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Measuring Microaggressions in the Advisor Advisee Relationship: Preliminary Scale Development

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MEASURING MICROAGGRESSIONS IN THE ADVISOR ADVISEE RELATIONSHIP: PRELIMINARY SCALE DEVELOPMENT

A Master's Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate College of

Missouri State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science, Clinical Psychology

By

Samantha Lynn Bumgardaner

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Psychology

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ABSTRACT

A number of survey instruments exist to measure microaggressions across various contexts and across numerous historically underrepresented groups. However, no such scale exists to assess microaggressions within the advisor-advisee relationship. The academic advisor-advisee relationship can make—or break—a student's experience at a university, both personally and academically. Thus, microaggressions in the advisor-advisee relationship could impose numerous negative implications, both psychologically and academically. The goal of the present study aimed to develop a psychometrically sound scale to measure microaggressions in this association. Overall, findings from the present study offer preliminary support of a two-factor measure to assess microaggressions within the advisor-advisee relationship along with evidence that microaggressions in this association negatively influence students' basic psychological needs satisfaction.

KEYWORDS: microaggressions, academic advising, advisor-advisee relationship, basic psychological needs, academic success

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INTRODUCTION

The advisor-advisee relationship is a valuable contributor to student success and a vital component of a prosperous college experience (Ferris et al., 2012). Academic prosperity is significantly related to key factors within the advisor-advisee relationship, including advisor accountability, advisor empowerment, student self-efficacy, study skills, and perceived advisor support (Young-Jones et al., 2013). However, these factors may be negatively impacted when students experience discrimination from faculty members, staff, or their peers. Since students from historically disenfranchised groups encounter unique challenges, academic advisors should strive to address these issues to promote academic achievement and facilitate a positive advisor-advisee relationship.

One subtle form of discrimination that students experience is microaggressions which is defined as brief, subtle exchanges that communicate derogatory messages or attitudes (Sue et al., 2007). Microaggressions on college campuses pose the threat of increasing psychological distress in marginalized populations that could jeopardize their educational endeavors (McCabe, 2009; Solorzano & Yosso, 2000; Sue et al., 2007; Torres et al., 2010; Jochman et al., 2019; Ogunyemi et al., 2020). Prolonged exposure to discrimination during college may increase rates of attrition (Washington, 2013), and lead to poor academic performance (Thomas et al., 2009). Additionally, microaggressions are related to maladaptive coping strategies, which could negatively influence scholastic outcomes (Blume et al., 2012).

To effectively address the use of microaggressions in academia, and specifically within the advisor-advisee relationship, a psychometrically sound instrument to measure microaggressions in this environment is required. A plethora of measures exist to assess

microaggressions across various populations and within historically marginalized groups based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability status, and socioeconomic status. However, no validated scale of microaggressions exist in the advisor-advisee relationship. Utilizing this could assist academic advisors in understanding how their interactions with advisee's are perceived, as well as to identify discriminatory behavior. Consequently, students may benefit from a tool which facilitates recognition and discussion of discrimination in educational settings. The current study was conceptualized to contribute a microaggression scale to the psychological literature for this academic relationship.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Advisor-Advisee Relationship

Academic advising is defined as a "powerful educational strategy to engage and support student learning" (Campbell & Nutt, 2008). This practice allows academic advisors to guide students through skill identification and development, promote critical thinking, motivate scaffolding of knowledge, and encourage the acquisition of transferrable abilities (Lowenstein, 2009). Advisors also serve as a liaison between an advisee and their professors, assist in goal setting, provide education on academic and career choices, and facilitate course registration. Additionally, advisor support can foster a stronger sense of belonging and academic self-concept within advisees (Curtain et al., 2013). Certainly, academic advisors play an integral role in students' academic career and subsequent academic success.

Such success is significantly related to key factors within the advisor-advisee relationship including advisor accountability, advisor empowerment, student self-efficacy, student study skills, and perceived advisor support (Young-Jones et al., 2013). High quality academic advising can act as a protective factor against attrition rates. In particular, Metzner (1989) surveyed 1,033 first-time freshmen and found quality academic advising negatively influenced student attrition, which was measured by grade point average, satisfaction in the role of the student, value of a college degree for future employment, and intent to leave the university. Overall, a successful advisor-advisee relationship can promote student success in a multitude of ways—both academically and professionally—and this relationship is a critical component of a successful college experience (Ferris et al., 2012).

