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Observing Subtle Discrimination at the Workplace: Taking a Third-Person Perspective on Workplace Microaggressions

Laura Frederica Schäfer

Master's in Psychology of Intercultural Relations

Supervisor:
Prof. Dr. Miriam Rosa, Assistant Professor,
ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon

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CIÊNCIAS SOCIAIS
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Sometimes we tend to overcomplicate things and once we get to the point where everything seems to make no sense anymore, it's good to have people around us who bring us back down to earth. In this sense, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Dr. Miriam Rosa, who in spite of unpredictable challenges supported me from both a professional and a personal perspective right up to the very last minute. My sincere appreciation also goes to my partner, my family and my friends. Not only did you show the greatest understanding when I couldn't keep to the plans at short notice, you encouraged me when I was on the verge of giving up, listened to me when I talked enthusiastically about my supposedly “world-changing” project, and actively supported me in many ways when I couldn't see the forest for the trees. In a somehow magical way, this master's program has not only taught me a lot on a professional level, but also on a human level and in regard to what is meaningful and in fact “world-changing” to me.

Resumo

Apesar do recente interesse no conceito de microagressões, a sua validade científica tem sido criticada por focar-se nas perceções individuais dos afetados. Assim, o presente estudo, com um design experimental misto 2x2, examinou as perceções de terceiros observadores de microagressões no trabalho, em relação à questão fundamental sobre se as microagressões são reconhecíveis (N = 271). Propôs-se que as microaggressões podem ser distinguidas de situações neutras, por serem frequentemente não intencionais, sem consciencialização, mas, ainda assim, discriminatórias. Também se propôs que o efeito do tipo de situação (microagressão vs neutra) e as intenções comportamentais ocorresse via perceção da situação como microaggressão. Além disso, com base em investigação sobre comportamento do observador, presumiu-se que a presença de uma figura de autoridade exacerbaria as intenções comportamentais prevalecentes, interagindo com a perceção de responsabilidade, e que a perceção de severidade também exacerbaria as intenções comportamentais. Como esperado, os observadores distinguiram microaggressões de interacções neutras, e as intenções comportamentais decorrentes foram mediadas pelas perceções de microagressão. Embora houvesse interação significativa entre figura de autoridade e intenções comportamentais, bem como tipo de situação, a moderação não pôde ser examinada, devido a limitações do instrumento analítico. No entanto, foram encontradas associações entre responsabilidade e severidade da situação e tipo de situação, o que dará origem a mais investigação. Com base na principal conclusão sobre a relevância da perspetiva de observadores, são desenvolvidas recomendações para investigação futura que fazem avançar o conhecimento na literatura sobre microagressões e promovem a diversidade e a inclusão na prática organizacional.

Palavras-chave: comportamento do observador, discriminação subtil, microagressões raciais, difusão da responsabilidade, comportamento no local de trabalho.

Código de Classificação APA: 3020 Processos Grupais e Interpessoais;
3660 Comportamento Organizacional

Abstract

Despite recent interest in the construct of microaggressions, its scientific validity has been strongly criticized for its focus on the individual perceptions of those affected. Thus, the present study, with a (2x2) mixed experimental design examined third-party observers' perceptions of microaggressions in the workplace, in relation to the fundamental question of whether microaggressions are recognizable (N = 271). It was hypothesized that microaggressions can be distinguished from neutral situations as they are often unintentional and out of awareness of the deliverers, but nonetheless discriminatory. It was also expected that the effect of situation type (microaggression vs neutral) on behavioral intentions was mediated by perception of a situation as a microaggression. Furthermore, based bystander behavior research inputs, the presence of an authority figure was assumed to exacerbate the prevailing behavioral intentions, interplaying with perceived responsibility. Finally, perceived severity was expected to also exacerbate behavioral intentions. As expected, observers distinguished microaggressions from neutral interactions and resulting expected behavior was mediated by perceptions of microaggression. While significant interactions were found between authority figure and behavioral intentions, as well as situation type, moderation of perceptions of responsibility and severity could not be examined due to limitations associated with the analytical instrument. Nevertheless, associations between responsibility and severity of the situation and situation type were found, which gives rise to further research. Based on the main conclusion on the relevance of the third person perspective, recommendations for future research are developed that advance knowledge in microaggressions literature and promote diversity and inclusion in organizational practice.

Keywords: bystander behavior, subtle discrimination, racial microaggressions, diffusion of responsibility, workplace behavior.

APA Classification Code: 3020 Group & Interpersonal Processes;
3660 Organizational Behavior

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Introduction

Contemporary work environments are characterized by an increasingly diverse workforce in terms of demographic differences (e.g., gender, age, sexual orientation, and ethnicity; Jackson et al., 2003; Triandis et al., 1994; Williams & O'Reilly, 1998; van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). Diversity (i.e., the presence of subjective or objective differences among individuals; Guillaume et al., 2015) can contribute to positive workplace outcomes associated with more innovation, better decision making, a broader customer base, and improved group performance, thereby enhancing an organization's competitiveness (Cox, 1993; van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). In fact, research has shown that companies in the top quartile for gender or racial diversity are more likely to benefit from financial returns above the industry median (Hunt et al., 2015). Likewise, ethnically diverse companies are 35% more likely to outperform those in the bottom quartile, illustrating the competitive advantage diverse companies have compared to those that are less diverse (Kim et al., 2019). However, when diversity is not managed, it can also have negative effects (for reviews, see Jackson et al., 2003; Milliken & Martins, 1996; Williams & O'Reilly 1998), which in turn poses challenges for organizations, including lower employee morale (Tsui et al., 1992), more conflict (Jehn et al., 1999), and poorer job performance (Chatman et al., 1998). These findings emphasize the importance of understanding and supporting diversity on the one hand and promoting inclusion practices on the other. In summary, the mere existence of diversity referred to as social category related differences might not always necessarily be correlated with those differences being embraced and does therefore not guarantee positive outcomes. Consequently, the extent to which the mentioned advantages can be achieved, and negative consequences prevented, largely depends on how diversity is managed and, hence, inclusion promoted (Ferguson & Porter, 2013).

An approach to capturing the underlying dynamics that can lead to undesirable outcomes, commonly used in research to understand and address bias while also providing evidence to inform the discussion and development of interventions, is to examine the underlying dynamics more closely through the lens of social categorization (Ferguson & Porter, 2013). According to Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), an important determinant of people's identity stems from affiliation with social groups. Social identity is achieved through comparison with other relevant groups, in which distinctiveness constitutes a major factor (see also optimal distinctiveness theory; Brewer, 1991). In light of this strong emphasis on the pursuit of distinctiveness, it can be inferred that any threat to group differentiation may elicit

negative attitudes toward the source of that threat, thereby rendering perceived intergroup (dis)similarity a crucial factor in determining attitudes toward other groups (Costa-Lopes et al., 2012). Thus, much research highlights a general preference for one's ingroup to play an important role. Going along with outgroup derogation such preference may ultimately lead to prejudice and discrimination with all its costs (Bielby, 2000; Brown & Turner, 1981; Byrne, 1971). Beyond this, such intergroup bias, commonly manifested in the form of implicit, subtle, and unintentional 'everyday' discrimination, is seen as a crucial basis for a relative lack of diversity and inclusion in the workplace (Ferguson & Porter, 2013).

'Everyday' discrimination is in fact a concerningly common phenomenon at the workplace (Bendick & Nunes, 2012; King & Cortina, 2010; Perry et al., 2015). With regard to the shift from the old-fashioned overt form of discrimination against minority groups to this much more subtle nature (i.e., 'new' racism; Vala, 2009), one major factor, in particular in social settings such as the workplace, is that the expression of prejudice is neither socially nor legally accepted (Vala, 2009). As such, unequal treatment, unfair dismissal, or ambiguous humor, can make it much more difficult to detect and address these discriminatory incidents - not only for those directly affected as targets, but also for (external) observers as well as researchers (Deitch et al., 2003; Pager & Western, 2012). It is worth noting that expressions of new racism may usually not be perceived as antinormative, when in fact they might express a belief in deep ingroup difference as well as out-group inferiority rather than pure ingroup positivity bias (Vala, 2009). Thus, socially shared knowledge and rules (e.g., social norms) may play an important role in both understanding the decline of overt racism and in comprehending the perpetuation of racist beliefs through covert processes (Crandall et al., 2002). Although research is only at the beginning towards an understanding of subtle forms of discrimination in the workplace, several effects on employees have already been suggested, including negative impact on their work-related stress, job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and performance (Kim et al., 2019). In support of these findings, a meta-analysis has found subtle discrimination to be as harmful as overt discrimination for members of minority groups (Jones et al., 2016; see also Okazaki, 2009; Chakraborty & McKenzie, 2002).

Subtle ethnic discrimination as a comparatively 'new' form of prejudice has been labeled in several ways including symbolic racism (Sears, 1988), aversive racism (Dovidio et al., 2002), racial ambivalence (Katz et al., 1986), or modern racism (McConahay, 1983; Pettigrew, 1989). Similarly, in the context of sexism, research refers to ambivalent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 2001), modern sexism (Swim et al., 1995), and neo sexism (Tougas et al., 1995). More recently, and correspondingly under-researched, a research paradigm examining subtle discrimination under

the term microaggressions has emerged (Sue et al., 2007). Defined as slurs, insults, devaluations, or humiliations that convey pejorative and hostile messages toward minorities, marginalized groups, and discriminated groups, microaggressions can be carried out by well-meaning individuals who are unaware of the implicitly discriminatory and ambiguous messages they convey (Sue, 2010). In this context, Jones and colleagues (2016) emphasize that subtle discrimination, and thus microaggressions, are not necessarily unlawful compared to overt forms of discrimination. However, unlike the aforementioned research directions, which have largely focused on the perspective of perpetrators (referred to as deliverers in this study, as suggested in Lilienfeld, 2017) of discrimination in order to better understand their biases, research on microaggressions has thus far focused primarily on the experiences of targets (referred to as receivers in this study; e.g., Tao et al., 2007) of subtle discriminatory acts (Dovidio et al., 2019), which have been assessed primarily using self-report indices (Lilienfeld, 2017). Because of this emphasis, it becomes crucial to extend the microaggression research program by checking its validity across different perspectives including external observers (Lilienfeld, 2017). There have been some initial studies on observer perceptions of microaggressions and their ability to classify microaggressions as a form of discrimination that have shown that observers can perceive microaggressions and classify this form of discrimination related to severity (Offermann et al., 2013; 2014). Yet, to the best of our knowledge there has been no research yet examining third-party observers' behavioral intentions when they find themselves as observers in situations of such form of subtle discrimination.

Thus, the present study seeks to fill this gap, aiming (1) to contribute to a greater understanding on the conceptualization and assessment of microaggressions as a comparatively novel concept in the context of research on subtle discrimination, with a particular focus on the third-person perspective (as suggested by Lilienfeld, 2017), (2) to advance the existing literature by not only investigating observers' ability to recognize subtle discrimination in the form of microaggressions, but also by considering people's behavioral intentions when observing situations that may be interpretable as racial microaggressions and (3) to explore the role of authority figure presence as a contextual factor common at the workplace.

CHAPTER 1

Literature Review

A controversial but potentially useful approach to better understand the manifestations of subtle discrimination in everyday life is provided by the concept of microaggressions (Sue et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2019; Dovidio et al., 2019). Compared to other subtle forms of discrimination that concordantly have been studied and characterized by ambiguity and nebulosity (e.g., modern racism, symbolic racism, and aversive racism; Dovidio et al., 2002; McConahay, 1986; Sears, 1988, Sue et al., 2007), Sue et al. (2007) propose the term microaggressions to best describe the phenomenon in its everyday manifestation. While modern racism and symbolic racism are associated with the conservative political orientation of individuals holding strong traditional values such as individualism and self-reliance in America, aversive racism is considered less consciously negative and prejudiced and is most closely affiliated with White liberals embracing egalitarian values (DeVos & Banaji, 2005; Dovidio & Gaertner, 1996, 2000). Even though both aversive racism and microaggression approaches focus primarily on subtle forms of bias and share substantial similarities in this regard, there are some important differences. Specifically, whereas research on aversive racism has primarily examined underlying psychological mechanisms, including conflicting (un-)conscious attitudes and the processes as well as conditions under which these attitudes predict discrimination against Black people, research on microaggressions has largely emphasized various behavioral manifestations of racial bias and their societal as well as individual implications for the receivers. In essence, it can be argued that research on microaggressions and aversive racism coincide in the examination of ways in which prejudice is expressed, perceived, and interpreted in social exchanges (Dovidio et al., 2019).

In the effort to provide an adequate framework and understanding of the dynamics involved in subtle discrimination, Sue's et al. (2007) taxonomy of microaggressions builds on several streams of scholarly work, including empirical evidence from research on aversive racism (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1996; Dovidio et al., 2002), studies suggesting the existence of a dissociation between implicit and explicit social stereotyping (Abelson et al., 1998; Banaji et al., 1993; DeVos & Banaji, 2005), the attributive ambiguity of everyday discrimination (Crocker & Major, 1989), the daily manifestations of racism in different spheres of life (Plant & Peruche, 2005; Sellers & Shelton, 2003; Vanman et al., 2004), similarities

between microaggressive incidents of racism-related stress among Black Americans (Brondolo et al, 2005; Klonoff & Landrine, 1999; Utsey & Ponterotto, 1996) and Asian Americans (Liang et al., 2004), along with an analysis of reported everyday experiences related to racism by psychologists (American Counseling Association, 1999; Conyne & Bemak, 2005; Ponterotto et al., 2001).

