

Illinois State University

ISU ReD: Research and eData

Theses and Dissertations

1-25-2022

Bystander or Ally? : Predictors of Adolescent Behavior in Response to Microaggressions on Social Media

Keeley Hynes

Illinois State University, khynes@ilstu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

Hynes, Keeley, "Bystander or Ally? : Predictors of Adolescent Behavior in Response to Microaggressions on Social Media" (2022). *Theses and Dissertations*. 1748.

<https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/etd/1748>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by ISU ReD: Research and eData. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ISU ReD: Research and eData. For more information, please contact ISUREd@ilstu.edu.

BYSTANDER OR ALLY? PREDICTORS OF ADOLESCENT BEHAVIOR IN RESPONSE
TO MICROAGGRESSIONS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

KEELEY HYNES

74 Pages

Microaggressions are a form of racism that Solórzano and Huber (2020) argue are understood and evaluated using the basic tenets of Critical Race Theory. Research suggests that high school students experience race- and sexuality-based microaggressions, although little is known about how microaggressive encounters that occur online impact adolescents. Research also suggests that college-age individuals are unlikely to intervene in response to microaggressive situations, but there do not exist any studies that highlight high schoolers' responses to these transgressions. Although, there is evidence that adolescents experience online victimization based on their race (Tynes et al., 2008). Feelings of school connectedness, offensiveness of the post, knowledge of school policy, and social media rumination may be key factors in understanding how adolescents interpret and respond to online microaggressions. I recruited 134 adolescents to assess these variables and hypothesized that school connectedness, offensiveness, knowledge about school policy, and social media rumination would significantly predict adolescents' intervention efforts when witnessing a microaggression towards a peer on social media. Results indicated that among the four predictor variables, participants' feelings of offensiveness of the post explained the most variance in participants' choice to intervene on microaggressive social media post.

KEYWORDS: microaggressions, social media, rumination, bystander behavior

BYSTANDER OR ALLY? PREDICTORS OF ADOLESCENT BEHAVIOR IN RESPONSE
TO MICROAGGRESSIONS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

KEELEY HYNES

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Psychology

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

2022

© 2022 Keeley Hynes

BYSTANDER OR ALLY? PREDICTORS OF ADOLESCENT BEHAVIOR IN RESPONSE
TO MICROAGGRESSIONS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

KEELEY HYNES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Brea Banks, Chair

Daniel G. Lannin

Suejung Han

S. Gavin Weiser

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Brea Banks, who believed in this project from the beginning and helped me continue to believe in myself throughout the process. Dr. Banks, I cannot tell you how grateful I am for your supervision, mentorship, and support. To my committee member, Dr. Daniel G. Lannin, thank you for contributing to this project and helping me grow as a researcher over the past several years. To my committee members, Drs. Suejung Han and S. Gavin Weiser, thank you for your excitement about this project and your honest and thorough feedback. Thank you to the Department of Psychology, for supporting student research.

To my peers and cohort members, thank you for the space to vent and providing words of encouragement. Thank you especially to Megan, who stuck with me through the blood, sweat, and tears. Thank you Michelle and Hailey, for your time and effort coding.

To my friends and family, thank you for the coffee, texts, calls, and silence when needed. Thank you for asking questions and understanding when I did not want to talk about it. Lida and Jose, thank you for reminding me to rest. To my mom, who I am endlessly appreciative of, who checks my grammar and is my forever proofreader. To my dad, who will always celebrate the wins with me, my sister, who will make me laugh for hours on a bad day, and my brother, who helps me see the bigger picture.

To my partner, Jonathan, thank you for always being there for me, reminding me to take breaks, and everything in between. I could not ask for a truer supporter. To Pippi, my wonderful dog, thank you for the endless cuddles and supervising my writing time.

K.H.

CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	i
CONTENTS	ii
CHAPTER I: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	1
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	4
Microaggressions	4
Consequences of Microaggressions	7
Adolescents and Microaggressions	9
The Bystander Effect	11
Allies and Bystanders	12
Social Media	15
Rumination	16
School Climate and Policy	18
School Policy	21
Policy as Institutional Microaggressions	23
Research Questions and Hypotheses	25
CHAPTER III: METHODS	28
Design	28
Participants	28
Measures	28
Demographic Survey	28
School Connectedness	28
Social Media Rumination	29

Bystander Behavior	29
Offensiveness	30
Awareness of School Policy	30
Procedure	31
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS	33
Analytic Plan	33
Positionality Statement	33
Preliminary Analyses	34
Primary Analyses	35
Quantitative	35
Post-Hoc Analyses	36
Qualitative	36
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION	40
Implications	44
Limitations and Future Directions	46
Conclusion	48
REFERENCES	50
APPENDIX A: SCHOOL CONNECTEDNESS	67
APPENDIX B: SOCIAL MEDIA RUMINATION SCALE	68
APPENDIX C: BYSTANDER BEHAVIOR SCALE	69
APPENDIX D: SCHOOL POLICY AWARENESS SCALE	70
APPENDIX E: SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS	71
APPENDIX F: SAMPLE POST	72
APPENDIX G: RECRUITMENT FLYER	73

CHAPTER I: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Previous research has focused on the impact of college students' social media use, because there is evidence that college students who use social media more frequently are more likely to report lower self-esteem, depression, and anxiety symptoms (Vogel et al., 2014; Alt, 2015; Yang et al., 2018). However, college students are not the only population frequently using social media, as many adolescents spend a significant amount of time online (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). Therefore, understanding adolescents' social media use is an important area of study. For example, some researchers have indicated that adolescents who use social media frequently may be likely to engage in stealing or fighting with peers (Vannucci & Ohannessian, 2019). Further, adolescents also show anxiety and depression symptoms when reporting more frequent social media use than their peers (Thorisdottir et al., 2019). Relevant to the purpose of the current study, research has demonstrated that adolescents report experiencing victimization online and that racial discrimination may occur frequently on social media platforms (Tynes et al., 2008; Tynes et al., 2013).

Because adolescents regularly use the Internet, they may be susceptible to content that they do not necessarily wish to consume. For example, videos of police brutality often circulate on social media platforms, and may be presented to adolescents without warning. Adolescents of Color who view these violent videos are more likely to experience negative mental health outcomes like posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression symptoms (Tynes et al., 2019). Adolescents may struggle with how to handle these online experiences. Relatedly, adolescents have reported confusion about steps to take in bullying situations, especially when they are unsure of their responsibility in the matter (Bauman et al., 2020).

Another example of undesired content social media users may be exposed to includes subtle race- and sexuality-based discrimination, or microaggressions. As discussed above, what one sees online may produce negative consequences. For example, Rowan-Kenyon and colleagues (2020) found that when college Students of Color experience microaggressions on social media they are less likely to trust white people on social media and report decreased well-being and a sense of belonging, suggesting that online microaggressions can impact daily life. Further, although the amount of time college students spend on social media does not predict negative perceptions of campus climate, research suggests that experiences with online racial discrimination might, as college students experiencing online victimization (especially those who identify as African American) reported a more negative perception of their campus climate (Tynes et al., 2013).

The above evidence demonstrating the association between online activity and school climate among college-age individuals is important and should also be explored in school-age populations, because there is evidence online victimization is linked to depressive symptoms, stress, and other negative mental health outcomes (Tynes et al., 2010). Researchers should also seek to identify other factors that influence online behavior, including school policy. Lack of clear policy and language for handling discrimination and harassment in schools may contribute to decisions to not intervene when students witness microaggressive situations, and this may extend to online spaces like social media. This study aimed to investigate if school connectedness, school policy knowledge, offensiveness, and social media rumination, contribute to adolescents intervening on a microaggressive social media post from one of their peers.

Adolescents who witness microaggressions can play an important role in intervening to mitigate effects of the transgressions, educate the perpetrator, and facilitate a safer, more

inclusive environment (Sue et al., 2019). School policy may be one area of study that addresses how and why adolescents might intervene after viewing a microaggressive social media post. As stated above, adolescents may not know how to respond to the victimization of their peers if they are unsure of their responsibility (Bauman et al., 2020). School policy has historically failed to protect all students (Jennings & Lauen, 2016; Kadzielski, 1977), and there is evidence that individuals holding marginalized identities, which are not specifically included in these policies (e.g., LGBTQIA+), experience the greatest degree of victimization at schools (Garvey et al., 2014). Further, we know that adolescents experience microaggressions at school and can label them as offensive (Banks & Ciccirelli, 2020). These transgressions may be perpetrated and witnessed by school peers in online spaces, suggesting that how and why adolescents intervene could be linked to perceptions of school such as school connectedness and awareness of school policy.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Microaggressions

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a framework that scholars use to describe the way race is engrained in the institution of education and how other identities (e.g., gender, sexual orientation, religion) can benefit from the abolishment of racist practices (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Race has existed as a social construction and racism has existed in the United States for quite some time, tracing back to 1619 (predating the United States) when African American individuals were legally held as slaves until 1865 (Solórzano & Huber, 2020). The end of slavery did not indicate the end of racism, as Jim Crow laws that mandated racial segregation of places, activities, facilities, and everyday aspects of life were relevant from 1865 to 1965 (Solórzano & Huber, 2020). Scholars of CRT iterate that racism is inherent to education and society, should be challenged through social justice efforts informed by experiences from People of Color, and is impacted by historical and modern influences (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Now that we are in the New Jim Crow era, or the era of racism between 1965 and the present, racism continues to exist in systems, policies, and across different environments (Solórzano & Huber, 2020). Relevant to the current study, because adolescents spend a significant amount of time in school and on social media, both of which represent systems that may uphold racism, encounters that occur in these spaces must be explored (Anderson & Jiang, 2018; Tynes et al., 2013).

Microaggressions are a form of racism that Solórzano and Huber (2020) argue are understood and evaluated using the basic tenets of CRT. The concept of microaggression was coined by Chester Pierce (1970) and is a subtle, often unconscious slight made toward a person holding a marginalized identity (Sue, 2010). Microaggressions are classified as microinsults, microinvalidations, and microassaults. *Microinsults* are a form of microaggression that can be

unconscious yet displays an insensitivity about someone's identity such as treating someone like a second-class citizen, questioning their intelligence or culture, and assuming criminality (Sue, 2010). A *microinvalidation* undermines the experience of someone's life given their identity (e.g., color blindness, assuming someone is from a foreign country, race does not impact their life enough to acknowledge, denying racism; Sue, 2010). A *microassault* is the most explicit form of microaggression, happening consciously from the perpetrator and usually inciting an attack on the receiver through threats, name-calling, and other forms of aggression with the intent of harming the receiver (Sue, 2010). For the purpose of this study, a *witness* is someone who sees a microaggression, whereas a *bystander* is someone who witnesses a microaggression and does not help. A *perpetrator* is an individual who commits the microaggression, and the *receiver* is an individual who is targeted by the offensive statement or act. Microaggressions do not always occur in the form of insulting comments that are a result of the perpetrator's ignorance. Microaggressions can also be blatant "racial jokes" that can lead Students of Color to feel stressed. That stress can emerge after the event as a result of the way the victim handled the situation and from the energy it takes to try to interpret what the person meant by their harmful comment (Yosso et al., 2009).

The type, context, effect, and response to microaggressions are important to consider, as there may be implications for why an individual handles each of these elements differently (Solórzano & Huber, 2020). The type of microaggression extends beyond verbal microinvalidations, microinsults, and microassaults. Solórzano and Huber (2020) indicate that microaggressions are not always simple verbal statements, as they can also be visual, appearing as imagery of stereotypes (e.g., depiction of an indigenous person as a mascot). Further, microaggressions can also surface as "jokes" in the media and social settings like college parties,

with the intention, perception, and consequences depending on the context (e.g., location, time, circumstances; Solórzano & Huber, 2020). Microaggressions can have cumulative effects, and these effects are evaluated by the response to the microaggression (Solórzano & Huber, 2020). For example, the way a receiver evaluates an interaction with a “friend” who perpetrates a microaggression at a party may be different than how the same receiver evaluates the same microaggression from a newscaster on television, because they may have more interactions with the friend than the newscaster. In turn, the cumulative effects of microaggressions perpetrated by those one has personal relationships with may lead the individual to feel more frustrated, depending on their evaluation of the microaggression.

