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Putting Microaggressions under the Microscope: Examining the short-term effects of microaggressions in a college classroom

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Examining whether the Presentation of Micro Aggressions within a College Classroom
Interaction has Short-Term Effects on College Students when presented by a Professor

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Science, Mathematics, and Computing

Bard College

By

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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

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Abstract

In 1970 Chester Pierce identified the term microaggressions as subtle insults toward African-American students that could be intentional or unintentional, conscious or subconscious, and verbal or nonverbal. In recent years following some of Pierce's work, researchers have begun focusing on what exactly constitutes as a micro aggression, which spaces this form of racism manifest and the various effects it has victims. Most of the past findings indicate that microaggressions have detrimental effects to mental health and even effects students in educational settings. The current study aimed to explore whether microaggressions have immediate effects on self-esteem, mood, attitudes toward a professor and awareness of microaggressions when presented to students in a classroom. It was hypothesized that the micro aggression condition would show lower levels across all variables. The study consisted of two conditions: a neutral and micro aggressed condition. Both groups were shown a video of a professor explain a successful college experience with one of the videos including five microaggressions followed by a survey measuring the variables of the research question immediately administered after the video. The current study only found students in the micro aggressed group to have more negative attitudes toward the professor than in the neutral condition with no significance differences in self-esteem and mood. Yet, past studies have found microaggressions to be predictor variables of things such as self-esteem, anger and social anxiety. Taking into account the current study, one implication is that an accumulation of microaggressions may have larger impacts on individuals than one-time interactions. However, further research should be done exploring factors that are immediately influenced by microaggressions and lead to more long-term effects.

While an awareness of overt racism has increased in the United States, researchers have indicated that racism has recently morphed into a more subtle attack aimed toward marginalized persons or groups. Social scientists believe racism has shifted from overt racial expressions of hate and hate crimes toward more subtle and ambiguous expressions of aversive racism. In 1970, psychiatrist Chester Pierce coined the term micro aggressions, shifting the focus of racism to the “everyday subtle, stunning, often automatic and unconscious, verbal and nonverbal exchanges which are insults, derogatory dismissals, or put-downs directed toward African Americans” (Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalez, & Willis, 1978, p. 66). Pierce conducted a study which found television commercials played a role in promoting and reiterating racist perspectives. Pierce and his colleagues (1978) conducted an analysis on “unbiased” television commercials that excessively displayed negative representations of minorities suggesting that it is these forms of media intake that perpetuate negative interracial attitudes and behaviors and hold what he found to be microaggressions. Through television many people, subconsciously or consciously, come to understand what should be desirable, acceptable, beautiful, and more. with the bulk of television commercials consisting of microaggressions. This is concerning because the largest consumers of television commercials are children who spend more time in front the television throughout their lives than they do in school. Television plays a huge role in molding and shaping people’s ideas and beliefs and a person usually is unaware of experiencing or adapting microaggressions. The study suggests that microaggressions become the medium for racist behaviors and perspectives where many of the predictions about television commercial expectations assumed many negative and inferior judgments toward African-Americans. Pierce devoted his work to a focus on microaggressions, after understanding the ways that racism manifests now. However, following his work and building on “modern racism”, “symbolic

racism” and “aversive racism”, Derald Wing Sue explored the term racial microaggressions. Researchers believe this shifts the focus from being on the attitudes and perspectives of whites in the form of prejudice and discrimination to an analysis of the persons being victimized experiencing microaggressions.

Prejudice and Discrimination

A large portion of past research exploring interracial relations aimed to examine the forms of prejudice and discrimination that exist without giving attention to the impact of these experiences; the victim’s perspective. Researchers have found racist attitudes to manifest through aversive racism. Social psychologists Jack Dovidio describes this to be when negative evaluations of racial minorities are shown through persistent avoidant interaction/behavior toward their racial groups stemming from the implicit biases of whites. His understanding of aversive racists is people that explicitly believe to be anti-racist, but implicitly hold prejudices stating, “They sympathize with victims of past injustice, support the principle of racial equality, and regard themselves as non prejudice dices, but at the same time, possess negative feelings and beliefs about blacks, which may be unconscious” (Dovidio and Gaertner 2004). Most of the time, aversive racist will only express racist feelings when a situation does not hold clear right or wrong boundaries or the social judgment is unclear. Basically in situations of clear wrongdoing, on the basis of self-image, aversive racists will treat African-Americans equal to whites or more favorably but when the situation’s appropriate response is vague, aversive racists express their racist feelings but justify them on the basis of a factor other than race. Their racist feelings eventually are expressed in subtle, indirect, and justifiable ways.

Researchers Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004) did a field experiment on discrimination in the labor market; researchers explore differential treatment by race through fictitious resumes. The authors randomly assigned African-American or White sounding names to resumes sending them to help-wanted ads in Boston and Chicago. Their main findings indicated that African-Americans continue to experience discrimination in the labor market with white named resumes receiving 50 percent more callbacks than African-Americans for interviews. Using specific postal addresses, the authors were also able to explore the neighborhood effect on callbacks where whites living in wealthier neighborhoods received more callbacks but the same did not apply for African-Americans living in a whiter, more educated zip code.

Two other major contemporary forms of racism are “modern racism” and “symbolic racism”. This research has also highlighted the more subtle forms of racism that exist today, and act as a political force against African-Americans subsequent to the civil rights movement. The civil rights movement made blatant forms of prejudice believing African-Americans are biologically inferior to whites and institutionalizing segregation socially unacceptable, while morphing the ideology that African-Americans own efforts must get them out of their situations within society without governmental or special assistance. Modern racism becomes very visible within racial politics in the United States predicting votes against black candidates, influencing policies involving welfare, unemployment, crime and the death penalty influencing policies that do not specifically mention African-Americans but disproportionately impact their lives. Modern racism, derivative of symbolic racism, has been found to be a predictor of voting behaviors and policy preferences however, much of the research has failed to answer the nature of modern racism. Similarly, researchers have stated that “symbolic racism represents a form of resistance to change in the racial status quo based on moral feelings that African-Americans violate such

traditional American values as individualism and self-reliance, the work ethic, obedience, and discipline” furthering the research on symbolic racism that followed the work on modern racism (Kinder and Sears 1981). This has become a common ideology among whites, believing success should only come from merits based on hard work and diligent services. Like modern racism, research on symbolic racism indicates that this type of racism finds its expression on political issues that involve assistance to African-Americans. These forms of racism have become deeply rooted in feelings of social morality in early-learned racial prejudices and fears of whites, allowing whites not to experience direct racial issues within their lives. These ideas and attitudes are prevalent in the media and within informal communications making stereotypical symbols of African-Americans’ violations of American values more salient than the actual damage African-Americans do to the lives of whites. With the understanding of the most powerful ways racism is manifesting aversively through symbolic and modern racism, psychologist Derald Wing Sue furthered these findings, naming, examining, and categorizing the literal manifestations of aversive racism focusing on internal experiences of microaggressions.

Racial Microaggressions

Building on aversive racism, modern racism, and symbolic racism, Derald Sue reintroduced the term racial microaggressions as “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group” (Sue et al. 2007). Racial microaggressions are not limited to human interaction, where they can manifest in factors as subtle as a person’s racial identity not being represented in decorations or literature in spaces such as public work spaces. For example, Sue and colleagues’ explored racial microaggressions, finding that they can be categorized in three forms: micro-assaults, micro-

insults, and micro-invalidations. Micro-assaults tend to be a more explicit form of racial derogatory usually displayed through behaviors of name-calling, avoidance, or purposeful discriminatory actions. This category consist of instances such as referring to a black person as “colored” or an Asian as “oriental”, using racial labels, or displaying swastikas or confederate flags which hold strong histories on racial experiences. Micro-assaults are more similar to the traditional form of racism which is conducted on an individual level generally being more conscious and deliberate but still hold anonymity because they are rarely expressed in private situations. Most times, micro-assaults capture more conscious and intentional attacks, but a micro insult tends to convey more subtle snubs that are usually not clear to the perpetrator, but also clearly hold hidden insulting messages received by persons of color. This type of racial micro aggression implies rudeness and insensitivity of one’s racial identity demeaning their heritage or identity as a whole. For example, a situation in a workplace where a person of color is asked how they got the job holds the underlying message that either people of color are not qualified for certain jobs or that as a member of a minority group, the person must have been offered the position due to an affirmative action or quota program rather than abilities. Micro-insults can also be nonverbal, for instance a teacher failing to acknowledge their students of color, sending the message that their contributions are not important. Similarly, less explicit than micro-assaults, micro-invalidations are “communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential realities of a person of color” (Sue et al. 2007). Negating a person of color their American heritage constitutes as micro-invalidations such as when Latinos or Asians are told they speak good English, or asking where they were born sending the message that they are foreigners. Experiences for African-Americans are negated in instances when they are told “I don’t see race”. Exploring the ways racism is classified, research