Using the taxonomy of microaggressions thus first developed to classify racial microaggressions and their manifestation in everyday life, Sue and colleagues (2007) contend to provide evidence for the existence of this form of everyday discrimination. Particularly, the researchers define microaggressions as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group" (Sue et al., 2007, p. 273). While the concept has first merely focused on racial indignities, it has later been expanded to the assessment of subtle discrimination towards other stigmatized groups (e.g., gender; Sue, 2010). The present study adapts the initial focus, thus, focusing on ethnical microaggressions.

Sue and colleagues (2007) propose the categorization of microaggressions in terms of its manifestation in three different forms or levels with respect to the discriminatory nature of a particular behavior or communication, increasing in the explicitness (1) of the incident (i.e., subtlety and ambiguity), the deliverer's intent (2), and his or her degree of awareness (3) of the communicated bias. Accordingly, a distinction is drawn between microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations. As the most blatant, closest to 'old-fashioned' overt discrimination and therefore socially less accepted, form, microassaults (however strongly criticized, e.g., Lilienfeld, 2017) refer to explicit verbal or nonverbal messages that can hurt affected individuals through behaviors such as name-calling, avoidance behaviors, or targeted discrimination. Microinsults, as they may occur, are characterized by expressions of rudeness, insensitivity, or demean a person's origin or identity, often meant to praise the receiving person in the sense of supposedly compliments (e.g., "ascription of intelligence" – assignment of high or low intelligence based on ascribed group membership; "second class citizenship" – treatment of a lesser being or group; "pathologizing values/communications" – notion of abnormality of people's forms of communication; "assumption of criminal status" – presumption of criminal, dangerous or deviant behavior as a fact of racial origin[1]; Sue et al., 2007, pp. 276-277). Finally,

[1]Race does not objectively exist as per conviction, hence in this thesis we will refer to ethnic or racial origin as suggested by the European Network of Legal Experts on Equality and Non-Discrimination (European Commission, 2017) for the European context, rather than race as frequently applied in US literature

microinvalidations, for their part, may result in the exclusion or invalidation of a person's psychological feelings or experiential reality. On this level of microaggression, the actual discrimination is most likely denied, and the receiver perceived as overreactive when responding (e.g., "alien in own land" – assumption of racial minority citizens' foreigner status; "colorblindness" – denial or pretense of not seeing color or differences; "myth of meritocracy"– notion that success in life derives from individual effort alone and not racial origin; "denial of individual racism" – denial of personal racism or one's own part in its perpetuation; Sue et al., 2007, pp. 276-277).

In terms of categorizing the nature of microaggressive communication, another distinction is made in microaggression literature between general and stereotype-based microaggressions (Kim et al., 2015). General microaggressions, on the one hand, refer to verbal or behavioral treatments that occur regardless of social identity group membership, such as those expressed, for example, in communication that denies people's unique experimental reality, thereby mistakenly assuming that individuals of a particular racial origin, gender, age, or identity share similar experiences within their respective groups (Johnston & Nadal, 2010; Nadal 2013; Rivera et al., 2010; Sue et al., 2007). On the other hand, stereotype-based microaggressions are considered specific types of verbal or behavioral treatment based on the content of stereotypes in the sense of generalizations and expectations that perceivers hold towards certain groups of people related to their racial or ethnic origin, gender, age, or other sources of identity (Rivera et al., 2010). This category is specially concerning considering the relevance of stereotypes in generating, maintaining and legitimizing discrimination (European Commission, 2017), and includes, for example, the notion of alien in own land in which people are assumed to be foreigners based on their appearance or other indicators of ethnicity (Rivera et al., 2010; Sue et al., 2007). Another example often referred to in the European context is the label of groups as intellectually inferior on the basis of their (suspected) group membership leading to differential treatment in social settings such as the workplace (European Commission, 2017).

Considering that microinvalidations are very closely related to overt forms of discriminations, and this study is interested in understanding observer's ability and behavioral intentions when witnessing the more controverse and subtle forms of discrimination, this study particularly focusses on stereotype-based microinvalidations.

1.3. Workplace Microaggressions

Despite growing research on microaggressions, less is known about the dynamics surrounding microaggressions as they manifest in the workplace. Yet the workplace is unique in many ways. When microaggressions occur during nonworking hours, receivers can eventually choose to avoid interacting with those persons committing the microaggressions. The situation differs though in the workplace, considering that people cannot stop working without severe consequences (Kim et al., 2019). Employees spend a substantial amount of their waking hours at their workplace throughout the work week (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017), and the implementation of digital communication tools further extends the exposure to work context into private spheres of life (Trottier, 2012; Lee et al., 2020).

Among the few studies that have directly examined microaggressions in the workplace, two qualitative studies conducted in the U.S. context have examined in detail the different types of microaggressions as they manifest in the workplace. Addressing the experiences of Black women in leadership positions (Holder et al., 2015) and Asian Americans (Kim et al., 2015), these studies suggest the prevalence of both common microaggressions specific to both Black women and Asian Americans (e.g., invisibility, universal experiences, and devaluing individual differences) and stereotype-based microaggressions specific to workers based on their respective racial or gender identities (e.g., stereotypes of Black women as aggressive workers whose qualifications are constantly questioned; attribution of math competency to Asian Americans; Kim et al., 2019).

Regarding the latter, research indicates that individuals who encounter group-specific microaggressions may be recalled to negative stereotypes related to their group. As a consequence of such stereotype-based microaggressions, they are likely to experience stereotype threat, a phenomenon widely recognized for its performance-inhibiting effects (Bergeron et al., 2006; Steele & Aronson, 1995). In response to this threat, individuals typically choose to overcompensate in either direction (Block et al., 2011). Since there is constant heightened alertness on the part of the individual, this can be cognitively demanding. Thus, there is additional energy required for individuals to try to reaffirm or disconfirm the stereotype. This "proof process" has been found to impact the self-confidence as well as work performance of those who experience microaggressions, illustrating the negative impact of this energy-draining process (Griffin et al., 2011), possibly leading to stereotype threat spillover. According to spillover theory, after coping with microaggression, one is exhausted and less able to control oneself, leading to more aggressive behavior when provoked, riskier choices, and poorer food choices (Griffin et al., 2011; Holder et al., 2015; Inzlicht & Kang, 2010; Kim et al., 2019). Thus,

stereotype-based microaggression are more consequential for the individual than it may commonly be expected.

Moreover, besides having to deal with stereotype related concerns, more general microaggressions have also to be considered as challenging to their receivers as well as observers. Given the subtle and often ambiguous nature of microaggressions, it becomes difficult for individuals to discern, on the one hand, whether the situation they are experiencing actually constitutes a microaggression and, on the other hand, to decide how to respond while wondering whether they might be interpreted by others as overly sensitive (Louis et al., 2016; Sue et al., 2007; Endo, 2015). This resulting overuse of cognitive and emotional resources creates a general risk that individuals will not be able to use their cognitive energy elsewhere, for example, to complete work-related tasks to the best possible quality (Lewis et al., 2013).

In summary, dealing with microaggressions of any kind, and often the threat of stereotyping, may leave members of minority groups perplexed and distressed as they try to come to terms with the intent behind the microaggression (Sue, et al., 2007; Sue et al., 2008). Furthermore, with regard to the workplace, the added stress of experiencing and dealing with microaggressions leads to undesirable limitations that interfere with or hinder an individual's ability to produce valuable work outcomes, resulting in job search behaviors and ultimately turnover (Cavanaugh et al., 2000). With this in mind, microaggressions and their perfidious effects can be a significant factor in the loss of top performers within an organization (Kim et al., 2019) and have also been linked beyond the workplace to exhaustion, insomnia (Hall & Fields, 2015), binge drinking (Blume et al., 2012), higher stress levels (Smith et al., 2011), negative emotions (Wang et al., 2011), and poorer mental health, including higher anxiety and depression and lower self-esteem (Nadal et al., 2014). As a conclusion, the presented findings strongly emphasize the relevance of addressing and acknowledging the negative effects of microaggressions. Despite of considerable critics that claim inadequate empirical support of the concept and consider microaggressions as trivial and negligible slights (Campbell & Manning, 2014; Lilienfeld, 2017), research has shown that the experience of microaggressions at the workplace is far from harmless to the individual (Kim et al., 2019). It is therefore highly important to generate more knowledge thereby providing more clarity of such concept that may in fact, in a very subtle, and possibly unseen, yet harmful manner hinder all efforts of organizations in promoting diversity and inclusion.

1.4. A third-person perspective on Microaggressions

In social psychology, there has been extensive research on prosocial behavior, investigating why people engage in such actions that benefit other persons (Penner et al., 2005). Typically, there are different motivations including helping out of altruism (i.e., desire to help despite any personal costs) and performing prosocial behavior out of self-interest, thus, calculating to get compensated (Aronson et al., 2013). While research has identified several individual factors that may influence prosocial behavior out of altruism (e.g., empathy, personality, culture, religion, and mood), it also took account of situational determinants of such behavior, suggesting, thus, whether people decide to intervene in critical situations depends on numerous factors (Aronson et al., 2013).

In order to explain what inhibits individuals from helping others, Latané and Darley (1970) developed the five-step model proposing the specific circumstances under which bystanders (i.e., any person who experiences inappropriate behavior or witnesses' situations worthy of comment or action; Scully & Rowe, 2009) will intervene. Accordingly, as a first step, bystanders must notice the critical incident; second, the situation must be considered an emergency; third, there must be a feeling of responsibility to intervene involved; fourth, bystanders must be able to reflect on how to help; and, ultimately, in a fifth decision-making step, the observers must decide to take action by intervening and, finally, implement their decision. As to the model, if any of these steps is not completed, bystanders will not get involved (Latané & Darley, 1970). Under the term "bystander effect" (Latané & Darley, 1968), early research particularly examined the influence of other people around as a main factor inhibiting observers' intervention behavior: the higher the number of bystanders witnessing a situation considered as an emergency, the less likely any one of them is to help (i.e., diffusion or responsibility). Subsequently, considerable scholarly work has attempted to contribute to a greater understanding of the passivity of bystanders, even in the face of clear normative violations (Latané & Darley, 1968, 1970; Scully, 2005).

In their Confronting Prejudice Responses (CPR) model, Ashburn-Nardo et al. (2008) applied the classical social psychological research on bystander intervention in emergency situations (Latané & Darley, 1970) to understand the potential obstacles people face when confronting prejudice and discrimination. Similar to the well-supported steps required for responding to physical emergencies, according to the CPR model, people must as an initial step recognize an incident as prejudice (i.e., identification); second, the incident must be perceived as a social emergency that is considered serious enough to warrant intervention (i.e., perceived severity); third, feel a sense of responsibility for addressing the critical situation (i.e., perceived responsibility); fourth, decide on a course of action for addressing it; and fifth, ultimately see

the benefits of confronting the deliverer as outweighing the costs (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2019a). While the CPR model specifically refers to confrontation as a counterpart to ignoring, other researchers have accessed people's support intentions on various dimensions in opposition to ignoring (Brody & Vangelisti, 2016; Darley & Latané, 1968; Madden & Loh, 2018; Rendsvig, 2014). In the present study, we will therefore distinguish between each of these intentions: support (indirectly and directly), confront, and ignore.

In response to the vast harm microaggressions can impose on affected individuals, Sue et al. (2019) introduce microinterventions as a strategic framework for addressing microaggressions in the form of concrete action and dialogue performable by both receivers and observers (e.g., bystanders and allies). In their review of responses to racial bias, they primarily focus on the perspective of the receiver, however, indicating that with modifications, the responses can be performed by observers, too. Sue et al. (2019) specifically differentiate between four main strategic goals on three dimensions that microaggressions can take place (i.e., interpersonal, institutional, and societal level). One of these strategies consists of making the "invisible" visible and includes actions such as undermining the meta-communication or asking for clarification. While this supportive action may be directed to the receiver, aiming to reassure them of their possible interpretation of the situation, another strategic goal suggested aims to disarm the microaggression is considered a more confrontive approach, often directly addressed to the deliverer. Another strategic goal is defined by educating the deliverer such that the difference between good intent and harmful impact is being emphasized (Sue et al., 2019). Finally, Sue et al. (2019) refer to seeking external support as yet another strategic goal in their review. This more indirect way to support the receiver is considered to minimize the risks one may associate with intervention and is thus likely in contexts where for example a strong power differential exists (Sue et al., 2019). These distinctions in terms of the directedness and visibility of an action are consistent with the early definitions of Latané and Darley (1970), who define strategies for dealing directly with a situation as direct intervention and actions that occur by seeking outside help as indirect intervention. Direct intervention is typically described as riskier and more effortful, whereas indirect intervention is considered more feasible to perform (Latané & Darley, 1970).

