Exploring the Factor Structure of a Measure of Microaggression Exposure Among Women of Color in Academia
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This mixed method study’s aim was to create a measure of microaggressions that women of color in academia experience. Microaggressions are verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights that can be intentional or unintentional, but communicate derogatory messages towards a group of marginalized people. Despite many reports of microaggressions by women of color in academia, there are no measures specific to the experiences of this group and environment. This study attempts to fill that gap by creating and testing the factor structure of a measure of microaggressions. Phase I of the study was focused on item development. Three focus groups with faculty, staff, and graduate students were conducted. Data was analyzed and coded by the principal investigator. Items were generated based on the results from the focus group and a thorough literature review. The pilot measure consisted of 51 items. A total of 290 women of color academics including graduate students, faculty, and staff completed a 15-minute online survey that asked about their experience with campus microaggressions. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to determine performance of items as well as the factor structure. Results indicated a 4-factor solution which explained 45% of the variance in the scale items. It is our hope that this measure will aid in increasing campus inclusivity and improving the retention of diverse students, faculty, and staff is by creating ways to assess, measure, and evaluate the events that are taking place.