has identified nine categories of microaggressions being alien in one's own land, recognition of intelligence, color blindness, assumption of criminal status, denial of individual racism, meritocracy myth, pathologizing cultural values, second-class status and environmental invalidation where a chart of common instances are recorded for each respectively. Research on racial microaggressions indicates that these experiences create psychological dilemmas for both the perpetrators and victims which increase the levels of racial anger and decreasing the self-esteem of persons of color. The harm of these experiences lay in the fact the fact that most times they are invisible to both the perpetrator and receiver where whites stand firm in their beliefs that they are good, moral human beings, failing to understand the racial biases they possess and African-Americans have difficulty answering the question of whether it really happened, exploring other plausible explanations. The uncertainty that lies within micro aggressive attacks tends to leave persons of color feeling uneasy and disrespected, unsure of what happened but knowing something does not feel right. In a study by Solórzano and colleagues (2000) authors stated that, "in some respects, people of color may find an overt and obvious racist act easier to handle than microaggressions that seem vague or disguised". Many studies have suggested the racial perceptions of people of color and whites largely differ while many whites believe we live in a post-racism society with a decrease in discrimination and increase of equality holding the perception that they themselves are incapable of racist behaviors. Research continuously reveals that "minorities perceive whites as racially insensitive, unwilling to share their position and wealth, believing they are superior, needing to control everything, and treating them poorly because of their race. There are many reports of African-Americans experiencing racial discrimination in the form of microaggressions. They are mistaken for service workers, given poor service at public accommodations, randomly treated rudely or experience strangers who

feel fearful or intimidated around people of color. More problematic, when micro aggressive acts are addressed, victims tend to be labeled as overreacting or overly sensitive. Even when understood as racial snubs, perpetrators tend to consider the situations or effects as minor failing to understand the impact it has on persons of color. However, studies examining racism and mental health have found positive associations between happiness, life satisfaction, and self-esteem and discrimination.

Impact of Micro aggressions

Due to the idea that microaggressions are “micro” and their effects tend to be considered minimally harmful, much research has began exploring the effects of microaggressions within different settings. Solórzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) did a study linking microaggressions to self-doubt and frustration for African-American students in educational settings. The goal of the study was to capture racial microaggressions and the ways they influence the collegiate racial climate using focus group interview data from African-American students at three universities. The researchers sought to explore the impact on campus racial climate understanding that this is an important piece of “analyzing college access, persistence, graduation and transfer between schools for African-American students” (Solórzano, Ceja, and Yosso 2000) .It was hypothesized that a negative and unsupportive classroom climate would be associated with poor academic performance and high dropout rates for African-Americans. Guiding group discussions that generate a wealth of understanding of the participant’s experiences and beliefs of a specific topic researchers were able to find that “many students spoke of feeling “invisible” within a classroom setting” feeling that because college classrooms tend to have less African-American students, professors are less likely to address their concerns. The study also highlighted instances of racial microaggressions in student-teacher interactions where professors hold low expectations of their

African-American students. The findings suggest that self-doubt begins to surface in African-American students where many of them feel it becomes important to have other African-American students in their classes to provide support in combating stereotype threat. Many of their experiences provoke frustration where African-American students will witness biases from white students when having to do group work together. Further, aside from feelings of self-doubt and frustration, African-American students reported feeling drained from the intense scrutiny of their actions received on the basis of negative preconceived ideas about African Americans. Importantly the study found that the most powerful racial micro aggression experienced by African-American students is the assumptions of how whites believe students entered the college; through affirmative action. Many students experience instances where white students will assume they received a sports scholarship over an academic scholarship, failing to recognize that black students have the mental capabilities to be intellectual as well. As a result of some of these experiences, many students in this study reported that they possessed feelings of not being able to perform well academically where some cases cause students to drop a class, change their major or leave the college in some cases. This study plays a huge role in the literature in highlighting that even institutions of elite status where things appear to be equal, discrimination exists, but in more subtle forms like microaggressions. This is important because many institutions will claim to have ideologies of color blindness and race-neutral environments while the experiences of racial microaggressions challenge this.

Further capturing the experience of racial microaggressions research finds that racial microaggressions tend to lead to difficult dialogues on race and racism in classrooms (Sue et al. 2009). This study too administered focus group interviews to capture the layers of these experiences. The authors sought to understand the interactions among students, between students

and teachers, and specific events related to experiencing difficult race dialogues. The study took 14 participants from Columbia University and administered a demographic questionnaire and a semi-structured interview with questions formulated to capture various examples of difficult dialogues on race. While reports within the main findings did not use the term racial microraggressions, much of the content reported to trigger difficult dialogues were reflective of some of the nine categories of microaggressions Sue had previously established. Students reported that microaggressions not only provoke anger that leads either to challenging perpetrators or deciding to ignore the attack, but it also surfaces tension in the classroom, discomfort among whites, the professor and students and generally an unsatisfied resolution to difficult dialogues. The study captures many descriptions of students feeling difficulty in learning in these invalidating classroom climates. Students experience cognitive, behavioral and emotional dilemmas in challenging offensive incidents where they become conflicted in addressing microaggressions knowing it will lead to a difficult dialogue. These dialogues often lead to the professor, white students and sometimes, themselves feeling uncomfortable. On the other hand, students face whether to ignore the attack, being left with negative feelings of themselves and their integrity.

To further understand the best approaches of examining microaggressions, it is important to explore not only the impact but to look at how they occur within classrooms focusing less on students' retrospective experiences, and more on capturing microaggressions as they occur in real time. Suarez-Orozco, Casanova, Martin, Dalal, Cuellar, Smith and Dias (2015) did an observational study aiming to capture micro aggressive incidents in real time to extend the ways people research and think about microaggressions in educational settings. The authors look into 60 classrooms across three community colleges putting members of the research through

intensive training to learn the ways to complete the observation protocol and capture events as they occurred. The research adds to the idea that microaggressions are pervasive as they observed them in 30 percent of the classrooms at the three campuses. From this study, researchers were able to witness microaggressions happening in four predominant categories: intelligence-related, cultural, gendered and intersectional microaggressions. While this study found microaggressions to occur on the basis of culture and gender, more frequently they found microaggressions in the classroom to attack intelligence and competence implying an influence on performance and classroom climate. Even though there are limitations to observational studies in capturing individual experiences, the study sheds light on the general experiences of microaggressions and the shift in classroom climate it creates.

Since the coining of the term microaggressions in 1970 where Chester Pierce described them as the everyday subtle, often automatic and unconscious, intentional or unintentional verbal and nonverbal exchanges which are insults, derogatory dismissals, or put-downs directed toward African Americans the topic has gained much attention. Many psychologists begin putting attention into contemporary forms of racism such as aversive racism, modern racism, and symbolic racism which usually focuses on exploring the attitudes and behaviors of whites toward blacks. Modern and symbolic racism were found to be largely prevalent in racial politics where many whites hold firm the beliefs that African-Americans violate traditional American values of hard work and diligence and that they must put forth their own efforts to get out of their situations rather than receive governmental assistance. Due to the fact that this form of racism allows whites to adopt these ideas as a form of social morality, while failing to experience damage within their lives from African-Americans, they are able to detach themselves from the notion of possessing racist biases. However, with the growing knowledge of aversive racism,

modern racism, and symbolic racism, psychologist Derald Sue expanded research on racial microaggressions which shifted the focus from an evaluation of whites' attitudes and perceptions toward blacks to examining the impact on the receivers; people of color. The work on racial microaggressions finds that they manifest in three forms: micro-assaults, micro-insults, and micro-invalidations where the current study focuses on the experience of micro-insults. Micro-assaults are usually the more deliberate and explicit forms of racism, where micro-insults and micro-invalidations are more subtle but still convey racial biases. With growing knowledge of what microaggressions are and how they manifest, researchers also sought to examine the harmful impacts of microaggressions. A focus group interview study by Solórzano et al. (2000) found microaggressions to be linked to self-doubt and frustration in African-American students. The researchers received several accounts of students receiving microaggressions from both professors and white peers such as low expectations for student success or assumptions of intelligence from white peers when it is time to do group work. Above all, students reported experiencing microaggressions on the basis of how they entered college which seemed to have more harmful effects such as dropping a class, changing their majors or changing colleges. Microaggressions have also been found to be associated with triggering difficult dialogues on race in the classroom. They have the power to be received by students of color then followed by a dilemma of whether to address them or not. Most students face the conflict of addressing a racial micro aggression aware that it will fuel a dialogue on race making the professor, peers and sometimes even the students of color uncomfortable or choosing to say nothing and sit with the effects internally trying to understand what happened exactly. Findings show that microaggressions are commonly attacks on intelligence and competence in the classroom, leaving room for exploring the effects on things such as performance and classroom climate.