However, the reactions and microintervention strategies developed by Sue et al. (2019) undergo the assumption that a microaggression has already been identified as such, has been considered as a social emergency, and that the respective observers feel a sense of responsibility to intervene. We therefore propose to first take a step back and shift our focus to understanding the psychological factors involved in taking such action in the face of microaggressions.

Step 1: Identification of ethnic microaggressions. In the case of subtle discrimination, extant research has found that particularly in workplace scenarios confrontation is likely not to occur due to ambiguity (Jones, et al., 2016). A study on the way witnesses identify to ethnic microaggressions indicates that bystanders have difficulties in identifying subtle, compared to overt, forms of discrimination as an unfair treatment. Interestingly, as to individuals' responses, witnessing a scenario including an ethnic microaggression has not caused any emotional or physiological changes as opposed to observing overt acts of discrimination. However, the researchers indicate the importance of individual factors such as a person's level of colorblind racial attitudes in regard to their responses (Torres et al., 2020). However, as previous findings (Madubata et al., 2019) show, the consequences of subtle discrimination go beyond harmless effects that can be exacerbated when the lack of recognition by others reinforces pervasive and persistent structural inequalities. Other studies examining observers' ability to identify microaggressions reinforce that identification of microaggressions depends on a variety of factors. Given this, as Graebner et al. (2009) suggest, it is essential to examine microaggressions in their complexity and as an interplay of intent, discrimination, and awareness. Adapting this conceptualization, a few studies have supported the assumption that observers can perceive microaggressions and distinguish between the different levels of microaggressions proposed by Sue et al. (2007; Offermann et al., 2013; 2014).

Step 2: Perceived severity. As suggested by Sue et al. (2007) in their differentiation and definition of microaggressions on a continuum of severity (from microinvalidation over microinsult up to microassault), people's perceived severity of an incident has been found to be particularly crucial in the face of subtle forms of discrimination such as microaggressions: the more severe people perceive a situation, the higher their perception of microaggression and the greater are negative work outcomes (Offermann et al., 2013). Moreover, increased severity of microaggressive incidents has shown to go along with individuals' perception of an authority figure to be more intentional and aware of his or her behavior (Offermann et al., 2013). These findings are crucial since early research suggests that observers' perception of a behavior as unintentional or beyond a deliverer's control or awareness contributes to lower perceived severity of such incident (Critchlow, 1985), ultimately explaining a positive correlation of high incident severity with bystander intervention and increased motivation to help in the example of (cyber-)bullying scenarios (Bastiaensens et al., 2014; Dijker & Raeijmaekers, 1999; Rind et al., 1995).

Besides perceived intent and awareness of the deliverer, bias type matters. As such, racism is commonly considered a more serious offense than sexism (Czopp & Monteith, 2003) and

therefore perceived as a greater emergency (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2014). To give an example, in one investigation of women's experiences with sexism, a significant percentage of the sample expressed that they were not sufficiently disturbed to confront the deliverers (Brinkman, et al., 2011). We argue, that in the context of microaggressions, a similar relevance of perceived severity on behavioral intention can be expected. However, to the best of our knowledge the role of perceived severity in relation to observer behavior when witnessing microaggressions has yet to be investigated.

Step 3: Perceived Responsibility. While Darley and Latané (1968) suggested that the presence of other people may influence the performance of the five-step sequence, as it specifically affects the perception of responsibility (i.e., diffusion of responsibility) as the main cause of the so-called bystander effect, more recent studies investigating the bystander effect in the work context have found that the *presence of an authority figure* causes a similar effect (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2019b). These results can be traced back to Milgram's (1974) research, indicating that if people feel that the responsibility for their actions is in the hands of an authority figure, they are more willing to obey authority figures than their personal beliefs and morals. Thus, social role matters, not only when prejudice is exhibited through a leader (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2014), but also such that people see authority figures who are merely present in the situation as more responsible for confronting than they see targets, other bystanders, and themselves. In fact, research on the responsibility construal of power (Sassenberg et al., 2012) provides large evidence for the role of power on one's sense of responsibility towards intervening in critical or uncivil incidents. As such, in a recent study, people in supervisory roles reported feeling a greater sense of responsibility for confronting prejudiced deliverers than people who are not in such roles and participants considered the present authority figure as most responsible for confronting prejudice and reported feeling less personally responsible in the presence of authorities, thereby indicating diffusion of responsibility to the authority person and highlighting conferred authority as a key factor in observers' intentions to confront discrimination (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2019a). Along this hesitation of taking on the responsibility to show confrontative behavior under certain conditions (Ashburn-Nardo, et al., 2008; 2014; 2019a; 2019b), other research indicates the fear of societal backlash (Kutlaca et al., 2020), or of being victimized oneself (Porath & Erez, 2009), as factors further impeding confrontation of bias and prejudice.

Drawing on these previous lines of research, the role of conferred authority of observers becomes evident in relation to third-person behavior in the light of prejudiced incidences. However, only a few studies examined the role of responsibility and, none, to the best of our

knowledge, considered the impact of the mere presence of authority figures in the context of microaggressions yet. Applying the construct of microaggressions by investigating perceptions of discrimination in ambiguous interactions between White supervisors and Black subordinates, as well as their impact on work outcomes and the influence of leader fairness, Offermann et al. (2013) found an impact of supervisor equity on third-person observers' perceptions of discrimination, suggesting the contextual importance of leader reputations of fairness. If leaders have a reputation for equity and fairness, expected work outcomes are better and microaggressions are perceived less due to lower perceived intent behind the instance (Offermann et al., 2013). Hence, these results indicate a crucial role of leadership in predicting not only third-person observers' perceptions but also their behavioral intentions in the light of microaggressions that needs further examination.

1.5. The Present Study

The present study seeks to adapt a third-person perspective on microaggressions. Specifically, we aim to investigate whether observers can identify ethnical microaggressions and to explore their behavioral intentions. Based on the previously mentioned theories and previous research, relevant variables have been identified in explaining bystander behavior in the face of discrimination. Thus, two experimental conditions representing two fictional situations (i.e., *neutral* and *microaggressive*) were designed to examine differences between them. Having included the presence vs. absence of an authority figure as an experimental manipulation allows us to additionally examine the role of relative authority within the framework. In addition, perceptions of scenario severity, responsibility, and instance of microaggression were assessed, as they represent crucial factors expected to impact individuals' behavioral intentions in the role of an observer.

Drawing on the Confronting Prejudice Responses (CPR) model (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2008), we seek to contribute to current research by examining in particular the first three steps of the CPR model. We argue that it is crucial to understand the psychological underpinnings of observer behavior in the context of microaggressions in the sense that being equipped with tools to intervene is not enough, if intervention is in fact hampered before. It is, thus, considerable that even if provided with knowledge of how to intervene in incidents that are identifiable as microaggressions, third-person observers do in fact not perceive microaggressions as a form of discrimination (Step 1; see Lilienfeld, 2017), do not consider it as severe (Step 2), or do not feel a sense of responsibility to address it (Step 3).

We further consider it crucial to put a particular emphasis on characteristics differentiating microaggressions from other types of bias and prejudice as referred to in the context of the CPR model. Thus, in the face of the subtleness and ambiguity of microaggressions, people may not only show confrontive but also other pro-social behaviors such as support towards the victim on an interpersonal (i.e., direct support), or an institutional level (i.e., indirect support; see also Sue et al., 2019). A study of observers' evaluations of and responses to racist comments revealed for instance the crucial role of perceived offensiveness of the biased comment in predicting the strength of verbal confrontation (Dickter et al., 2013), suggesting that contextual factors such as perceived severity but also perceived microaggression may enhance the intention to show several, direct or indirect, behaviors. While we anticipate an indirect effect of situation type on behavioral intention through perceived microaggression, we expect perceived severity of an incident, the presence of an authority person as well as observers' sense of responsibility in the face of a critical situation to play a moderating role regarding people's behavioral intentions. In the case of microaggressions, people may detect discrimination but due to the often ambiguous and unintentional character of microaggressions, do yet not always feel responsible or perceive the incident as severe (e.g., interpret the receiver as overly sensitive; Sue et al., 2007). We therefore argue that while people may intervene because they perceive a microaggression, they may show more intentions to intervene when they feel responsible and when they perceive the incident as severe enough. Further, drawing on the presented lines of research, we suggest that authorities will be seen as more responsible for intervening when microaggressions occur and, thus, anticipate authority figure presence to interact with perceived responsibility as a function of diffusion of responsibility.

Building on the previously reviewed literature, we formulated the following theoretical model (Figure 1.1.) and hypotheses.

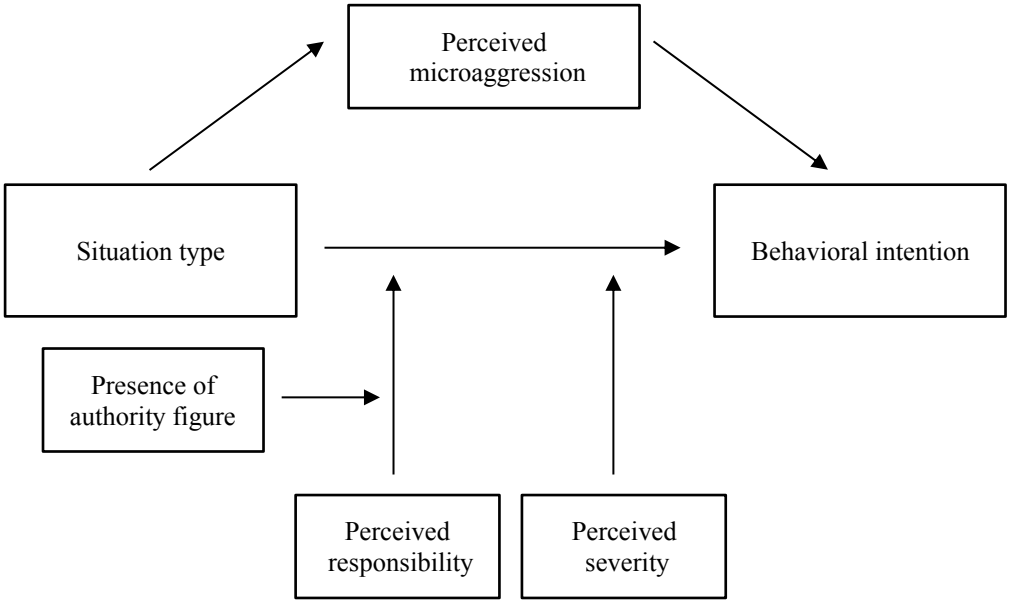

Figure 1.1.

Note. Conceptual model estimating the effect of situation type (microaggression vs. neutral situation) on behavioral intent (directly support, indirectly support, confront, ignore), moderated by perceived responsibility in interaction with the presence of an authority figure, as well as perceived severity. The effect of type of situation on behavioral intent is estimated indirectly through perceived microaggression.

H1: There is an effect of the type of situation on people's behavioral intentions, so that when in the microaggressive situation (experimental condition) participants should be more likely to show supportive behavioral intentions towards the victim (direct; H1a) as well as on an institutional level (indirect; H1b) and intentions to confront (H1c) and should be less likely to portray intentions to ignore(H1d) in comparison with the neutral situation (control condition).

H2: The effect of type of situation on behavioral intention is mediated by participants' perceived microaggression (H2) in a way that in the microaggressive situation, compared with the neutral situation should lead to more intentions to intervene, via perceived microaggression. We expect higher levels of perceived microaggression to lead to a higher likelihood for participants to show intentions of direct support (H2a), institutional support (H2b), and confrontation (H2c) and a lower likelihood for intentions to ignore (H2d).

Moreover, we were interested in examining the role of people's perception of severity, feeling of responsibility and the presence of an authority figure. Therefore, we conducted

additional moderation analyses to determine if significant indirect effects that remain uncovered through the hypothesis testing (H1; H1a-d) varied significantly as a function of perceived severity and perceived responsibility.

H3: The effect of situation type on behavioral intention is moderated by perceived responsibility (H3a) authority figure presence (H3b), and perceived severity (H3c), with higher perceptions of responsibility and severity in the microaggression condition, compared to the neutral condition.

H3a: The effect of situation type on behavioral intention is moderated by perceived responsibility with increasing perceptions of responsibility leading to more intentions to directly support (H3a1), indirectly support (H3a2), and confront (H3a3), and less intentions to ignore (H3a4).

H3b: The effect of situation type on intentions to directly (H3b1), indirectly support (H3b2) and intentions to confront (H3b3) should be stronger in the absence of a supervisor than in the presence of a supervisor and the effect of situation type on intentions to ignore (H3b4) should be stronger in the presence of a supervisor than in the absence.

H3c: The effect of situation type on behavioral intention is moderated by perceived severity with increasing perceptions of severity leading to more intentions to directly support (H3a1), indirectly support (H3a2), and confront (H3a3), and less intentions to ignore (H3a4).

Finally, we further hypothesized a causal interaction effect of authority figure presence on perceived responsibility, thus proposing a hypothesis of multiplicative moderation.

H4: Regardless of the condition, perceived responsibility is higher when a supervisor is absent and lower when a supervisor is present.

