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Perceptions of Gendered Racial Microaggressions

An Honors Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors in Psychology

by

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Under the mentorship of Amy Hackney

Abstract

The impact of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination is a widespread issue in society that has become more visible to people with privilege and has been more widely studied by social scientists and mental health professionals. More recently, the impact of gendered racial microaggressions has been investigated. Gendered racial microaggressions are defined as indirect and everyday slights and insults based on the intersection of racism and sexism (Gadson & Lewis, 2021). Research shows that gendered racial microaggressions toward multiple minority status individuals has a negative impact on their mental wellbeing (Mekawi & Todd, 2018). However, there is a gap in the literature assessing the way others perceive these microaggressions. Specifically, it is important to assess whether majority members perceive gendered racial microaggressions as harmful or not. To answer this research question, participants answered questions to a modified version of the Acceptability of Microaggressions Scale (ARMS; Mekawi & Todd, 2018). In the current research, the ARMS was modified to assess both acceptability and perceived severity towards a Black female target of the microaggression. Results showed that Color Evasion statements were viewed as the most acceptable, followed by Power Evasion, with men finding such statements more acceptable than did women. The findings provide new insight on how college students view microaggressions that multiple minority individuals face in their everyday lives.

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The impact of discrimination is a issue in society that has been more widely acknowledged, visible, and studied (Pager & Shepherd, 2008). The discrimination that individuals face may vary based on their race, gender, weight, sexual orientation, and other social categories (Wofford et al., 2019). Research shows that the act of discrimination negatively affects an individual's mental and physical wellbeing (Díaz et al., 2001; English et al., 2020; Jackson et al., 2020; Williams & Mohammed, 2009). In fact, it has been found that repeated experiences of discrimination can result in depression, poor physical health, and a higher likelihood of chronic illness (Adam et al., 2015; Fuller et al., 2012). For example, a sample of African American lesbian, gay, or bisexual adolescents revealed that the influence of multiple forms of discrimination leads to depression and suicidal thoughts (Thoma & Huebner, 2013). In today's time, discrimination has taken on more subtler forms through the use of microaggressions (Fattoracci et al., 2020; Sue et al., 2007). However, it is important to note that microaggressions may take the same physical and mental toll on individuals as does discrimination (Sue, 2010).

Microaggressions

Microaggressions are generally characterized as brief, daily assaults, which can be social or environmental, verbal, or nonverbal, as well as intentional or unintentional (Sue et al., 2007). Microassaults, environmental microaggressions, microinsults, and microinvalidation are the four main classifications of microaggressions. Microassaults have been found to closely align with the "old fashioned" actions of discrimination (e.g., When I tell people I am black, they might make the joke that I love watermelon or fried chicken) (Balsam et al., 2011). Environmental microaggressions isolate minority groups by praising only white males (Fattoracci et al., 2020). Microinsults criticizes the personal identity of an individual (Fattoracci et al., 2020).

Microinvalidations consist of dominant groups downplaying the experiences of minority groups (Fattoracci et al., 2020). Microinsults and microinvalidations are usually unintentional forms of discrimination by the perpetrator (Balsam et al., 2011). The physical and mental health of multiple minority individuals is more likely to be negatively affected by different forms of discrimination and microaggressions (Cyrus, 2017). Through the creation of the minority stress model, Meyer (2013) explained that the stigma, prejudice, and discrimination that minority groups face forms a stressful social environment that results in psychological distress. Meyer's model details stress processes, such as prejudice experiences, expected rejection, avoidance, internalized homophobia, and improving coping mechanisms, that are faced by multiple minority status individuals.

Multiple Minority Status

Those who fall under the category of a multiple minority individual are labeled as minorities in more than one category. For example, Black women, gay Black men, Hispanic bisexual women all experience discrimination on multiple levels because of their multiple minority statuses. Meyer's minority stress theory addresses the social stress that minority members face due to their minority status (Meyer, 2013). Meyer (2013) defines minority stress as the heightened discrimination and societal disconnection that multiple minority status individuals face due to their status. The discrimination that these individuals face creates a negative and stressful social environment that results in their heightened risk of mental health problems (Meyer, 2013). Researchers have also been recently investigating the impact of gendered racial microaggressions on an individual's well being.