Considering the past research, there is a gap in understanding exactly what factors may be affected in short-term when a micro aggression is experienced. Majority of micro aggression research puts experiences in retrospect asking participants to reflect back on their experiences with microaggressions indicating more long-term effects. The current study investigates whether presenting a group of students with a professor using microaggressions in a classroom setting impacts student self-esteem/mood, their attitudes toward the professor, awareness of microaggressions and measures the general classroom climate of their classes. The study aims to not only expand the literature on microaggressions, but also to fill the gap of answering what happens immediately when microaggressions are experienced. Consistent with past literature the experimenter predicts that:

1. There will be lower levels of self-esteem for students in the micro aggressed condition than students in the neutral condition.
2. There will be lower scores in mood for students shown the professor using microaggressions versus students shown the neutral professor.
3. With a higher awareness of microaggressions in the micro aggressed condition students will have more negative attitudes toward the professors than students in the neutral condition
4. There will be significantly more negative reports of classroom climate in the micro aggressed condition than in the neutral condition.
5. On all variables, woman will show lower levels than men in the micro aggressed condition than in the neutral condition.

Methods

Participants

The study consisted of Bard College students recruited through tabling processes in student spaces on campus and through different courses on campus with the permission of professors. Participants were only asked if they would like to sign up for a 10-15 minutes study with the opportunity to win a \$50 gift card. The experimenter assigned a condition to the sign-up sheets before recruitments and all time sheets included at most 15 slots. Eighty-seven participants participated in the study with one being excluded for not completing the survey. The mean age of participants was 19.86 ($SD=1.28$) with 46 of the participants being female, 38 male and 2 identifying as other. Majority of the students were White (42%) with the remainder 29% Black/ African-American, 15.1% identifying as other, 9.3% Hispanic/ Latino, and 5% Asian.

Design

This experiment is a between subjects design where different participants were used in each condition of the independent variables. The independent variables of the study are the control or micro aggression recorded videos presented to participants. The dependent variable used in the study is the self-esteem/mood and attitude toward the professor survey administered to participants formulated by the experimenter. After watching the video for both conditions, participants will be asked questions specific to their self-esteem, mood, awareness of micro aggressions, their attitudes toward the professor speaking in the video and the general class climate of their classes at Bard.

Materials

The experiment includes a scripted video which will or will not include the presentation of micro aggressions. The video was scripted by the experimenter with the inclusion of five microaggressions from a chart adapted by psychologist Derald Wing Sue. In the study is also a questionnaire compiled of basic demographic questions, a self-esteem scale, a brief mood introspection scale, questions specific to the awareness of micro aggressions in general and in the video, the participants' attitudes toward the professor and finally six questions about the general class climate of their classes (see Appendix F).

Scripted Videos. The experimenter presented both groups with a video of a young white male professor speaking to students about ways to have the best college experience. The professor covers three broad steps to students should use in order to have the most wholesome experience. The professor is positioned the same in both videos presenting the same information to students with the exception of the micro aggressions in one condition. The video was scripted by the experimenter with the inclusion of five micro aggressions derived from or formulated based on the Recognizing Micro aggressions and the Messages They Send chart adapted from the research of Derald Sue in his book *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender and Sexual Orientation*. There is full script followed by the microaggressions used and the message they send (see appendix D & E)

Self-esteem scale of questionnaire. The participants were administered a questionnaire consisting of a self-esteem scale developed by sociologists Dr. Morris Rosenberg and widely used in research for its validity. The Rosenberg self-esteem scale is a ten-item Likert scale with items answered on a four point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The

original sample in developing the scale included 5,024 high school juniors and seniors. The scale consists of five statements positively worded and five negatively worded. It measures the state self-esteem of participants through asking students to reflect on the current feelings. Researchers generally consider the scale to be high in reliability and a valid tool for self-esteem assessment.

Mood measurement of questionnaire. The questionnaire administered to participants also included The Brief Mood Introspection Scale (BMIS). The BMIS is a commonly used scale to measure pleasant-unpleasant mood. It uses a 4-point response scale for each adjective consisting of 16 mood-adjectives. The pleasant-unpleasant scale of the BMIS is sufficiently reliable in most cases and can also be adjusted if reliability is of concern. The scale presents participants with different adjectives with the response choices of: xx, x, v, vv used for the scoring.

Awareness of micro aggressions and attitudes toward the professor. The experimenter formulated questions within the questionnaire specific to students' past experiences or awareness of micro aggressions in general and then in the video. These questions were used to examine whether college students are aware of experiencing micro aggressions and whether they can recognize them when presented by figures such as professors. The questions were also shifted to grasp an idea of the perceptions students had on the professor following the video. (see appendix F)

Classroom Climate. The final part of the survey administered to participants consisted of questions first derived from the University of California campus climate survey, and then shifted to measure classroom climate. The experimenter selected six questions from the campus

climate survey, replacing campus with classroom respectively. These questions were geared to measure the level of comfort students feel in classrooms in many aspects.

Procedures

Participants were asked to meet at one of the reserved locations (RKC 102 or Olin 309) during specific time slots. As participants entered the room, they were free to sit anywhere and after all were seated, the experimenter handed out the consent forms. All participants were given the consent form to read and sign while the experimenter verbally informed participants of the consent form's key points and waited for them to sign. Next, the group was shown a video with or without micro aggressions based on condition with a clip of a white male speaking to students about having the most successful college experience. The video for each condition was the same as far as speaker, and content. After the video, participants were administered the short questionnaire to obtain their demographics, awareness of micro aggressions in general and in the video and their attitudes toward the speaker/professor. The questionnaire included the self-esteem, mood, and general classroom climate measures. Then, as participants handed in their questionnaires they were asked to fill out an index card with their name and email address for the raffle and so that it was separate from the data. Finally, each participant received a debriefing form describing the nature of the study.

Data Preparation

All surveys were manually given a subject number to match an excel data sheet. Before, inputting the data, each scale was coded and the necessary questions were reverse coded. The self-esteem scale consisted of ten questions in which items 2, 5, 6, 8, and 9 were reverse coded, "strongly agree" was given 0 points, "agree" 1, "disagree" 2, and "strongly disagree" 3 points.

The scores and sum scores for all ten questions (30 being the most a participant could score) were entered into excel with higher scores indicating higher self-esteem. The response scale of the brief mood introspection scale was converted to numbers: xx=1, x=2, v=3, vv=4 for the items active, calm, caring, content, happy, lively, loving and peppy. Scores were reversed for the remaining eight items: xx=4, x=3, v=2, vv=1 for the items drowsy, fed up, gloomy, grouchy, jittery, nervous, sad and tired. All items were added up to get sum scores with an effective range of 16 to 64, higher scores indicating more pleasant mood. The attitudes toward the professor and awareness of micro aggression questions were “yes” “no” questions giving yes 1 point and no 0 points. The highest a student could score on the “attitudes” questions was a 4 being the most positive attitude and the lowest was a 0 being a negative attitude. The class climate questions were coded where “strongly agree” was given 4 points, “agree” 3, “neutral” 2, “disagree” 1, and “strongly disagree” 0 points for all but the last question. The last question was reverse coded and items were added to get sum scores with higher scores indicating a more positive class climate.

Results

Self- Esteem

I predicted that students presented with the video of the professor using micro aggressions would have lower levels of self-esteem. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare self-esteem in students in the neutral and aggression conditions. There was no significant difference in the scores for neutral ($M=19.24$, $SD=4.7$) and aggression ($M=18.64$, $SD=3.9$) conditions; $t(84) = .646$, $p = .52$. These results suggest that self-esteem is not immediately affected when students witness a professor using micro aggressions. The results are not consistent with the original hypothesis. I also predicted that there would be an effect of

gender with woman showing lower self-esteem levels than men. A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of gender on self-esteem in aggression and neutral conditions. There was not a significant effect of gender on self-esteem in neither the neutral condition nor the micro aggressed condition; neutral [$F(2, 38) = 2.84, p = .07$], aggressed [$F(2, 42) = .790, p = .46$]. The mean scores for females were not significantly different from in either condition; neutral females ($M = 17.82, SD = 5.02$) males ($M = 21.11, SD = 3.63$) and aggressed females ($M = 18.13, SD = 3.51$) males ($M = 19.40, SD = 4.47$). These results indicate that gender does not affect self-esteem in either of the conditions suggesting that females are not affected more than males in the micro aggressed condition; inconsistent with the original hypothesis.