CHAPTER 2

Method

2.1. Participants and Sampling

A total of 198 adult participants participated in the experiment. Due to uncomplete participation and, thus, missing values, we excluded 26 participants from the analysis. Additionally, we decided to exclude one participant who did not match our perquisites regarding age, resulting in a total sample of 172 participants (86 females, 84 males, 1 person that identifies as transsexual male, and 1 person preferred not to answer). A share of 95 of which were recruited by means of a snowball sampling technique in a way that an electronic link containing the Qualtrics online survey was posted on the researcher's own sources, such as social media page, e-mail and instant messaging tools. The initial participants were then asked to circulate the link to other friends and work colleagues through their social media. For this proportion of participants, participation was voluntary and unpaid. The remaining 77 participants were recruited using Clickworker, an online recruitment platform, and were, thus, paid for their participation.

The inclusion criteria for this study were that participants had to be over the age of 18 years and have good German language skills. Participants' ages ranged from 20 to 65 years old with an average age of 37 years (M = 37.20, SD = 12.62), female participants' ages ranged from 20 to 63 years (M = 36.42, SD = 13.21), male participants' ages ranged from 20 to 65 years (M = 38.07, SD = 12.09), and transsexual male participant's age was 31 years. Most (95.35 %) of the participants were currently employed and 91.86 % indicated that their profession included teamwork. Moreover, most of the participants (74.42 %) indicated that they were not in a leadership position at the moment.

2.2. Design

In a 2 (microaggression vs. neutral situation) x 2 (Supervisor present vs. supervisor absent) mixed factorial design, vignettes were developed and designed according to literature on microaggressions (Sue et al. 2007; Nadal, 2011) as well as stereotypes against Muslim minorities in Germany (Kilan-Yasin, 2017), to simulate experimental manipulations with both, within- (Situation type: microaggression vs. neutral situation) and between-factors (Presence of an authority figure: Presence of supervisor vs. absence of supervisor). Vignettes have been found to better estimate real-life decision-making than interviews or questionnaires (Alexander

& Becker, 1978) and are an appropriate method for broaching sensitive issues, since participants' responses based on personal experience are not required (Wilks, 2004).

Experimental (microaggression) and control condition (neutral situation) had the same instructions and were held equal with analogous length in order to keep the discriminative character subtle and ambiguous, and, thus, close to real-life situations. The factors were manipulated in the form of a WhatsApp group chat scenario using a manipulated screenshot that has been created with the online software FakeChatApp. The supposed screenshots showed a conversation between colleagues consisting of eight participants, either with or without the presence of a supervisor (between-factor; see Appendix A).

2.3. Procedure

The present study was conducted online using Qualtrics platform (Qualtrics, Provo, UT). Participants were invited to participate in the study under the premise that it was examining dynamics of digital workplace communication. The study was approved by the Ethics committee of Iscte-University Institute of Lisbon.

Beforehand, participants were presented with an informed consent page, providing information on the instructions of the study, the confidentiality of their answers, as well as the right to withdraw participation at any time without further explanation, and finally, requiring participants to agree on taking part in the study. Once the information was read and participation consented, participants were asked initial questions related to their current work situation (employment status, experience in teamwork and leadership position) and were then randomly assigned to first see either the experimental (microaggressions) or the control condition (neutral situation) scenario.

Specifically, the scenario indicative of a microaggressive situation consisted of a group member named *Andreas* ambiguously complimenting a (common) work colleague called *Muhammad* for his good presentation. The ambiguity and thus possibly discriminatory character of his message can be interpreted based on the emphasis of his enthusiasm about Muhammad's presentation in terms of linguistic aspects and especially on the subliminal rhetorical question that reveals the suspicion that his colleague must have had corrective help in the process. The other scenario, intended to represent a neutral situation, involves a comparatively conventional conversation between *Jens* and *Ahmet* about scheduling a work meeting. In order to ensure meaningfulness and to guarantee that answer options and situations were mapped closely to workplace communication and discriminatory interaction definitional

criteria of subtleness (microaggressions), and neutrality, scenarios and manipulations were pre-tested in a pilot study. We will describe this pre-study in more detail in a separate section below. The names were chosen to make group membership salient. For the supervisor presence condition, the vignette included a sentence indicating that the group consisted of their supervisor and equal positioned colleagues. For the supervisor absence condition, it was indicated that the group only consisted of the participant and his/her colleagues in equal position. Additionally, a screenshot of the supposed group composition made the presence or absence of a supervisor salient by the inclusion of the word "supervisor" behind one of the group participants, or not, as well as the allocation of one versus many "admins" (see Appendix A). Moreover, the stimuli appeared in the WhatsApp design and included all the features of WhatsApp chat groups (e.g., group picture; text field; names in different colors). However, any additional information (e.g., last names of the group members) was made illegible for credibility. Participants were instructed to read each on-line conversation carefully and imagine being a member of the chat group, encountering such situation within the work context. After seeing each scenario, the participants were presented with different questions. Participants were made aware of the anonymity and confidentiality in the beginning of the study as a part of the informed consent, moreover they were reminded frequently that there were no right or wrong answers and that they should therefore respond to the questions most honest and intuitive possibly (Chang et al., 2010). First, behavioral intentions to intervene privately or publicly by supporting the victim or confronting the perpetrator, or to ignore the incident, as well as their feelings of responsibility were measured. Thereafter, participants answered to question assessing perceived microaggression. Subsequent to the presentation of both vignettes, perceived status (McCreary, 1994; Feinman, 1981; Sirin et al., 2004) for each person relevant for the interactions was assessed and participants were presented with a 13-item short from of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale measuring their social desirability (Reynolds, 1982). Finally, manipulation checks and suspicion checks were administered, and subjective experiences and thoughts as well as some demographic data were assessed (i.e., age, gender, political orientation). All scales were translated for the purpose of this study, the use of back-translation technique by another native German speaking researcher, providing linguistic validity (Brislin, 1970). Figures A.1 and A.2 in appendix show how the two situations were operationalized in this study.

2.4. Measures

Behavioral intention. The primary dependent variable assessed was the behavioral intention. Previous research refers particularly to three intervention behaviors, bystanders (i.e., observers) may display in the face of critical incidents: confrontation (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2008), support, and ignorance (Brody & Vangelisti, 2016; Darley & Latané, 1968; Madden & Loh, 2018; Rendsvig, 2014).

To measure behavioral intentions, we used a scale developed by Bastiaensens et al. (2014). Consistent with Bastiaensens et al. (2014), we categorized each behavioral intention into more specific actions that can be performed in the context of digital communication in both private (e.g., "send a private message to the deliverer/receiver") and public settings (e.g., "send a public message in the group"). In line with the previously reviewed research findings, we devoted particular attention to the ambiguity and subtlety of microaggressions. As stated in our research hypotheses, we expect observer response to be influenced by multiple variables and assume that there are differences in individuals' behavioral intentions indirectly associated with the presence or absence of an authority figure. Thus, in considering literature on strategic responses to microaggressions (Sue et al., 2019) and research indicating factors that may particularly inhibit confrontational observer behavior, such as fear of social backlash (Kutlaca et al., 2020) or self-victimization (Porath & Erez, 2009), we consider it crucial to additionally distinguish between confrontational and supportive behavioral intentions and whom they are directed to (i.e., direct and indirect intervention; Latané & Darley, 1970; see also Wang, 2021). Therefore, we modified the original Bastiaensens et al. (2014) intervention scale by splitting the items of the intervention scale into the following three subscales, ultimately distinguishing prosocial behavioral intentions between direct supportive behavioral intentions toward the victim ("send a private message to Muhammad/Ahmet to express your disagreement regarding Andreas'/Jens' message", "send a public message in the group to express your disagreement regarding Andreas'/Jens' message", "send a private message in the group to encourage Muhammad/Ahmet", "send a message in the group to encourage the Muhammad/Ahmet"; for the microaggression condition: $\propto = .83$; for the neutral condition: $\propto = .90$; 5-point Likert scale); indirect supportive behavioral intentions on an institutional level, with two items ("contact the Human Recourses Department to report the incident", "contact the supervisor to report the incident"; for the microaggression condition: $r = .80$, $p < .001$; for the neutral condition: $r = .90$, $p < .001$; 5-point Likert scale), and intentions to confront the deliverer, with two items ("send a private message to inform Andreas/Jens that you don't agree with his message", "send a public message in the group to inform Andreas/Jens that you don't agree with his message"; for the microaggression condition: $r = .43$, $p < .001$; for the neutral condition: $r = .74$, $p < .001$;

5-point Likert scale).We further included an additional scale to measure participants intentions to ignore the incident as in Madden & Loh (2018), adopted from Armstrong (2015), including four items (“ignore the conversation because it can't be too big a deal if no one else does anything about it”, “get on with my work and not worry about the conversation any further“, “ignore the situation because I'm not sure I know the entire background”, “feel that it is in my best interest not to get involved because there are already enough people who can take care of it”$\propto = .91$; 5-point Likert scale). Participants’ behavioral intentions were measured constantly on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (does not apply) to 5 (does apply).

Perceived Microaggression. Observer perceptions of microaggressions were measured on a 13-item scale developed by Graebner et al. (2009). Items were averaged to compute a perceived microaggression score, with higher scores indicating a greater perception of microaggression for each vignette. Items were originally developed to assess the degree to which observers perceive supervisors to be aware of the racial undertones of their actions (*awareness subscale*), communications to express discrimination (*discrimination subscale*), and supervisors to be intentionally discriminatory (*intent subscale)*, reflecting the construct definition of racial microaggressions (Sue et al., 2007). For the purposes of this study, the indication of the supervisor was modified to the names of the colleague engaging in a microaggressive vs. neutral situation. Sample items include “Andreas’ actions were discriminatory,” “Andreas meant to behave in a racially-insensitive manner,” and “Andreas’ actions were just’” (reverse coded). The perceived racial microaggression scale showed consistently strong reliability ($\propto$ = .79-.91; Offermann et al., 2013). For the present study, Cronbach’s alpha of this scale was reliable for both conditions ($\propto$ = .76 in the microaggression condition; $\propto$ = .80 in the neutral condition). The scale was used mainly in its aggregated form, but we still considered the three subscale separately in some of the analyses as reported.

Perceived severity. Participants’ perceived severity of the incident was measured on a 5-point, bipolar rating scale reaching from “not threatening” to “very dangerous” (Obermaier et al., 2016). Cronbach’s alpha scores for the present study revealed good reliability ($\propto$ = .86 in the microaggression condition; $\propto$ = .96 in the neutral condition).

Perceived responsibility. Participants' feelings of responsibility to intervene in the incident were measured by three items which were adopted and modified from Obermaier et al. (2016) study. Examining whether participants felt a sense of duty to help the victim in each of the scenarios, participants were asked to rate statements such as 'I would feel personally responsible to do something about the situation' on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = does not apply; 5 = does apply). Cronbach's alpha scores for the items in the present study showed good reliability in both the microaggression condition ($\propto$ = .88) and the neutral condition ($\propto$ = .85).

Social Desirability. Considering the potential for participants to report socially desirable responses, Reynolds' (1982) 13-item short version of the original bipolar (yes/no) Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960) was implemented at the end of the experiment to potentially control for social desirability bias. For the present study cronbach's alpha score was $\propto$=.68. However, as all participants responded within the first or second lower option available in all items (*M*s < 1.77, *SD*s < 0.50), we saw controlling for it as unnecessary.

Manipulation Check. A manipulation check was administered to ensure that the variable Presence of authority figure could be accurately recalled. Thus, at the end of the experiment, participants were asked to choose the correct answer regarding the composition of the chat-group from two options: exclusively colleagues, or colleagues and the supervisor.

Additional Measures. In addition to the variables described before, current employment status, experience in teamwork, current leadership position, perceived status, and political ideology were measured (see Appendix B). Categorical variables were dummy coded prior to analysis. Moreover, we initially started to measure variables to access constructs related to the theory of planned behavior (i.e., attitudes towards intervention, subjective norms, and perceived control; Ajzen, 1991), that pertained to different research questions and were not considered in the final analyses of the present study.

Sociodemographic Characteristics. Age, gender (male, female, trans-sexual male, trans-sexual female, intersexual, other), German language skills, and number of years lived in Germany were accessed.

2.5. Pre-test

A pre-test with a sample of 28 German adult participants was administered with the main purpose to ensure that the contents of the vignettes accurately represented our definition of microaggression and that the vignettes for the experimental condition differ from the control condition. Therefore, we developed a pool of 12 vignettes. Eight vignettes were chosen to

represent ethnic microaggressions, differing on type (stereotype-based vs. general) and overtness (subtle vs. blatant). Four vignettes were created to display neutral interactions. The participants were presented with the vignettes in a randomized order and were asked subsequently to seeing each vignette, how they would rate the interaction on a 5-point-likert scale from positive to negative. Thereafter, they were asked to answer a 13-item scale assessing perceived microaggression and developed by Graebner et al. (2009) by indicating on a 5-point-likert scale how much they agreed on different statements ("strongly disagree" to "strongly agree").

