Microaggressive Experiences Among High School Students and School Personnel
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PURPOSE

• Gain insight into the microaggressive experiences of adolescents at a Midwestern urban high school.
• Compare the experiences of targeted groups (e.g., student vs. school personnel, gender, race, sexuality).
• Needs assessment for the sampled district.

MICROAGGRESSION

• Microaggressions are verbal, behavioral, or environmental slights that are considered rude, insensitive, or demeaning (Sue et al., 2007).
• Categorized into microslights (i.e., offends individuals’ marginalized identity), microinvalidations (i.e., nullifies or diminishes experiences, thoughts, or feelings), and microassaults (i.e., intentionally meant to hurt).
• Much of the literature has focused on the experiences of college-age individuals and those in the workplace.
• Wintner and colleagues (2017) identified the following microaggressive themes through qualitative analyses with K-12 students: vulnerability and protection, social and emotional skills, and community building.
• Black male adolescents report experiencing different types of microaggressions in the school setting (Henfield, 2011).
• Some research suggests that microaggressions experienced in high school are associated with greater depressive symptoms at the start of college and have a longitudinal influence on depressive symptoms at the end of the first year of college (Keels, 2017).

SCHOOL CLIMATE

• School climate includes the nature of interactions between adults and students, norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009).
• Higher student engagement, positive student adjustment, better student behavior, and lower suspension rates have been identified as associated benefits to positive school climate (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D’Alessandro, 2014).
• Underrepresented students are more likely to report negative views of school climate (Russell, Ryan, Tookey, Diaz & Sanchez, 2011; Watkins & Aber, 2009).
• Microaggressive experiences may contribute to perceptons of a hostile school climate, which in turn may contribute to diminished cognitive functioning in the academic setting (Banks & Landau, in press).

PARTICIPANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High school Students</th>
<th>School Personnel</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N = 389</td>
<td>N = 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age: 14-19 (M = 15.60)</td>
<td>Age: 24-56 (M = 39.27)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year: 116 freshman, 115 sophomore, 74 junior, 84 senior</td>
<td>Years teaching: 3-40 (M = 10.91)</td>
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MEASURES

Survey-based items administered online via Qualtrics to high school students and school personnel
• Demographic items
• School climate items (students only)
• Frequency of microaggressive statements to POCS and LGBTQ students
• Offensiveness ratings
• Experience ratings
• Racial Microaggressions Scale (RMAS; Torres-Harding, Andrade, Diaz, 2012)*
• LGBTQ Microaggressions on Campus Scale (LMCS; Woodford, Chonody, Kalick, & Brennan, 2015)*
• Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBra; school personnel only; Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000)*

RESULTS

1. School personnel find microaggressive statements more offensive than students.
2. LGBTQ students find race-based microaggressive statements more offensive than straight students.
3. Girls find microaggressive comments more offensive than boys.
4. White school personnel find microaggressive statements based on multiracial identity more offensive than school personnel of color.

DISCUSSION

• This study adds to the microaggression literature that has minimally examined the experiences of high school students.
• High schoolers are experiencing microaggressions, but the extent to which these experiences are taken personally vary depending on the identities they hold.
• White students from non-racial underrepresented backgrounds may be better able to detect racial microaggressions because they have had microaggressive experiences relevant to their own marginalized identities (e.g., sexuality).
• Nonetheless, school personnel of color are reporting greater exposure to microaggressions when compared to high school students of color.

Questions? Contact Brea M. Banks, Ph.D. at bmbanks@ilstu.edu

*Results not included in the present study

*Figures represent district demographics

1. Multiracial girls hear microaggressions based on multiracial identity (e.g., “What are you?”) more than multiracial boys.
2. Multiracial LGBTQ students hear microaggressions based on multiracial identity (e.g., “You can’t be both”) more than straight multiracial students.
3. Black LGBTQ students hear microaggressions based on Black identity (e.g., “Why are you so loud and animated?”) more than straight Black students.