Mood Introspection

I predicted that students in the aggression condition would have lower mood scores than students in the neutral condition. Also, an independent-samples t-test to compare mood scores in both groups. There was no significant difference in scores for aggression ($M=42.60, SD= 6.6$), and neutral ($M=42.95, SD= 7.5$) conditions; $t(84) = 2.31, p = .82$. The findings of the mood variable are also not consistent with the original predictions. The results suggest that mood is not immediately affected by the presentation of microaggressions to college students. I also predicted that there would be an effect of gender with woman showing lower scores of mood than men in the micro aggressed condition. A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of gender on mood in aggression and neutral conditions. There was a significant effect of gender on mood in the neutral condition but not in the micro aggressed condition; neutral [$F(2, 38) = 7.02, p = .003$], aggressed [$F(2, 42) = .699, p = .503$]. These results indicate that participant's gender impacted their mood in the neutral but not aggressed condition. The mean scores for females were statistically different from men in the neutral

condition; females ($M = 39.59$, $SD = 6.80$) males ($M = 47.28$, $SD = 6.22$) (*see Figure 1*).

However, mean scores of mood were not significantly different in the aggressed condition between females ($M = 41.50$, $SD = 6.07$) and males ($M = 19.40$, $SD = 4.47$). The results, inconsistent with the original hypothesis, suggest that females generally have lower levels of mood than males but when presented with microaggressions, there is no effect of gender on mood.

Attitudes toward Professor

I predicted that students in the aggression condition would have more negative attitudes toward the professor in the video than students in the neutral condition. An independent-samples t-test was also conducted to compare the attitudes of students in both conditions. There was a significant difference in attitudes for neutral ($M=2.88$, $SD=1.3$) and aggression ($M=1.51$, $SD=1.4$) conditions; $t(84) = 4.71$, $p = .000$ (*see Figure 2*). These findings are consistent with original predictions suggesting that the attitudes of students toward a professor decrease when the professor uses micro aggressions. I also predicted that there would be an effect of gender with woman showing more negative attitudes toward the professor than men in the micro aggressed condition. A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of gender on students' attitudes in aggression and neutral conditions. There was not a significant effect of gender on students attitudes in neither the neutral condition nor the micro aggressed condition; neutral [$F(2, 38) = 1.12$, $p = .338$], aggressed [$F(2, 42) = 1.02$, $p = .368$]. The mean attitudes for females were not significantly different from males in either condition; neutral females ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 1.28$) males ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 1.33$) and aggressed females ($M = 1.38$, $SD = 1.44$) males ($M = 1.75$, $SD = 1.29$). These results indicate that gender has does not impact students' attitudes in either of the conditions suggesting that females were not affected more than

males in the micro aggressed condition as I hypothesized. Also, a Pearson correlation coefficient was run to assess the relationship between students' attitudes toward the professor and the number of micro aggressions reported by students to be in the video. There was a negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.603$, $n = 84$, $p = .000$. A scatter plot (*Figure 3*) summarizes the results. Overall, there was a strong negative correlation between attitudes toward the professor and the amount of microaggressions reported suggesting that students' attitudes toward the professor decrease the more micro aggressions the student reported.

Class Climate

I predicted that students in the aggression condition would have more negative classroom climate scores than in the neutral condition. An independent-samples t-test was run to compare classroom climate in general in both conditions. There was a significant difference in climate for aggression ($M=15.18$, $SD= 4.1$) and neutral ($M=13.12$, $SD= 3.5$) conditions; $t(84) = -2.49$, $p = .02$. These findings are not consistent with the original hypothesis that classroom climate would be lower for the micro aggressed condition than the neutral condition but there was a statistically significant difference between the conditions. However, the questions only suggest that students in the neutral condition have a lower level of class climate in their general classes at Bard than the students in the aggression condition and not a difference in classroom climate specifically in this study. I also predicted that there would be an effect of gender with woman reporting more negative classroom climates than men in the micro aggressed condition. A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of gender on students' reports on classroom climates in aggression and neutral conditions. There was not a significant effect of gender on students reports in neither the neutral condition nor the micro aggressed condition; neutral [$F(2, 38) = 2.97$, $p = .063$], aggressed [$F(2, 42) = 1.20$, $p = .312$].

The mean reports for females were not significantly different from males in either condition; neutral females ($M = 11.95$, $SD = 3.87$) males ($M = 14.44$, $SD = 2.43$) and aggressed females ($M = 14.29$, $SD = 4.40$) males ($M = 16.20$, $SD = 3.72$). These results indicate that females do not experience more negative classroom climates than males in the micro aggressed group as I hypothesized, or in the neutral condition (*see Figure 4*).

Discussion

Understanding a shift in the way discrimination and prejudices manifest, research has explored the attitudes and perceptions of whites finding racial biases to still be prevalent in the United States. However, in recent years, following the coining of the term, micro aggression research has gained much attention focusing on the perceptions and impact on victims of discrimination. The current study examined whether students' experience of microaggressions in a college classroom impacts their self-esteem, mood, attitude toward the professor, and awareness of microaggressions. The study also aimed to measure the general classroom climates of participants' classes. The main prediction was that students would experience lower levels of self-esteem, mood, attitudes, and awareness as a result of the condition they were assigned (neutral or aggression). The condition consisting of microaggressions was expected to lower participants' levels across all variables. It was also predicted that students in the micro aggression condition would report more negative classroom climates for their general classes at Bard. In addition to the main predictions, I hypothesized that females would experience lower levels across all variables than males in the micro aggressed condition.

Participants in the micro aggressed condition did not show significantly lower levels across variables compared to the neutral condition. The results found that the presentation of

microaggressions do not immediately impact self-esteem. There are a few studies that have indicated that microaggressions have an effect on college students' self-esteem. Nadal, Wong, Griffin, Davidoff and Sriken (2014) found a significant negative correlation between microaggressions and self-esteem average scores. Similar to the current study, researchers included the Rosenberg scale of self-esteem as their measure; however the authors additionally asked students more about their personal experiences with microaggressions. Further, they found specifically workplace/school microaggressions to be statistically significant predictor variables of self-esteem and of race and ethnic microaggressions. While there are studies suggesting that young females tend to have lower self-esteem than young males, the current study did not find females to have a lower level of self-esteem in either condition compared to males.

Huynh (2012) specifically did not find denial of racial reality microaggressions to be predictors of depressive and somatic symptoms but found negative treatment and emphasis on differences to be predictors of symptoms. Inconsistent with the current study, the author found that the frequency of microaggressions affects young adult's state anger, psychological stress, and social anxiety. Using only a brief mood introspection scale, the findings of the current study did not suggest microaggressions have an immediate impact on students' mood. The findings together suggest that students' may experience negative affect only when they have experienced microaggressions frequently in a setting. The students of the current study had no prior interactions with the professor presenting the microaggressions which in turn did not immediately decrease their moods. However, past research suggests that perhaps it is instead long-term accumulations of microaggressions from a known or current professor that may cause frustrations, angers and doubts in students.

While microaggressions did not have an immediate effect on self-esteem and mood, they did impact the attitudes toward the professors. Students that watched the video of the professor using microaggressions report more negative attitudes toward him. The questions (*see Appendix F*) used to measure attitudes suggest that students would not want to take a class with this professor or even feel comfortable taking one. While there are not any known studies measuring this, there are findings that microaggressions effect students' performance in classes and shift the conversations in classrooms to more difficult dialogues on race. The current study indicates that perhaps microaggressions have a more quick and direct influence on students perceptions of their professor which in long-term, begins to impact things such as performance, self-esteem, and mood states. However, further supporting that an accumulation of microaggressions has larger impacts on students, the current study found that students' attitudes toward the professor decrease the more microaggressions the students reported to witness. The uncertainty of experiencing microaggressions could have caused some students that only witnessed maybe one or two of the microaggressions to ignore their offense, and analyze the experience on the basis of factors other than discrimination.