To best promote student success, academic advisors should consider examining advisees academic motivation and achievement. Previous research has demonstrated that academic advisors significantly influence students' basic psychological needs satisfaction associated with the Self-Determination Theory of motivation (SDT, Deci & Ryan, 2000; Burt et al., 2013). According to SDT, basic psychological needs for autonomy, competency, and relatedness are innate and support wellbeing when satisfied (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Thus, academic advisors who promote the satisfaction of basic psychological needs in their advisees may in turn have positive effects on student wellbeing, motivation, and achievement.

Traditionally, academic advisors are primarily concerned with students' academic interests, motivation, and performance. However, individuals employed in higher education must consider personal factors which could impact student success. For instance, Fowler and Boylan (2010) found that clear student guidelines, integrating first year transition homework, academic advising to assess nonacademic and personal factors, developmental educational coursework, and tutoring increased grade point average and the number of students in good academic standing. Therefore, addressing personal and academic factors within the advising relationship tends to promote wellbeing and academic success.

In order to facilitate student success as an academic advisor, one should evaluate personal factors which might influence academic performance and/or attrition. For example, the transition from leaving home and starting college away from one's family can be difficult to overcome. Tinto (1988) posited students who are unable to cope with the stress of dissociating themselves from membership in previous groups and joining a new community are likely to drop out. He theorized a student's response to these new conditions determine their potential of leaving the university (Tinto, 1988).

As such, institutions should encourage academic advisors to identify factors surrounding the transition into collegiate studies in order to reduce rates of attrition. To address factors which could impact the transition into university studies, academic advisors should focus on identifying personal barriers to academic success that their students face. An unsupportive campus climate is related to poor academic performance and increased rates of dropout (Carroll, 1998; Hurtado et al., 1998). Regarding historically underrepresented students, a positive advisor-student relationship could operate as a protective factor against poor academic performance and dropout.

Museus and Ravello (2010) analyzed qualitative data about academic advising from ethnically diverse students at predominately White universities. They identified three key themes which contribute to diverse student success: advisors who humanize the practice of academic advising, advisors who adopt a holistic approach (e.g., students want their advisors to be knowledgeable about resources and opportunities available), and proactive academic advising (Museus & Ravello, 2010). Institutions should aim to maximize the effectiveness of their advisors by applying factors that foster success in all students, including those in stigmatized groups.

Microaggressions

Microaggressions were originally deemed as "subtle, stunning, often automatic, and non-verbal exchanges which are 'put downs'" (Pierce et al., 1978, p. 66). Research on microaggression theory has since identified three primary components of microaggressions: microinvalidations, microinsults, and microassaults (Torino et al., 2019). Individuals who identify with historically marginalized groups based upon race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, or socioeconomic status are at risk of experiencing

microaggressions from their peers, supervisors, family members, academic advisors, and/or educators. Ogunyemi et al. (2020) asserted that microaggressions at the institutional level can result in the cultural starvation of minorities, which highlights the importance of increased education and intervention required to diminish the usage of microaggressions on college campuses.

Microinvalidations are classified as verbal comments or behaviors which exclude, reject, or repudiate the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experienced reality of the individual (Sue et al., 2007). For instance, when Black individuals are told "I don't see color", the underlying message is the refusal to acknowledge or dismiss the numerous challenges faced by people within this culture. Similarly, when a person is told "I don't care if you're gay as long as you keep it to yourself", this insinuates individuals of the LGBTQ+ community should avoid speaking on their lived experience to prevent discomfort or hostility on the behalf of others.

Microinsults are unintentional behaviors or verbal comments which communicate insensitivity or disrespect to degrade a person based on their identity (Torino et al., 2019). Microinsults often occur in the form of snide comments or avoidant behaviors which communicates a message that a person is "less than" and unimportant. For example, when international students are praised for their ability to speak English, their perceived status as an "outsider" is perpetuated.

Microassaults include "a blatant, verbal or nonverbal attack which is designed to convey discriminatory biased feelings toward an individual" (Torino et al., 2019). Sue (2007) suggests people are likely to discretely hold notions of minority inferiority and will only display them publicly when they either lose control or feel safe to engage in this behavior. Examples of

microassaults include using racial slurs, overt discrimination, or preferential treatment toward White, heterosexual people.

Microaggressions pose psychological and academic consequences for historically underrepresented groups. Microaggressions have been linked to increased anxiety (Liao et al., 2016), lack of self-efficacy (Byrd, 2016), binge drinking in college students (Blume et al., 2012), self-doubt (Solorzano & Yosso, 2000), and psychological distress (Byrd, 2016; Sanchez et al., 2018; Ogunyemi et al., 2020). Students also reported feeling devalued as a result of microaggressions (Yosso et al., 2009). Subsequently, negative emotional and psychological implications associated with microaggressions may negatively impact students' academic performance.

