EXAMINING GENDER MICROAGGRESSIONS IN ACADEMIC SETTINGS: AN ANALYSIS OF TYPES AND FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO GENDER INEQUALITY AMONG TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS

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Abstract

This descriptive quantitative study aimed to design a scale, discover the types and causes of gender prejudice behavior by microaggressions, and pinpoint the types of gender bias experienced by recipients of microaggressions. The population in this study were elementary school teachers in Makasar and the total sampling was 100 teachers. Simple random sampling was employed as the sample strategy in this investigation. The data was obtained using 1) The Gendered Racial Microaggressions Scale (GRMS); 2) Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)- qualified tested instruments for microaggression factors. Descriptive statistical tests and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the JASP application were utilized as data analysis tools. The findings reveal that: (1) the most prevalent type of microaggression is created by gender bias, particularly when it comes to stereotypes and specific gender discrimination. Additionally, there are two factors contributing to microaggression: internal (cultural awareness) and external (colleagues, family culture, and social media). The study suggests that it is essential to improve gender awareness in basic education units through education, positive family education practices beginning at a young age, and selective social media use.

Keywords: Gender Microaggressions, Elementary School Teachers, Gender Bias Effects

Introduction

The gender discrimination gap in Indonesia is among the highest in the ASEAN area. As time passes, gender discrimination in the context of microaggressions becomes increasingly subtle, according to research literature (Matsuzaka et al., 2022). Microaggression gender prejudice is characterized as views or assumptions about women or the sexes that are minimized through offensive interactions that have sexism-related components and indirectly affect someone's behavior (Ahmad et al., 2022; Sprow et al., 2021; Sue, 2010). According to McGowan (2018), gender or other microaggressions are prevalent behavior that are frequently committed accidentally through jokes or nonverbal attitudes. Regardless of its overt or covert characteristics, microaggression can impact the recipient's psychological, physical, and mental dimensions. It is reinforced that if it occurs again, it will impact the victim's life in terms of their social status, education, and work (Blithe & Elliott, 2020; Fadhilah Umar, 2019; Ro & Villarreal, 2021).

Unconscious gender prejudice is prevalent in the world of education. It occurs not only in students, teachers, and other educational professionals, gender discrimination is frequently seen in school textbooks that reflect the dominance of a particular gender

(second choice) (Pradita, 2017). Schools, which are supposed to be a place where students can learn about diversity and how to avoid discrimination, could not fully prevent and uphold gender equality (Suhaeny, 2020; Williams, 2020).

A person will typically show various gender bias behaviors in their environment depending on the severity of gender bias behavior they have encountered (Ahmad et al., 2022). According to Steketee et al. (2021), gender biased behavior changes with time and persuades others to do the same. Men are considered leading classes or groups due to their masculinity, which is an example of a gender case, particularly in schools. Compared to deliberate discrimination, gender bias microaggression may appear harmless due to its subtle and ambiguous character (Lewis & Neville, 2015a; Shinta Aprilia, 2021; Sue, 2010).

In fact, however, studies show that the repercussions felt by students who encounter microaggression conduct result in uncertainty about their own identities, frustration, and retreat because of bias (Overland et al., 2019). The microaggression scale was created by Lewis and Powell to quantify the harm that gendered microaggressions cause to one's bodily and mental well-being. The limitations of the current scale continue to focus on racial-gender microaggression research subjects, such as GRMS (Lewis and Neville, 2015) and TERM (Powell et al., 2022), but no research has examined and evaluated the form and frequency factors for determining the frequency of microaggression cases against teachers in schools.

Sexual objectivity is marginalized due to gender and the person's history or ethnicity, which leads to gender bias, according to the scale that can detect the construct of racial-gender microaggression problems (Lewis and Neville, 2015). Another subscale suggests that social media, family background, and a lack of understanding of differences are the main causes of gender bias (Ogunyemi et al., 2020). Considering the aforementioned findings, the research's findings must thoroughly reveal these phenomena, starting with the identification of the many gender microaggressions and the conditions that favor their occurrence.

As a result, this study investigates the frequency of micro-aggressive behavior motivated by gender bias experiences in elementary schools, because the teacher micro-aggressive behavior in learning serves as the foundation for the development of micro-aggressive prevention programs motivated by teacher gender bias experiences (Nadal et al., 2014; Sue et al. , 2007). As a result, this study will create a scale to identify the causes. Most gender bias behavior is caused by microaggressions, and it is necessary to recognize the gender bias carried out by microaggressions against their recipients.

Method

This research was a quantitative descriptive correlational study. The independent variable (X) was gender bias, and the dependent variable (Y) was microaggression. The aim was to characterize the description and microaggression elements of elementary school teachers in various types of gender bias in the learning process.