Opposite from the main hypothesis of this study, participants in the neutral condition reported more negative attitudes toward the classroom climates of their Bard classes than students in the micro aggressed condition. While this study did not find gender difference among conditions, considering the questions and the results of this measure, the findings support past research that females tend to have lower levels on factors such as self-esteem. Many of the questions examined whether students felt visible and heard, and whether teachers did their part in addressing difficult topics and making students feel safe in classes. Further research should be done examining factors that impact the Bard classroom climates because students in this study

with an awareness of microaggressions reported higher climates of their classes. Researchers should also start examining whether there are benefits in the classroom that are influenced by an awareness of microaggressions. Perhaps students are able to overcome negative effects of microaggressions when they have a clear understanding: 1. that they are experiencing a micro aggression and 2. The message the micro aggression sends.

Limitations and Implications

The results of the current study only supported one of the five hypotheses with the design of the study having several limitations. The experiment consisted of randomly assigning participants to conditions where race and gender were not equally controlled for, while the study included three sexist microaggressions and one racial micro aggression. It was hypothesized that females would report lower levels across all variables than males; however, it was only in the neutral condition of mood that females had significantly lower scores than males.

Much of past research focused on the effects of microaggressions using Correlational or semi-experimental designs where the current study used an experimental design. With an experimental design, another limitation of the study is that it consisted of common microaggressions as a manipulation whereas; it may be more personal experiences of microaggressions that are having the biggest impacts in reality. Past studies have geared participants to think about their personal experiences of microaggressions, reporting things that they clearly took offense to. However, an awareness of microaggressions existing in this study cannot be sure to cause a participant to be insulted by or take offense to the micro aggression. To measure whether the manipulation affected participants, a survey consisting of different scales was administered. However, because many studies have not examined short-term and more

immediate effects of microaggressions, the current study only include one mood measure; the brief mood introspection scale which only had participants report how definite they felt a series of adjectives. There should be more studies examining at what point mood begins to be affected directly by experiencing microaggressions utilizing a range of mood scales.

Conclusion

Overall, there has been a great deal of research indicating that the effects of microaggressions are not minimal. Researchers have conducted a series of studies allowing participants to reflect on and report their experiences of microaggressions in various settings. Many of these studies have found that microaggressions exist in workplaces, educational settings and everyday interactions having detrimental effects to the mental health of minorities, causing self-doubt, anger, and stress, and being a predictor of low performance and success in college for African-American students. The current study aimed to shift the research and examine whether a direct manipulation of microaggressions had short-term effects on things such as self-esteem, mood, attitudes toward a professor and awareness of microaggressions. The findings suggest that only attitudes toward a professor are immediately affected by microaggressions. However, while many of the other variables were not affected, this is only the first study examining short-term effects of a manipulation. This is important to the literature because with the long-term effects of microaggressions becoming more known, it is vital that researchers began exploring where these effects start.

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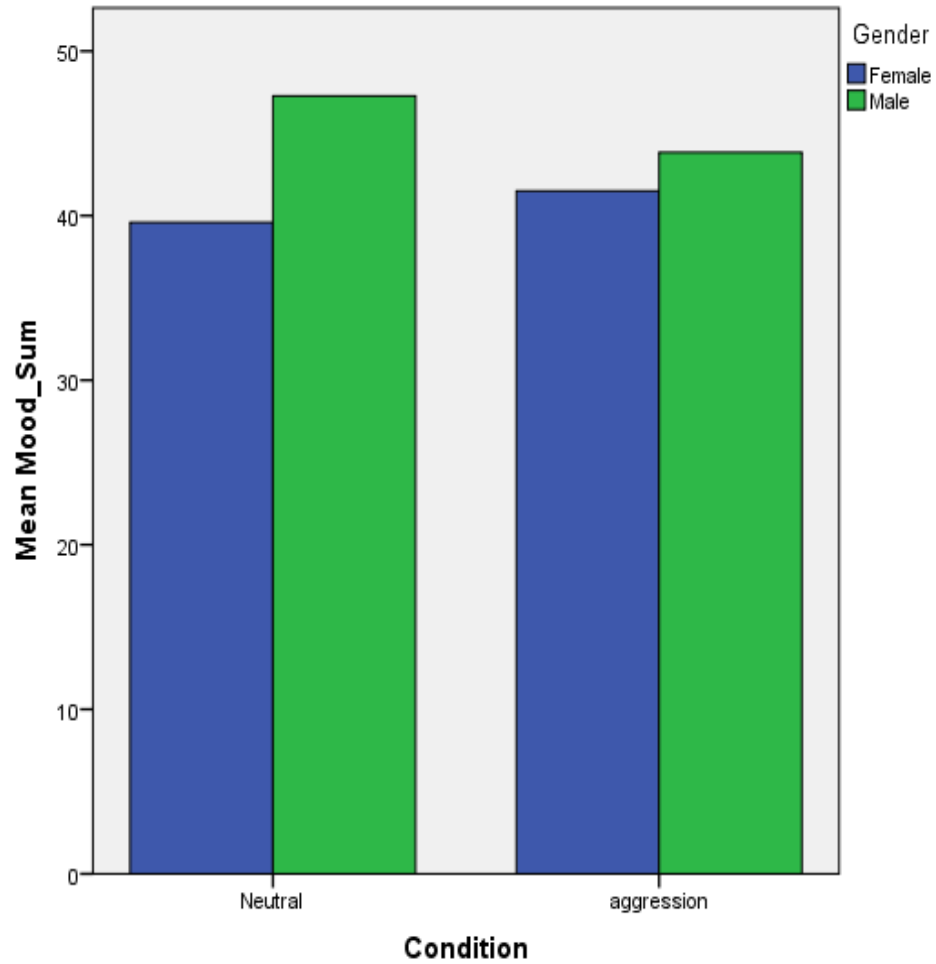


Figure 1. Average mean scores for females and males in both the neutral and aggression condition. Higher mean scores indicate more positive moods.

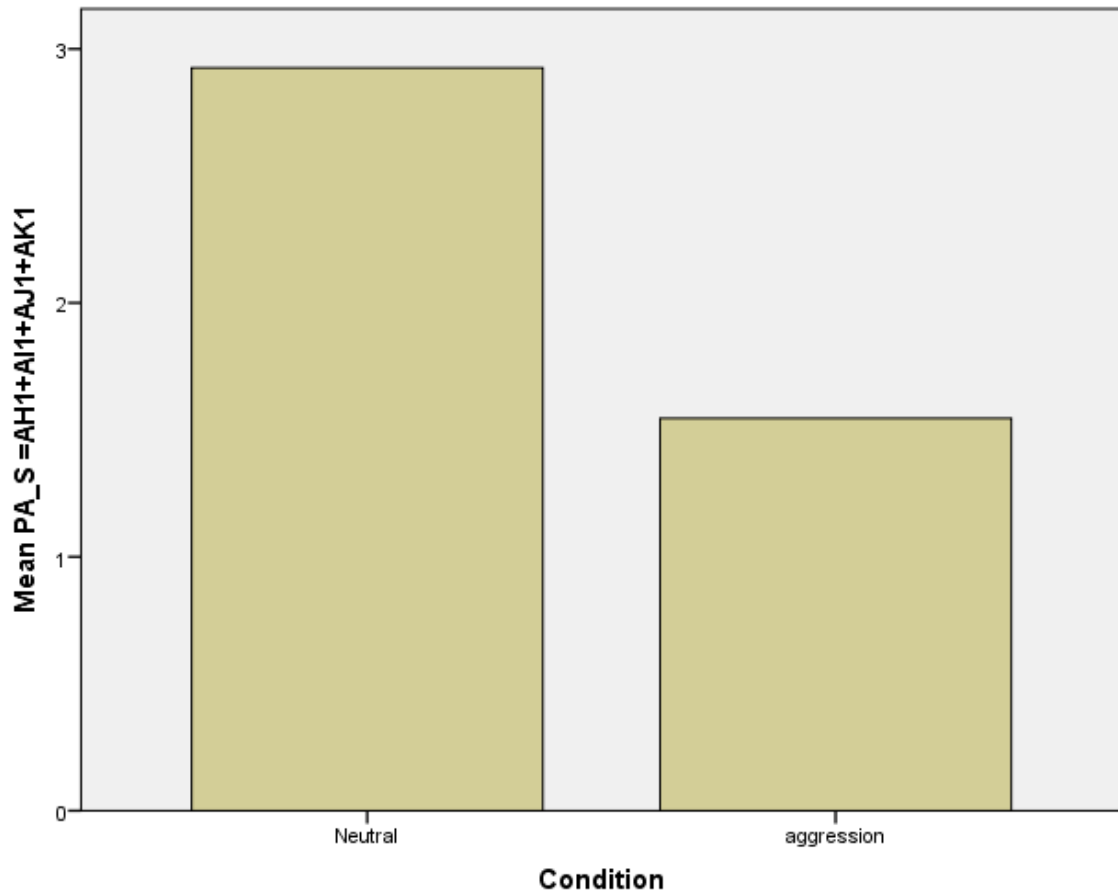


Figure 2. The graph shows the difference in means of attitudes toward the professor between the neutral and aggression condition. Higher numbers mean a more positive attitude.