Gendered Racial Microaggressions

Gendered racial microaggressions are indirect and everyday slights and insults based on the intersection of racism and sexism, and there has been a growing body of research on the topic (Gadson & Lewis, 2021). Research has revealed some of the core themes of gendered racial microaggressions on Black women as Standards of Beauty and Objectification, Silenced and Marginalized, and several projected stereotypes: expectation of the Angry Black Girl, expectation of the Ghetto Black Girl, and expectation of the Jezebel (Gadson & Lewis, 2021). Lewis and Neville (2015) developed the Gendered Racial Microaggressions Scale (GRMS) to assess the frequency and stress of microaggressions. Their studies focused on Black women and found that Assumptions of Beauty and Sexual Objectification, Silenced and Marginalized, the Strong Black Woman Stereotype, and the Angry Black Woman Stereotype were significantly related to psychological stress. In other words, Black women who experienced these gendered racial microaggressions reported higher levels of physiological stress (Lewis & Neville, 2015).

Although there is a growing body of research on the mental impact of racial microaggressions on multiple minority status individuals, there is little research assessing bystander perceptions of these microaggressions. Mekawi and Todd (2018) addressed this gap by creating the Acceptability of Racial Microaggressions Scale (ARMS). This scale explores the perception of how “okay” it is for White individuals to use different racially microaggressive statements towards racial and ethnic minorities. The ARMS has four factors referring to the acceptability of a series of microaggressive statements: Victim Blaming, Color Evasion, Power Evasion, and Exoticizing. Responses on the ARMS scale were found to be stable over a two week time span and there was a positive association between perceived acceptability and participants commission of microaggressions and a negative association between perceived acceptability and openly disagreeing with someone who committed a microaggression. In other

words, people who perceived microaggressions as more acceptable were more likely to use microaggressions and were less likely to confront the use of microaggressions by others.

Current Study

Previous research shows the negative impact that racial microaggressions have on the target who is receiving them (Donovan et al., 2013). However, research has not assessed how bystanders perceive the painfulness of the racial microaggression statements that are used on the target. The current study modified the Acceptability of Racial Microaggressions Scale by asking participants to rate how painful each microaggressive statement was on the feelings of the Black female target. The ARMS was also modified to be targeted specifically towards a Black female, and not any other ethnic minority group. Any items that were a part of the original ARMS scale and did not pertain to Black women were eliminated from our modified version. Additionally, we created statements based upon qualitative reports of gendered racial microaggressions experienced by Black female students. Lewis and Neville (2015) created the Gendered Racial Microaggressions Scale for Black Women to assess both frequency and stress appraisal of microaggressions. Their scale is made up of four factors: Assumptions of Beauty and Sexual Objectification, Silenced and Marginalized, the Strong Black Woman Stereotype, and the Angry Black Woman Stereotype.

The primary aim of the current study is to assess college students' perceptions of the severity and acceptability of microaggressions that are experienced by Black women in a campus setting. We chose to use a campus setting because the literature shows that microaggressions are especially damaging to students of color in an academic setting (Williams et al., 2021). We hypothesized that survey items related to Color Evasion will be perceived as significantly more acceptable and less painful compared to other subscales, male participants will find all subscale

items more acceptable and less painful than women, and participants of color will find all subscales less acceptable and more painful than White participants. This study advances the literature on racial microaggressions by addressing to what extent do college students perceive gendered racial microaggressions as acceptable and painful, and whether or not these perceptions vary by participant gender and race.