The participants of this research consisted of elementary school teachers from Makassar City. The sample size was determined using the Slovin method, which involved selecting 10% of the population. The sampling strategy employed in this study was simple random sampling. The participants were chosen based on specific criteria, which included: (1) having a teaching experience of over three years, (2) being affiliated with public schools in Makassar City, and (3) having a relatively equal number of educators and students, as suggested by Barreiro and Albandoz (2001). The sample of this study consisted of 101 elementary school teachers.

This study utilized two different assessment tools.

1. The first tool was adapted from the Gendered Racial Microaggressions Scale (GRMS), which was originally developed by Lewis and Neville in 2015. The purpose of this tool was to measure the frequency and level of stress associated with gender microaggressions. The GRMS scale consisted of 30 question items, categorized into four groups: anger racial stereotypes by ethnicity, assumptions of gender and sexual objectification, marginalization and silence, and strong ethnic stereotypes. Participants were asked to respond to each item using a Likert scale, with options ranging from "very often" to "rarely/almost never." Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed to analyze the test data, which revealed that the GRMS instrument demonstrated a good fit to the model and was suitable for implementation. The results of the analysis can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. CFA Results from The Gendered Racial Microaggressions Scale *(GRMS)*

| Measuring Tools | N | Reliability | | Validity | | |
		McDonald's oh	Cronbach's α	CFI	GFI	TLI
Microaggression Questionnaire (Lewis & Neville, 2015)	100	0.920	0.912	0.915	0.862	0.889
Assumptions of Gender and sexual objectification		0.828	0.804			
Silenced and Marginalized		0.658	0.618			
Bring Strong Ethnic Stereotypes		0.771	0.768			
Angry racial stereotypes by ethnicity		0.724	0.700			

*Cronbach Alpha > 0.60 (Reliable) *McDonald's Omega > 0.60 (Reliable) *GFI (Goodness of Fit) = 0 (Poor fit)-1.0 (perfect fit) *CFI ≤ ≥ 0.95 (Accepted Model) *TLI ≤ ≥ 0.95 (Very Good Fit)

In the CFA analysis, the researchers employed the Gendered Racial Microaggressions Scale (GRMS) consisting of 30 statement items and four indicators. The results indicated that the instrument demonstrated good validity, as reflected by its Cronbach alpha score of 0.920, surpassing the acceptable threshold of 0.60. Additionally, the McDonald's value of 0.912, also exceeding 0.60, further supported the instrument's validity. The categorization of the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) as acceptable and valid further indicated that the GRMS instrument was suitable for implementation in this study.

2. Instruments of microaggression factors. An instrument designed to measure factors associated with microaggressions has been developed through an analysis of variables influencing gender microaggressions. The scale comprises two factors: internal factors related to awareness, as identified by Awang-Shuib et al. in 2017, gender bias factors (Belief, Experience, Awareness) (Parker et al., 2016), and external factors derived from family (Parker et al., 2016), colleagues, culture (Bergman et al., 2014), and social media (Ribeiro et al., 2018).The scale has been

modified from the Likert model to accommodate the tendency of Indonesians to frequently adopt a neutral behavior. The significance of the microaggression elements was determined through the use of the CFA test, leading to including four answer choices: very unsuitable for me, not suitable for me, suitable for me, and very suitable for me. The CFA test results confirmed that the microaggression factors instrument displayed a well-fitting model, which can be observed in table 2.

Table 2. CFA Results From The Microaggression Factorization Questionnaire

| Measuring Tools | N | Reliability | | Validity | | | |
		McDonald's oh	Cronbach's α	CFI	GFI	TLI	RMSEA
Factor Microaggression Questionnaire	100	0.822	0.822	0.955	0.915	0.933	0.054
Internal factors		0.604	0.653				
External Factors		0.668	0.689				

*Cronbach Alpha > 0.60 (Reliable) *McDonald's Omega > 0.60 (Reliable) *GFI (Goodness of Fit) = 0 (Poor fit)-1.0 (perfect fit) *CFI ≤ ≥ 0.9: *Accepted Model) *TLI ≤ ≥ 0.95 (Very Good Fit)

The findings from the CFA analysis indicated that the microaggression questionnaire instrument consisted of 34 statement items and 6 indicators. The instrument demonstrated a Cronbach alpha validity value of 0.822, which exceeded the threshold of 0.60. Additionally, the McDonald's value was also 0.822, surpassing the cutoff of 0.60. Furthermore, the CFI, GFI, RMSEA, and TLI values were deemed acceptable and valid, suggesting that the instrument was appropriate for utilization in the study.

The SmartPLS application was utilized to conduct Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in order to examine the correlation between factors influencing microaggression behavior in this case. The JASP Apple Silicon MacOS application was employed for descriptive analysis to examine the manifestations of teacher microaggression in terms of gender bias.