Another purpose of the pre-test was to check if the manipulation of the independent variable was successful, as well as to ensure that the situations would be perceived as likely to occur at the workplace and, thus, close to reality. We tested these aspects by asking the participants to choose one option out of three regarding the composition of the chat group (i.e., exclusively colleagues, colleagues and the supervisor, various supervisors and subordinates), and by asking them to rate on a 5-point-likert scale from very unlikely to very likely, how likely they think it was that this situation has occurred at the workplace. Reliability tests indicated that the scale for the designed vignettes demonstrate an adequate reliability ($\propto$ = .69–.90 depending on the vignette used), with the lowest reliability reported for a no-microaggression/control vignette where respondents may have found it more difficult to assess microaggression intent, as measured by the same perceived microaggression scale as used in the main study.

To choose the vignettes that most accurately expressed the definition of microaggression used in this study, we calculated the mean scores and average rank for all the stimuli. Two situations showed similar perceptions of microaggressions, were ranked to be most likely to occur at the workplace and were ranked similarly negative with an average score significantly higher than the midpoint of the scale (see Table 2.1.). Given the similar ratings of the two situations, we decided against vignette 1.2 and chose vignette 1.1 because vignette 1.1 was rated relatively less negative and more likely to occur at the workplace, to better meet criteria of subtleness and ambiguity.

The four vignettes that were created to represent neutral situations showed similar values and paired-sample t-tests revealed that participants perceived higher microaggression scores for the experimental vignettes than they did for the control vignettes. We, thus, decided for vignette 3.1, since the t-test indicated significant differences to vignette 1.1, $t(27) = 7.49$, $p < .001$, d=.40, and it has been rated as the most positive situation ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.83$).

Table 2.1.

Average Ratings of the microaggression situations.

	Vignette 1.1		Vignette 1.2	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Perceived microaggression	2.87	0.34	3.01	0.42
Probability to occur	3.57	0.84	3.32	1.28
Rating	4.07	0.81	4.50	0.63
Average rank	3.50		3.61	

CHAPTER 3

Results

3.1. Manipulation Check

In order to verify if participants had comprehended the group composition and thus the presence or absence of a supervisor, in the end of the survey, participants were asked to indicate who the chat group consisted of (see Appendix B). The results displayed in Table 3.1. indicate that when in the supervisor present condition, most participants indicated that the group consisted of colleagues and a supervisor (73.49 % vs 26.51 %). When in the supervisor absent condition, most participants indicated that the group consisted only of colleagues (95.56 % vs 4.44 %). Statistically, there is an association between the manipulation and the scores obtained ($x^2(1,172) = 86.74$, $p < .01$). Thus, the manipulation of authority figure presence was considered as successful. A manipulation check of the vignettes was not carried out because the polit test served this purpose.

Table 3.1.

Manipulation Check.

	The group consisted of …	
	Only colleagues (%)	Colleagues and the supervisor (%)
Supervisor Absence	86 (95.56%)	22 (26.83%)
Supervisor Presence	4 (4.44%)	60 (73.17%)

Note. Supervisor Absence $N = 90$. Supervisor Presence $N = 82$. Total Sample $N = 172$.

3.2. Preliminary Analyses

Prior to hypothesis testing, we analyzed conducted a correlation analysis, as shown in Table 3.2., providing a closer examination of relations between all the variables considered in this study.

Intentions to directly support. In the microaggression condition, intentions directly support presents a strong positive relation with perceived responsibility ($r(170) = .59$, $p < .001$) and a moderate positive relation with perceived severity ($r(170) = .44$, $p < .001$), but only a weak positive relation with perceived microaggression ($r(170) = .24$, $p < .001$)

Intentions to indirectly support. For indirect support, a moderate positive relation to perceived responsibility ($r(170) = .37$, $p < .001$), perceived severity ($r(170) = .34$, $p < .001$), and perceived microaggression ($r(170) = .33$, $p < .001$) has been found.

Intentions to confront. Confrontative behavioral intention shows a strong positive relation with perceived responsibility ($r(170) = .61$, $p < .001$), a moderate positive relation with perceived severity ($r(170) = .33$, $p < .001$), and a weak positive association with perceived microaggression ($r(170) = .27$, $p < .001$).

Intentions to ignore. Contrarily to the correlations reported for the pro-social behavioral intentions, intentions to ignore presents a strong negative relation to perceived responsibility ($r(170) = -.71$, $p < .001$), a moderate negative relation to perceived severity ($r(170) = -.36$, $p <. 001$), and a weak negative relation to perceived microaggression ($r(170) = -.27$, $p < .001$). Similarly, in the control condition, direct support ($r(170) = .71$, $p < .001$), indirect support ($r(170) = .54$, $p < .001$), and confrontation ($r(170) = .60$, $p < .001$) are highly positive related to perceived responsibility while intention to ignore shows a strong negative relation to perceived responsibility ($r(170) = -.64$, $p < .001$), and a moderate negative relation to perceived severity ($r(170) = -.38$, $p < .001$) and perceived microaggression ($r(170) = -.39$, $p < .001$).

In line with the present study's research interest in contributing to a better understanding of how microaggressions are conceptualized and assessed, it is worth noting how each component contributing to perceived microaggression is related to the different behavioral intentions examined. Particularly, perceived intent of the deliverer shows to be significantly related to all of the behavioral intentions: direct support ($r(170) = .20$, $p <.001$), indirect support ($r(170) = .37$, $p < .001$), confrontation ($r(170) = .23$, $p < .001$), and ignorance ($r(170) = -.23$, $p < .001$). Awareness presents a weak positive relationship with indirect support ($r(170) = .24$, $p < .001$) and a weak negative relationship with ignorance ($r(170) = -.19$, $p < .001$). Discrimination related moderately positive to support ($r(170) = .31$, $p < .001$) and weakly positive to confrontation ($r(170) = .24$, $p < .001$).

In summary, these results suggest significant relationships between perceived responsibility, perceived severity, perceived microaggression, and each behavioral intention (directly supportive, indirectly supportive, confrontational, ignoring). In other words, the greater participants' perceived responsibility, perceived severity, and perceived microaggression, the more pro-social (i.e., directly supportive, indirectly supportive, and confrontational) and the less intentions to ignore they displayed.

3.3. Hypotheses' Testing

3.3.1. Analytical Framework

To test our hypotheses and considering the mixed design including a between-subjects factor, a series of multiple linear regression analyses were conducted using MEMORE (Mediation and

Moderation Analysis for Repeated Measures Designs), created and documented by Montoya and Hayes (2017).

First, to test Hypotheses 1 and 2, separate simple mediation analyses for each dependent variable (Montoya 2019, Model 1) with situation type as the predictor and one mediator (M = perceived microaggression) was performed, examining whether the different scenarios would influence the effects of the independent variable (i.e., situation type) on the mediator variable (i.e., perceived microaggression) and the effects of the mediator on the dependent variables (i.e., behavioral intentions). In particular, as suggested by Montoya and Hayes (2017) in a path-analytic framework, the procedure involves bootstrap methods of inference to estimate direct, indirect, and total effects in two-condition within-participant designs. Used to estimate effect size, non-parametric bootstrapping is an approach with no assumptions about the shape of the distributions of the variables or the sampling distribution of the test statistics. This feature turns the procedure desirable for use in indirect effects analyses with reasonably small sample sizes (Preacher & Hayes, 2004).

Second, to investigate the moderation hypotheses formulated in Hypothesis 3, thus, to estimate and probe interaction effects with the within-participant factor situation type as a predictor and the three moderators (W_1 = perceived responsibility, W_2 = authority figure presence, W_3 = perceived severity), an additive moderation model (Montoya, 2019, Model 2) was meant to be employed. To further test the role of authority figure presence, as predicted in Hypothesis 4, we considered applying a multiplicative model to include a causal interaction among W_1= Perceived responsibility and W_2=Authority figure presence.

However, even though conceptually we would have predicted moderations, the framework of MEMORE does not allow for repeated-measures moderators but rather perceives moderators that were measured twice as mediators (Montoya, 2018). Given this crucial constraint, which was addressed by Montoya (2018) and, to our knowledge, has not been addressed by other researchers since, we decided to shift our focus to more general findings such as associations that we can draw from our data and to provide a meaningful starting point for the examination of perceptions of responsibility (H3a) and severity (H3c) in the form of moderators. In the impossibility to rightfully test those hypotheses as we have proposed, we still conducted a series of alternative analyses to test for associations with the other constructs measured under the proposed research model. More precisely, to examine the moderating role of the presence of an authority figure (H3b), we conducted a series of 2 x 2 mixed ANOVAs in which the absence or presence of an authority figure was a between-subjects factor, situation type (microaggressive

Table 3.2.

Correlations between all Variables.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	12.1	12.2	12.2	13	14	15	16	17
1. Direct Support	—	.63**	.86**	-.45**	.11	.03	.00	-.03	.19*	.71**	.49**	.64**	.06	.66**	.61**	-.05	-.09	-.08	.05	.02
2. Indirect Support	.41**	—	.63**	-25**	.06	-.02	-.08	.08	.09	.54**	.40**	.56**	.27**	.43**	.56**	.12	.02	.15*	.06	.08
3. Confrontation	.74**	.51**	—	-.38**	.11	.03	.16	-.01	.11	.60**	.46**	.64**	.16*	.60**	.64**	.06	.02	-.08	.02	.05
4. Ignoring	-.45**	-.26**	-.47**	—	-.13	.02	-.13	-.02	-.14	-.64*	-.38**	-.39**	-.03	-.45**	-.34**	-.02	-.02	.13	-.08	.03
5. Political orientation [a, h]	-.15	-.03	-.10	.23*	—	.10	.13	.20**	.14	.19*	.05	.06	.09	.02	.07	.10	.12	-.22**	-.20**	.02
6. Teamwork [b, h]	.06	.07	.01	-.03	-.10	—	.09	.00	-.03	-.02	-.03	-.02	.02	-.01	-.01	.05	-.08	.08	.64**	.03
7. Age	-.15*	-.18*	-.12	.10	.13	.09	—	.09	-.04	.09	.14	.09	-.08	.08	.13	.22**	.29**	-.25**	.11	-.15*
8. Gender [c, h]	-.08	-.08	-.09	.24**	.20**	.00	.09	—	.04	.01	.03	-.11	-.02	-.15	.39	.00	.15	-.32**	.05	.19*
9. SV Presence [d, h]	-.07	-.17*	-.18*	.11	.13	-.03	-.04	.03	—	.16*	.14	.14	-.01	.18*	.17*	-.12	-.05	.01	.04	-.16*
10. Perc. responsibility	.59**	.37**	.61**	-.71**	-.12	.02	-.08	-.11	-.11	—	.43**	.53**	.18*	.51**	.46**	.12	.15*	-.18*	-.01	.07
11. Perceived severity	.44**	.34**	.33**	-.36**	-.14	.01	-.19	-.23**	-.08	.43**	—	.55**	.06	.60**	.51**	.08	.04	-.11	.05	-.01
12. Perc. microaggression	.24**	.33**	.27**	-.27**	-.03	.02	.08	-.02	.01	.22*	.24**	—	.51**	.87**	.92**	-.08	-.09	-.05	.03	-.03
12.1 Awareness	.02	.24**	.13	-.19*	.08	-.02	.16	.04	.00	.09	.12	.79**	—	.16*	.33**	.07	.09	-.13	.08	-.17*
12.2 Discrimination	.31**	.07	.24*	-.16	-.08	.09	-.09	-.07	-.07	.21*	.17	.44**	.01	—	.73**	-.22**	-.25**	.07	.03	.01
12.3 Intent	.20**	.37**	.23**	-.23**	-.05	-.02	.04	-.03	.03	.20*	.23*	.87**	.55**	.19*	—	.01	-.01	-.10	.01	.03
13. Receiver Status	.04	-.04	.23*	.11	.09	-.10	-.04	.19*	-.07	.22*	.18	.02	-.07	.22*	-.02	—	.90**	-.28**	.04	.01
14. Deliverer Status	.02	-.03	.26*	.09	.13	.02	.00	.19*	-.03	.10	.01	.08	-.02	.22*	.04	.43**	—	-.20*	-.11	-.14
15. Source [e, h]	.16*	-.05	.10	-.34**	-.22*	.08	-.25**	-.32**	.01	.25**	.20**	-.05	-.24**	.15*	-.04	-.27**	-.25**	—	-.03	.00
16. Employment [f, h]	.06	.11	.02	-.05	-.20**	.64**	.11	-.05	-.04	.07	.09	.01	-.04	.03	.04	-.06	-.04	-.03	—	.13
17. Leader position [g, h]	-.24**	.03	-.08	.04	.02	-.03	.15*	.19*	-.16*	-.01	-.18*	.01	.04	-.02	-.02	.03	.00	.00	.13	—

Note. Coefficients below the diagonal represent correlations of variables in the microaggression condition for total sample (N = 172); coefficients above the diagonal represent correlations of variable in the neutral condition. Age and covariates were used as single indicator constructs in the model.

[a] 1 = very left and 5 = very right; [b] 0 = no teamwork experience and 1 = teamwork experience; [c] 1 = female, 2 = male, 3 = male-to-female transsexual, 4 = female-to-male transsexual, 5 = other; [d] 0 = supervisor absent and 1 = supervisor presence; [e] 0 = Clickworker sample and 1 = Snowball Sampling sample; [f] 0 = currently not employed and 1 = currently employed; [g] 0 = currently not in a leadership position and 1 = currently in a leadership position; [h] correlations are non-parametric (Spearman)

or neutral situation) was a within-subjects factor, and respective behavioral intentions were the dependent variables.