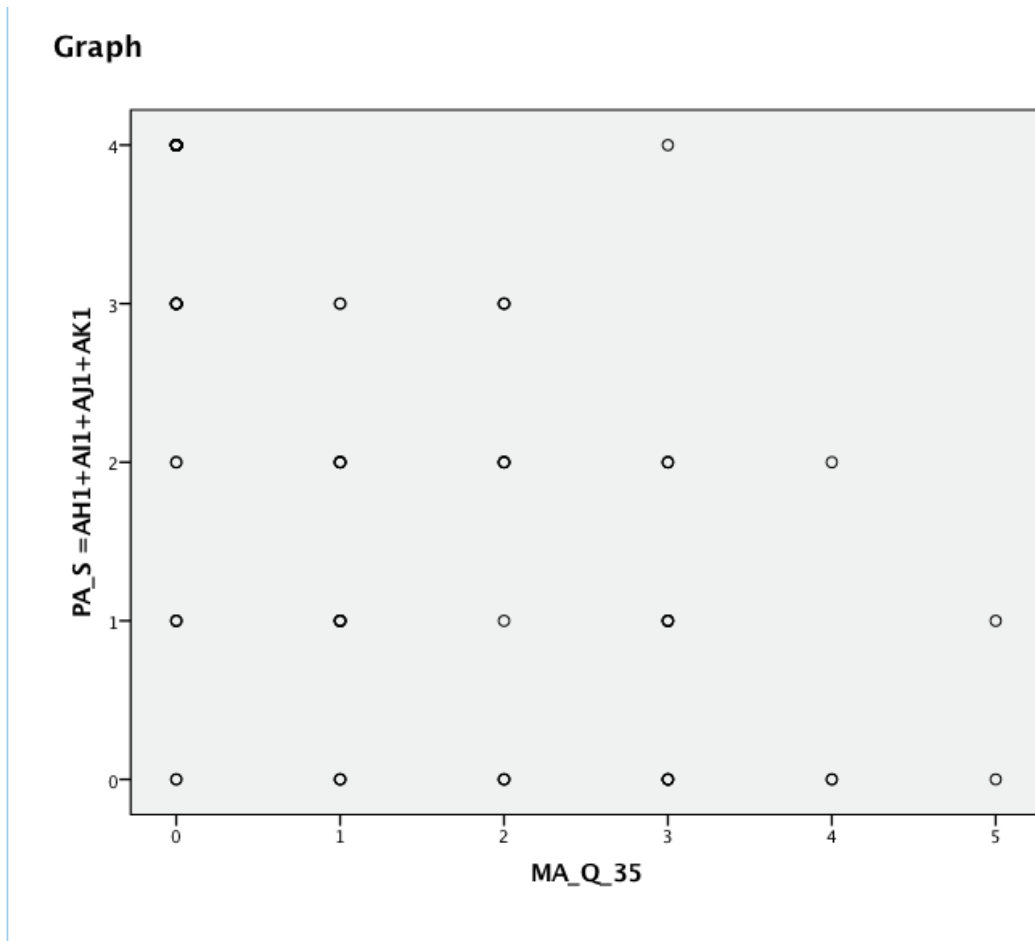


Figure 3. Graph plots the relationship between students’ attitudes toward the professor and the number of microaggressions witnessed in the video. The direction of the graph indicates a negative relationship.

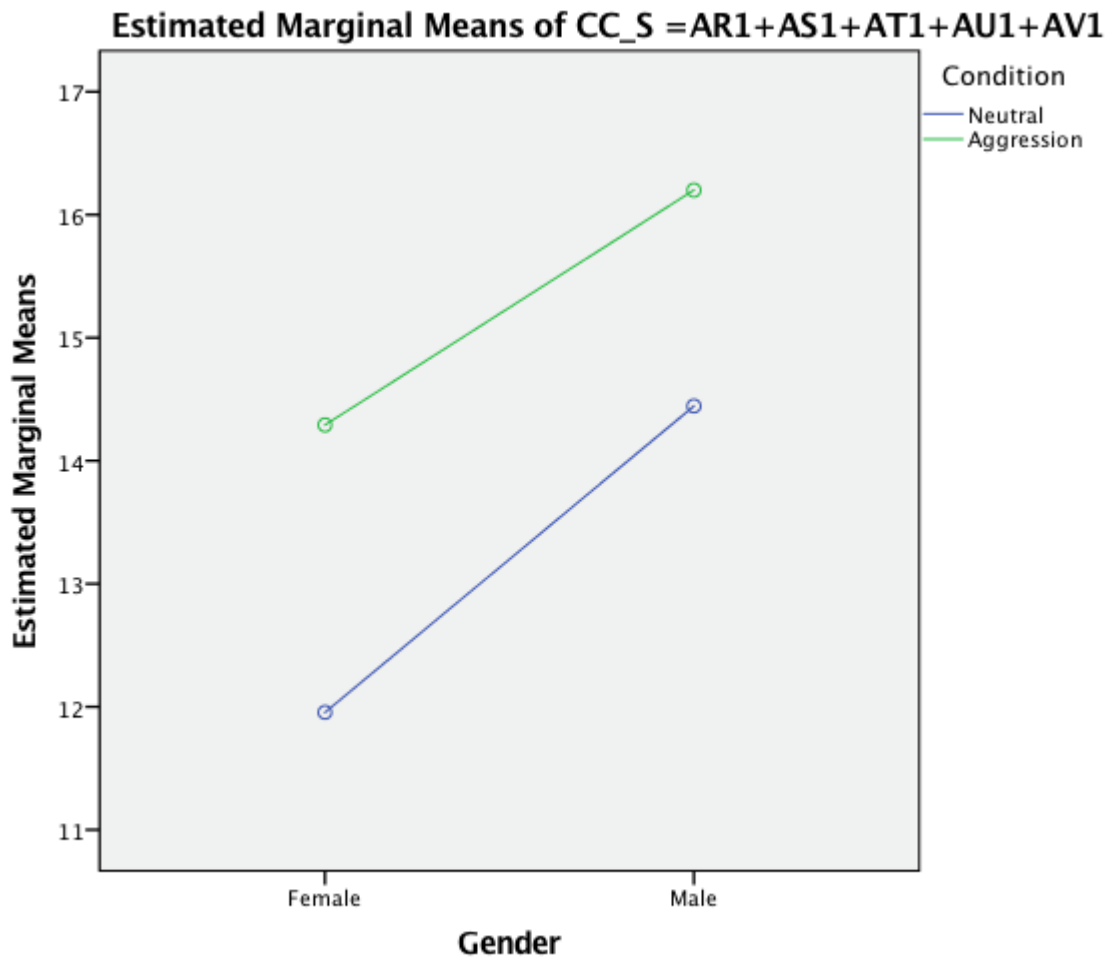


Figure 4. Graph of gender differences among each condition in reports of general classroom climates. Lower numbers mean a more negative classroom climate report.

Appendix A

IRB Application

SECTION 1

Glenisha Givens, (504)450-5042, gg2741@bard.edu, Psychology, undergrad Thomas Hutcheon, thutcheo@bard.edu

SECTION 2

Do you have external funding for this research?

No external funding was received for this research.

Start Date: January, 2017 End Date: January, 2018

Title: Putting Micro-Aggressions under the Microscope: Examining the short-term effects of micro aggressions in a college classroom.

Research Question:

In 1970 psychiatrist Chester Pierce coined the term micro-aggression. While the term micro-aggression has been coined for decades now, researchers have increased examining effects because they are being used much more today. He defined the term based on insults and dismissals he witnessed white Americans inflict on African Americans. The term was extended in 1973 by Mary Rowe to include similar aggressions directed at women, those of different abilities, religions and other socially marginalized groups. By the 2000s, researchers were exploring the experiences of micro-aggressions in college classrooms. In a study (Boysen & Vogel 2009), researchers found verbal derogation of specific groups, which falls under the term micro-aggression, to be the most common form of implicit bias in the classroom. With the

growing awareness of the racial biases many people possess toward different groups, more research has been done beginning to explore the effects of micro aggressions. I am interested in a research question examining whether the presentation of a micro aggression between a professor-students' interaction affects students' awareness of micro-aggressions, moods in regards to self-esteem, and attitudes toward the professor. Considering the literature, I predict that students presented with micro-aggressions will show lower self-esteem and mood while not showing interest in the professor or taking a course with him.