Race, gender, and sexual orientation specifically have been well-researched when considering individuals who may be on the receiving end of microaggressions (Sue, 2010; Garvey et al., 2014; Lui & Quezada, 2019), although any person holding a marginalized identity (e.g., transgender individual, Muslim American, homeless high schooler) can experience a microaggression. Further, microaggressions can be relevant to multiple identities, as individuals may experience these transgressions at the intersection of more than one identity. Specifically, Crenshaw (1989) coined the phrase intersectionality to describe the dynamics of unique sets of identities an individual holds and how those unique sets can impact daily life, such as the power dynamics that exist between individuals. Cho and colleagues (2013) write about intersectional identities as “vexed dynamics of difference and the solidarities of sameness in the context of antidiscrimination and social movement politics” (p. 787). This difference and sameness refer to how individuals’ identities are not mutually exclusive in their impact on how others view them, and this dynamic is relevant to how microaggressions are received (Cho et al., 2013). Keels and colleagues (2017) argue that the impact of a microaggression may depend on how the receiver

understands and values each part of their identity. For example, adolescent girls may be frequent receivers of gender microaggressions while experiencing puberty, especially if symptoms show earlier than their peers (Hill & Kearnl, 2011). This harassment may intensify for Black girls experiencing puberty symptoms and transgender adolescents attempting to navigate social gender norms, as these identities may be targeted given their race and gender expression (Sterzing et al., 2017).

Consequences of Microaggressions

The effects of microaggressions have been widely studied, as research suggests that there are different types of consequences (e.g., physiological, psychological, and cognitive) that follow one's experiences as the target of microaggressions. For example, Black students who experience microaggressions at all levels of their schooling (i.e., elementary, middle, and high school) show long-term effects of feeling like their teachers make assumptions about their lives and these students understand that their school experiences may be inequitable (Compton-Lily, 2020). Also relevant to school experiences and functioning, receivers of microaggressions use their cognitive resources to decide how to respond, which Sue and colleagues (2007) define as a "catch 22" situation in which individuals must contemplate the consequences, risks, and benefits of calling out a perpetrator or not. This described catch 22 dilemma may be one factor that depletes an individual's cognitive resources, as research suggests that Students of Color exposed to microaggressions in lab settings demonstrate diminished cognitive functioning after exposure to these transgressions (Banks & Ciccirelli, 2019; Banks & Landau, 2020). The frequency and cumulation of microaggressions in different settings are linked to physical symptoms like fatigue, low energy levels, and higher pain levels, and these symptoms are reported to likely impact one's daily functioning (Nadal et al., 2017). Further, college students experience racial

battle fatigue, or the “cumulative psychosocial–physiological impact of racial micro and macroaggressions on racially marginalized targets” (Smith et al., 2016, p. 4), after frequently witnessing or being a target of racist insults, such as those included in social media posts. Racial battle fatigue is associated with Students of Color feeling stressed, frustrated, and interpreting their campus as hostile (Gin et al., 2017). This fatigue may not be exclusive to People of Color, as college students who identify as part of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual (LGBTQIA+) community report receiving microaggressions on campus (Garvey et al., 2014) and may experience similar exhausting thought processes as Students of Color. Also known as minority stress, individuals who hold marginalized sexual identities may experience lasting effects of victimization based on their sexuality that can lead to negative mental health outcomes like suicidal ideation (Fulginiti et al., 2020).

The behaviors of individuals holding dominant or privileged identities are also important to note when discussing microaggressions, particularly in the school setting. Some white scholars continue to downplay the necessity of addressing microaggressions, insinuating that work in this area promotes fragility, over-emotional people, and a divide among people in college student populations (Solórzano & Huber, 2020). Further, Solórzano and Huber (2020) argue that white people tend to assert that they are not responsible in microaggressive situations, because they may feel that their intervention can cause unnecessary conflict. However, placing all the responsibility on those holding marginalized identities to educate and combat microaggressions may be problematic. Black college students report feeling pressure to correct or educate white students when they make discriminatory statements, and this pressure is associated with stress; although, some Black college students report that they may also feel guilty when they do not correct or educate their white peers (Griffith et al., 2019). Further, LGBTQIA+ students may feel

pressure related to educating their peers on issues, as undergraduate students identifying as lesbian, bisexual, gay, or queer reported experiencing frequent microaggressions and that peers feel uncomfortable when these students disclose their sexuality (e.g., their peer ignores them, question their sexuality; Platt & Lenzen, 2013). Although there does not exist any research that specifically examines these phenomena among children and adolescents, this complicated sense of responsibility points to the need for research on how schools can use policy to ensure that receivers of microaggressions are protected and validated, while also educating their privileged peers about the prevalence of, consequences of, and appropriate responses to microaggressions.

Adolescents and Microaggressions

Although the consequences of microaggressions for college Students of Color have received a great deal of attention in the research literature, less is known about how exposure to microaggressions impact school-age children. Research suggests that children and adolescents are likely receivers of microaggressions, as children as young as five experience microaggressions from adults and are aware of the underlying meaning of microaggressions (Farr et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2019). Sinclair and colleagues (2012) found that middle and high school students who experience racial and/or sexual harassment show potential greater risk for substance abuse, school problems, and suicidal ideation, especially when this harassment was both online and in person. In addition, there is evidence that high school students holding marginalized racial and sexual orientation identities recognize and label microaggressions as offensive, experience microaggressions in multiple settings, and report school personnel and peers as perpetrators of microaggressions (Banks et al., 2020).

If the reception of microaggressions has the same cognitive and academic consequences for adolescents as their adult counterparts, more research is needed to explore these outcomes, as

healthy cognitive functioning in adolescence is a predictor of successful adult functioning such as physical good health and appropriate decision-making (Alderman & Breuner, 2019). Further, research suggests that poor academic outcomes, which may be associated with cognitive functioning, are also seen in adolescents who experience racially hostile school environments, as newly graduated high school students who report receiving microaggressions from peers related to their academic standing show lower academic achievement than their counterparts (Keels et al., 2017). These effects of academic-related microaggressions in high school may have continued impacts in college settings (Keels et al., 2017), suggesting a need for research focus on microaggressions in younger populations.

Research points to depleting mental health functioning as another consequence of adolescents receiving microaggressions. Depressive symptoms may be much greater for middle and high school students who experience about five instances of discrimination each day than their counterparts who experience less or no instances (English et al., 2020). Adolescents who receive race-based microaggressions can develop depression and anxiety symptoms (Huynh, 2012). Individuals who are LGBTQIA+ and endure daily discrimination also experience harmful social/emotional consequences. Transgender youth are already at high risk for psychological distress and dysfunctional behaviors like depression and suicide, self-harm, and suicidal thoughts (Rafferty, 2018). Further, Muslim adolescents who experience more frequent harassment at school based on their religion and use of English experience higher levels of psychological distress (Oberoi & Trickett, 2018). These findings provide examples of the need for further analyses on how schools can prevent and protect marginalized student groups from discrimination. Although research suggests that adolescents may interpret microaggressions as offensive or problematic, there is evidence that they remain resilient in having a positive view of

their family after receiving a microaggression (Farr et al., 2016). However, more than half of children whose parents are LGBTQIA+ report receiving microaggressions about their parents' sexuality or gender, with frequent teasing and bullying (Farr et al., 2016). Black and Latinx adolescents who report experiencing subtle and overt discrimination are also at significant risk for suicidal ideation (Madubata et al., 2019).

As discussed, microaggressions present in different forms (e.g., racial “jokes,” news headlines), and online spaces may be a frequent platform for perpetrators to insult individuals holding marginalized identities because they may be able to hide their identity or be more anonymous than they otherwise might be in-person. Further, there is evidence that racism online can victimize someone more than once (Tynes et al., 2013), as memes (i.e., jokes in visual and digital form), videos, and posts can be shared several if not thousands of times across platforms.

The Bystander Effect

Individuals may choose to intervene when witnessing someone enduring a victimizing experience, like receiving a microaggression. Darley and Latané (1968) found that factors related to intervening or not may be related to the number of people present and the severity of the situation. In other words, people are less likely to intervene when in larger groups and if they do not perceive the situation as an emergency. Roberts and Rizzo (2020) relate this effect to racism in society today, as individuals who witness others intervening may view racism as a problem more than those who do not witness others taking anti-racist stands. Relevant to the purpose of the current study, individuals who are told racism is a problem and should be addressed appropriately, possibly through policy that encourages people to do so, may be more likely to intervene when witnessing racism online.

Allies and Bystanders

As discussed previously, Sue and colleagues (2007) describe the “catch 22” phenomena as occurring when an individual is exposed to a microaggression. Receivers of microaggressions may first contemplate if a comment or action was in fact microaggressive, as individuals have reported wondering if they are being hypersensitive (Sue et al., 2007). Once an individual deems a comment or action as problematic, they must then decide how to respond, which involves considering the consequences of the perpetrator’s response. As such, receivers of a microaggression may not always feel safe or empowered enough to respond to a perpetrator, as power dynamics, the ambiguity of the situation, and potential negative repercussions are stressful, which may mirror responses that individuals have to bully behavior (Sue et al., 2007). Microaggressions may occur within the context of bullying, which happens over an extended period of time and involves power differentials (Espelage & Colbert, 2016). Further, microaggressions may be considered a form of victimization, which can be defined as a “maladaptive relationship pattern” (Troy & Soufre, 1987, p. 169) in which those who perpetrate microaggressions may create a harmful environment and pattern among individuals they target and individuals who witness the microaggression.

Similar to occurrences of bullying, witnesses may play a key role in helping receivers manage microaggressions and in addressing a perpetrator’s problematic behavior, as the effects of the transgression on the receiver could be mitigated by a witness intervening instead of engaging in bystander behavior (Byrd, 2018; Sue et al., 2019). Although different than experiencing microaggressions, the bullying research suggests that there may also be direct benefits (e.g., higher academic achievement, more positive outlook on life) for adolescents who intervene as witnesses when compared to their counterparts who are bystanders, as these

individuals may be more likely to feel as though they have less control over their behavior and may believe the receiver is at some fault for the incident (Evans et al., 2018; Hoxmeier et al., 2018).

Adolescents may have different reasons for choosing to intervene or not in microaggressive situations, although researchers have not explored these relations specific to microaggressions. However, the cyberbullying literature is useful. Defending a receiver online may be more complicated than in person. In fact, research suggests that adolescents may be likely to act aggressively online toward the perpetrator of cyberbullying, especially when they feel confident that they can defend the victim (Bussey et al., 2020). These findings from Bussey and colleagues (2020) suggest an interesting gap in research: understanding how and why adolescents may intervene when seeing a microaggression online. The bullying literature also points to personality traits such as agreeableness (Caprara et al., 2015) or tendencies such as moral disengagement (i.e., choosing to engage in inhumane acts rather than considering the feelings of others) as links to prosocial behavior (Thornberg & Jungert, 2013). Further, adolescents who show better perspective taking skills and empathetic traits demonstrate opinions consistent with restorative justice attitudes (i.e., educating or rehabilitating the offender and healing the victim) rather than punitive attitudes towards negative behavior (Rasmussen et al., 2018). Although understanding these characteristics aids in conceptualizing these behaviors, a more complicated process could exist. Specifically, adolescents may consider several factors before deciding to intervene (e.g., how serious is the situation, what social dynamics are at play, and can the victim defend themselves; Thornberg et al., 2018). The decision to intervene may depend on the unique thought process of an individual witness, such as analyzing the risks and benefits involved in standing up to the perpetrator.

It should also be noted that some scholars have argued that the current research is insufficient in finding empirical evidence of microaggressions causing harm, that the term microaggression has too vague a definition, and methods of research used to study microaggressions are lacking (Lilienfield, 2017). For example, Lilienfield (2017) argues that because the root term “aggression” implies intent, the definition of microaggression is tainted. He also argues that there are too many behaviors that can be classified as microaggressions and that participant samples in microaggression research are not diverse enough. However, using a CRT lens, Solórzano & Huber (2020) argue that scholars must challenge racism by taking into account the experiences and practices of those who hold marginalized identities. In other words, research investigating the harm of every day oppression is not a simple task and requires acceptance of identities that otherwise do not have a voice, regardless of an overly critical look at the term used to describe this oppression. Nonetheless, there is sufficient evidence that individuals holding marginalized identities rate microaggressions as more offensive and problematic than in comparison to white, male, and straight counterparts (Banks & Landau, 2019; Banks et al., 2020). As such, continued exploration of how microaggressions are interpreted by diverse individuals is important for expanding our understanding of adolescents’ intervention, ongoing oppression, and how to further investigate these transgressions.

This vague understanding of how to deal with complicated social scenarios points to a widening gap in research and could be reduced if clear policy of consequences is communicated by school personnel. A clear policy communicated by authority could be beneficial, because adolescents may be unsure of what to do when they witness a peer being victimized or may feel it is not their responsibility to intervene (Bauman et al., 2020). Policy that demonstrates an

understanding that all students should be safe and welcome may help facilitate this perspective-taking for faculty, staff, and students.