3.3.4. Testing H1 and H2

Paired sample *t* tests provided support for Hypothesis 1, stating that situation type had an effect on the different behavioral intentions, as the difference between situation type between the two conditions was found statistically significant, that is, after application of the Bonferroni adjustment to reduce the likelihood of a Type I error. Cohen's *d* ranged from .48 to .80, suggesting that these differences were of moderate to large effect size. As expected, the mean score of perceived microaggression was significantly higher in the microaggression condition (M = 2.81, SD = 0.50) than in the neutral condition (M = 2.38, SD = 0.53), with higher mean scores indicating greater perceived microaggression. In particular, the analyses revealed that when witnessing the microaggression situation, people were more likely to show pro-social behavioral intentions, that is, direct support ($t(171) = 7.84$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.57, .93]), indirect support ($t(171) = 2.61$, $p = .01$, 95% CI [.05, .35]), as well as confrontation ($t(171) = 6.95$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.48, .87]), and less likely to show intentions to ignore ($t(171) = -6.57$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-.87, -.47]), than when encountering the neutral situation. Table 3.3. shows means and standard deviations for all parametric study variables by situation type condition.

Table 3.3.

Descriptive Statistics for All Numerical Variables by Situation Type Condition.

Variables	Microaggression		Neutral	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Direct support	2.75	1.03	2.01	0.95
Indirect support	1.78	0.94	1.58	0.87
Confrontation	2.58	1.03	1.90	0.97
Ignoring	3.01	1.10	3.67	0.96
Perceived responsibility	2.99	1.03	2.24	0.96
Perceived severity	2.47	0.88	1.66	0.89
Perceived microaggression	2.81	0.49	2.37	0.53
Awareness	2.74	0.60	2.73	0.40
Discrimination	3.26	0.55	2.56	0.71
Intent	2.44	0.83	1.84	0.86
Perceived Receiver Status	2.01	0.12	2.01	0.13
Perceived Deliverer Status	1.98	0.12	2.00	0.11

Note. $N = 172$.

Hypothesis 2 stated that the effect of situation type on behavioral intention would be mediated by participants' perception of microaggression, particularly suggesting that perceived microaggression should be higher in the microaggressive situation and lower in the neutral situation. Thus, as a first step, we tested the effect of situation type on the supposed mediator perceived microaggression using a one-sample *t* test. Results indicate that the mean difference in perceived microaggression was different. On average, in the microaggressive situation, perceptions of microaggression were significantly higher than in the neutral situation, $t(171) = 11.59$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.36, .51].

To test the mediation model of perceived microaggression as a mediator of the effect between situation type and behavioral intention, we used non-parametric bootstrapping as indicated above (see Preacher & Hayes, 2004). In these separately conducted analyses for each behavioral intention, mediation is significant if the 95% bias corrected and accelerated confidence intervals for the indirect effect do not include zero (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). We specified four simple meditation models, one for each behavioral intention. Overall, results supported the effect of situation type on perceived microaggression found in the *t* test as presented before: When in the microaggressive condition, participants perceived greater levels of microaggression compared to the neutral situation ($B = 0.44$, $t = 8.49$, $p < .001$).

In regard to the mediations, we found support for Hypothesis 2b: the total effect of situation type on intentions to indirectly support was significant, corroborating H1 ($B = 0.20$, $SE = 0.08$, $p = .001$), and the direct effect of situation type on intentions to show indirect support was not ($B = -0.04$, $SE = 0.08$, $p = .62$). Thus, perceived microaggression fully mediated the relationship between situation type and indirect supportive behavioral intentions, as shown by the indirect effect ($B = 0.24$, $SE = 0.05$, 95% CI = [.14, .36][2]). The model (see Figure 3.1.) explained a significant proportion of the variance $F(2,169) = 15.16$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .15$). Because zero is not in the 95% confidence interval, the indirect effect is significantly different from zero at $p<.05$.

For Hypotheses 2a, 2c, and 2d (i.e., direct support, confrontation, ignoring), we only found partial mediations. All models explained a significant proportion of the variance (for direct support: $F(2,169) = 32.79$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .28$; for confrontation: $F(2,169) = 29.68$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .26$; for ignoring: $F(2,169) = 8.27$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .09$). As reported in Table 3.4., the analyses revealed significant indirect effects. In another sense, higher values in perceived microaggression lead to higher intentions to directly support ($B = 0.89$, $t = 7.33$) and to

[2] Lower and upper level bias-corrected and accelerated confidence intervals (5000 bias-corrected resamples in bootstrapping. See also Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

confront (B = 0.84, t = 6.67), and lower intentions to ignore (B = -0.53, t = -3.62, p < .001). However, the direct effects of situation type on participants' intentions to directly support, confront, and ignore remained when introducing the mediator, indicating that perceptions of microaggression do not provide entire explanation for the relationship between situation type and intentions to directly support, confront, and ignore.[3]

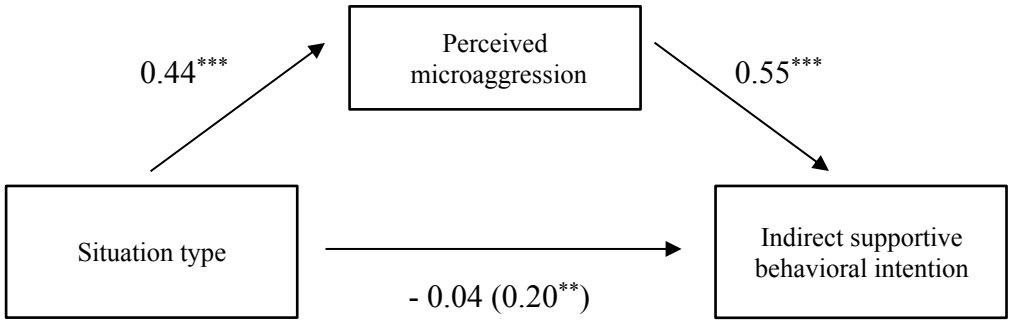

Figure 3.1.

Mediation Results for Indirect Support Model

Note. * p < .05 ** p < .01, *** p < .001. Non-standardized Regression Coefficients with Bootstrapping.

Table 3.4.

Summary of Mediation analyses of Perceived Microaggression on the Relationship between Situation Type and Behavioral Intention for all models.

				95% CI		
Dependent Variable	Effect	*B*	*SE*	Lower	Upper	*p*
Direct Support	Total	0.74	0.10	.56	.93	.001
	Direct	0.36	0.10	.17	.55	.001
	Indirect (mediation)	0.38	—	.25	.54	—
Indirect Support	Total	0.20	0.08	.05	.35	.01
	Direct	-0.04	0.08	-.21	.12	.62
	Indirect (mediation)	0.24	—	.14	.36	—
Confrontation	Total	0.67	0.10	.48	.87	.001
	Direct	0.31	0.10	.11	.51	.02
	Indirect (mediation)	0.37	—	.23	.52	—
Ignoring	Total	-0.67	0.10	-.87	-.47	.001
	Direct	-0.44	0.12	-.67	-.21	.001

[3] Analysing each subscale of the perceived microagression scale separately provided support for discrimination and intent as mediators, but not awareness.

Indirect (mediation)	-0.23	—	-.39	-.08	.05

3.3.4. Testing H3 and H4

Hypothesis H3 stated that perceived responsibility, the presence of an authority figure and perceived severity moderate the effect of situation type on behavioral intention. However, as stated above, the analytical tools available did not allow us to test this hypothesis as initially intended. Thus, in this section we will primarily focus on the role of authority figure presence and approach the other variables suggested as moderators as well as the interplay between authority figure presence and responsibility (as suggested in Hypothesis 4) in the form of additional analyses in the next chapter.

In the following lines we will, thus, focus on behavioral intentions of third-person observers in the presence or absence of an authority person that were measured when presented with both a microaggressive and a neutral situation. In line with theories suggesting diffusion of responsibility on authority figures or other people around (Latané & Darley, 1970), in Hypothesis 3b1 to 3b4, we expected prosocial behavioral intentions (i.e., direct support, indirect support, and confrontation) to be higher and intentions to ignore to be lower in the absence of an authority figure especially in the light of higher perceptions of microaggression related to observing the microaggressive situation, as revealed in the mediation analysis.

A series of 2 x 2 mixed ANOVA with authority figure presence (supervisor absence or presence) as a between-subjects factor and situation type (microaggression or neutral) as a within-subjects factor was carried out for each behavioral intention. The between-factor authority figure presence was entered as a dummy variable (0 = supervisor absent, 1 = supervisor present). Participants' leadership position was included as a covariate (0 = not in a leadership position, 1 = in a leadership position; see Table 3.5. for descriptive statistics).

For direct support, within-subjects effects showed a main effect of situation type ($F(1,169) = 76.52$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .31$), corroborating previous results of more support intentions in the microaggression condition ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 1.03$) than in the neutral condition ($M = 2.01$, $SD=0.95$). Importantly, an interaction was found between situation type and supervisor presence ($F(1,169) = 9.98$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2_p = .06$; Figure 3.2.). To better understand the interaction, simple main effects of supervisor condition show that the difference between supervisor

Table 3.5.

Summary of descriptive statistics of behavioral intentions by situation type and authority figure presence (SV).

Behavioral Intentions	Microaggression *M (SD)*		Neutral *M (SD)*	
	SV Absence	SV Presence	SV Absence	SV Presence
Direct support	2.84 (0.98)	2.67 (1.07)	1.84 (0.95)	2.16 (0.93)
Indirect support	1.96 (1.02)	1.62 (0.83)	1.51 (0.84)	1.65 (0.90)
Confrontation	2.79 (1.02)	2.39 (1.00)	1.80 (0.96)	2.00 (0.97)
Ignoring	2.87 (1.07)	3.13 (1.12)	3.80 (0.97)	3.55 (0.94)

Note. $N = 172$. Leadership position was included as a covariate.

presence or absence was only significant in the neutral condition ($F(1,169) = 5.30$, $p = .02$, $\eta^2_p = .03$) but not in the microaggression condition ($p = .11$). As to simple main effects of situation type, the difference between microaggression and neutral condition was significant in both supervisor present and absent ($ps < .001$). There was also an interaction with the covariate ($p = .002$).

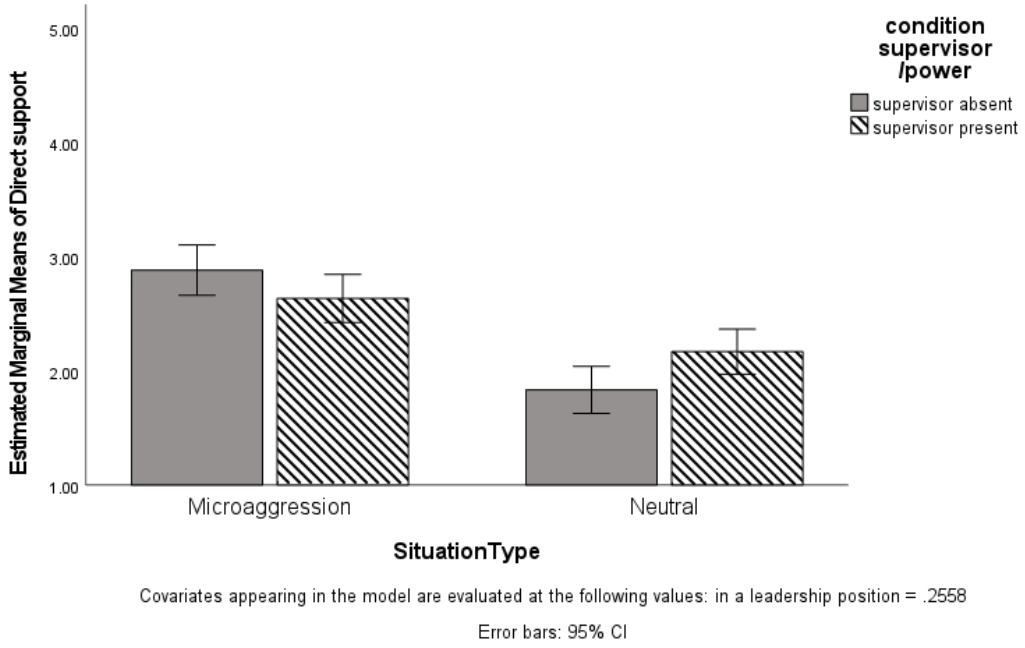

Figure 3.2.

Interaction effects for Intentions to Directly Support

When analyzing private and public support separately (Bastiaensens et al., 2014), effects on private support were significant, both in terms of main effect of situation type, and interaction with supervisor presence ($p < .001$), whereas for public support, there was only a main effect of situation type ($p < .001$), but only a marginal interaction with supervisor presence ($p = .06$).