Method

Participants

A total of 102 participants took part in this study. An analysis of attention check questions indicated that eighteen participants did not correctly remember the Black racial identity of the target and/or the White racial identity of the perpetrator of the microaggressions. Excluding these participants left a final sample size of 84 participants for hypothesis testing. These participants included 17 males and 67 females. Forty-four participants identified as White and 40 identified as Participants of Color (POC). All of the participants were undergraduate students at Georgia Southern University. The majority of participants (59.5%) reported being a student in the social or behavioral sciences or health sciences. The participants' ages ranged between 18 to 28 ($M = 19.89$, $SD = 2.32$).

Procedure

Participants were recruited through the Psychology Department's online SONA system and through class flyers that were posted on Folio by voluntary course instructors. The study took place through an online survey via Qualtrics. Participants who were recruited through the psychology department's research participation pool received one course credit or extra credit from their instructors. Participants who were recruited from other courses received extra credit

through their instructor's discretion and had the opportunity to receive a \$5.00 Amazon electronic gift card. Participants were provided with an informed consent form before beginning the study to inform them that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any given point. After completion, participants were thanked for their participation, debriefed, and received instructions to receive credit and/ or the Amazon gift card incentive for their participation.

Measures

Participants were asked to imagine overhearing a Black female complaining about a comment that was made by a White group member in one of her classes. Participants then read a series of hypothetical statements and rated the acceptability of making each statement and rated the severity of pain experienced by the target of each statement.

The ARMS was modified to assess both acceptability and perceived severity towards a Black female target of the microaggression and additional statements were created based upon qualitative reports of gendered racial microaggressions experienced by Black female students (Lewis & Neville, 2015). In total there were 49 items rated on a Likert scale of 1 (totally unacceptable) to 6 (perfectly acceptable) and 1 (extremely painful) to 6 (totally painless) that were created to measure nine different categories of gendered racial microaggressions. The nine subscales used in the modified ARMS were Victim Blaming, Color Evasion, Power Evasion, Exoticizing, Assumptions of Beauty and Sexual Objectification, Silenced and Marginalized, Angry Black Woman, Jezebel, and Ghetto Black Girl. Descriptions of each subscale are detailed below.

Victim Blaming. The victim blaming subscale measured microaggressions that blame racial and ethnic POC and cultures for racial disparities. There were seven items used to measure

perceptions of acceptability and pain of victim blaming. Perceptions of acceptability were rated on a Likert scale of 1 (totally unacceptable) to 6 (perfectly acceptable). Perceptions of perceived pain were rated on a Likert scale of 1 (extremely painful) to 6 (totally painless). Sample statements of victim blaming are as follows: “Lots of people worked their way out of poverty, why can't Blacks do the same?” and “Black people should stop using slavery as an excuse for their problems.” Cronbach’s alpha for acceptability was .92, showing strong internal consistency of the acceptability ratings of the victim blaming items. Cronbach’s alpha for painfulness was .90, showing strong internal consistency of the painfulness of the victim blaming items.

Color Evasion. The color evasion subscale measured microaggressions that denies an individual's race by putting emphasis on “sameness” across racial and ethnic groups. There were seven items used to measure perceptions of acceptability and pain of color evasion. Perceptions of acceptability were rated on a Likert scale of 1 (totally unacceptable) to 6 (perfectly acceptable). Perceptions of perceived pain were rated on a Likert scale of 1 (extremely painful) to 6 (totally painless). Sample statements of color evasion are as follows: “I don't see your race, I see you as a person.” and “Even if we look different, we are basically the same.” Cronbach’s alpha for acceptability was .95, showing strong internal consistency of the acceptability ratings of the color evasion items. Cronbach’s alpha for painfulness was .96, showing strong internal consistency of the painfulness ratings of the color evasion items.

Power Evasion The power evasion subscale measured microaggressions that denies and minimizes institutional racism. There were nine items used to measure perceptions of acceptability and pain of power evasion. Perceptions of acceptability were rated on a Likert scale of 1 (totally unacceptable) to 6 (perfectly acceptable). Perceptions of perceived pain were rated on a Likert scale of 1 (extremely painful) to 6 (totally painless). Sample statements of power

evasion are as follows: “Everyone is treated the same by the legal system.” and “Everyone has access to the same educational opportunities, regardless of race or ethnicity.” Cronbach’s alpha for acceptability was .96, showing strong internal consistency of the acceptability ratings of the power evasion items. Cronbach’s alpha for painfulness was .98, showing strong internal consistency of the painfulness ratings of the power evasion items.