Social Media

Racism is widely present online and is represented through different types of media (e.g., text, music; Biluc et al., 2018). Cyber-racism (i.e., online racial discrimination) can come from a group, individual, or game (Bliuc et al., 2018). Research suggests that online experiences of racial discrimination occur significantly among high school students, and targeted statements may be directed at an individual, or an individual may vicariously experience racism online (i.e., see a post targeted at someone else holding the same racial identity; Tynes et al., 2008). Research also suggests that Black students may be victimized more than once by the same social media post because memes, photos, videos, and the like are widely viewed and shared across several online platforms (Tynes et al., 2013). This presented evidence provides rationale for investigating how using social media may influence adolescents sharing or not sharing victimizing posts, the interpretation of them, and what other factors may be involved.

Many adolescents report frequent use of social media (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). Even adolescents whose families are of low socioeconomic status report having access to a smartphone and social media (VonHoltz et al., 2018), suggesting that social media usage may not be limited to adolescents with financial privilege. However, the way technology is used and adolescents' reasons for using social media may vary for different groups of adolescents. For example, adolescent girls are more likely to text and use social media, whereas adolescent boys report more frequent gaming (Twenge & Martin, 2020). In general, adolescents report using social media for many positive reasons, like sharing daily activities, scheduling plans with friends, and connecting with different groups of people that share similar interests (Radovic et

al., 2017). On the other hand, adolescent social media activity may also include posting inappropriately for attention, stressing over gaining more followers on platforms, and engagement in cyberbullying (Radovic et al., 2017). Adolescents may also avoid social media when they are sad, depressed, or anxious, attempting to mitigate the effects of feeling left out of social plans or generally feeling jealous of others (Radovic et al., 2017). This avoidance may stem from a deeper need to create and maintain relationships with others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

The Need to Belong Theory may help explain adolescents' social media usage. This theory asserts that people generally want to maintain social bonds and avoid what may break those bonds (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Research suggests that addiction to social networking sites and materialism (i.e., placing great importance, happiness, and success on owning things) may be moderated by one's need to belong, as adolescents reporting a greater sense of needing to belong also report higher levels of materialism (Wang et al., 2020). Further, among college students, a higher need to belong is associated with more Facebook use, suggesting that individuals who use social media more may be concerned about their social bonds (Casale & Fioravanti, 2018). The connection between needing to belong and social media usage provides the psychology field with unanswered questions as to how belonging extends past peer groups (e.g., schoolwide considerations).

Rumination

Nolen-Hoeksema (1991) defines rumination as constant brooding. Rumination can be maladaptive or adaptive. Maladaptive rumination is the tendency to think about one's problems but never act to solve them (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1991), and it has been linked to psychopathology outcomes like depression, eating disorders, and alcohol dependency (Grierson et al., 2016; Luca,

2019). Research suggests that gender differences in rumination exist, as girls may be more likely to ruminate and show depression symptoms as compared to boys (Broderick & Korteland, 2002; Muris et al., 2004), which may be due to differences in how binary gender norms socialize children and adolescents (Cyranowski et al., 2000).

As there may be different reasons for adolescents' frequent use of social media, there may be different thought processes about how an adolescent uses their social media platforms. *Social media ruination* is the tendency to mull over one's and others' social media use (Parris et al., 2020). Self-determination theory (SDT) may explain why adolescents engage in social media rumination. Hynes and colleagues (2020) found that adolescents with higher extrinsic motivation (i.e., reported more desire for fame, wealth, and a positive image than their peers) are more likely to ruminate over their social media than adolescents with higher intrinsic motivation. Further, Przybylski and colleagues (2013) found that adults who are not meeting their basic psychological needs (i.e., autonomy, relatedness, competency) were more likely to be stressed about their Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), or concern that they will feel left out or not as happy if they are not engaged in the same way as a certain peer group (Scott & Woods, 2018; Przybylski et al., 2013). Adolescents may choose to avoid social media because of FoMO (Radovic et al., 2017), indicating that conscious thought processes are involved in deciding how to use social media. For example, girls may engage in more efforts to create an image of themselves by editing their photos for social media and even posting more than boys (Dhir et al., 2016). This difference in effort between boys and girls may explain why girls who report using social media frequently in early adolescence also report lower well-being over time when compared to boys (Booker et al., 2018; Twenge & Martin, 2020).

The Need to Belong Theory may also be at play in how adolescents engage in social media rumination. The *belonging hypothesis* (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) indicates that people generally want to maintain social bonds, and they likely will avoid circumstances that lead to breaking these bonds. As such, Baumeister and Leary (1995) indicate that individuals may be inclined to make themselves attractive to maintain their attachment to others. This idea has implications for social media, because adolescents may consider their belongingness when posting, as they might want to remain consistent with what they see their peers doing on social media. For example, Wang and colleagues (2017) found that adolescents who have a higher need to belong were more addicted to their smartphones, a common avenue to log onto social media platforms, than their counterparts. Adolescents' sense of belongingness may also be influenced by their experiences with discrimination.

We know that online discrimination is prevalent (Tynes et al., 2008; Tynes et al., 2013), and that adolescents report experiencing frequent microaggressions (Banks et al., 2020; Keels et al., 2017). However, less is known about adolescents' experiences with microaggressions on social media. Given the research reviewed surrounding social media usage and rumination, it may be beneficial to explore how these factors are related to how adolescents interpret and respond to online microaggressions. This line of research would fill a gap in the literature and may have important implications for school practices, as providers may select interventions specific to usage and rumination to target the associated consequences of microaggressions.

School Climate and Policy

Feeling safe and welcome at school is important for students to succeed in the classroom and to protect or improve their overall social emotional functioning (Suldo et al., 2012; Kwong et al., 2015). School climate, which can foster or hinder this sense of safety and welcomeness, is

a complex concept built of experiences of students, teachers, school staff, and family members (Cohen et al., 2009). These experiences can be interpreted from an individual or group level but overall contribute to the culture and climate and prime the sense of belonging among students and anyone else who enters the school. Generally, a more positive school climate is linked to higher academic achievement and graduation rates, effective risk prevention, and teacher retention (Cohen et al., 2013).

Cohen and colleagues (2013) also indicate that school climate has significant impacts on school violence. Students' perceptions of their school may affect their peer relationships, such that adolescents who feel more connected to their school report less instances of peer victimization (i.e., physical, verbal, relational) than adolescents who feel less connected to their school (O'Brennan & Furlong, 2010). This relationship may be bidirectional, as La Salle and colleagues (2016) found that middle and high school students who reported more occasions of peer victimization over 30 days demonstrated diminished school connectedness. Though participants in La Salle and colleagues' (2016) study reported experiencing victimization much less than even once per month, there is evidence to suggest that even one occurrence of bullying, harassment, or victimization can negatively impact youth. Relevant to the purpose of the current study, online peer victimization is associated with diminished academic success, increased likelihood abusing drugs, and increased suicidal ideations (Sinclair et al., 2012). These negative consequences may be even greater for Black children and adolescents, as individuals who experience racial discrimination are at high risk for depression, anxiety, and other health problems (Williams et al., 2020).

Given the degree to which adolescents engage with social media and the possible link between peer aggression online and school climate (Bartolo et al., 2019; Hanurawan et al.,

2020), understanding how different types of peer aggression (e.g., microaggressions) occur online and how adolescents interpret them may be warranted for improving school climate. The current literature does not include studies that specifically investigate how online exposure to microaggressions is related to perceptions of school climate. Adolescents holding marginalized identities may experience more victimization than their counterparts, especially if their racial identity is underrepresented at their school (La Salle et al., 2016). Students of Color who experience microaggressions may second guess their belonging in a space dominated by white students, and this can become distracting, especially when white students do not take action as allies, or actively support Students of Color and denounce individuals who do not support them (Yosso et al., 2009).

Again, drawing from Need to Belong Theory, goal-directed behavior to satisfy the maintenance of a bond is a common human behavior (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). For example, students who are experiencing microaggressions at school may feel distracted or stressed, because they want to feel part of the school, or like they belong. This idea may help explain why microaggressions lead to psychological distress (e.g., depression, anxiety), because losing one's sense of belongingness may cause more severe cognitive damage than negative affect (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Relationships with classmates may be an important indicator for the degree to which adolescents' need to belong, as adolescents are less likely to report higher need to belong when their relationships with other students are more positive (Wang et al., 2017). Given this evidence, students experiencing microaggressions from peers may feel the need to strive for more belongingness, which may lead to negative outcomes like psychological distress (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Further, awareness of school policy that protects them may

facilitate more belongingness, as adolescents may feel more connected if they know someone is “on their side.”

School Policy

Policy may be a blatant, yet hidden bystander, as policy often focuses on individual mishaps rather than addressing systemic issues that can be changed (Spade, 2013). When adolescents do not know how to handle peer victimization (Bauman et al., 2020), clearly communicated policy could facilitate a safer school environment and in turn improve perceptions of school climate. Public school policy is an important area of research, because districts, counties, and states have different, and sometimes conflicting or changing standards that can lead to “failing” schools (Jennings & Lauen, 2016), while school administrators attempt to maintain integrity of services for the families in their schools. Examining school policy is necessary, as effects of policy language, standards, and other elements may directly harm certain groups of students while maintaining the status quo for others. It is important to uplift individuals who have been oppressed by racism, homophobia, and the like through commitment to social justice, as “educational institutions operate in contradictory ways” (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 26).

According to Solórzano and Yosso (2002), there are layers to institutional oppression. Some policy efforts have been made to combat this oppression, yet they generally fall short. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is one of the first modern examples of policy intending to do good but failing in clear language, action, and implementation (Kadzielski, 1977). Sexual harassment and discrimination based on race, gender, ability, and other marginalized identities continues to take place in public spaces, including schools (Garvey et al., 2014; English et al., 2020). This may be in part because Title IX does not specifically include sexual orientation and religious affiliation, as these are common identities targeted for

harassment in schools (Garvey et al., 2014; Oberoi & Trickett, 2018). Although Title IX could have been a step in the direction of justice for individuals often overlooked, state and local governments must determine their own bullying policies that align with federal laws, although federal laws do not include distinct actions for schools (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; USDHHS, n.d.). As such, an issue with aligning with federal laws is there are no specific definitions of words like “interview” and “communicate” when outlining schools’ obligations for dealing with discrimination (USDHHS, 2017). This approach to guiding state and local governments may give the impression that consequences for discrimination in schools are not as important as they truly are for students who are experiencing discrimination. Further, legal action for when individuals are discriminated against can be difficult or even ignored by the court system (Spade, 2013). Through a Critical Race lens, we can use our knowledge that individuals of marginalized backgrounds are slighted by racist, sexist, and heteronormative narratives to improve school policy (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). Students who do not directly experience these transgressions may be more likely to interpret behavior as offensive if there is clear language from school officials about handling such instances. Therefore, it is important to know how and if students interpret racist, homophobic, xenophobic, and other problematic behaviors as offensive to understand how they may respond when encountering these instances.

Though the use of school policies to encourage prosocial behavior can be beneficial, this must be purposeful, as policies created with good intention may have negative effects. For example, the use of performance accountability within the No Child Left Behind Act is an example of how policy can have unintended negative consequences (NCLB; U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Specifically, scores on mandated high-stakes tests are correlated with overall higher academic achievement (Dee & Jacob, 2011), and this strong connection likely exists

because achievement and testing are closely related; further, schools held accountable when not meeting adequate yearly progress also showed decreased absences at school (Holbein & Ladd, 2017). This demonstrates that clear policy can make noticeable differences in how students function at school, although these policies can negatively impact special education populations and Black, Hispanic, and students of lower socioeconomic status, as pressure to meet standards can impact teachers' performance (e.g., focus on teaching to the test; Gonzalez et al., 2016; Jennings & Lauen, 2016), highlighting the issue of opportunity gaps and suggesting the need to investigate school policy.

Policy as Institutional Microaggressions

As stated above, school policy can be open for interpretation, susceptible to misunderstanding, and too vague to protect those for which it is intended. Related to the purpose of the current study, another way policy can be problematic relates to racism and heterosexism. Solórzano and Huber (2020) describe a model of institutional racism that is encompassed by white supremacy, indicating that the impact of the microaggression is more important than the intent and that these microaggressions occur as a result of underlying white supremacy and institutional racism. Specifically, white supremacy is at the root of society, which causes institutional racism that produces the microaggressions that are enacted in everyday systems like education, health, economic, criminal justice, political, and mass media (Solórzano & Huber, 2020). *Institutional microaggressions* are “racially marginalizing actions and inertia of the university evidenced in structures, practices, and discourses that endorse a campus racial climate hostile to People of Color” (Yosso et al., 2009, p. 673). Though this definition specifies university actions, institutional microaggressions may also be present in all institutions, including kindergarten through twelfth-grade public schools. Primary and secondary schools in

the U.S. are indeed institutions that uphold racist structures and practices that may be perpetuated through policy.