Critical Race Theory

To understand the historical and philosophical origins of microaggressions, Critical Race Theory (CRT) offers an encompassing view of systemic racism, discrimination, and oppression. CRT emerged during the 1970's in response to the failure of the United States legal system to enact significant and lasting racial reform (Crenshaw, 1988; Lynn & Adams, 2002). This theory asserts that race is a social construct which serves to maintain the interests of the White society (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001). The foundations of CRT suggest systemic racism is perpetuated through the continuation of discriminatory language or actions, including microaggressions. The basic tenets of CRT apply to the academic setting; Tate (1997) posited the theories and belief systems of the education system are "premised upon political, scientific, and religious theories relying on racial characterizations and stereotypes about people of color that help support a legitimating ideology and specific political action."

At its core, CRT demonstrates the mechanism through which racism is perpetuated and embedded within American society. One primary tenant of CRT is systemic racism has contributed to the manifestation of discrimination and oppression of other historically disenfranchised groups, and this is commonly represented through microaggressions (Tate, 1997). CRT recognizes racism remains widespread in society and is ingrained within all facets of society, including the educational system (Crenshaw, 1988; Delgado & Stefanic, 2001). This study aimed to contribute to a necessary conversation regarding microaggressions in the university setting to gain experiential knowledge so individuals better realize the experiences of diverse populations.

Microaggressions in an Academic Setting

Critical Race Theory (Tate, 1997) provides theoretical evidence that microaggressions are common in everyday life. Consequently, it is imperative to ascertain the potential impacts these discriminatory actions have on university students both academically and personally. Microaggressions occur on college campuses throughout the country, which are often targeted towards historically marginalized populations; this could lead to psychological distress which may significantly influence one's academic performance (McCabe, 2009; Solorzano & Yosso, 2000; Sue et al., 2009; Torres et al., 2010). Leaders in higher education should cultivate a positive campus culture enhancing the inclusion of students of color, a curriculum reflecting historical and contemporary experiences of people of color and marginalized populations, and academic programs supporting the retention and graduation of historically underrepresented students (Yosso et al., 2009). As students spend significant time within school contexts, it is of

utmost importance to identify, understand, and address discrimination in these settings to foster equal academic opportunities for all students.

Research in university settings has demonstrated that students from numerous marginalized populations experience microaggressions. Harris (2017) found that microaggressions based on disability status were associated with decreased student comfort and willingness to engage in the classroom. McCabe (2009) reported that women identified male dominated major classrooms as a common setting for microaggressions. Researchers have also identified that vague forms of heterosexism are present on college campuses, which can include microaggressions (Rankin et al., 2010). Microaggressions are typically associated with racial and ethnic identity; however, for the purposes of this study, we utilize the principles of CRT to provide context surrounding systemic discrimination against individuals based upon race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability and health status, religion, age, immigration and adoption status, and socioeconomic status (Tate, 1997; Lui & Quezada, 2019).

To recognize how microaggressions in academia impact students, it is vital to discern the types of microaggressions that are present in academic settings. Scholars have identified three primary categories of microaggressions that are present within the school ecology which include racial, nativist, and immigrant-origin types (Steketee et al., 2021). Racial microaggressions are directed toward students who are marginalized based upon their racial and/or ethnic identity. Scientists have posited that exposure to racial and ethnic microaggressions are related to poor academic performance (Assari & Caldwell, 2018; Thomas et al., 2009), psychological distress (McCabe, 2009; Solorzano & Yosso, 2000; Sue et al., 2007; Torres et al., 2010; Jochman et al., 2019; Ogunyemi et al., 2020), and physical health challenges (Cooper and Sanchez, 2016; Soto et al., 2011), all of which may negatively influence academic endeavors.

Within school contexts, nativist microaggressions focus on the perception of "American-ness" and oftentimes have an increased focus on language (Steketee et al., 2021). Nativist frameworks propose that microaggressions are communicated by using language to subjugate students, connecting ethnicity to immigrant status, perceiving a false nonnative status, and separating English language learning students from American identity (Pérez Huber, 2011). Immigrant-origin microaggressions are directed toward individuals who are foreign born, native born to immigrant parents, or third generation immigrants. Microaggressions in this context typically focus on an immigrant's right to "place roots in their country of residence" (Steketee et al., 2021), which potentially leads to perceptions of being a perpetual foreigner (Nadal et al., 2014).