Exoticizing. The exoticizing subscale measured microaggressions comments that objectify, sexualize, or exoticize to portray someone as unusual, or romanticize or glamorize. There were two items used to measure perceptions of acceptability and pain of exoticizing. Perceptions of acceptability were rated on a Likert scale of 1 (totally unacceptable) to 6 (perfectly acceptable). Perceptions of perceived pain were rated on a Likert scale of 1 (extremely painful) to 6 (totally painless). The statements of exoticizing are as follows: “I just love Black women's butts.” and “Your skin color is so exotic.” Cronbach’s alpha for acceptability was .65, showing fair internal consistency of the ratings of acceptability of the exoticizing items. Cronbach’s alpha for painfulness was .72, showing fair internal consistency of the painfulness ratings of the exoticizing items. The lower internal reliability is expected given that only two items were used to measure this construct.

Assumptions of Beauty and Sexual Objectification. The assumptions of beauty and sexual objectification subscale measured microaggressions that captures both the current stereotypes about aspects of Black women’s physical appearances and gendered racial forms of objectification of Black women. There were seven items used to measure perceptions of acceptability and pain of assumptions of beauty and sexual objectification. Perceptions of acceptability were rated on a Likert scale of 1 (totally unacceptable) to 6 (perfectly acceptable). Perceptions of perceived pain were rated on a Likert scale of 1 (extremely painful) to 6 (totally

painless). Sample statements of beauty and sexual objectification are as follows: “You’re pretty for a Black girl.” and “You’d be prettier if you were light skinned” Cronbach’s alpha for acceptability was .85, showing good internal consistency of the acceptability ratings of the beauty and sexual objectification items. Cronbach’s alpha for painfulness was .84, showing good internal consistency of the painfulness ratings of the beauty and sexual objectification items.

Silenced and Marginalized. The silenced and marginalized subscale measured microaggressions that make Black women feel powerless and disrespected in the workplace, school, or professional setting. There were 9 items used to measure perceptions of acceptability and pain of silenced and marginalized. Perceptions of acceptability were rated on a Likert scale of 1 (totally unacceptable) to 6 (perfectly acceptable). Perceptions of perceived pain were rated on a Likert scale of 1 (extremely painful) to 6 (totally painless). Sample statements of silenced and marginalized are as follows: “That was a really good answer you gave, I didn’t expect you to be so smart.” and “Wow, you speak so professionally.” Cronbach’s alpha for acceptability was .85, showing good internal consistency of the acceptability ratings of the silenced and marginalized items. Cronbach’s alpha for painfulness was .87, showing good internal consistency of the painfulness ratings of the silenced and marginalized items.

Angry Black Woman. The angry black woman subscale measured microaggressions that perceive Black women as angry or hostile. There were three items used to measure perceptions of acceptability and pain of the angry black woman stereotype. Perceptions of acceptability were rated on a Likert scale of 1 (totally unacceptable) to 6 (perfectly acceptable). Perceptions of perceived pain were rated on a Likert scale of 1 (extremely painful) to 6 (totally painless). Sample statements of angry black woman are as follows: “Calm down, you don’t have to be so aggressive when you speak.” and “I feel very threatened by your tone.” Cronbach’s alpha for

acceptability was .85, showing good internal consistency of the acceptability ratings of the angry black woman items. Cronbach's alpha for painfulness was .88, showing good internal consistency of the painfulness ratings of the angry black woman items.