The presence of institutional microaggressions does not necessitate purposeful approval from a board of trustees or school principal. Rather the lack of clearly outlined statements denouncing white supremacy and asserting value for diversity and policies that require consequences for behaviors that do not align with anti-white supremacist values are troublesome. For example, when institutions have poor policies and consequences in place, loosely affiliated groups who engage in microaggressive behavior can affect how individuals interpret climate. For example, Eschmann (2020) found that a Facebook group designed to promote “anti-political correctness” at a university, using the institution’s name, negatively influenced students holding marginalized backgrounds sense of safety and belonging at the school. The “unmasking of racism” online that Eschmann (2020) indicates may be more present on and offline than white people care to admit, and this racism is reflected in school policy by whom that policy protects and fails to protect. Unfortunately, individuals who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community also experience hostile online environments, as we know they experience significantly more online victimization than their counterparts, and these experiences are linked to suicide attempts, suicidal ideation, depression, and low self-esteem (Abreu & Kenny, 2018).

Even when language is clear for how to implement discipline in schools, some students are more likely to be harmed by a policy than others. As Title IX, a federally-funded initiative, indicates that gender-based discrimination is not allowed in schools, there is no explicit law that prohibits race- and sexuality-based discrimination in schools (Solórzano & Huber, 2020). Although meant to improve school safety, Zero Tolerance policies harm Black and Brown students most, decreasing future success and maintaining the school-to-prison pipeline (APA,

2008). Given the urgency to examine suspension and expulsion practices did not arise until the 21st century, understanding how school policies about modern student behavior (e.g., social media usage) may impact the next generation of adolescents is necessary. Further, the United States Department of Education acknowledges problems in policy and instruction when confronted with blatant acts of violence like school shootings (Federal Commission on School Safety; FCSS, 2018), but the entity has failed to appropriately respond to racism. Revamped policies surrounding school shootings indicate a need to monitor shared online spaces that could facilitate cyberbullying as it relates to school climate (FCSS, 2018). This admission of the FCSS relates to a gap in the literature, as schools may need to consider how social media impacts students in the context of their education.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Understanding the relation between perceptions of school climate and how students may respond to microaggressions on social media may help establish safe environments for students at school, as research suggests that exposure to online racial discrimination is associated with lower academic achievement, stress, depression and anxiety symptoms, and suicide ideation among adolescents (Tynes et al., 2008; Huynh, 2013; Madubata, 2019; Tynes et al., 2019). As part of the current study, I aimed to examine how perceptions of school connectedness, knowledge of school policy, social media rumination, and perceptions of offensiveness impact bystander behavior when witnessing a microaggression perpetrated by a peer on a social media platform (i.e., Instagram).

Drawing from Darley and Latané (1968), people witnessing an emergency situation and how they evaluate that situation can predict how they intervene, and this study aims to address how this theory may extend to online environments. Adolescents may notice problematic

behavior on social media (e.g., microaggressive post) and interpret it as offensive enough to be an emergency, or at least severe enough that they may need to intervene if someone is hurt by the post. Darley and Latané (1968) also pose that assuming responsibility is part of the thought process for intervening, and this may be related to maintaining a positive school environment. Therefore, those who feel more connected to school may feel responsible for helping others feel connected like them. Knowing how to intervene is another aspect of the bystander effect, and knowledge of school policy could be a factor for teaching adolescents how to handle these online situations. However, adolescents who are not aware of their school policy or do not know about their school's policies may choose not to intervene because the expectations of them are not clear. Finally, social media rumination may also predict why adolescents intervene, because those who perceive more benefits than costs to intervening may be more likely to act on a microaggressive post.

I hypothesized that higher perceptions of offensiveness, school connectedness, school policy knowledge, and less social media rumination would positively predict intention to intervene in response to an online microaggression. On one hand, I hypothesized that individuals would be less likely to intervene when witnessing an online microaggression when they report lower perceptions offensiveness, less school connectedness, less knowledge of their school's policies, and more rumination. On the other hand, individuals would be more likely to intervene when they report greater feelings of offensiveness, greater school connectedness, knowledge of their school's policies, and less rumination.

Research suggests that there is a negative relation between school connectedness and experiences of peer victimization (La Salle et al., 2016; O'Brennan & Furlong, 2010), indicating that greater feelings of school connectedness are associated with more supportive school

environments. This evidence informs the above hypothesis, as students reporting more feelings of connection and support at school may be more likely to intervene in response to microaggressive behaviors when compared to students who feel less connected to their school, because they may want to maintain a supportive environment. Related to the hypothesis about school policy, knowledge about one's school policies may positively impact a decision to intervene. Research suggests that adolescents often feel overwhelmed or confused about their responsibility for what steps to take in a bullying or microaggressive situation (Bauman et al., 2020). Students' awareness of policy may address this problem, particularly if the policy lists consequences and steps students can take in response (Bauman et al., 2020).

Finally, given what we know about social media rumination, individuals who want to create a certain image online may thoroughly think through the consequences of their actions on social media and how others perceive them (Hynes et al., 2020). Further, the presence of their peers online and the need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) may be associated with feeling as though their school environment is extended online, as adolescents who have a higher need to belong may present themselves differently on social media than their counterparts with less need to belong (Wang et al, 2018). This dynamic could then impact how one reacts to a microaggressive social media post, as rumination about their social media presence (e.g., wanting to be accepted by their peers and maintain social bonds) may decrease the likelihood that they intervene online.

CHAPTER III: METHODS

Design

I aimed to examine how several independent variables impact participants' reported bystander behaviors following microaggressions committed on a social media platform. Specifically, I explored perceived offensiveness, school connectedness, awareness of school policy, and social media rumination as predictor variables and bystander behavior (i.e., would intervene or not) as an outcome variable.

Participants

I recruited potential adolescent participants from high schools. Given the results of a power analysis for a .08 effect size with a power of 0.8 (Faul et al., 2009), 134 adolescents participated in the study. Informed consent and parent permission were obtained prior to their participation.

Measures

Demographic Survey

Demographic data were collected regarding participants' age, grade, race/ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. Specifically, age, grade, race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and zipcode of high school or home address were entered by participants in an open-response format.

School Connectedness

The *School Connectedness* subscale of the *Georgia School Climate Survey* (La Salle, 2017) was used to measure participants' perceptions of their school connectedness, an aspect of school climate that focuses on personal feelings about the school environment. This 5-item subscale includes items that address connectedness (e.g., "I like school") and they are listed in Appendix A. These items are rated on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*)

to 4 (*strongly agree*). There is support for adequate reliability and validity of this measure ($\alpha = .74$; La Salle, 2017). For the current study, reliability was acceptable ($\alpha = .77$).

Social Media Rumination

The *Social Media Rumination Scale* (SMRS; Parris et al., 2020) measures the degree to which participants think or worry about social media activities (e.g., “I worry about what my social media posts say about who I am”). This reliable 12-item scale ($\alpha = .88$; Parris et al., 2020; Hynes et al., 2020) prompts respondents to rate their behaviors on a 4-point Likert scale 1 (*never*) to 4 (*almost always*). See Appendix B. Prior research suggests that this measure is valid, as it relates to psychological distress and social media usage (Parris et al., 2020; Hynes et al., 2020). For the current study, reliability was acceptable ($\alpha = .90$).

Bystander Behavior

For the purpose of the current study, I created the *Bystander Behavior Scale* to assess the degree to which participants would intervene in response to a microaggressive situation (e.g., “I would send a direct message to the person to tell them that their post is inappropriate”). See Appendix C. These items were created based on common social media behaviors, and some items were inspired by the *General Social Media Usage* subscale from the *Media and Technology Usage and Attitudes Scale* (Rosen et al., 2013; e.g., mention of liking, commenting on social media posts). Respondents were prompted to indicate if they would respond to the post by choosing “Keep scrolling and not respond” or “Respond to the post.” If participants indicated they would respond, they were prompted with the five items to which they reported “yes” or “no” regarding whether or not they would use the listed responses. The measure also includes an open-ended item that assessed other actions participants might have taken when encountering the presented microaggressive situation to further explore what responses participants might engage

in that are not included in the previous items. These data were examined using qualitative methods. For the current study, reliability was acceptable ($\alpha = .63$).

Offensiveness

Participants were asked to rate the degree to which they found each social media post offensive (i.e., “rate to degree to which you think this post is offensive, rude, or insulting”). They were prompted to complete this item for each social media post using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The mean of ratings for all social media posts accounted for an overall *Offensiveness Score* of each post. This method is consistent with procedures followed in other research that has examined participant reactions to microaggressive behaviors (Banks et al., 2020; Banks & Landau, 2019).

Awareness of School Policy

I also created the *School Policy Awareness Scale* to assess awareness of school policy. This 12-item measure is on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) and assesses the degree to which participants know about their school’s policy (e.g., “My school has clear policies about online conduct,” “I know how to access my school’s policies”). An “I do not know” option is included for all items. See Appendix D. As there is no existing policy awareness scale targeted at online discrimination, this scale was created using terms aimed at awareness, a concept used in some studies assessing school or campus policy (Brown et al., 2016; Asio et al., 2020). For the current study, participants’ responses were coded as 1 (i.e., indicated their level of awareness from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*) or 0 (i.e., indicated they did not know), and reliability was acceptable ($\alpha = .82$).

Procedure

I contacted high school principals to request that they allow me to send the current study's survey to be sent to students at their school. School principals who allowed me to recruit their students received a letter to disseminate to all parents/guardians. This letter described the purpose of the study and indicated that they could opt their adolescent out of the study by contacting me. One week after this letter was disseminated, participants were recruited via an email they received from their school that invited them to participate in the study and included the Qualtrics survey link. One high school and one middle school were recruited using this opt-out procedure.

Two school districts requested an opt-in method. So, instead of granting permission for their adolescent to receive the survey by not responding, parents received a letter from their school principal that described the purpose of the study and indicated they could opt-in their adolescent to the study by returning a signed letter of consent or responding to the email with their adolescent's name. Participants whose parents opted them into the study received an email with the Qualtrics link to complete the survey.

I also recruited participants by posting a flyer on my social media (i.e., Instagram, Facebook, Twitter) for parents to opt their adolescent into the study (see Appendix G). This flyer was also physically displayed in local community settings (e.g., churches, coffee shops).

Participants whose parents/guardians provided permission in one of the ways described above first viewed an assent form and selected the "next" button to participate in the study. The first of four social media posts appeared in random order on the next page. Participants had 30 seconds to review the post before the next page was displayed. At this time, participants were prompted to rate how offensive they thought the post was on a scale of 1 to 7 before completing

the *Bystander Behavior Scale*. For each social media post, participants responded to the offensiveness item and completed the *Bystander Behavior Scale*, indicating “yes” or “no” if they would intervene on the post. Finally, participants completed the *School Policy Awareness Scale* and indicated on a scale of 1 to 7 how aware they are about aspects of school policy and the *Social Media Rumination Scale* and indicate on a scale of 1 to 4 how often they engage in worries about social media, each of which were counterbalanced and randomized to mitigate order effects. When all items were completed, participants viewed a debriefing page and were able to enter a raffle for the chance to win one of 10 \$10 Amazon gift cards or Apple AirPods.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Analytic Plan

The analytic plan for this study was to use a multiple regression model, with the *School Connectedness* subscale scores, *School Policy Awareness Scale* scores, *Social Media Rumination Scale* scores, and the *Offensiveness Scale* scores entered as predictors. Participants' *Bystander Behavior Scale* total score was entered into the analysis as an outcome variable.

To assess the qualitative data obtained from the *Bystander Behavior Scale* (i.e., “Are there other things you might do in response to the post?”), the researcher utilized a Grounded Theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) by first reading responses and indicating general themes, then analyzing those themes to understand specific categories within the themes. The researcher created a codebook and all qualitative responses about bystander behavior and school policy were be coded by trained research assistants. Interrater reliability was assessed and deemed acceptable at 90%.

Positionality Statement

The positionality of the researchers are of note. The primary researcher identifies as a cisgender white woman. One coder identifies as cisgender Latina woman, and the second coder identifies as a cisgender, biracial, Hispanic/Latin American woman. These three researchers are graduate students at a predominantly white institution. The coders are in their first year of graduate school, and this is their first experience analyzing qualitative data. The primary researcher served as a member of a lab that dedicated most of her time to leading a group of undergraduates in facilitating and coding focus groups. The chair of the project identifies as a Black woman and assistant professor in psychology. She has conducted a significant amount of reserch surrounding the microaggressive experiences of individuals in schools. The positionality

of the researchers was acknowledged throughout analyses, and the researchers discussed the interpretation of results given their identities.