Regarding indirect support, within-subjects effects showed a main effect of situation type ($F(1,169) = 9.29$, $p = .003$, $\eta^2_p = .05$), corroborating previous results of more support intentions in the microaggression condition (M=1.78, SD=0.94) than in the neutral condition (M=1.58, SD=0.87). Figure 3.3. displays, importantly, an interaction was found between situation type and supervisor presence ($F(1,169) = 11.30$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .06$). Simple main effects of supervisor condition show that the difference between supervisor being present or absent was only significant in the microaggression condition ($F(1,169) = 5.60$, $p = .02$, $\eta^2_p = .03$), but not

in the neutral condition (p = .23). As to simple main effects of situation type, the difference between microaggression and neutral condition was significant only when supervisor was absent (F(1,169) =18.40, p < .001, η^2_p= .10), but not when supervisor was present (p=.69). There was no interaction with the covariate (p=.23).

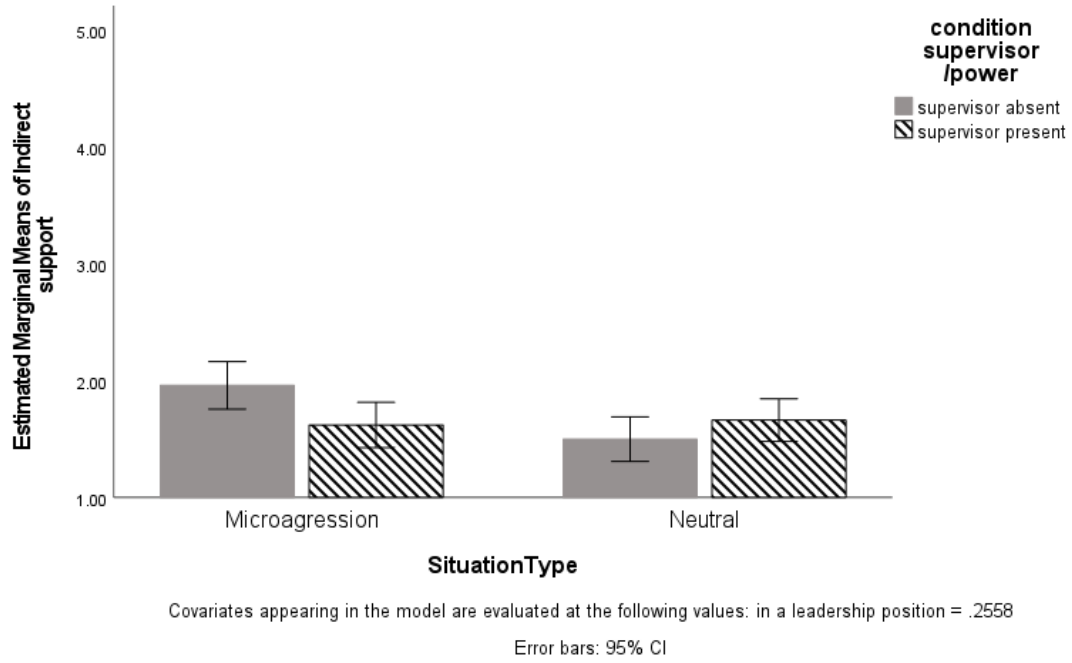

Figure 3.3.

Interaction effects for Intentions to Indirectly Support

Regarding behavioral intention to confront, within-subjects effects showed a main effect of situation type (F(1,169) =52.18, p < .001, η^2_p= .24), corroborating previous results of more confrontation intentions in the microaggression condition (M=2.58, SD=1.03) than in the neutral condition (M = 1.90, SD = 0.97). More importantly, as displayed in Figure 3.4. an interaction was found between situation type and supervisor presence (F(1,169) = 11.83, p < .001, η^2_p= .07). Simple main effects of supervisor condition show that the difference between supervisor being present or absent was only significant in the microaggression condition (F(1,169) =7.63, p = .01, η^2_p= .04), but not in the neutral condition (p = .14). As to simple main effects of situation type, the difference between microaggression and neutral condition was significant in both supervisor present and absent (ps < .01). There was no interaction with the covariate (p = .07).

When analyzing private and public support separately (Bastiaensens et al., 2014), effects on private support were significant, both in terms of main effect of situation type, and

interaction with supervisor presence ($p < .001$), and also for public support ($p < .001$ for main effect of situation type, $p = .04$ for interaction with supervisor presence).

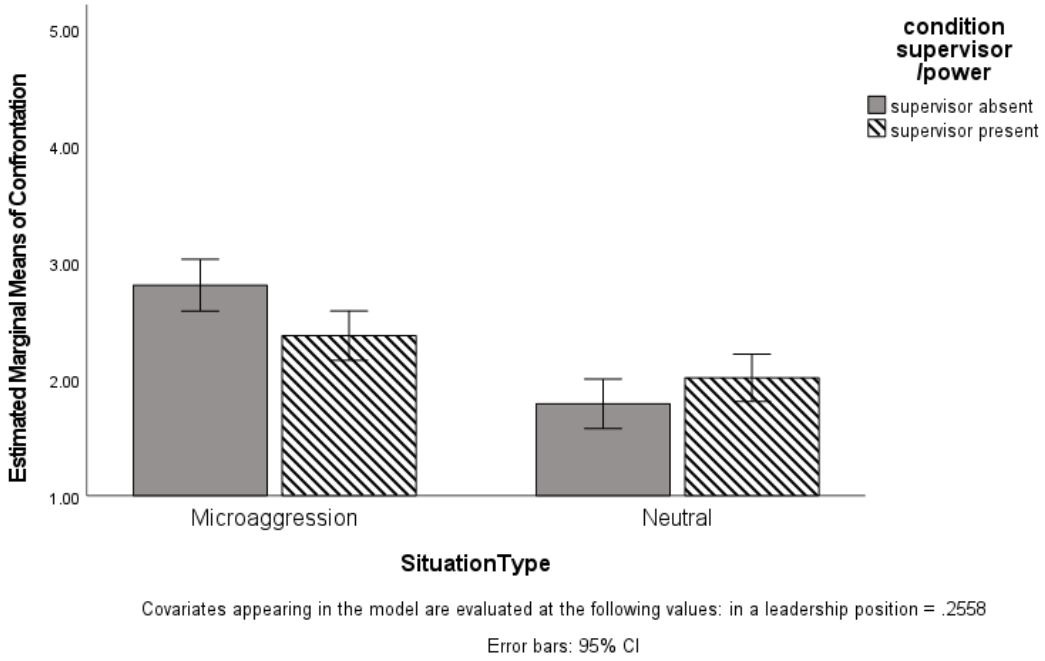

Figure 3.4.

Interaction effects for Intentions to Confront

Finally, regarding ignoring, within-subjects effects showed a main effect of situation type ($F(1,169) = 37.09$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .18$), corroborating previous results of less ignoring intentions in the microaggression condition ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 1.10$) than in the neutral condition ($M = 3.67$, SD=0.96). More importantly, as shown in Figure 3.5. an interaction was found between situation type and supervisor presence ($F(1,169) = 6.80$, $p = .01$, $\eta^2_p = .04$). Simple main effects of supervisor condition show that there was no significant difference between supervisor being present or absent in either situation type ($ps > .10$). As to simple main effects of situation type, the difference between microaggression and neutral condition was significant in both supervisor present and absent ($ps <. 003$). There was no interaction with the covariate ($p = .07$).

Due to positive moderate to high significant correlations between intentions to privately or publicly intervene in the case of both confrontative and supportive behavioral intentions (for the microaggression condition: $r = .57$, $p < .001$; for the neutral condition: $r = .78$, $p < .001$), there will be no further distinction between behavioral intentions in private and public in the scope of the present study.

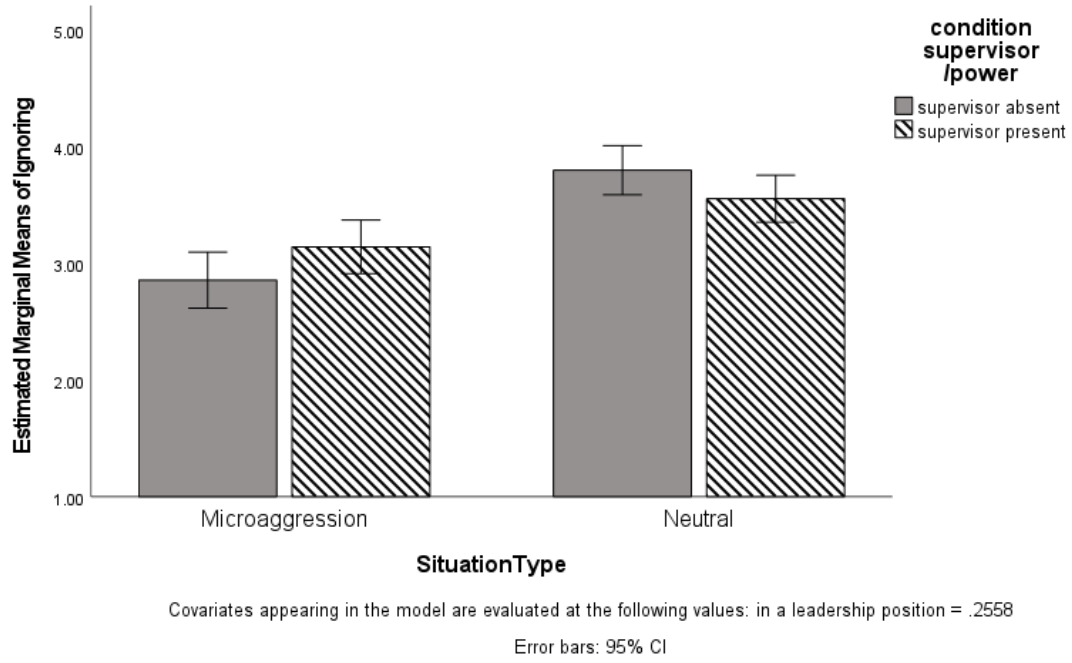

Figure 3.5.

Interaction effects for Intentions to Ignore

3.3.4. Alternative Analyses

Because it is not possible to test our hypotheses with the analytical tools provided as discussed by Montoya (2018), we decided to conduct a series of alternative analyses. Since we were interested in examining the impact of situation type on perceived responsibility and perceived severity, we conducted several repeated measures ANOVA on to provide a first insight into the plausibility of these variables in the context of the third person perspective on microaggressions, also including whether participants have a supervisor position as covariate.

Perceived Responsibility. A mixed ANOVA similar to the ones conducted for behavioral intentions showed that perceived responsibility was higher in the microaggression (M = 2.99, SD = 1.03) than the neutral situation (M = 2.24, SD = 0.96), (F(1,169) = 56.77, p < .001, η^2_p = .25). These results support findings established before. Results also indicate a significant interaction between the within-subjects factor and the supervisor condition F(1,169) = 8.57, p = .01, η^2_p = .05). Simple main effects of supervisor condition show that the difference between supervisor being present or absent was only significant in the neutral condition (F(1,169) =4.38, p = .03, η^2_p= .03), but not in the microaggression condition (p = .13). As to simple main effects of situation type, the difference between microaggression and neutral condition was significant in both supervisor present and absent (ps < .01). There was no effect of the covariate (p = .20).

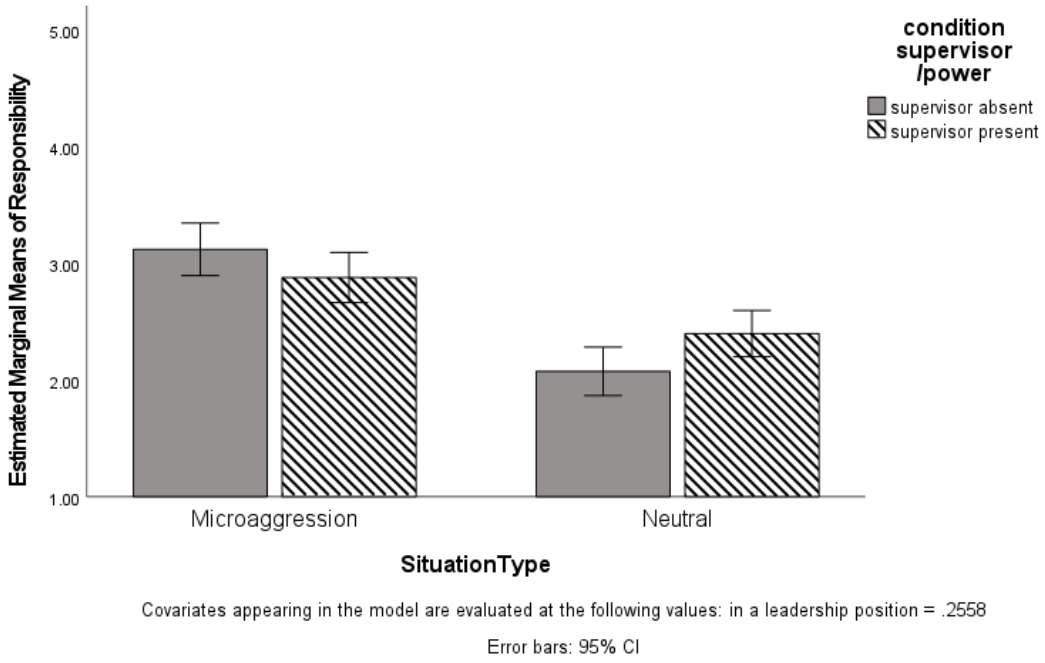

Figure 3.6.