Since it is common for immigrant students to study in the United States, immigrant-origin microaggressions may be more prevalent in university settings. Using CRT as a framework, one can presume that racial, nativist, and immigrant-origin microaggressions contribute to the perception of White superiority, thus contributing to systemic discrimination and oppression of all historically disenfranchised groups. Moreover, these microaggressions may interfere with a students' assimilation into campus culture and pose a threat to personal and professional success.

Impact of Microaggressions in Academia

While it is necessary to understand the underlying construct through which microaggressions occur, it is equally important to recognize how microaggressions impact students. In an attempt to identify prevailing issues Black students face, Burt and colleagues (2016) interviewed doctoral STEM students. Some participants reported they were subjected to racial microaggressions in their scholastic environment (e.g., advisors, peers within research

groups, classrooms). Students revealed these instances were perceived as threatening and made them feel less comfortable in their field of study.

Similar results were found (Allen & Solorzano, 2001) in which law students reported that microaggressions and a negative racial campus climate had a negative impact on their overall academic performance. Likewise, Robinson-Perez and colleagues (2019) found that microaggressions which communicated perceptions of incompetence and low achievement based on racial identity had a significant negative effect on psychological distress in college students.

In addition to the law school setting, researchers have found that microaggressions occur in numerous educational contexts and academic relationships. For instance, Dhaliwal et al. (2013) revealed that students at a public medical school witnessed or experienced discriminatory behavior by faculty members towards people with strong religious beliefs, people of low socioeconomic status, non-English speakers, women, racial/ethnic minorities, and LBGTQ+ individuals. This research provides evidence that microaggressions can be detrimental to scholastic achievement; specifically, students from numerous historically underrepresented groups are at risk of facing microaggressions from faculty, staff, academic advisors, and classmates.

In a systematic review of literature on microaggressions in a learning environment, Ogunyemi and colleagues (2020) identified maladaptive coping strategies individuals used when discriminated against, which exacerbated psychological distress. These included disengagement and cultural mistrust (Kim et al., 2017), stigma for seeking psychological help (C. Cheng et al., 2014), alcohol use (Blume et al., 2012), and intolerance of uncertainty (Liao et al., 2016). Conversely, engagement (Sanchez et al., 2018), dispositional forgiveness (Burrow & Hill, 2012), self-efficacy (Byrd, 2016; Sanchez et al., 2018), and social connectedness (Liao et al., 2016)

ameliorated some of the negative psychological effects associated with microaggressions. Undoubtedly, students who experience microaggressions in their academic endeavors are potentially at increased risk of attrition, psychological distress, and negative academic outcomes.

Additional research has identified strategies for individuals working in higher education to reduce discrimination and disparities associated with systemic inequities. Kiles and Chisholm-Burns (2021) proposed five actionable recommendations to address racial bias from microaggressions in educational settings based on participants' experience in a Doctor of Pharmacy program. These suggestions included to purposefully incorporate images, patients, and speakers of color into curriculum and presentations, provide historical and social context for racial health disparities, be intentional and consistent with presentation of race in patient cases, use clear and 'person-first' language, and intentionally discuss race. Both instructors and academic advisors may benefit from incorporating these recommendations into their practice.

Few scholars have sought to create reliable measurement tools to assess microaggressions in academic settings. However, Keels and colleagues (2017) developed a brief school based racial and ethnic microaggressions scale to address this gap. In a sample of 462 Black and Latinx students, researchers identified a three-factor model including (1) academic inferiority, (2) expectations of aggressions, and (3) stereotypical misrepresentations. Researchers determined that exposure to racially hostile microaggressions in academia was detrimental to student outcomes and mental health (Keels et al., 2017). Consequently, the development of an academic advising scale is necessary to accurately evaluate rates of microaggressions within this context.

Academic advisors and their students will benefit from a psychometrically sound tool that measures microaggressions in the advisor-advisee relationship. Such a measure will be beneficial to students and advisors as it will facilitate accountability and may open the dialogue regarding

discrimination in academic relationships. As the advisor-advisee relationship is an essential contributor to student success (Ferris et al., 2012), microaggressions within this relationship will ultimately jeopardize student success and may prevent students from seeking guidance and support from their advisor. Overall, reducing discrimination via microaggressions in scholastic environments is paramount to student success and interventions which address this issue may act as a catalyst to address discrimination within other academic settings.