Populations:

The study will include specifically college students but not of any specific demographics.

Recruitment:

I plan to recruit participants in a variety of ways. I plan to table in both the Campus Center and Kline with a sign and candy asking students to sign up for a 10-15 minute study. The experimenter will determine the condition assigned to each sign-up sheet prior to tabling. The sign-up sheets will only display the time and location (RKC) of the study. With permission of instructors, I will also visit different types of classrooms asking students to hang around for a 10-15 minute study. A sign-up sheet of up to 15 slots will be passed around to students.

Procedure:

Participants will be seated as small groups of 12-15 in a classroom based on condition which will be determined by the time slot they sign up to participate during. First, all participants will be given the consent form to read and sign. The experimenter will verbally inform participants of the consent form's key points and have them sign. Next, the group will be shown a 3-5 minute

video with or without micro aggressions based on condition with a clip of a white male speaking (see script below) to students about having the most successful college experience. The video for each condition will be the same as far as speaker, and content; however, one will be under a minute longer due to the insertion of five micro aggressions. Following the video, participants will be asked to fill out a short questionnaire to obtain their demographics, awareness of micro aggressions in general and in the video and their attitudes toward the speaker/professor. The questionnaire will also include the self-esteem and mood survey measures. Finally they will be asked to fill out an index card with their name and email address so that the raffle is separate from the data and will receive a debriefing form describing the nature of the study. The data will be analyzed to determine whether different levels of self-esteem and mood exist between the two groups, whether awareness about micro aggressions are different, and whether the presence of micro aggressions had an influence on students' attitudes toward the professor.

Estimated number of participants:

120

Risks and Benefits:

This study adds to literature on micro-aggressions and to researchers' understanding of the effects micro-aggressions pose in places such as classrooms, work environments, and everyday interactions. The study has minimal risks. The participants of this study will not experience any pain, danger, or arousals beyond the levels expected in everyday life.

Consent Form:

Participants will provide the experimenter with written consent indicating that they are at least 18 years old and understand the risk and benefits of the study. The written consent will also notify participants of their chance to enter into a raffle for a gift card without mentioning amount for participation. Last, the written consent will allow participants to understand their right to withdraw at any time and to email the experimenter with any further questions.

Verbal Description of Consent Process:

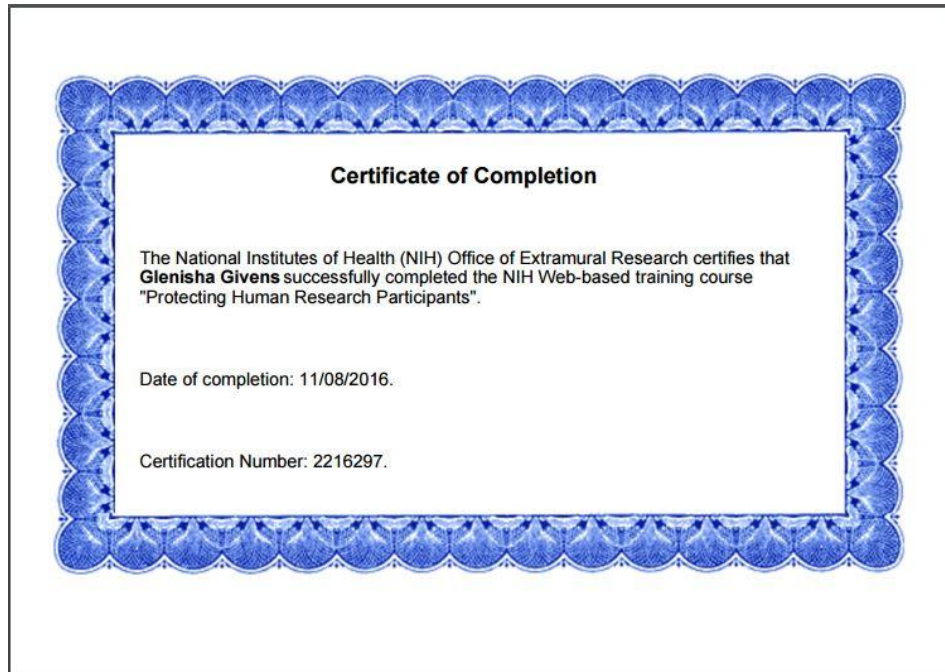
The experimenter will inform participants that they must be at least 18 years of age, explain their rights to withdraw at any time, and answer any questions they might have. Please see the verbal consent script.

Confidentiality Procedures:

I will be asking participants basic demographic questions along with personal awareness of micro aggressions and feelings toward the speaker. I will also be obtaining measures of self-esteem and mood through the survey. All these materials will be obtained and secured in the Bard Developmental Psychology Lab.

Deception: No deception.

Debriefing Statement: Please see debrief form.



Appendix B

IRB Approval

Bard College

Institutional Review Board

28 November 2016

Re: Putting Micro-Aggressions under the Microscope: Examining the short-term effects of micro aggressions in a college classroom

DECISION: APPROVED

Dear Glenisha,

The Bard Institutional Review Board has reviewed the revisions to your proposal. Your project is approved through 3 May 2017. Your case number is 2016NOV28-GIV.

Please notify the IRB if your methodology changes.

We wish you success with your Senior Project research.

Sincerely,

Simeen Sattar
sattar@bard.edu
IRB Chair

cc: Thomas Hutcheon

Appendix C

IRB Amendment

Hello,

My name is Glenisha and I submitted a project under the name *Putting Micro-Aggressions under the Microscope: Examining the short-term effects of micro aggressions in a college classroom* and I would like to make an amendment to the survey. I would like to add six more questions to measure classroom climate:

I think I would feel comfortable participating in a class with this professor.
You feel comfortable participating in your classes.
My teachers really try to understand how students feel about things.
My teachers explain/address difficult topics clearly.
You feel heard in your classes.
You feel alienated in your classes.

I have also attached an updated version of the survey in its final stage with the added questions highlighted.

Thank you,
Glenisha

Appendix D

Scripts

Recruitment Script

Classroom recruitment script:

Hi everyone. My name is Glenisha and I am a psychology major doing a study for my senior project. I really need participants, so if you would like to be one you can stay in this room directly after this class. The study will be a 3-5 minute video, and a short survey. You will be given an index card to fill out at the end for the raffling of a gift card, and you will be helping me with my senior project! Thanks.

Campus Center and Kline recruitment script:

Sign: Do you want to participate in a psychology study?

To students that stop by: Hi, I'm Glenisha. I am a senior psychology major, and this study is for my senior project. The study is a 3-5 minute video, and a short survey. At the end you will be given an index card to fill out for the raffling of a gift card, and you will be helping me with my senior project!

Testing Script

Testing in RKC: Hi, my name is Glenisha. Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study!

Testing when remaining in classroom: Thank you all for staying to participate in the study!

You must be 18 or older to participate in this study. If you are not at least 18 I am sorry but you cannot participate in this study today and I have to ask you to leave.

Great! So, today you are going to spend about 3-5 minutes watching a video of a professor speaking. Following the video you will be asked to fill out a short survey. When you are done with that, I'll ask you write your name and email on an index card for the opportunity to win a gift card through a raffle.

Before we begin, please be aware that your participation in this study is completely voluntary.

If you feel uncomfortable for any reason, at any time, you have the right to leave no questions asked. You will still be given an index card to fill out for the raffle of the gift card.

The last thing you should know is that the data collected in this study is completely anonymous and confidential.

Please take your time reading this consent form, and sign when you are ready to begin and I will pick it up.

Video Script: *Neutral condition*

Hello everyone! My name is Professor David M. Short and I am going to give a few suggestions on how to have the most successful college experience from what I've observed from my most successful students habits. First, it is always important to develop a relationship or understanding with your professors. Not to say you have to become best friends, but make sure the professor knows your name and face. Frequently visiting office hours has been found to increase student-professor rapport along with course performance. Along with knowing the professor, you should also know the most effective ways to get good grades. So here are the steps:

Take Charge!

Step up to the plate and take responsibility. Find the best ways to manage your time to fulfill not only the academic aspects of your life, but all aspects to stay mentally healthy as well. Since the 90s there has been a huge increase in the number of college students seeking help for serious mental illness. It's up for debate the factors behind this increase: the numbers of persons with mental illness are increasing, the college environment has an increasing number of pressures, or just the numbers of students that are willing to seek help are increasing due to increased visibility and availability of resources.

