.80	
Occupational group												
Managerial, professional, technical and scientific	1.45	107	.64	.015	1.51	107	.74	.095	1.79	82	.73	.434

Clerical and secretarial	1.88	16	1.01		1.99	16	1.00		1.98	12	1.21	
Sales and personal service	1.73	49	.80		1.55	49	.68		1.92	48	.81	
Craft and skilled manual	1.68	18	.93		1.56	18	.65		2.02	13	.78	
Semi-skilled and unskilled manual	2.12	11	1.05		1.91	11	1.02		2.25	10	.92	
Tenure												
0 to 3 years	1.62	157	.79	.080	1.60	157	.78	.124	1.89	126	.83	.295
3 to 6 years	1.57	19	.63		1.54	19	.71		2.00	17	.74	
6 to 9 years	1.12	11	.179		1.10	11	.21		1.43	9	.43	
9 and above	1.93	14	1.00		1.81	14	.85		2.05	13	.86	