Result and Discussion

The data collected from the Gendered Racial Microaggressions Scale (GRMS) indicated that out of the 101 elementary school teachers in Makassar City were categorized as moderate. The descriptive test results are outlined in the subsequent table.

Table 3. GRMS Descriptive Test

Aspect	Median	Mean	Std. Deviation	Category
Negative Assumptions Against Certain Gender Roles	23.000	24.21	3.529	Moderate
Silencing and marginalizing certain gender roles	9.000	11.01	4.800	Low
Carrying strong gender stereotypes	15.000	15.44	6.872	Moderate
Angry behavior towards certain genders	11.000	10.67	5.000	Low

According to the results of the descriptive statistical test presented in table 3, four forms of microaggression caused by gender bias among teachers have been identified. Negative assumptions about specific gender roles (X1) exhibited an average score of 24.21 and a standard deviation of 3.529, indicating that the level of gender bias behavior among teachers predominantly involves negative assumptions falling within the moderate category. Carrying strong gender stereotypes (X3) yielded an average score of 15.44 and

a standard deviation of 6.872, suggesting that teachers in schools exhibit gender bias by adhering to and promoting strong perceptions or stereotypes about certain genders. On the other hand, silencing and marginalizing gender roles (X2) obtained an average score of 11.01 and a standard deviation of 4.800, indicating a low level of such behavior. Angry behavior towards certain genders (X4) was also classified as low, with an average score of 10.67 and a standard deviation of 5.000. These findings imply that the average microaggression behavior exhibited by teachers is primarily influenced by gender stereotypes and strong assumptions about individual genders.
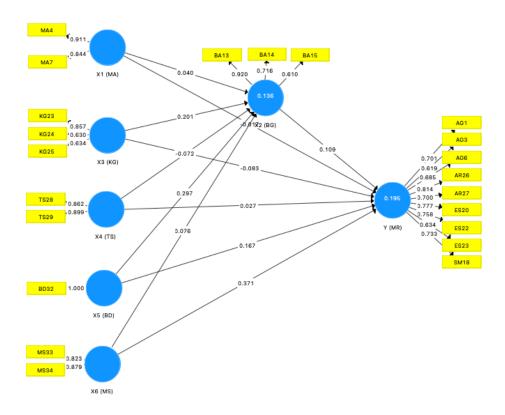

Figure 1. Equation Modeling Structural Analysis

By employing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) as depicted in figure 1, the examination revealed several variables that impact teacher microaggression behavior. These variables encompass both external factors, such as multicultural awareness, family, colleagues, culture, and social media, as well as internal factors. Among these variables, gender bias (X2) acts as a mediator variable that exerts both direct and indirect effects on teacher microaggression behavior (Y).

Table 4. Uji Inner Model Test (R-Square)

Construct	R Square
Y (Microaggression)	**0.1948**
0.1948 X 100% = 19 %	
100% - 19 % = 81 % ?	

According to the inner model test presented in table 4, the R-Square value for predicting the causal relationship between variables is 0.1948. Referring to Chin's categorization (1998), R Square values of 0.67 are high, 0.33 are moderate, and 0.19 are low. Subsequently, the researcher computed Path Coefficients between the variables to

assess the strength of their relationship or effects. It was discovered that 19% of teachers engaged in microaggressions due to factors other than microaggressions themselves. After conducting the Path Coefficients test, it was determined that 81% of the predicted influence on microaggression behavior (Y) was attributable to gender bias factors, including multicultural awareness, family, culture, colleagues, and social media. Hence, through the path coefficient test presented in table 5, the researchers identified a significant influence between the factors and the variable of microaggression (Y) through gender bias (X2).

Table 5. Test Inner Model Test (Path Coefficient)

	X2 (Bias Gender)	Y (Microaggression)
X1 (Multicultural Awareness)	0.0400	-0.0174
X2 (Bias Gender)		0.1090
X3 (Family)	0.2005	-0.0831
X4 (Colleagues)	-0.0717	0.0274
X5 (Culture)	0.2973	0.1669
X6 (Media Sosial)	0.0765	0.3714

Negative		Positive
-1	0	1

Based on the path coefficient test displayed in table 5, the gender bias factor, colleagues, culture, and social media exhibit a direct positive effect on microaggression (Y). This implies that as the level of gender bias increases in these factors, the likelihood of engaging in micro-aggressive behavior also increases.

Moreover, it was observed that multicultural awareness, family, culture, and social media have a direct effect on microaggression (Y) through the moderating variable of gender bias (X2). This indicates that when these factors, such as cultural awareness, family upbringing, awareness of differences, and the impact of social media, decrease, they contribute to the manifestation of gender bias behavior, leading to unconscious or direct microaggressions.