Select, don't settle!

To get good grades in college, it's very important that you pick the right courses. Pick classes that you think you can do. And be sure to pick the right level in required courses such as math, sciences, and languages (in some colleges, there are five courses all bearing the name "college math"). Most of all, don't accept a "standard freshman program" from your adviser. Pick your courses one by one, paying careful attention that some fulfill distribution requirements, some count to a possible major, some satisfy some interest of yours, and at least one is something that somehow "sounds interesting." You'll do better if you've made the right choices.

Get involved, but breathe.

After attending the campus activities fair it seems like there are about 13 different groups you have similar interests with and want to be involved in. Plus, student senate president wouldn't look bad on a resume, right? Social clubs are a fantastic part of college, but pick and choose just a couple you truly want to dedicate time and energy to. It's easy to spread yourself too thin with campus activities outside of class that end up adding to your stress level. Understand you cannot do everything and no one expects you too. Consider being involved with one professional organization related to your major and one recreational organization centered on something you care about and love to do. College is all about learning who you are and what you want to do.

Video Script: *Micro aggression condition*

Hey Kids! My name is Professor David M. Short and I am going to give a few suggestions on how to have the most successful college experience on what I've observed from my most successful students habits. First, it is always important to develop a relationship or understanding with your professors. Not to say you have to become best friends, but make sure the professor knows your name and face. Personally, **when I look at students I don't see race** or gender so it's important I know each student's name. Frequently visiting office hours has been found to increase student-professor rapport along with course performance. Along with knowing the professor, you should also know the most effective ways to be successful outside the classroom.

Take Charge!

Step up to the plate and take responsibility. Do not sell yourself short; **men and women have equal opportunities for achievement.** Find the best ways to manage your time to complete not only the academic aspects of your life, but all aspects to stay mentally healthy as well. Since the 90s there has been a huge increase in the number of college students seeking help for serious mental illness. It's up for debate the factors behind this increase for reasons such as **the number of women and minorities in college are increasing** or the numbers of students that are willing to seek help are increasing due to increased visibility and availability of resources.

Select, don't settle!

To get good grades in college, it's very important that you pick the right courses. Pick classes that you think you can do. And be sure to pick the right level in required courses such as math, sciences, and languages (in some colleges, there are five courses all bearing the name "college math"). Women **you don't have to be good at math** but you do need to be good enough to at least pass in college. Most of all, don't accept a "standard freshman program" from your adviser. Pick your courses one by one, paying careful attention that some fulfill distribution requirements, some count to a possible major, some satisfy some interest of yours, and at least one is something that somehow "sounds interesting." You'll do better if you've made the right choices.

Get involved, but breathe.

After attending the campus activities fair it seems like there are about 13 different groups you have aligned interests with and want to be involved. Plus, student senate president wouldn't look bad on a resume, right? Social clubs are a fantastic part of college, but pick and choose just a couple you truly want to dedicate time and energy to. It's easy to spread yourself too thin with campus activities outside of class that end up adding to your stress level. Understand you cannot do everything and no one expects you too. Consider being involved with one professional organization related to your major and one recreational organization centered on something you care about and love to do. College is all about learning who you are and what you want to do.

Appendix E

Micro aggressions

Hey Kids: Failing to recognize college students as adults. (Ageism)

When I look at students I don't see race or gender: Denying the significance of a person's race or gender on their identity. (racism/sexism)

Men and women have equal opportunities for achievement: The playing field is even so if women cannot make it, the problem is with them. (sexism)

The number of women and minorities in college are increasing: Assuming that women and minorities are weaker and the reason for increasing numbers. (sexism/racism)

You don't have to be good at math: Women are less capable in math and science. (sexism)

Appendix F

Survey/Questionnaire

Please answer a few questions including some basic demographics.

What is your age? _____

What is your ethnicity origin (or race):

- White
- Hispanic or Latino
- Black or African American
- Native American or American Indian
- Asian
- Other (_____)

What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Other

What is your major? _____

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. At times I think I am no good at all.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. I certainly feel useless at times.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

INSTRUCTIONS: Circle the response on the scale below that indicates how well each adjective or phrase describes your present mood.

(definitely do not feel) (do not feel) (slightly feel) (definitely feel)

XX X V VV

Lively XX X V VV Drowsy XX X V VV Jittery XX X V VV

Happy XX X V VV Grouchy XX X V VV Active XX X V VV

Sad XX X V VV Peppy XX X V VV

Tired XX X V VV Nervous XX X V VV

Caring XX X V VV Calm XX X V VV

Content XX X V VV Loving XX X V VV

Gloomy XX X V VV Fed up XX X V VV

27. Do you think this professor is liked by most students?

Yes No

28. Do you think this professor makes all students feel safe in the classroom?

Yes No

29. Would you feel safe taking a class with this professor?

Yes No

30. Would you take a class with this professor by choice? Why or why not?

Yes No

31. Are you familiar with the term “micro-aggression”?

Yes No

32. If so, where did you learn about the term?

33. Have you ever experienced a micro-aggression in a classroom setting?

Yes No

If so, did you or someone in the classroom address it? How?

34. Did you witness any micro-aggressions in the video you just watched?

Yes No 35. How many? _____

36. Describe this (these) micro aggressions.

37. I think I would feel comfortable participating in a class with this professor.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

38. You feel comfortable participating in your classes.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

39. My teachers really try to understand how students feel about things.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

40. My teachers explain/address difficult topics clearly.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

41. You feel heard in your classes.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

42. You feel alienated in your classes.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

Appendix G

Informed Consent Form

Thank you for your time and participation in this study!

Background: This study addresses attention in a college classroom.

What you will do in this study: If you agree by signing this consent form, you will be shown a 3-5 minute video of a professor speaking about a specific topic. Following the video you will be asked to complete a short survey.

Risk and Benefits: The study adds to the literature about students experience in a college classroom. By participating, you help the experimenter complete a Bard College senior project in psychology. There are no risks associated with this study.

Compensation: In exchange for your time and participation in the study, you will have the chance to enter your name into a raffle for a gift card. You will also receive candy for participation.

Confidentiality: Your results for the study will remain anonymous and confidential. Your name and student email will only be connected to the raffle slip which will be kept separate from data. All these materials will be kept in a secured Bard Developmental Psychology Lab.

Your rights as a participant: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may stop and withdraw from the study at any time with no questions asked. You will also still be able to enter into the raffle.

You must be at least 18 years old to participate in this study. By signing this consent form you are confirming that you are 18 years or older. You are also confirming that you have read and understood this form.

<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Person obtaining consent</i>	<i>Date</i>
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You will receive a debrief statement at the end of the study to give more information regarding the study. You will also receive contact information if you have any questions, concerns, or ideas about the study.

If you have any questions or would like to know more about this subject, please feel free to contact the primary researcher, Glenisha Givens at gg2741@bard.edu. If you have any questions about the Bard Psychology Program, you can reach Professor Thomas Hutcheon, advisor to this project, at thutcheo@bard.edu. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Bard College Institutional Review Board at irb@bard.edu.

Appendix H

Debrief Form

Thank you for your participation in this study!

This study is concerned with the effect of micro aggressions in a college classroom. The study examines the short-term effects of micro aggressions on students' self-esteem, mood, awareness of micro aggressions, their attitudes toward the professor, and the overall classroom climate. Previous literature has indicated that minorities or marginalized groups experience a variety of mental health issues due to the long-term effects of micro aggressions. However, not much research has been done examining immediate effects of experiencing micro aggressions in a classroom setting.

In this study you were first asked to watch a video of a professor speaking which either included micro aggressions or did not depending on the condition you were assigned. All content of the two videos were the same as far as speaker and topic. The speaker in this study is not actually a professor. Then you were asked to complete a survey which included questions measuring self-esteem, mood, awareness of micro aggressions, and attitude toward the professor. The experimenter predicts students that watched the video consisting of micro aggressions to show lower levels of self-esteem and mood showing less positive attitudes toward the professor.

The short-term effects of micro aggressions in a college classroom are relevant to the literature and to everyday life. This study fills a gap in the literature such that it shifts the focus from having participants reflect back on how micro aggressions have negatively impacted them over time and more toward how experiencing them in spaces such as classrooms effects them at that moment.

If you have any concerns or questions about this study or topic in general please feel free to contact the primary researcher, Glenisha Givens at gg2741@bard.edu.

If you have any questions about the Bard Psychology Program, you can reach Professor Thomas Hutcheon, advisor to this project, at thutcheo@bard.edu.

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Bard College Institutional Review Board at irb@bard.edu.