Purpose of the Present Study

Academic advisors who consciously or unconsciously use microaggressions in conversation and/or in general interactions with their advisees may influence students' psychological distress, academic performance, trust in the university, career choices, and desire to pursue a post-secondary degree. Since the advisor-advisee dynamic is essential for student success (Ferris et al., 2012; Curtain et al., 2013; Young-Jones et al., 2013), advisors have the ability to help their advisees overcome the psychological (McCabe, 2009; Solorzano & Yosso, 2000; Sue et al., 2009; Torres et al., 2010) and academic implications (Assari & Caldwell, 2018; Thomas et al., 2009) of microaggressions. Advisors can take action through advocacy, referrals to on-campus counseling centers, and educating staff, faculty, and students on the detrimental impacts of microaggressions. When students have a supportive and trusting relationship with their academic advisor, they may turn to their advisor for support and guidance to navigate their experience (Ferris et al., 2012; Curtain et al., 2013; Young-Jones et al., 2013). This process is beneficial for ensuring students graduate on time (Metzner, 1989), are confident in their academic ability (Curtain et al., 2013), and have the resources to overcome the negative psychological effects of microaggressions (Ogunyemi et al., 2020).

The goal of the present study was to develop, through exploratory factor analysis, the structure of a scale measuring microaggressions in the advisor-advisee relationship. Based on previous literature, we expected the factor structure to reflect three latent factors related to microaggressions and one factor associated with a lack of advisor support (Sue et al., 2007; Torino et al., 2019; Ogunyemi et al., 2020). Hence, this research aimed to elucidate the importance of addressing and reducing microaggressions in the advisor-advisee relationship, as well as the implications associated with experiencing microaggressions in academic settings.

METHODS

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1. It is hypothesized that exploratory factor analysis of the MAAS34 will demonstrate a four-factor structure: Microinvalidations, Microinsults, Microassaults, and Lack of Advisor Support.

Hypothesis 2. It is hypothesized that associations between the MAAS34 and R28REMS will demonstrate adequate concurrent validity.

Hypothesis 3. It is hypothesized that students who report decreased levels of microaggressions from their academic advisor (MAAS34) are more likely to succeed academically (demographic questions assessing grade point average).

Hypothesis 4. It is hypothesized that students who report increased levels of microaggressions from their academic advisor (MAAS34) will report increased psychological distress (DASS-21).

Hypothesis 5. It is hypothesized that students subjected to increased levels of microaggressions from their advisor (MAAS34) will report decreased academic autonomy, competence, and relatedness (BPNSS).

Participants

This study was comprised of undergraduate and graduate participants ($N = 69$) aged 18 years and older. The participants were mostly White (71.1%), with a smaller percent of other race/ethnicities: Black/African American (8.7%), Biracial (8.7%), Hispanic/Latino (5.8%), Asian (4.3%), Other (1.4%). The majority of participants were 18-21 years old (68.1%), female

(68.1%), had one academic advisor (73.9%), and a mean GPA of 3.52 (*SD* = 0.67). This sample was collected from a predominately White institution in the Midwest, with an enrollment of approximately 15,000 students.

Measures

The survey packet was comprised of the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale-21 Item (DASS-21), Microaggressions in Academic Advising Scale (MAAS34), Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction Scale (BPNSS), Revised 28-Item Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (R28REMS), and a demographic form. Scales were counterbalanced to prevent order effects, with the demographic questionnaire administered last.

Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale-21 Item (DASS-21). The DASS-21 assessed the presence of depression, anxiety, and stress in participants. This measure is quantified using a four-point Likert scale ranging from zero (did not apply to me at all) to three (applied to me very much, most of the time). The DASS-21 has a Cronbach alpha of .94 for depression, .87 for anxiety, and .91 for stress. Concurrent validity between DASS-21 and other measures of similar constructs have moderately high correlations, providing adequate validity (Antony et al., 1998).

Microaggressions in Academic Advising Scale (MAAS34). The Microaggressions in Academic Advising Scale (MAAS34) evaluated the presence of microaggressions in the advisor-advisee relationship. This scale was developed based on microaggression theory from Sue et al (2007) and Torino et al (2019) in which three underlying factors of microaggressions (microinsults, microinvalidations, microassaults) were identified. This measure is quantified using a five-point Likert scale ranging from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree). Participants are instructed to respond to items based upon the perception of their relationship

with their academic advisor(s). Cronbach alpha for the MAAS34 is .91, indicating high internal consistency.

Basic Psychological Needs Satisfaction Scale (BPNSS). This questionnaire examined levels of competence, autonomy, and relatedness as a function of basic psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The BPNSS employs a seven-point Likert scale ranging from one (not true at all) to seven (very true). Participants are asked to think about how each item relates to their life and indicate how true it is. Cronbach alpha for the BPNSS is .86, suggesting adequate internal consistency.