Preliminary Analyses

I conducted preliminary analyses and cleaned data before addressing the primary research questions. First, I assigned codes to demographic variables. For gender, participants who identified as woman/girl were assigned 1 ($n = 97$), boy/man assigned 2 ($n = 28$), and those identifying as gender fluid, nonbinary, or they/the, were assigned 3 ($n = 9$). For race, participants who identified as Black were assigned 1 ($n = 16$), Latino/x/Hispanic assigned 2 ($n = 12$), Asian assigned 3 ($n = 12$), multiracial assigned 4 ($n = 15$), and white assigned 5 ($n = 75$). Four participants did not report their race. Participants who identified their sexuality as LGBTQIA+ were assigned 1 ($n = 44$) and heterosexual assigned 2 ($n = 78$), and 12 participants did not report their sexuality. Participants reported their current grade level, with 21 in eighth grade, 25 in ninth grade, 19 in tenth grade, 37 in eleventh grade, and 32 in twelfth grade. Participants' age ranged from 14 to 18 ($M = 15.84$, $SD = 1.38$). Table 2 displays the means, standard deviations, and Person product-moment correlations among each variable.

I conducted analyses to assess data normality for the variables of interest. Participants' ratings on the *Offensiveness* measure were normally distributed with a kurtosis of 0.06 ($SE = 0.42$) and a mean of 5.37 ($SD = 1.05$). Then *Policy Awareness Scale* was also normally distributed with a kurtosis of -0.19 ($SE = .61$) and a mean of 4.32 ($SD = 1.20$). Participants' ratings on the *Social Media Rumination Scale* (Parris et al., 2020) was normally distributed with a kurtosis of 0.09 ($SE = .42$) and a mean of 1.93 ($SD = 0.63$). Participants' rating on the *School Connectedness Scale* (La Salle, 2017) was normally distributed with a kurtosis of -0.54 ($SE = 0.42$) and a mean of 2.73 ($SD = 0.66$). See Table 1. The most highly correlated variables were

intervening and offensiveness, $r = .39, p < .001$, while social media rumination and offensiveness were also significantly correlated, $r = .31, p < .001$. Social media rumination was also significantly correlated with school connectedness, $r = -.22, p = .002$ and intervening, $r = .24, p = .003$. No other correlations between variables were significant. See Table 1.

Primary Analyses

Quantitative

I hypothesized that higher reports of school connectedness, school policy knowledge, higher perceptions of offensiveness and less social media rumination would positively predict adolescents' intention to intervene on an online microaggression. I analyzed these data using a hierarchical multiple regression model, with the *School Connectedness* subscale (La Salle, 2017), *School Policy Awareness Scale*, *Social Media Rumination Scale* (Parris et al., 2020), and the *Offensiveness Scale* entered into the analysis as predictors. The *Bystander Behavior* scale was entered into the analysis as the outcome variable. Connectedness, policy awareness, social media rumination, and offensiveness explained a significant proportion of variance in participant reports of intervention on a microaggressive social media post, $R^2 = .17, F(4, 129) = 6.45, p < .001$. Although the overall model was significant, offensiveness explained most of the variance in participants' decision to intervene. Specifically, the degree to which participants found the post offensive positively predicted the degree to which they would intervene, $b = 0.11, t(129) = 4.15, p < .001$. Regarding the other variables, neither social media rumination, $b = 0.07, t(129) = 1.45, p = .15$, policy awareness, $b = -0.04, t(129) = -0.34, p = .74$, nor school connectedness, $b = .01, t(129) = 0.26, p = .79$, significantly predicted the degree to which participants would intervene. These results are presented in Table 2.

Post-Hoc Analyses

Because the *Offensiveness Scale* surfaced as a strong predictor, I conducted additional analyses for this composite. Because individuals holding marginalized identities may interpret microaggressions differently than those holding dominant identities (Banks & Landau, 2019), I examined race and sexuality as variables that may impact how participants evaluated offensiveness. Participants who reported identification as being LGBTQIA+ ($M = 5.84$, $SD = .89$) rated the posts significantly more offensive than their heterosexual counterparts ($M = 5.14$, $SD = 1.04$), $t(120) = 3.76$, $p < .001$. There were no significant differences of ratings of offensiveness based on racial identity.

Participants who were prompted to indicate what action they would take on the *Bystander Behavior Scale* after answering “yes” on the intervention item most often indicated they would report the post to a teacher or school administrator ($M = 1.50$, $SD = 0.37$) and least often that they would send a direct message to the poster to tell them their post is inappropriate ($M = 1.05$, $SD = 0.10$). Participants also indicated that they would send a direct message to others who may be offended by the post ($M = 1.39$, $SD = 0.44$), comment publicly to say that the post is inappropriate ($M = 1.20$, $SD = 0.33$), and comment publicly to show support to those who may be offended ($M = 1.34$, $SD = 0.34$). Interestingly, these quantitative results conflict with the qualitative reports of participants’ hypothetical actions toward the the person who shared the post. Noted below, participants were most likely to report that they would directly respond to the poster.

Qualitative

The qualitative data obtained from the *Bystander Behavior Scale* (i.e., “Are there other things you might do in response to the post?”), was analyzed using Grounded Theory

(Corbin & Strauss, 2015) by first reading responses and identifying general themes, then analyzing those themes to understand specific categories within them. I created a codebook and all qualitative responses about bystander behavior and school policy were coded by trained research assistants. Interrater reliability was assessed and was deemed acceptable at 90%. Across the four scenarios, there were 154 written responses.

Directly respond. Participants' responses were coded as "directly respond" when they indicated they would direct message, repost, or comment on the presented Instagram post. Thirty participants indicated they would educate the poster (e.g., use facts or resources) when responding. For example, one participant indicated they "would point out that adhering to colorblind standards, it invalidates every person of color's experiences with racism or prejudice." Four participants indicated they would argue with the poster when responding. For example, one participant indicated they would "argue with those in the comment section who think that being gay is *phase* when it's not." Six participants indicated they would ask the poster to remove the post when responding. For example, one participant indicated. "I would ask the person to take the story down." Thirty-eight participants indicated they would express an opinion to the poster (i.e., agree or disagree) when responding. Interestingly, the only post in which participants said they would agree with the poster when responding was in response to the colorblind post ($n = 10$), and 28 participants indicated they would express an opinion disagreeing with the poster. For example, one participant indicated they would "tell them [the poster] their post was extremely homophobic and rude." Three participants indicated they would repost the original post and add an opinion when responding. For example, one participant indicated they would "repost and try to make other people comment." One participant indicated they would use humor with the poster

when responding. For example, they indicated they would “most likely send a message that is humorous but still telling them to stop.”

Indirect action. Participants’ responses were coded as “indirect action” when they indicated they would block, unfollow, or report the poster. Ten participants indicated they would block the poster. Some participants indicated simply blocking, while others indicated blocking after responding. For example, one participant indicated they would “most likely block the person after I respond.” Twelve participants indicated they would unfollow the poster. Twenty-three participants indicated they would report the poster to the application (i.e., Instagram). One participant indicated they would post something else and “bring further attention to it, targeting people who have the same agenda to bring people together.”

Talking with someone outside of social media. Participants’ responses were coded as “talking with someone else outside of social media” when they indicated they would complain, discuss, or bring up the post in some capacity to someone in a way other than via social media. One participant indicated they would talk with family. For example, one participant indicated, “Honestly I would probably complain about it to my family.” Nine participants indicated they would talk with friends. For example, one participant indicated they would “share it with my friends and discuss how wrong we think it is privately with each other.” Three participants indicated they would talk with school personnel. For example, one participant indicated that after checking with the poster if they meant to be offensive, they “would tell them it’s not cool and then would tell my school staff.”

Feelings/opinions expressed and no action. Participants’ responses were coded as “feelings/opinions expressed and no action” when they shared their opinion or feeling about the post but did not indicate any action. Seven participants shared a general opinion about the post.

For example, one participant indicated they “feel like this depends on who the person is and whether or not they actually think it is a *phase*.” Four participants shared an unsupportive opinion about the post. For example, one participant indicated they would “question why I follow them.”

Check poster’s page. Participants’ responses were coded as “check the poster’s page” when they indicated they would review the poster’s page after seeing the post. Two participants provided this response. For example, one participant indicated they “would probably see [their] other medias, collecting evidence of racism to ban their accounts.”

Action after repeated offense. Participants’ responses were coded as “action after repeated offense” when they indicated they would take action if they notice a similar post by the poster again. Two participants indicated they would unfollow the poster if they notice a similar post by the person again. For example, one participant indicated “If the behavior continued or the poster was unreceptive to my feedback, I would most likely unfollow/unfriend them.”

No or nothing. Participants’ responses were coded as “no or nothing” when they answered with “no,” “N/A,” “-,” or a blank space ($n = 113$). Three participants answered with a reason for responding with “no.” For example, one participant indicated “No, but I wanted to explain [my] reasoning for this. Teachers and a lot of parents will not take anything online seriously, or say they don’t care, so there is really no point.”

Yes. Participants’ responses were coded as “yes” when they indicated “yes” and nothing else. Eight participants provided this response.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

Adolescents report frequently using social media (Anderson & Jiang, 2018), and there is evidence that some online activity is stressful, as adolescents have reported engaging in cyberbullying and relating feelings of stress to social media (Radovic et al., 2017). Further, some scholars argue that school bullying policies are behind in protecting marginalized students, lacking specific and appropriate language (Spade, 2013). Some of this cyberbullying may include microaggressions, insults we know that have harmful effects on children and adolescents (Tynes et al., 2013). In this study, participants reported their school connectedness, school policy awareness, and social media rumination then viewed four microaggressive social media posts. Participants indicated their ratings of offensiveness for each post and if they would intervene on that respective post. If they reported that they would intervene, participants were then able to provide an open-ended response of what this intervention might look like.

I aimed to investigate predictors of adolescents intervening on microaggressive social media posts. Specifically, I predicted that higher rating of offensiveness, school connectedness, and school policy knowledge, and less social media rumination would positively predict adolescents' report that they would intervene in response to microaggressive social media posts. Though these independent variables as a group predicted adolescents' intention to intervene, supporting the general hypothesis, perception of offensiveness was the only predictor that explained a significant portion of the variance in choosing to intervene.

The quantitative findings of this study are consistent with Darley and Latané's (1968) notion that a bystander interpreting a situation as an emergency (i.e., offensive) leads to intervening on the situation. Though I hypothesized that this offensiveness may be perceived as an emergency to maintain a positive school environment, the emergency may actually be for

adolescents to maintain a safe online space. This finding is important to note, as adolescents' ratings of school connectedness did not significantly predict their choice to intervene. However, their rating of offensiveness did, which could indicate the state of emergency was interpreted in a broader context (e.g., social media).

Other insignificant findings of this study are necessary to note as well. Social media rumination was hypothesized to negatively predict intervention, and it did not explain a significant proportion of the variance in intervening behavior. There may have been factors that influenced participant ratings of social media rumination. For example, the simulation aspect of this study (i.e., prompting participants to think about a "friend from school" rather than them actually seeing a friend they know from school on their timeline) may have impacted the relation between social media rumination and intervening behavior, as the level or type of rumination occurring while viewing a "fake" post could be different than viewing an actual timeline. For example, there could already be negative or positive feelings about the individual who is posting. Further, how well an individual knows the poster may be a factor that could impact rumination and intervening, as well as the identities that the person viewing the post holds. Further understanding how these factors of rumination are involved in social media activity may help better explain how intervening behavior occurs.

School policy awareness is another notable insignificant predictor of intervening on the microaggressive social media posts. The *School Policy Awareness Scale* and the *Bystander Behavior Scale* were created for the purposes of this study, and the items in these scales may have interacted to impact results. For example, some items on the *Bystander Behavior Scale* may better relate to social media rumination (e.g., comment publicly on the post and say that it is

inappropriate), and one item might be considered an aspect of school policy (i.e., tell an adult at school).

Insignificant findings may also have been impacted by the identities targeted in the microaggressive social media posts. Racial and sexuality identities were the two identities included in these posts, though as Sue and colleagues (2007) pose, any marginalized identity can be targeted through microaggressions. It could be the case that school connectedness, school policy awareness, and social media rumination might predict participants intervening on posts targeting other identities.