Jezebel. The jezebel subscale measured microaggressions that reflect perceived exoticization and/or sexualization of Black women. There were four items used to measure perceptions of acceptability and pain of the jezebel. Perceptions of acceptability were rated on a Likert scale of 1 (totally unacceptable) to 6 (perfectly acceptable). Perceptions of perceived pain were rated on a Likert scale of 1 (extremely painful) to 6 (totally painless). Sample statements of the jezebel are as follows: "You're so thick." and "You can't wear that outfit with your figure." Cronbach's alpha for acceptability was .78, showing moderate internal consistency of the acceptability ratings of the jezebel items. Cronbach's alpha for painfulness was .79, showing moderate internal consistency of the painfulness ratings of the jezebel items.

Ghetto Black Girl. The ghetto black girl subscale measured microaggressions that reflect assumptions of criminality and lower-class status in Black women. There were two items used to measure perceptions of acceptability and pain of the ghetto black girl. Perceptions of acceptability were rated on a Likert scale of 1 (totally unacceptable) to 6 (perfectly acceptable). Perceptions of perceived pain were rated on a Likert scale of 1 (extremely painful) to 6 (totally painless). Sample statements of ghetto black girl are as follows: "You look like you can fight." and "Do you like watermelon and fried chicken?" Cronbach's alpha for acceptability was .34, showing poor internal consistency of the acceptability ratings of the ghetto black girl items. Cronbach's alpha for painfulness was .65, showing moderate internal consistency of the painfulness ratings of the ghetto black girl items. For the purposes of the current research, no

further analyses were conducted on these items since they did not show acceptable levels of inter-item reliability.

Results

Hypothesis One

Hypothesis one stated that survey items related to Color Evasion would be perceived as significantly more acceptable and less painful compared to the other microaggression subscales.

Acceptability. To test the acceptability hypothesis, we conducted a repeated measures ANOVA to test differences in perceived acceptability of each subscale. The overall test was significant, $F(7,77) = 37.30, p < .001$, partial eta squared = .77. Follow-up examinations of the pairwise comparisons showed that Color Evasion was rated as significantly more acceptable ($M = 3.98, SD = 1.52$, all p 's $< .001$) than all other types of microaggressions, and Power Evasion was rated as the second most acceptable type of microaggressive statement ($M = 2.36, SD = 1.37, p < .001$). The least perceived acceptable microaggressions were Victim Blaming ($M = 1.56, SD = .83$), Exoticizing ($M = 1.43, SD = .71$) Beauty and Sexual Objectification ($M = 1.50, SD = .51$), and Silenced/Marginalized ($M = 1.54, SD = .58$), and these microaggressions were seen as less acceptable than the Angry Black Woman ($M = 1.70, SD = 1.00$) and the Jezebel ($M = 1.67, SD = .85$), all p 's $< .001$.

Perceived pain. To test the perceived pain hypothesis, we conducted a repeated measures ANOVA to test differences in perceived pain of each subscale. The overall test was significant, $F(7,77) = 26.80, p < .001$, partial eta squared = .71. Follow-up examinations of the pairwise comparisons showed that Victim Blaming was rated as significantly more painful ($M = 1.56, SD$

= .63, all p 's < .03) than all other types of microaggressions, and Color Evasion was rated as the least painful type of microaggressive statement ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 1.57$, $p < .001$).

Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis two stated that male participants would rate all types of microaggressions more acceptable and less painful than would female participants.

Acceptability. To test the acceptability hypothesis, we conducted a series of independent samples t -tests with participant gender as the predictor variable. The results showed gender differences in perceived acceptability of Color Evasion, with males ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 1.09$) finding such statements more acceptable than did females ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 1.57$), $t(35) = 2.65$, $p = .01$. Additionally, the results showed gender differences in perceived acceptability of Power Evasion, with males ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 1.68$) finding such statements more acceptable than females ($M = 2.17$, $SD = 1.22$), $t(20) = 2.17$, $p = .04$. There were also significant gender differences in perceived acceptability of Beauty and Sexual Objectification, with males ($M = 1.85$, $SD = .64$) finding such statements more acceptable than females ($M = 1.41$, $SD = .44$), $t(20) = 2.66$, $p = .02$. All other microaggression subscales measured were perceived similarly acceptable by male and female participants, all p 's > .05.