Revised 28-Item Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (R28REMS). This scale determined concurrent validity of the MAAS34. The R28REMS utilizes a six-point Likert scale ranging from zero (I did not experience this event) to five (I experienced this event 5 times in the past six months). Participants are instructed to read each item and think of how many items the event has happened to them in the past six months. The Cronbach alpha for the R28REMS is .88, indicating high internal consistency (Forrest- Bank et al., 2015).

Demographic Questionnaire. A demographic questionnaire determined age, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, major, year in school, advisor-advisee relationship, and microaggressions in academic settings. Information obtained from this questionnaire was used to evaluate relationships among academic advising, microaggressions, and academic implications.

Procedures

To acquire participants for this study, instructors from a variety of undergraduate and graduate courses notified their students of a research opportunity. Students accessed the survey via SONA, an online research management system, linked to Qualtrics. Once the survey was

accessed, students provided informed consent prior to beginning the study. All information received was kept confidential and was only accessible to select research team members through a password protected online database. This study was approved by the Missouri State University Institutional Review Board on February 10th, 2023, and received Approval #FY2023-359 (See Appendix). The present research posed minimal risks to participants.

RESULTS

The primary goal of this research was to discover how many distinct factors emerged from the sample of participants and to evaluate the reliability of items on the MAAS34. Data were screened for multivariate assumptions (normality, linearity, homogeneity), and all assumptions were met. Multivariate outliers were assessed using Mahalanobis distance; no outliers were detected. Twelve participants were excluded from the analyses because more than five percent of their data was missing. For the remaining participants, missing data was replaced using linear trend at point for seven variables of the MAAS34. The hypotheses were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics software version 28 and the FACTOR program (Lorenzo-Seva & Ferrando, 2006).

To evaluate the first hypothesis, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was utilized to examine the underlying factors in the Microaggressions in Academic Advising Scale using the FACTOR program (Lorenzo-Seva & Ferrando, 2006) and SPSS. Factor analysis is recommended with a sample size of 300 or greater; however, an EFA was conducted on a preliminary basis to aid in the development of the MAAS34. Data collection will continue in order to analyze the factor structure with an adequate sample size.

A variety of criterion were utilized to determine the number of extracted factors (eigenvalues, scree plot, parallel analysis, microaggression theory). A parallel analysis and scree plot examination suggested two to three overall factors, and a two-factor model was tested. Principal components estimation was used with normalized direct oblimin rotation due to expected correlation between factors. After testing all 52 items, 18 items loaded substantially on multiple factors (e.g., items 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 17, 18, 21, 27, 35, 43, 44, 45, 46, 50) and were

removed from further analyses based on the criterion that factor loadings should be greater than .300 (Hair et al., 1998). A confirmatory factor analysis was tested with a fixed two-factor model, and the factor loadings are presented in Table 1 and Table 2. This model achieved simple structure as each item loaded on one factor only. This model had a good fit: the RMSEA indicated acceptable fit at .078, RMSR suggested acceptable fit at .083, the CFI (.96) and NNFI (.95) indicated good fit. Sampling efficacy was assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test (.773) which determined appropriate sampling.

Table 1. Factor Loadings for Factor 1 of the MAAS34 Scale.

MAAS34 Factor Loadings	
Variable	Factor 1
MAAS34-3	.362
MAAS34-6	.464
MAAS34-7	.737
MAAS34-8	.550
MAAS34-9	.418
MAAS34-10	.426
MAAS34-11	.444
MAAS34-14	.663
MAAS34-15	.688
MAAS34-16	.931
MAAS34-17	.765
MAAS34-18	.978
MAAS34-19	.992
MAAS34-20	.885
MAAS34-21	.996
MAAS34-22	.695
MAAS34-25	.811
MAAS34-26	.481

Factor 1 included 18 statements that examined students' perception of microaggressions within the academic advisor-advisee relationship based on questions such as "My advisor makes me feel like I am an outcast." and "My advisor has referred to me with a slur." Factor 2 included 16 statements that assessed students' perception the support they receive from their academic advisor, with questions such as, "My advisor assumes I will not succeed academically." and "My advisor does not care about my personal life." The reliability of each factor was very high with .97 and .94 for Factors 1 and 2, respectively.

Table 2. Factor Loadings for Factor 2 of the MAAS34 Scale.