It should be noted that although not significant for racial identities, the difference in ratings of offensiveness was significant based on sexuality identities. Researchers have found that microaggressions based on race and sexuality can happen so frequently that targets of microaggressions experience significant exhaustion and stress over the matter (Smith et al., 2016; Garvey et al., 2014). On one hand, adolescents who identify as LGBTQIA+ likely reported these social media posts as more offensive, because they can more easily recognize microaggressive behavior. In other words, adolescents may be receiving and witnessing microaggressive social media behavior so frequently that they can spontaneously identify these posts as harmful. On the other hand, although not statistically significant, adolescents who identified as Black, Latino/x/Hispanic, and Asian rated the microaggressive posts as less offensive than their white counterparts. These findings are necessary to note, because this evidence points to the importance of considering how identities can impact the viewpoints of individuals. In turn, discerning how these viewpoints are different can aid in understanding how we can prevent and intervene on victimization based on identity.

The qualitative findings of this study demonstrate that adolescents are aware that microaggressive social media posts can be harmful. Further, some participants indicated a need to create a space that is consistent with their values, like blocking an individual who repeatedly posts microaggressive content. Further, consistent with Bussey and colleagues' (2020) findings surrounding individuals who intervene when witnessing cyberbullying, some participants indicated they might act aggressively toward the perpetrator, using language like, "give them a piece of my mind." Also consistent with the literature (Rasmussen et al., 2018), participants reported moral reasons for intervening on the posts, like citing that the post is "inappropriate," "rude," or "invalidates" experiences of others. The quantitative findings on rumination predicting intervention were not significant. However, qualitatively, there is some evidence that adolescents are contemplating the image of others' social media activity. For example, multiple participants indicated they would check the poster's page to see if they are frequent offenders of microaggressions. This evidence may be indicative that adolescents are spending more than a few minutes deciding how their sense of identity is consistent with those they follow on social media. Though these qualitative findings help provide some insight as to the thought processes of adolescents when encountering microaggressive social media posts, there is still much more to be understood about why an adolescent might take action.

The qualitative findings are also consistent with the idea that bystanders of cyberbullying are likely to intervene when they feel accountable (DiFranzo et al., 2018). For example, participants indicated responding to the poster with facts and opinions that educated the poster about their harmful comments. Although, this accountability, according to DiFranzo and colleagues (2018), is most impactful when bystanders take personal responsibility. Participants who responded they would unfollow, block, report, and speak with people outside of social

media may have felt less personally responsible for intervening. Further, there is some evidence that adolescents can label microaggressions as offensive (Banks et al., 2020), and the qualitative findings in this study point to more evidence that adolescents understand microaggressions are offensive. For example, participants indicated that someone saying that being gay is a “phase” and that colorblindness can be “invalidating.”

Bystander Theory helped inform the research questions of this study. My findings are consistent with Darley and Latané’s (1968) proposal that individuals perceiving the situation as an emergency, or offensive, warrants intervention. However, the responsibility piece of Darley and Latané’s (1968) work may not involve school environment or connectedness as originally hypothesized. As noted, most participants answered “I don’t know” to at least one item on the *Policy Awareness Scale*, limiting the interpretation of how policy knowledge and awareness is impacting bystander behavior. Although, knowing that adolescents may not have their school policy in mind at all, or at least very little, is informative of how this study can aid in improving school practices.

Implications

Understanding how adolescents respond to microaggressive social media behavior is helpful in development of prevention and intervention efforts for victimization and bullying. One participant indicated that adults (e.g., parents and teachers) “do not care” what happens online. Sending the message to adolescents that adults, especially school personnel, in fact care how students engage with each other on social media may prevent online victimization or provide an opening for adolescents to talk with a trusted adult about online victimization. To send this message, school districts may implement trainings for school staff.

Prevention and intervention efforts to increase adolescents' and school personnel's knowledge about microaggressive behavior and the impacts of microaggression may increase adolescents' sense of responsibility to intervene. In a study conducted at a predominantly white institution, undergraduate students who received bystander training about microaggressions were more likely to sustain knowledge about microaggressions than their counterparts that received typical ethics training (Banks et al., 2020). This training includes similar discussions Byrd (2018) utilizes, such as the definition of microaggression and common strategies to intervene on microaggressions as a bystander. Some of the strategies discussed by Byrd (2018) are consistent with participants' open responses to how they would have intervened on the microaggressive social media post. For example, using facts and/or statistics to call out a microaggression is cited by Byrd (2018) as an effective strategy.

Though awareness of school policy did not significantly predict adolescents intervening on microaggressive social media posts, it should be noted that more than 50% of participants answered "I don't know" to at least one question about their school policy. These results indicate that even if school policy addresses strategies to prevent or intervene on discrimination, adolescents may not have a clear understanding or know where to find this policy. Efforts to encourage students to access and read their school policy may increase students' sense of responsibility relevant to discrimination. These efforts may include openly talking about codes of conduct, educators regularly checking in on students' understanding of discrimination, and training of educators on microaggressions.

As offensiveness explained the most variance in participants' decision to intervene, exploring why this occurred could include many angles. There are differences in offensiveness based on sexuality, such that LGBTQIA+ participants rated the posts as more offensive than

heterosexual participants. However, participants of color did not rate the posts' offensiveness significantly different than white participants. That LGBTQIA+ participants hold a marginalized identity, a commonality with participants of color, it may be expected that their ratings would be similar. Carroll (1998) discusses that racism occurs so frequently that it is ubiquitous, a phenomenon they coined as *mundane extreme environmental stress*. Results from this study suggest that there may be a difference between how often microaggressions against LGBTQIA+ individuals occur and how they are interpreted and microaggressions against People of Color. The posts used in this study may also be a factor in these interpretations, as labeling a gay man as a "waste" and being gay as a "phase" might not be as direct as a colorblind statement that "We are all Americans." Understanding nuances of microaggressions, and respecting the interpretation of the person holding the targeted identity may be an important component for informing prevention and intervention efforts.

Limitations and Future Directions

There are several limitations to this study that warrant discussion. First, the sample of participants in this study included mostly adolescents of the same region, a suburban Midwest town. Generalizing the quantitative results should be done with caution, as this sample likely does not represent the national or international population of adolescents. Future researchers may consider recruiting a more diverse sample to understand how a more diverse group of adolescents would respond to microaggressive social media posts. Second, this study relied on self-report measures and used an operational definition of intervening that was limited to "respond to this post" that may not have captured the most accurate allyship behavior. I aimed to examine behavior using self-report measures, and this method may not accurately capture what an adolescent might actually do when scrolling through their social media timeline. Although

prompted to think of the post as from someone from school and with the account labeled as “friendfromschool123,” this stimulus was simply a simulation. The intention-behavior gap (i.e., following through on a goal you intend to achieve; Sheeran & Webb, 2016) may be a factor, as individuals who intend to engage in a behavior (e.g., intervening on a microaggressive social media post) may not actually follow through with that behavior (Sheeran & Webb, 2016). Research demonstrates that when individuals have an actionable goal and monitor progress toward that goal and intention-behavior gap decreases (Sheeran & Webb, 2016), further pointing to the need for education and intervention about microaggressions. Also worth mentioning, participants who answered that they would intervene, yet responded to the open-ended question in support of the colorblind post, might not be considered allies, which points to the limitation of how “ally” was defined for this study. Although endorsement of any type of intervention was considered “ally behavior” for this study, we know that colorblind attitudes and comments are harmful to People of Color (Sue et al., 2007). Future researchers may utilize behavioral observations or experimental designs to more accurately depict bystander behavior and consider methods of assessing intention of intervening. Third, another limitation of this study is lack of access to policies at participants’ schools. A thorough analysis of school policies may help future researchers understand specific areas of improvement that may encourage more appropriate bystander behavior. Further, many participants selected “I don’t know” on the *School Policy Awareness Scale*, indicating there may be a need to look deeper into how effective school policies are. Fourth, the *Bystander Behavior Scale* and *Offensiveness Score* had lower alpha values than desired. This lack of reliability may have impacted results, such that participants may not have answered as consistently as possible. Given the *Bystander Behavior Scale* was created for the purposes of this study, future researchers may consider piloting this scale and using factor

analysis for the items. For the *Offensiveness Score*, reliability may have been impacted by the type of post that participants were rating. Specifically, racial microaggressions may be interpreted differently than microaggressions based on sexuality. Further, participants holding identities that were targeted in the posts are not necessarily allies, as their interpretation and action (or lack there of) following their viewing of the post is objectively different than a participant who views the post and does not hold the marginalized identity being targeted. In other words, Black participants who viewed the colorblind post and chose to intervene were not being allies; they were intervening for the group of which they are included. The same may be said for participants holding marginalized sexuality identities. Fifth, this study utilized Instagram as the only social media platform. Adolescents report using several social media platforms such as Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter, Facebook, and others (Hynes et al., 2020). Each social media platform provides a unique experience, and adolescents may respond to posters differently based on the platform. For example, Snapchat is a more direct way of posting, as sending photos and videos is the primary method of use. Future researchers may explore how adolescents' responses to microaggressive posts depend on different social media platforms.

Conclusion

My goal for this study was to begin exploring predictors of adolescents' bystander behavior on social media. Specifically, I hypothesized that offensiveness of a microaggressive social media post, school policy awareness, social media rumination, and school connectedness would significantly predict if adolescents choose to intervene on the post. Adolescents who rated the posts as more offensive were more likely to intervene, and school policy awareness, social media rumination, and school connectedness did not significantly predict intervention. These results provide information about how important understanding the impacts of microaggressions

(e.g., offensiveness) could empower bystanders to intervene when witnessing a microaggression. Increasing children's, adolescents', and school personnel's awareness of how harmful microaggressions are could lead to a safer and more positive school environment, as individuals may be able to better recognize when a comment or action is offensive, therefore intervening.

REFERENCES

- Abreu, R. L., & Kenny, M. C. (2018). Cyberbullying and LGBTQ youth: A systematic literature review and recommendations for prevention and intervention. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma, 11*(1), 81–97. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40653-017-0175-7>
- Alderman, E. M., & Breuner, C. C. (2019). Unique needs of the adolescent. *Pediatrics, 144*(6). <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2019-3150>
- American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force. Are zero tolerance policies effective in the schools?: An evidentiary review and recommendations. (2008). *American Psychologist, 63*(9), 852–862. <https://doi-org.libproxy.lib.ilstu.edu/10.1037/0003-066X.63.9.852>
- Anderson, M., & Jiang, J. (2018). Teens, social media & technology 2018. *Pew Research Center, 31*, 2018.
- Asio, J. M. R., A Bayucca, S., & Jimenez, E. (2020). Child protection policy awareness of teachers and responsiveness of the school: Their relationship and implications. *Shanlax International Journal of Education, 9*(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v9i1.3384>
- Banks, B., Adams, D., Williams, C., & Piña, D. (2020). Preliminary investigation of efforts to improve awareness of racial microaggressions on campus. *Journal of Underrepresented & Minority Progress, 4*(1), 20-43.
- Banks, B. M., & Cicciarelli, K. (2019). Microaggressive classroom language and diminished cognitive functioning. *Journal for Multicultural Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JME-05-2019-0039>

- Banks, B. M., Cicciarelli, K. S., & Pavon, J. (2020). It offends us too! An exploratory analysis of high school-based microaggressions. *Contemporary School Psychology*, 1-13.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40688-020-00300-1>
- Banks, B. M. & Landau, S. E. (2021). Cognitive effects of racial microaggression directed at Black college women. *Journal of Negro Education*.
<https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/820521>.
- Banks, B. M., & Landau, S. E. (2019). Offensive or not: Examining the impact of racial microaggressions. *Journal of Underrepresented & Minority Progress*, 3(2), 51-65.
<https://doi.org/10.32674/jump.v3i2.1808>
- Bartolo, M. G., Palermiti, A. L., Servidio, R., Musso, P., & Costabile, A. (2019). Mediating processes in the relations of parental monitoring and school climate with cyberbullying: The role of moral disengagement. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 15(3), 568-594.
<https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.v15i3.1724>
- Bauman, S., Yoon, J., Iurino, C., & Hackett, L. (2020). Experiences of adolescent witnesses to peer victimization: The bystander effect. *Journal of School Psychology*, 80, 1-14.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2020.03.002>
- Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117(3), 497.
- Bliuc, A. M., Faulkner, N., Jakubowicz, A., & McGarty, C. (2018). Online networks of racial hate: A systematic review of 10 years of research on cyber-racism. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 87, 75-86. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.05.026>