Perceived pain. To test the painfulness hypothesis, we conducted a series of independent samples t -tests with participant gender as the predictor variable. The results showed gender differences in perceived pain of Power Evasion, with males ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 1.76$) finding such statements less painful than did females ($M = 1.89$, $SD = 1.15$), $t(20) = 2.70$, $p = .01$. All other microaggression subscales measured were perceived similarly painful by male and female participants.

Hypothesis Three

Hypothesis three stated that participants of color would rate all types of microaggressions as less acceptable and more painful than White participants.

Acceptability. To test the acceptability hypothesis, we conducted a series of independent samples *t*-tests with participant race as the predictor variable. Contrary to expectations, overall, participants of color and White participants rated acceptability of microaggressions similarly. Specifically, participants of color rated Color Evasion as similarly acceptable ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 1.54$) as did White participants ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 1.52$), $t(82) = .50$, $p = .62$. Additionally, participants of color rated Angry Black Women ($M = 1.61$, $SD = .83$) as similarly less acceptable as did White Participants ($M = 1.79$, $SD = 1.15$), $t(82) = .82$, $p = .42$. Participants of color ($M = 1.97$, $SD = 1.15$) rated Power Evasion as less acceptable than did White participants ($M = 2.72$, $SD = 1.46$). All other p 's were $> .05$.

Perceived pain. To test the painfulness hypothesis, we conducted a series of independent samples *t*-tests with participant race as the predictor variable. Contrary to expectations, participants of color and White participants rated the painfulness of microaggressions similarly. Specifically, participants of color rated Exoticizing as similarly painful ($M = 2.13$, $SD = .90$) as did White participants ($M = 1.84$, $SD = 1.02$), $t(82) = -1.35$, $p = .35$. Additionally, participants of color rated Power Evasion ($M = 1.96$, $SD = 1.25$) as similarly painful as did White participants ($M = 2.23$, $SD = 1.47$), $t(82) = 1.09$, $p = .18$. Interestingly, the only significant difference between participants of color and White participants was for the Jezebel. Participants of color rated the Jezebel as less painful ($M = 2.33$, $SD = 1.01$) than did White participants ($M = 1.91$, $SD = .93$), $t(82) = -1.99$, $p = .05$. All other p 's were $> .05$.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to assess college students' perceptions of the severity and acceptability of microaggressions that are experienced by Black women in a campus setting. We hypothesized that color evasion would be perceived as more acceptable and less painful in comparison to any other type of microaggression. Second, we hypothesized that men would find all types of microaggressions as more acceptable and less painful than would women. Finally, we hypothesized that participants of color would find all types of microaggressions as less acceptable and more painful than would White participants.

The results revealed that there were significant differences in the ratings of acceptability of different types of microaggressions. Color Evasion statements were rated as significantly more acceptable than any other type of microaggression. Power Evasion was rated as the second most acceptable type of microaggression compared to other types of microaggressions, Angry Black Woman was rated as third most acceptable, and the Jezebel was rated as the fourth most acceptable type of microaggression. Additionally, the results revealed that Victim Blaming was rated significantly more painful than any other type of microaggression. The results also showed that Color Evasion statements were seen as significantly less painful in comparison to all other types of microaggressions. These results suggest that college students are more likely to perceive microaggressions that directly target members of a specific racial group, such as the victim blaming statement "Lots of people worked their way out of poverty, why can't Blacks do the same?" as less acceptable than power evasion microaggressions that make similar claims, but are

more broadly framed, “Everyone has access to the same educational opportunities, regardless of race or ethnicity.” In other words, while our participants generally recognized that it is unacceptable to directly blame African Americans for discriminatory treatment (“African Americans would get more jobs if they dressed more professionally”), they were less likely to recognize that beliefs in a fair, just world (“Everyone has the same chance to succeed regardless of their race”) perpetuate such discriminatory treatment.