MAAS34 Factor Loadings	
Variable	Factor 2
MAAS34-1	.426
MAAS34-2	.633
MAAS34-4	.616
MAAS34-5	.588
MAAS34-12	.775
MAAS34-13	.764
MAAS34-23	.714
MAAS34-24	.663
MAAS34-27	.621
MAAS34-28	.504
MAAS34-29	.621
MAAS34-30	.660
MAAS34-31	.562
MAAS34-32	.711
MAAS34-33	.560
MAAS34-34	.701

To test the second hypothesis, scores from the MAAS34 and R28REMS were analyzed with Pearson correlations. Overall, the entire scale was not significantly correlated to the R28REMS, $r(69) = .089$, $p = .468$. However, when separated by factors of the MAAS34, significant correlations were found. The first factor of the MAAS34 was significantly associated with the entire R28REMS scale $r(69) = .298$, $p = .013$. Additionally, the first factor of the MAAS34 was significantly correlated with the assumptions of criminality/second class citizens and assumptions of inferiority subscales of the R28REMS respectively, $r(69) = .361$, $p = .002$, $r(69) = .317$, $p = .008$. These findings provide evidence that the MAAS34 exhibits adequate concurrent validity.

For the third hypothesis, a Pearson correlation was computed to determine the relationship between grade point average (GPA) and rate of microaggressions on campus based on a demographic question which stated: "Please indicate the number of times that a microaggression occurred in the past six months." The results were insignificantly related, $r(63) = -.017$, $p = .894$. To test the fourth hypothesis, a Pearson correlation was run to determine the association between microaggressions in the advisor-advisee relationship and psychological distress. This analysis was also insignificant, $r(69) = .083$, $p = .497$. These findings suggest that microaggressions in the advisor-advisee relationship did not have a significant effect on GPA or psychological distress.

The final hypothesis was also analyzed with a Pearson correlation between MAAS34 average scores and BPNSS average scores to determine the relationship among microaggressions in the advisor-advisee relationship and basic psychological needs satisfaction. Results demonstrated a significant negative correlation, $r(69) = -.457$, $p < .001$. This analysis suggests

that microaggressions in an academic advising setting may negatively influence basic psychological needs satisfaction, including autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to develop a measure to assess microaggressions in the advisor-advisee relationship. Oftentimes, the subtle nature of some microaggressions (Pierce et al., 1978, p. 66) lead individuals (typically those of majority status) to believe that microaggressions do not leave a lasting impact. However, numerous scholars have found that this is not accurate, and increased exposure to microaggressions can result in decreased academic performance (Assari & Caldwell, 2018; Thomas et al., 2009), increased psychological distress (McCabe, 2009; Solorzano & Yosso, 2000; Sue et al., 2007; Torres et al., 2010; Jochman et al., 2019; Ogunyemi et al., 2020), maladaptive coping strategies (Blume et al., 2012), attrition (Washington, 2013), and physical health problems (Cooper and Sanchez, 2016; Soto et al., 2011). Since microaggressions are a common form of discrimination, this research aimed to highlight the importance of reducing microaggressions within the advisor-advisee relationship to best support students of all backgrounds.

This study provides preliminary evidence that a two-factor measurement tool is useful to assess microaggressions in the advisor-advisee relationship. Evaluation of the first hypothesis demonstrated that the MAAS34 encapsulates a broad range of student experiences related to microaggressions and advisor support, or lack thereof. Items were worded to measure microaggressions that may occur across numerous historically marginalized populations due to similarities in experiences that arise from being in a stigmatized group (Sue et al., 2007). Exploratory factor analysis was utilized to identify a scale that included 18 questions related to microaggressions and 16 questions related to perceptions of support from an individual's

academic advisor. Analyses revealed the MAAS34 has two primary factors: Microaggressions and Lack of Advisor Support.

When comparing the MAAS34 to the R28REMS, analyses testing the second hypothesis established that the MAAS34 exhibits concurrent validity. Overall, the full MAAS34 scale was not significantly related to the R28REMS measure. This is not surprising considering that the R28REMS primarily measures ethnic and racial microaggressions, while the MAAS34 encapsulates a broad range of microaggressions and lack of advisor support. However, the Microaggression subscale of the MAAS34 was significantly associated with the R28REMS, as well as two of the subscales: assumptions of criminality/second class citizen and assumptions of inferiority. These results provide evidence that the MAAS34 is valid to measure microaggressions in the advisor-advisee relationship.