- Booker, C. L., Kelly, Y. J., & Sacker, A. (2018). Gender differences in the associations between age trends of social media interaction and well-being among 10-15 year olds in the UK. *BMC Public Health, 18*(1), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-018-5220-4>
- Broderick, P. C., & Korteland, C. (2002). Coping style and depression in early adolescence: Relationships to gender, gender role, and implicit beliefs. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research, 46*(7-8), 201-213. <https://doi-org.libproxy.lib.ilstu.edu/10.1023/A:1019946714220>
- Brown, E. M., Henes, A. L., & Olson, L. T. (2016). E-cigarette policies on college campuses: Student use behaviors, awareness, and policy support. *Journal of Community Health: The Publication for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, 41*(6), 1110-1115. <https://doi-org.libproxy.lib.ilstu.edu/10.1007/s10900-016-0262-y>
- Bussey, K., Luo, A., Fitzpatrick, S., & Allison, K. (2020). Defending victims of cyberbullying: The role of self-efficacy and moral disengagement. *Journal of School Psychology, 78*, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2019.11.006>
- Byrd, C. M. (2018). Microaggressions self-defense: A role-playing workshop for responding to microaggressions. *Social Sciences, 7*(6), 96. <https://doi.org/10.20944/preprints201805.0113.v1>
- Caprara, G. V., Kanacri, B. P. L., Zuffianò, A., Gerbino, M., & Pastorelli, C. (2015). Why and how to promote adolescents' prosocial behaviors: Direct, mediated and moderated effects of the CEPIDEA school-based program. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 44*(12), 2211-2229. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-015-0293-1>

- Carroll, G. (1998). Mundane extreme environmental stress and African American families: A case for recognizing different realities. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 29(2), 271–284. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=psych&AN=1998-11873-004&authtype=shib&site=ehost-live&scope=site&custid=s8412973>
- Casale, S., & Fioravanti, G. (2018). Why narcissists are at risk for developing Facebook addiction: The need to be admired and the need to belong. *Addictive behaviors*, 76, 312-318. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2017.08.038>
- Cho, S., Crenshaw, K. W., & McCall, L. (2013). Toward a field of intersectionality studies: Theory, applications, and praxis. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 38(4), 785-810.
- Cohen, J., Guffey, S., Higgins-D'Alessandro, A., & Thapa, A. (2013). A review of school climate research. *Review of Educational Research*, 83(3), 357-385. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654313483907>
- Cohen, J., McCabe, L., Michelli, N. M., & Pickeral, T. (2009). School climate: Research, policy, practice, and teacher education. *Teachers college record*, 111(1), 180-213.
- Compton-Lilly, C. (2020). Microaggressions and macroaggressions across time: The longitudinal construction of inequality in schools. *Urban Education*, 55(8-9), 1315-1349. <https://doi.org/10.177/0042085919893751>
- Corbin, J. & Strauss, A. (2015). *Basics of Qualitative Research* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *u. Chi. Legal f.*, 139.

- Cyranowski, J. M., Frank, E., Young, E., & Shear, M. K. (2003). Adolescent onset of the gender difference in lifetime rates of major depression: A theoretical model. In M. E. Hertzig & E. A. Farber (Eds.), *Annual Progress in Child Psychiatry and Child Development: 2000–2001*. (pp. 383–398). Brunner-Routledge.
- Darley, J. M., & Latané, B. (1968). Bystander intervention in emergencies: Diffusion of responsibility. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 8, 377–383.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/h0025589>
- Dee, T. S., & Jacob, B. (2011). The impact of No Child Left Behind on student achievement. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 30(3), 418–446. <https://doi-org.libproxy.lib.ilstu.edu/10.1002/pam.20586>
- Dhir, A., Pallesen, S., Torsheim, T., & Andreassen, C. S. (2016). Do age and gender differences exist in selfie-related behaviours?. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 63, 549–555.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.05.053>
- DiFranzo, D., Taylor, S. H., Kazerooni, F., Wherry, O. D., & Bazarova, N. N. (2018, April). Upstanding by design: Bystander intervention in cyberbullying. In Proceedings of the 2018 CHI conference on human factors in computing systems (pp. 1–12).
<https://doi.org/10.1145/3173574.3173785>
- English, D., Lambert, S. F., Tynes, B. M., Bowleg, L., Zea, M. C., & Howard, L. C. (2020). Daily multidimensional racial discrimination among Black US American adolescents. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 66, 101068.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2019.101068>
- Eschmann, R. (2020). Unmasking racism: Students of color and expressions of racism in online spaces. *Social Problems*, 67(3), 418–436. <https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spz026>

- Espelage, D. L., Colbert, C. L., Holt, M. K., & Grills, A. E. (2016). School-based bullying: Definition, prevalence, etiology, outcomes, and preventive strategies. *Critical issues in school-based mental health: Evidence-based research, practice, and interventions*, 132-144.
- Evans, C. B., Smokowski, P. R., Rose, R. A., Mercado, M. C., & Marshall, K. J. (2018). Cumulative bullying experiences, adolescent behavioral and mental health, and academic achievement: An integrative model of perpetration, victimization, and bystander behavior. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 28(9), 2415-2428.
- Farr, R. H., Crain, E. E., Oakley, M. K., Cashen, K. K., & Garber, K. J. (2016). Microaggressions, feelings of difference, and resilience among adopted children with sexual minority parents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 45(1), 85-104.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-015-0353-6>
- Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Buchner, A., & Lang, A.-G. (2009). Statistical power analyses using G*Power 3.1: Tests for correlation and regression analyses. *Behavior Research Methods*, 41, 1149-1160.
- Federal Commission on School Safety. (2018). Final report of the federal commission on school safety. U.S. Departments of Education, Homeland Security, Health and Human Services, and Justice. <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/school-safety/school-safety-report.pdf>
- Fulginiti, A., Rhoades, H., Mamey, M. R., Klemmer, C., Srivastava, A., Weskamp, G., & Goldbach, J. T. (2020). Sexual minority stress, mental health symptoms, and suicidality among LGBTQ youth accessing crisis services. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 1-13.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-020-01354-3>

- Garvey, J. C., Taylor, J. L., & Rankin, S. (2014). An examination of campus climate for LGBTQ community college students. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 39(6), 527-541. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2013.861374>
- Gin, K. J., Martínez-Alemán, A. M., Rowan-Kenyon, H. T., & Hottell, D. (2017). Racialized aggressions and social media on campus. *Journal of College Student Development*, 58(2), 159-174. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2017.0013>
- Gonzalez, A., Peters, M. L., Orange, A., & Grigsby, B. (2017). The influence of high-stakes testing on teacher self-efficacy and job-related stress. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 47(4), 513-531. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2016.1214237>
- Grierson, A. B., Hickie, I. B., Naismith, S. L., & Scott, J. (2016). The role of rumination in illness trajectories in youth: linking trans-diagnostic processes with clinical staging models. *Psychological Medicine*, 46(12), 2467-2484. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033291716001392>
- Griffith, A. N., Hurd, N. M., & Hussain, S. B. (2019). "I didn't come to school for this": A qualitative examination of experiences with race-related stressors and coping responses among Black students attending a predominantly White institution. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 34(2), 115-139. <https://doi.org/10.177/04355841742983>
- Hall, W. J., & Chapman, M. V. (2018). The role of school context in implementing a statewide anti-bullying policy and protecting students. *Educational Policy*, 32(4), 507-539. <https://doi.org/10.1177/089504816637689>

- Hanurawan, F., Chusniyah, T., & Rahmawati, H. (2020, August). Developing a positive school climate to reduce aggression and cyber aggression of student in social media. In *1st Progress in Social Science, Humanities and Education Research Symposium (PSSHERS 2019)* (pp. 538-544). Atlantis Press.
- Hill, C., & Kearl, H. (2011). *Crossing the Line: Sexual Harassment at School*. American Association of University Women. 1111 Sixteenth Street NW, Washington, DC 20036.
- Holbein, J. B., & Ladd, H. F. (2017). Accountability pressure: Regression discontinuity estimates of how No Child Left Behind influenced student behavior. *Economics of Education Review*, 58, 55-67. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2017.03.005>
- Hoxmeier, J. C., Flay, B. R., & Acock, A. C. (2018). Control, norms, and attitudes: Differences between students who do and do not intervene as bystanders to sexual assault. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 33(15), 2379-2401. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260515625503>
- Huynh, V. W. (2012). Ethnic microaggressions and the depressive and somatic symptoms of Latino and Asian American adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 41(7), 831-846. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-012-9756-9>
- Hynes, K., Lannin, D., Kanter, J., Yazedjian, A., & Nauta, M. (2020). Do materialistic adolescents ruminate more over their social media?. *Youth & Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X20984172>
- Jennings, J. L., & Lauen, D. L. (2016). Accountability, inequality, and achievement: The effects of the No Child Left Behind act on multiple measures of student learning. *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, 2(5), 220-241.
- Kadzielski, M. A. (1977). Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972: Change or continuity. *JL & Educ.*, 6, 183.

- Keels, M., Durkee, M., & Hope, E. (2017). The psychological and academic costs of school-based racial and ethnic microaggressions. *American Educational Research Journal*, 54(6), 1316-1344. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831217722120>
- Kwong, D., & Davis, J. R. (2015). School climate for academic success: A multilevel analysis of school climate and student outcomes. *Journal of Research in Education*, 25(2), 68-81.
- La Salle, T. P. (2017). *Technical manual for the Georgia school climate survey suite*. Georgia Department of Education. Retrieved from www.gadoe.org
- La Salle, T. P., Parris, L., Morin, M., & Meyers, J. (2016, March). Deconstructing peer victimization: Relationships with connectedness, gender, grade, and race/ethnicity. In *School Psychology Forum* (Vol. 10, No. 1).
- Lilienfeld, S. O. (2017). Microaggressions: Strong claims, inadequate evidence. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 12(1), 138-169. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691616659391>
- Luca, M. (2019). Maladaptive rumination as a transdiagnostic mediator of vulnerability and outcome in psychopathology. *Journal of Clinical Medicine*, 8(3), 314. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jcm8030314>
- Lui, P. P., & Quezada, L. (2019). Associations between microaggression and adjustment outcomes: A meta-analytic and narrative review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 145(1), 45. <https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000172>
- Madubata, I., Spivey, L. A., Alvarez, G. M., Neblett, E. W., & Prinstein, M. J. (2019). Forms of racial/ethnic discrimination and suicidal ideation: a prospective examination of African American and Latinx Youth. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15374416.2019.1655756>

- Muris, P., Roelofs, J., Meesters, C., & Boomsma, P. (2004). Rumination and worry in nonclinical adolescents. *Cognitive Therapy and Research* 28(4), 539-554. <https://doi-org.libproxy.lib.ilstu.edu/10.1023/B:COTR.0000045563.66060.3e>
- Nadal, K. L., Griffin, K. E., Wong, Y., Davidoff, K. C., & Davis, L. S. (2017). The injurious relationship between racial microaggressions and physical health: Implications for social work. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, 26(1-2), 6-17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15313204.2016.1263813>
- Nolen-Hoeksema, S. (1991). Responses to depression and their effects on the duration of depressive episodes. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 100(4), 569–582. <http://doi.org/10.1037/0021-843X.100.4.569>
- Oberoi, A. K., & Trickett, E. J. (2018). Religion in the hallways: Academic performance and psychological distress among immigrant origin Muslim adolescents in high schools. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 61(3-4), 344-357. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12238>
- O’Brennan, L. M., & Furlong, M. J. (2010). Relations between students’ perceptions of school connectedness and peer victimization. *Journal of School Violence*, 9, 375–391. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220.2010.509009>
- Parris, L., Lannin, D. G., Hynes, K., & Yazedjian, A. (2020). Exploring social media rumination: Associations with bullying, cyberbullying, and distress. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. <https://doi.org/10.177/08820520946826>
- Pierce, C. (1970). Offensive mechanisms. In F. B. Barbour (Ed.) *The Black Seventies*, Porter Sargent Publisher. 265-282.