Additionally, the results showed that there are significant gender differences in perceived acceptability of Color Evasion, Power Evasion, and Beauty and Sexual Objectification microaggressions, with women reporting lower levels of acceptability across these subscales compared to men. Gender differences in perceived pain showed a significant gender difference in perceived pain of Power Evasion microaggressions with women reporting higher levels of pain compared to men. These results are consistent with empathy findings and may reflect that female participants were more likely to place themselves in the target’s situation as compared to men.

In reference to racial differences in acceptability, we found that there were significant racial differences in perceived acceptability of Power Evasion microaggressions with participants of color reporting lower levels of acceptability than did White participants. Finally, racial differences in perceived pain showed significant racial differences in Jezebel microaggressions. White participants reported significantly higher levels of pain for Jezebel microaggressions than did participants of color. These results suggest that the majority of White participants in our sample perceived racial microaggressions that targeted a Black female in a similar manner as participants of color. Most of the White participants in the sample were female participants, which may partially explain these findings. Regardless of racial identification, female

participants may be more likely to experience self-other overlap with the Black female target of microaggressions.

Limitations

One limitation of this study is due to the sampling procedure used. We used a convenience sample of undergraduate college students who signed up for the study through the psychology department's online research system (SONA) and students who signed up through volunteer course instructors outside of the psychology department. This sampling technique resulted in a small sample size, and the majority of the sample were women. Although 102 participants engaged in the survey, several participants provided data that indicated insufficient effort responding. The final sample of 84 participants included nine men of color, eight White men, 22 Black women, and 36 White women. The large majority of the participants in the sample were students in the social or health sciences; although we attempted to expand our participants to other types of students, the sample only included twelve participants who were students in business, physical sciences, or engineering.

In future studies, it will be important to use sampling techniques that provide a more accurate representation of the college student population, and in particular, it will be important to focus on the recruitment of undergraduate men and students who are not receiving an education in the social and health sciences. It is likely that students in the social and health sciences receive advanced course content and training related to perceptions of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination that students in other disciplines may not receive. In addition to limited generalizability of our findings, the statistical validity of the findings was limited due to the small sample size, particularly the small sample of men. The lack of evidence for gender and

racial differences in perceptions of gendered racial microaggressions may be due to the limited power to detect an association between participant race and gender and perceptions.

A second limitation is the question items that were used to measure the construct of the Ghetto Black Girl. This construct reflects assumptions of criminality and lower-class status in Black women, but the two items used to measure this construct did not demonstrate inter-item reliability. Additional measurement work is needed in the future to accurately measure the perceived acceptance and painfulness of microaggressions related to the Ghetto Black Girl stereotype.

Future Directions

The current research extends the literature by assessing how college students perceive the acceptability and severity of microaggressions that are used against Black women on a campus setting. Although we analyzed gender and racial differences, future research should assess other situational factors that may be related to students' perceptions of microaggressions such as their friend groups, majors, and training in understanding of microaggressions. Future research should also assess the reasoning behind why individuals perceive microaggressions at different levels of acceptability and painfulness.

Conclusion

As expected, our results showed that microaggressions related to Color Evasion are perceived as more acceptable and less painful compared to other types of gendered racial microaggressions. The results were inconsistent with our hypothesis that male participants would find all microaggressions more acceptable and less painful than did women; males only

found Color Evasion, Power Evasion, and Beauty and Sexual Objectification more acceptable.

The results were also inconsistent with our hypothesis that participants of color would find all types of microaggressions less acceptable and more painful than would White participants.

White participants only viewed Power Evasion as more acceptable than participants of color and participants of color viewed the Jezebel as less painful than did White participants. Overall, there are fewer gender and racial differences in perceptions of acceptability and severity of gendered racial microaggressions than expected. This result may be due to insufficient statistical power to detect an effect, or it may exemplify that there has been progress in the way that younger generations are understanding the negative impact that microaggressive statements have on minorities who receive them. Further research on the relationship between perceiver gender and race and perceptions of gendered racial microaggressions is vital to know which explanation is accurate.

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