Another aim of the present research was to evaluate the impact of microaggressions in the advisor-advisee relationship on psychological and academic implications. Analyses assessing the third and fourth hypotheses of this study were insignificant, suggesting that microaggressions in the advisor-advisee relationship do not have a significant effect on grade point average (GPA) or psychological distress. These results did not replicate findings of previous researchers who demonstrated that microaggressions decrease academic performance (Assari & Caldwell, 2018; Thomas et al., 2009) and increase psychological distress (McCabe, 2009; Solorzano & Yosso, 2000; Sue et al., 2007; Torres et al., 2010; Jochman et al., 2019; Ogunyemi et al., 2020). This may be due to the convenient sampling method, small sample size, lack of diversity within participants, and/or the relatively high GPA of the sample.

Despite not replicating past results, evaluation of the final hypothesis did reveal that microaggressions in the advisor-advisee relationship have a significant effect on students' basic

psychological needs satisfaction, which is associated with the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) of motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This unique finding suggests that academic advisors play an integral role in facilitating student autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Strengthening students' basic psychological needs satisfaction promotes assimilation to the university and enhances wellbeing (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991; Deci & Ryan, 2000). Academic advisors may benefit from close examination of their practice to identify methods and strategies to increase basic psychological needs satisfaction in their advisees. Likewise, advisors should exercise caution in their interactions with students to ensure that they are not consciously, or unconsciously, engaging in discriminatory behavior which could negatively influence students' academic motivation associated with SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Limitations and Future Directions

Some limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings from this research. One primary limitation of this study is the small sample size. Comrey and Lee (1992) advise that 50-100 participants for an exploratory factor analysis is poor and reduces the generalizability of this research. Additionally, the current study utilized a convenient sample of undergraduate and graduate college students. The sample of participants in this study lacked racial and ethnic diversity as 71.1% of participants were White.

Despite these findings, our results provide preliminary evidence of a two-factor measure to assess microaggressions in the advisor-advisee relationship. The results of the relationship between microaggressions in the advisor-advisee relationship, basic psychological needs satisfaction, and psychological distress may be useful for leaders in higher education to develop and implement interventions to address discrimination in academic relationships in order to best

serve all students, and especially those in historically underrepresented groups. Future research will focus on continued data collection to attain a large, representative, and adequate sample size to validate the MAAS34. Subsequent research should evaluate the validity of the MAAS34 across different universities and academic settings as well as explore factors that could influence the association between basic psychological needs satisfaction and the advisor-advisee dynamic.

Conclusion

Microaggressions are subtle, and thus may occur consciously or unconsciously in direct or indirect conversations and interactions. Victims of microaggressions typically include individuals who identify with historically disenfranchised groups (Sue et al., 2007) and consequently face unique challenges in academia. As the advisor-advisee relationship is a pivotal contributor to student success (Ferris et al., 2012; Curtain et al., 2013; Young-Jones et al., 2013), identifying microaggressions in this academic context is paramount to an individual's scholastic success. This research sought to develop a scale that quantifies microaggressions within the advisor-advisee relationship to fill a gap in the psychological literature regarding microaggressions.

Overall, this research demonstrated that (1) preliminary scale development resulted in the identification of a two factor measure to assess microaggressions in the advisor-advisee relationship and (2) microaggressions in this relationship have a significant impact on students' basic psychological needs satisfaction. Due to the subtle nature of microaggressions (Pierce et al., 1978, p. 66), academic advisors may not recognize when they micro-aggress against an advisee. Therefore, this survey may be utilized in academic advising relationships to help keep

advisors accountable, encourage students to speak up when discriminated against, and lessen the amount of microaggressions in academic contexts.

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APPENDIX

Appendix. Human Subjects IRB Approval

To:
Adena Young-Jones
Learning Diagnostic Clinic, Psychology
Steven Capps

Date: Feb 10, 2023 12:09:51 PM CST

RE: Notice of IRB Exemption
Study #: IRB-FY2023-359
Study Title: Measuring Microaggressions in Academic Advising: Validation of a Four Factor Scale

This submission has been reviewed by the Missouri State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and was determined to be exempt from further review. However, any changes to any aspect of this study must be submitted, as a modification to the study, for IRB review as the changes may change this Exempt determination. Should any adverse event or unanticipated problem involving risks to subjects or others occur it must be reported immediately to the IRB.

This study was reviewed in accordance with federal regulations governing human subjects research, including those found at 45 CFR 46 (Common Rule), 45 CFR 164 (HIPAA), 21 CFR 50 & 56 (FDA), and 40 CFR 26 (EPA), where applicable.

Researchers Associated with this Project:
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Co-PI: Steven Capps
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