

Future directions and conclusions



This study sets the stage for future research exploring the relationship between racial malleability and psychological well-being. Continued research exploring the relationship between multiracial identity and psychological well-being must explore the use of alternative ways of measuring well-being with multiracial individuals while controlling for general life stressors that impact well-being. Future studies may assess for specific multiracial experiences and whether people felt congruence between their internal sense of self and their behaviors in that specific experience and how that may relate to psychological well-being. Future studies should incorporate other demographic variables or experiences related to being an ethnic minority. Studies may include the role of perceived social status in racial malleability as recent studies have shown that social class (as assessed by parents' educational attainment and racial distribution of one's environment) may account for who identifies as multiracial (Townsend et al.

, 2012). Also, based on a recent study that points to the buffering effects of identifying as multiracial on the relationship between discrimination and psychological well-being (Giamo, Schmitt, & Outten, 2012), future research should examine the relationship between racial malleability and discrimination. In the present study, relationships between constructs that have not previously been studied with a multiracial sample were illuminated; further examination of these relationships may be beneficial to extending the research with this population. Remaining questions center on the relationship between identity questioning and a lack of family acceptance, as well as how aspects of authenticity influence the relationship. In addition, a mixed methods design may be beneficial in shedding light on the role of

racial malleability in different contexts by contextualizing assessed processes of malleability, questioning and social interactions with thick descriptions of lived experiences.

Incorporating qualitative data in a study of multiracial experiences would allow an examination of the meaning making processes in which participants engage, which likely influence a variety of outcomes. Conclusions The findings of this study reinforce the complexity of multiracial identity. First and foremost, the way multiracial people identify is diverse and requires alternative options to truly assess how people self-identify. Second, racial malleability may not have a direct effect on negative aspects of psychological well-being, but identifying differently in different contexts does relate to positive aspects of well-being. Third, lack of family acceptance and identity questioning may play a role in the relationship between racial malleability and perceived stress and that relationship should be further explored. Finally, self-alienation plays a significant role in the psychological well-being of multiracial individuals.

As this segment of the population grows both popular and empirical curiosity about their experiences increases as well. The current dissertation study contributes an examination of the complexity inherent in fully understanding the multiracial experience. Additionally, this research helps to fill the gap between existing multiracial identity theory and empirical evidence as well as provides an empirical extension of the extant racial identity literature.