The results obtained from the evaluation of the microaggression instrument, including the scale and factors, indicate that teachers in schools experience a higher frequency of gender bias. This is evident from the moderate categorization of gender stereotypes and individual assumptions about specific genders. These findings align with previous research (Capodilupo et al., 2010), which reported that women are more susceptible to experiencing gender microaggressions compared to men. The study identifies similar instances, such as objectifying or marginalizing individuals based on their gender roles.

The study conducted by Capodilupo et al. (2010) uncovered that subtle sexism and discrimination against women can have psychological, mental, and career-related consequences. It is believed that career women are often perceived as "too" independent due to their background (Lewis and Neville, 2015). While Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2007) argues that these microaggressions may not cause severe stress impacts, they subtly convey assumptions and expectations for women to be brave, strong, assertive, and independent. This can lead to the perception that these women are less feminine compared to the societal norm, influenced by ethnicity or gender.

The findings from Ahmad et al.'s (2022) research highlight that gender bias in everyday interactions, such as making sexist jokes or catcalling, occurs frequently. These biased behaviors are primarily driven by prejudiced beliefs individuals hold against a specific gender, with females being more prone to experiencing subtle and implicit forms of microaggression (Blanch-Hartigan et al., 2010).

This study contributes to the existing knowledge by examining the factors that influence gender microaggression among teachers in elementary school education

settings. The findings align with previous research conducted by Al-Mukhani et al. (2018), indicating that external influences, predominantly characterized by assumptions of gender bias, contribute to the occurrence of micro-aggressive behavior. These behaviors are indirectly influenced by factors such as family upbringing, awareness of differences, and the impact of social media (Ribeiro et al., 2018).

The obtained findings suggest that multicultural awareness is the most influential factor in preventing microaggressions. This is consistent with the findings presented by Parker et al. (2016), which propose that having multicultural awareness entails possessing gender-sensitive behavior, as well as comprehensive knowledge and understanding of gender-related issues in education (Verdonk et al., 2009). Heightened gender-related awareness among both women and men can serve as a deterrent to gender bias behavior.

Additionally, the study suggests a positive correlation between the family environment and teacher gender bias behavior, in line with research conducted by Nadal et al. (2013). These findings support the notion that parenting behaviors, such as warmth, parental involvement in a child's education, and the quality of relationships, play a central role in preventing gender micro-aggressive behavior (Burton et al., 2010). This finding is further supported by Verdonk et al. (2009), suggesting that while the effects may not be significant during the ages of 10-16, it becomes more pronounced during adolescence, emphasizing the importance of avoiding negative parenting practices and promoting gender-equitable family education that challenges patriarchal norms and prioritizes gender equality.

Among the factors examined, we discovered that culture and social media exert a direct effect on gender microaggression behavior. Although this specific impact was not substantiated in our findings, previous research conducted by Eschmann et al. (2020) identified a gap where micro-aggressive behavior extends directly into the online social media realm. This suggests that even subtle biases directed towards individuals can have negative consequences, influenced by cultural factors and the effects of social media (Anderson, 2016).

Several limitations are present in this study. First, a more diverse and extensive sample size would yield more comprehensive findings. We intend to address this by expanding the sample size in future studies. Second, the experience of microaggression, along with the accompanying factors, is subjective. This allows for different perceptions among individuals, even when faced with the same problematic situation.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that over 70% of the participants in the study experienced gender microaggressions, primarily stemming from gender stereotypes and individual ethnic factors. These factors were influenced by various dominant factors such as low multicultural awareness, family upbringing, the effects of social media, and cultural influences. These microaggressions had psychological, mental, and career-related impacts on the individuals, albeit not causing severe stress. To address these issues, promoting gender awareness within educational institutions, implementing positive family education practices from an early age, and selectively using social media can help reduce the occurrence of teacher gender microaggressions in Indonesia.

Furthermore, it is recommended that future research adopt a more comprehensive methodological approach. This could involve investigating other forms of microaggressions that teachers may engage in within school settings, beyond gender aspects. A longitudinal prospective study would also be beneficial in understanding the most vulnerable groups to experience and perpetrate microaggressions. Adopting a quantitative approach may be more suitable for studying various case studies of gender microaggression in Indonesian educational units.

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Author Contributions Statement

NFU contributed to the concept and design of the study, conducted data analysis and interpretation, drafted the manuscript, provided technical or material support, and gave final approval of the version to be published. MR contributed to the concept and design of the study, conducted data analysis, performed a literature search, ensured funding security, critically revised the manuscript, and assisted with the formatting. NNM contributed to administrative tasks, data analysis and interpretation, data tabulation, and statistical analysis. HR provided technical or material support, assisted with administrative tasks, and proofread the manuscript. NF contributed to the critical revision of the manuscript, as well as administrative tasks and data analysis/interpretation.

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