- Platt, L. F., & Lenzen, A. L. (2013). Sexual orientation microaggressions and the experience of sexual minorities. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *60*(7), 1011-1034.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2013.774878>
- Przybylski, A. K., Murayama, K., DeHaan, C. R., & Gladwell, V. (2013). Motivational, emotional, and behavioral correlates of fear of missing out. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *29*(4), 1841-1848. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2013.02.014>
- Radovic, A., Gmelin, T., Stein, B. D., & Miller, E. (2017). Depressed adolescents' positive and negative use of social media. *Journal of Adolescence*, *55*, 5-15.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2016.12.002>
- Rafferty, J., & Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health. (2018). Ensuring comprehensive care and support for transgender and gender-diverse children and adolescents. *Pediatrics*, *142*(4).
- Rasmussen, H. F., Ramos, M. C., Han, S. C., Pettit, C., & Margolin, G. (2018). How discrimination and perspective-taking influence adolescents' attitudes about justice. *Journal of Adolescence*, *62*, 70-81.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2017.11.005>
- Raudsepp, L., & Kais, K. (2019). Longitudinal associations between problematic social media use and depressive symptoms in adolescent girls. *Preventive Medicine Reports*, *15*, 100925. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmedr.2019.100925>
- Roberts, S. O., & Rizzo, M. T. (2020). The psychology of American racism. *American Psychologist*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000642>

- Rosen, L. D., Whaling, K., Carrier, L. M., Cheever, N. A., & Rökkum, J. (2013). The media and technology usage and attitudes scale: An empirical investigation. *Computers in Human Behavior, 29*(6), 2501-2511. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2013.06.006>
- Rowan-Kenyon, H. T., McCready, A. M., Alemán, A. M. M., & Barone, N. (2020). Measuring racist aggressions on social media and the effects on US college students of color: An instrument validation. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development, 1-17*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481756.2020.1827437>
- Scott, H., & Woods, H. C. (2018). Fear of missing out and sleep: Cognitive behavioural factors in adolescents' nighttime social media use. *Journal of Adolescence, 68*, 61-65. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2018.07.009>
- Sheeran, P., & Webb, T. L. (2016). The intention–behavior gap. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 10*(9), 503–518. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12265>
- Sinclair, K. O., Bauman, S., Poteat, V. P., Koenig, B., & Russell, S. T. (2012). Cyber and bias-based harassment: Associations with academic, substance use, and mental health problems. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 50*(5), 521-523. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2011.09.009>
- Smith, W. A., Mustaffa, J. B., Jones, C. M., Curry, T. J., & Allen, W. R. (2016). ‘You make me wanna holler and throw up both my hands!’: Campus culture, Black misandric microaggressions, and racial battle fatigue. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 29*(9), 1189-1209. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2016.1214296>

- Solórzano, D. G., & Huber, L. P. (2020). *Racial Microaggressions: Using Critical Race Theory to Respond to Everyday Racism*. Teachers College Press.
- Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2001). Critical race and LatCrit theory and method: Counter-storytelling. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 14(4), 471-495. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390110063365>
- Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), 23-44.
- Spade, D. (2013). Intersectional resistance and law reform. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 38(4), 1031-1055. <https://doi.org/10.1086/669574>
- Sterzing, P. R., Gartner, R. E., Woodford, M. R., & Fisher, C. M. (2017). Sexual orientation, gender, and gender identity microaggressions: Toward an intersectional framework for social work research. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, 26(1-2), 81-94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15313204.2016.1263819>
- Sue, D. W. (2010). *Microaggressions in everyday life: Race, gender, and sexual orientation*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Sue, D. W., Alsaidi, S., Awad, M. N., Glaeser, E., Calle, C. Z., & Mendez, N. (2019). Disarming racial microaggressions: Microintervention strategies for targets, White allies, and bystanders. *American Psychologist*, 74(1), 128. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000296>
- Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A., Nadal, K. L., & Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: implications for clinical practice. *American Psychologist*, 62(4), 271.

- Suldo, S. M., McMahan, M. M., Chappel, A. M., & Loker, T. (2012). Relationships between perceived school climate and adolescent mental health across genders. *School Mental Health, 4*(2), 69-80. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12310-012-9073-1>
- Thorisdottir, I. E., Sigurvinsdottir, R., Asgeirsdottir, B. B., Allegrante, J. P., & Sigfusdottir, I. D. (2019). Active and passive social media use and symptoms of anxiety and depressed mood among Icelandic adolescents. *Cyberpsychology Behavior and Social Networking, 22*(8), 535–542. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2019.0079>
- Thornberg, R., & Jungert, T. (2013). Bystander behavior in bullying situations: Basic moral sensitivity, moral disengagement and defender self-efficacy. *Journal of Adolescence, 36*(3), 475-483. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2013.02.003>
- Thornberg, R., Landgren, L., & Wiman, E. (2018). ‘It depends’: A qualitative study on how adolescent students explain bystander intervention and non-intervention in bullying situations. *School Psychology International, 39*(4), 400-415. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034318779225>
- Troy, M., & Sroufe, L. A. (1987). Victimization among preschoolers: Role of attachment relationship history. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 26*(2), 166-172.
- Twenge, J. M., & Martin, G. N. (2020). Gender differences in associations between digital media use and psychological well-being: evidence from three large datasets. *Journal of Adolescence, 79*, 91-102. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2019.12.018>
- Tynes, B. M., Giang, M. T., Williams, D. R., & Thompson, G. N. (2008). Online racial discrimination and psychological adjustment among adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 43*(6), 565-569. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2008.08.021>

- Tynes, B. M., Rose, C. A., & Markoe, S. L. (2013). Extending campus life to the Internet: Social media, discrimination, and perceptions of racial climate. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 6(2), 102. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033267>
- Tynes, B. M., Rose, C. A., & Williams, D. R. (2010). The development and validation of the online victimization scale for adolescents. *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, 4(2). Retrieved from <https://cyberpsychology.eu/article/view/4237/3282>
- Tynes, B. M., Willis, H. A., Stewart, A. M., & Hamilton, M. W. (2019). Race-related traumatic events online and mental health among adolescents of color. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 65(3), 371-377. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adohealth.2019.03.006>
- U.S. Department of Education (2001). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/107-110.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2017). *Federal laws*. Retrieved from <http://www.stopbullying.gov/laws/federal>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.). *Key components in state anti-bullying laws, policies, and regulations*. Retrieved from <http://www.stopbullying.gov/laws/key-components>
- Vannucci, A., & Ohannessian, C. M. (2019). Social media use subgroups differentially predict psychosocial well-being during early adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 48(8), 1469-1493. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-019-01060-9>
- Vogel, E. A., Rose, J. P., Roberts, L. R., & Eckles, K. (2014). Social comparison, social media, and self-esteem. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 3(4), 206. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000047>

- VonHoltz, L. A. H., Frasso, R., Golinkoff, J. M., Lozano, A. J., Hanlon, A., & Dowshen, N. (2018). Internet and social media access among youth experiencing homelessness: Mixed-methods study. *Journal of Medical Internet Research, 20*(5).
<https://doi.org/10.2196/jmir.9306>
- Wang, P., Lei, L., Yu, G., & Li, B. (2020). Social networking sites addiction and materialism among Chinese adolescents: A moderated mediation model involving depression and need to belong. *Frontiers in Psychology, 11*, 3373.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.581274>
- Wang, P., Xie, X., Wang, X., Wang, X., Zhao, F., Chu, X., ... & Lei, L. (2018). The need to belong and adolescent authentic self-presentation on SNSs: A moderated mediation model involving FoMO and perceived social support. *Personality and Individual Differences, 128*, 133-138. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2018.02.035>
- Wang, P., Zhao, M., Wang, X., Xie, X., Wang, Y., & Lei, L. (2017). Peer relationship and adolescent smartphone addiction: The mediating role of self-esteem and the moderating role of the need to belong. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions, 6*(4), 708-717.
<https://doi.org/10.1556/2006.6.2017.079>
- Williams, M. T. (2020). Psychology Cannot Afford to Ignore the Many Harms Caused by Microaggressions. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 15*(1), 38-43.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691619893362>
- Yang, C. C., Holden, S. M., Carter, M. D., & Webb, J. J. (2018). Social media social comparison and identity distress at the college transition: A dual-path model. *Journal of Adolescence, 69*, 92-102. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-017-0801-6>

Yosso, T., Smith, W., Ceja, M., & Solórzano, D. (2009). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate for Latina/o undergraduates. *Harvard Educational Review*, 79(4), 659-691.

<https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.79.4.m6867014157m7071>

Zhang, E., Zhang, X., & Pinderhughes, E. E. (2019). “Your skin’s not as good as us”: Microaggressions among transracially-adopted children from China. *Adoption Quarterly*, 22(4), 284-306. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10926755.2019.1675837>

APPENDIX A: SCHOOL CONNECTEDNESS

Indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements.

1 = Strongly Disagree ← → 4 = Strongly Agree

1. I like school
2. Most days I look forward to going to school
3. I feel like I fit in at my school
4. I feel successful at school
5. I feel connected to others at school

APPENDIX B: SOCIAL MEDIA RUMINATION SCALE

People think and do many different things when they use social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or Snapchat. Please read each of the items below and indicate whether you almost never, sometimes, often, or almost always think or do each one when you use social media. Please choose **what you generally do**, not what you think you should do.

1 = Almost Never ← → 4 = Almost Always

1. I worry about what my social media posts say about who I am
2. I spend several minutes deciding what to post on social media
3. I worry about how people will react to my social media posts
4. I feel jealous about other people's posts on social media
5. I can't stop thinking about what somebody posted on social media
6. I "beat myself up" for posting something stupid on social media
7. I worry that other people might be angry at me for things I post
8. I am worried that I won't look attractive in my social media posts
9. I obsess over what I am going to post on social media
10. Seeing what others post on social media makes me self-conscious
11. I don't post on social media because I am afraid I won't get many "likes"
12. My self-esteem can depend on how many "likes" my posts get

APPENDIX C: BYSTANDER BEHAVIOR SCALE

Think about the social media post you just viewed. Use the check boxes to indicate whether or not you would do the behaviors below. It is OK to select yes or no more than once. Yes = I would do this. No = I would not do this.

1. Send a direct message the person to tell them that their post is inappropriate
2. Send a supportive direct message to people who may have been offended
3. Comment publicly on the post to say that it is inappropriate
4. Comment publicly on the post to express support to people who may have been offended
5. Tell an adult at school (teacher or administrator) about the post
6. Are there other things you might do in response to the post? _____

APPENDIX D: SCHOOL POLICY AWARENESS SCALE

Use the following scale to indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements.

Strongly Disagree	←					→	Strongly Agree	I don't know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	IDK	

1. My school has policies about discrimination based on person's identity (for example, race, gender, sexuality) online/social media
2. My school's policy or handbook lists consequences for engaging in discrimination based on person's identity (for example, race, gender, sexuality) online/social media
3. My school's policy or handbook states how to report discrimination based on person's identity (for example, race, gender, sexuality) online/social media.
4. I have a copy or know how to access my school's policy or handbook
5. I have read my school's policies or handbook
6. My school encourages students to read the policy or handbook

APPENDIX E: SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

1. Our country would be better off if people just stopped seeing color. We're all Americans [INSERT FLAG EMOJI]
2. Why are Black people always so loud LOL. Like she's standing right next to you [INSERT LAUGHING EMOJI]
3. I'm definitely going through a gay phase right now LOL
4. This new kid in my class is so cute but he's gay. Ugh what a waste LMAO

APPENDIX F: SAMPLE POST



ARE YOU A PARENT OF
AN ADOLESCENT?

**THEY CAN
PARTICIPATE IN A
RESEARCH STUDY
TO WIN AIRPODS OR
AN AMAZON GIFT
CARD!**

Use the QR code or link below to enter your
adolescent's email to receive the survey



**YOUR CHILD MUST BE BETWEEN
THE AGES OF 14 AND 18 YEARS OLD
TO PARTICIPATE**

They will complete a survey asking about their
social media behaviors and feelings about
school:

<https://tinyurl.com/DissertationRecruitment>

APPENDIX H: VARIABLES OF INTEREST

Table 1

Correlations of Predictor and Outcome Variables

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1. Offensiveness	5.37	1.05	—				
2. Policy Awareness	4.32	0.80	.01	—			
3. School Connectedness	2.73	0.66	-.11	.25	—		
4. Social Media Rumination	1.93	0.63	.31*	-.18	-.22*	—	
5. Intervening	1.34	0.33	.39*	-.15	-.05	.24*	—

Note. Pearson’s product-moment correlation are reported above when either variable was continuous; When both variables were binary, we conducted Spearman’s rank-order correlations. * $p < .05$.

Table 2

Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Intervention of Microaggressive Social Media Post

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE_b</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Offensiveness	.11	.03	.35	4.15	<.001
Policy Awareness	-.04	.13	-.03	-0.34	.74
School Connectedness	.01	.04	.02	0.26	.79
Social Media	.07	.05	.13	1.54	.15

Table 3

Bystander Behavior Scale

Item	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
Send a direct message the person to tell them that their post is inappropriate	1.05	0.10
Send a supportive direct message to people who may have been offended	1.39	0.44
Comment publicly on the post to say that it is inappropriate	1.20	0.33
Comment publicly on the post to express support to people who may have been offended	1.34	0.34
Tell an adult at school (teacher or administrator) about the post	1.5	0.37