Within-subjects Effects for Perceived Responsibility

Perceived Severity. To examine if participants' perceived severity changes significantly depending on the situation they are observing, we conducted a repeated measures ANOVA and found significant differences in perceptions of severity($F(1,169) = 88.64$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .34$), so that in the microaggression condition, people considered the incident more severe ($M = 2.47$, $SD = 0.88$) than the neutral condition ($M = 1.66$, $SD = 0.89$). Results also indicate a significant interaction between the within-subjects factor and the supervisor condition $F(1,169) = 7.87$, $p = .01$, $\eta^2_p = .04$). Simple main effects of supervisor condition show that the difference between supervisor being present or absent was only significant in the neutral condition ($F(1,169) = 4.22$, $p = .04$, $\eta^2_p = .02$), but not in the microaggression condition ($p = .16$). As to simple main effects of situation type, the difference between microaggression and neutral condition was significant in both supervisor present and absent ($ps < .001$). There was no effect of the covariate ($p = .07$).

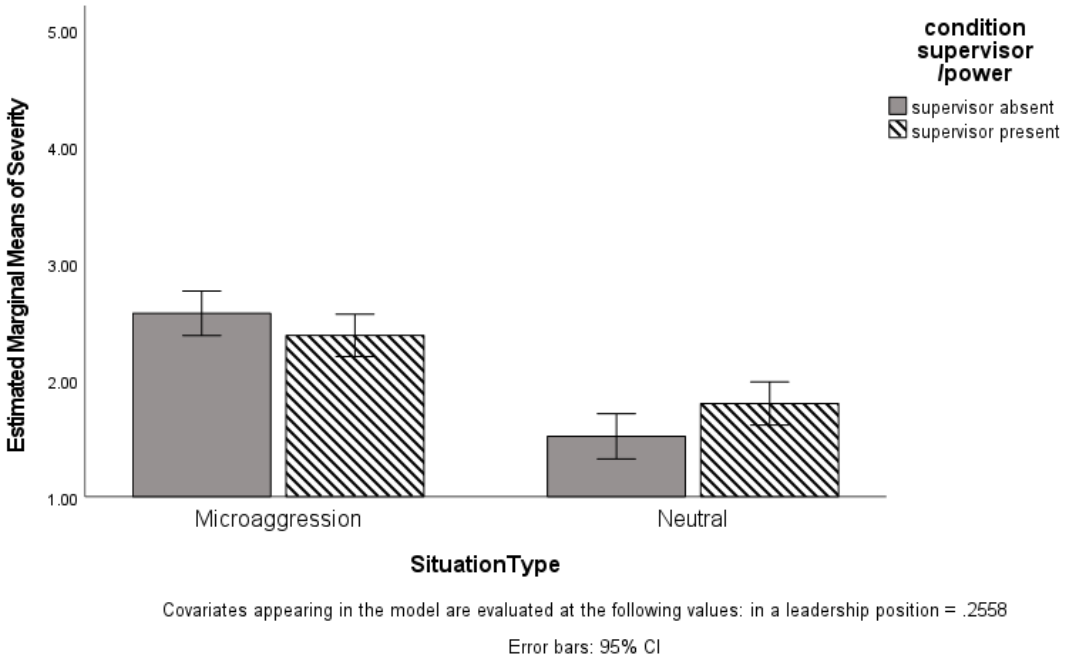

Figure 3.7.

Within-subjects Effects for Perceived Severity

CHAPTER 4

Discussion

In an effort to bridge basic social psychological theories and literature on bystander behavior with the comparatively new concept of microaggressions, this study aimed to contribute to a better conceptual understanding, while adopting a third-person perspective. Drawing upon research on observers' ability to recognize (Torres et al., 2020) and categorize (Offermann et al., 2013; 2014) microaggressions, this study, to the best of our knowledge, comprises one of the first to examine the link between cognitive and behavioral processes in the context of observer behavior with respect to ethnic microaggressions. Not only did we take a first step towards understanding whether third person observers after all are able to identify microaggressions, but it was also a main goal to examine whether there is an effect of witnessing a microaggression on people's behavioral intentions and whether perceptions of microaggression could explain such effect. Furthermore, in order to contribute to the advancement of the development of scientifically grounded intervention programs as a form to successfully manage diversity and inclusion at the workplace, we sought to gain an understanding on factors that may enhance prosocial behavioral intentions (i.e., supportive and confrontational) and thereby diminish intentions to simply ignore such incidents. On the one hand, we aimed at analyzing perceptions of one's responsibility to intervene as a crucial factor that may exacerbate pro-social behavioral intentions to uncover or disrupt microaggressions as they occur. On the other hand, we drew on previous research and investigated the role of people's severity perceptions of such incidents. Finally, considering both literature on bystander behavior and the high practical relevance assigned to understanding subtle forms of discrimination in the workplace, we considered the role of the presence of an authority figure (i.e., supervisor absence or presence) and examined whether it interacts with people's perceptions of responsibility.

First, the results of our experimental study show that people can recognize microaggressions and distinguish them from neutral situations in terms of awareness, instance of discrimination and intent (as suggested by Graebner et al., 2009). Furthermore, there was an effect of the type of situation on all people's behavioral intentions (i.e., direct support, indirect confrontation, ignoring) assessed, which can be (partly) explained by the perception of a situation as microaggressive, at least if people perceive the situation as intentional and

discriminatory. From these results, we derive the transferability of the concept of microaggressions beyond the often-criticized limitation to the individual level of perception of the receivers (Lilienfeld, 2017). Along with this, the first implication we ascribe to this study, namely the plausibility of the construct and the need to gain more insight into observers' perceptions in order to effectively support those affected by microaggressions in the workplace and beyond, is discussed below.

Second, our analyses revealed similar effects for observer behavior in the context of microaggressions as for other forms of discrimination (Brody & Vangelisti, 2016; Madden & Loh, 2018; Rendsvig, 2014) as well as for a variety of similar critical incidents (Latané & Darley, 1968). The discovered effect of the presence of the role of an authority figure and the evidence of associations with perceptions of responsibility suggest that the effectiveness of observers in responding to microaggressions in the workplace may benefit from approaches similar to those used for other forms of discrimination and, in this sense, evidence-based interventions for diversity and inclusion at work, as will be discussed below.

Third, with the notion that people can distinguish microaggressions from neutral situations in terms of severity, we replicated Offermann's et al. (2013; 2014) findings that observers can classify microaggressions on a continuum of severity. The results suggest that perceptions of severity may be a promising construct for understanding what contributes to identifying and addressing microaggressions, highlighting the importance of understanding those indicators that can ultimately be explained by reflecting on early approaches from social psychology.

In the following discussion, we attempt to outline how our study can shed light on some previously undiscovered aspects of microaggressions, argue the ways in which our study can contribute to the literature on microaggressions, and speak to important scientific and practical implications. We conclude with the relevance of understanding microaggressions and adopting a third-person perspective, with important insights into the limitations of the present study, and with ideas and suggestions for future research in this comparatively under-researched area.

4.1. Adapting a new Perspective on Microaggressions

While our findings on third-person observers' ability to identify microaggresions may certainly challenge a basic assertion about the nature of microaggressions made by Sue et al. (2007), namely that microaggressions tend to lie in the eye of the receiver, which is frequently used in the literature as an illustration of the claim of mono-source bias (Lilienfeld, 2017), these findings most importantly should be considered a fruitful extension and a first step on the path

from subjective experiences to a concept based on consent, thus contributing to the necessary clarity of the concept for future research. In their recent work on microinterventions in the form of a provision of ways to respond to microaggressions Sue and colleagues (2019), themselves clarify their consideration of the efficacy of microinterventions by observers as well. In this sense, our study can help to address necessary preliminary evidence for adopting a third-person perspective and provide insights that can provide scientific support for previous theoretical considerations.

Having considered several behavioral intentions that observers may display, observer reactions have to be considered an interplay with other crucial variables considered in research on the bystander effect. In the same vein, the importance of more research on the construct of microaggressions becomes evident. By including a measurement of perceived microaggresion consisting of different subscales (i.e., awareness, discrimination, intent; Graebner et al., 2009) we acknowledged the complexity of microaggressions as a concept and could show that in the first place, observer behavior was due to the assessment of the situation as discriminatory and under intentional discrimination by the deliverer, and not to the awareness attributed to the deliverer of the discriminatory content of his communication.

Considering the importance of third-party observer responses in creating ethical organizational climates (Skarlicki & Kulik, 2005), establishing individual and social change (Czopp & Monteith, 2003; Dickter & Newton, 2013), protecting targets of injustice (O'Reilly & Aquino, 2001), and potentially mitigating undesirable behavior (Ferguson & Barry, 2011), there is a call for organizations to promote awareness through diversity trainings (Eligon, 2016; Kim et al., 2019; Mazzula & Campón, 2019; Sinclair, 2016). Thus, there have been several practical considerations and applications intended to address the impacts of microaggressions in the form of training programs, including interventions for third-party observers, often referred to as White bystanders (Hansen, 2003; Holder, 2019; Kim et al., 2019). However, many of these trainings are envisioned in a similar approach to conventional diversity trainings or those targeting observers and bystanders of bullying or sexual harassment, providing individuals with potential responses to microaggressions (Clark & Spanierman, 2019; Sue et al., 2019). To ensure that such training approaches do not produce backlash or other undesirable effects, further scientific study of microaggressions as a special form of subtle discrimination is crucial (e.g.,"anti-microaggression" backlash; Furedi, 2015; Lilienfeld, 2017; Lukianoff & Haidt, 2015). While we do by no means question the importance of microaggression awareness training programs, our findings, which show that full mediation through an perceptions of microaggressions only occurs when seeking institutional support is considered, clearly suggest

that interventions of support in terms of proactivity and, as has recently been discussed extensively in the human resources field, self-organization (Laloux, 2014) are of great importance when it comes to effectively and sustainably reducing discrimination in the workplace.

4.2. On Authority, Perceived Responsibility and Associated Dynamics from a Social Psychological Lens

Our main findings on the role of authority figure presence revealed the importance of considering various behavioral intentions when aiming to assess observer behavior. We specifically found that when a Microaggression occurred, people show more supportive behavior compared to neutral situations, regardless of the absence or presence of an authority figure. On the contrary, in the case of behavioral intentions to confront, a significant indication for the classical bystander effect (Latané & Darley, 1968) has been found, replicating finding by Ashburn-Nardo and colleagues (2019a) that people consider the present authority figure as most responsible for confronting prejudice and reported feeling less personally responsible in the presence of authorities (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2019a). Despite underlining the importance of distinguishing between different types of behavior and in how they may be derived by contextual factors, it remains crucial at this point to emphasize the ongoing relevance of social psychological theories established long before the conceptualization of the microaggression concept.

As to our results, an interaction with the covariate measuring people's own position as a leader only occurred in the case of direct behavioral intentions. This finding points to the importance of individual variables but also context variables such as hierarchy perceptions and raises more questions, thereby going along with evidence on higher perceptions of responsibility reported by people in supervisory roles highlighting conferred authority as a key factor in observers' intentions to confront discrimination (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2019a). Our study added to the literature by showing the same for people who may consider themselves as authorities in relation to their background, an individual difference variable that further strengthens intentions to show direct behavior.

In this context, we would like to highlight the relevance of our approach to combine cognition and behavior to ultimately understand what contributes to a microaggression and what not. Our results may precisely be considered as an indication that is not only is about perceiving a microaggression as such in terms of discriminatory nature, and awareness as well

as intention of the deliverer, but also about motives, perceptions, and context, after all deciding whether others learn about possible consensus in (third person) recognition of a situation or communication constituting microaggressions as a form of unlawful discrimination despite of its oftentimes unclear intentions and ambiguity.

Finally, drawing on our findings that replicate the classical bystander effect and the role of authority figures, we strongly suggest including considerations on a structural level (e.g., norms) in the attempt to encourage observers to do something about subtle discrimination such as microaggression, and thereby constituting well needed organizational climate.

4.3. On Severity, Emergencies and Other Perceptions

Our findings regarding the role of severity indicated that perceived severity changes significantly from the microaggression to the neutral situation, thereby underlining the relevance of severity perceptions for the concept of microaggressions. Even if we could not test our initial hypothesis suggesting the moderating function of perceived severity, we still consider this approach valuable with regard to the results obtained and in special regard to prevalent conceptualizations of the microaggression concept. In particular, the findings of the present study can encourage to take a critical look on the understanding of microaggressions on a continuum of severity as suggested by Sue et al. (2017). On the one hand, we agree with critics that question the boundaries of subtle and overt discrimination when, for instance, referring to microassaults (Lilienfeld, 2017). On the other hand, in relation to most of the behavioral intentions considered in this study, the perception of a situation as microaggression mainly based on perceiving it discriminatory in nature or as intended by the deliverer. This major finding of the present study goes along with research suggesting the relevance of bias type in considerations of severity in relation to behavior (Brinkman et al., 2001). When certain types may be identified, individual considerations of severity may strengthen or weaken intentions to intervene. Addressing severity as a moderator on the effect of situation type on behavioral intentions instead may contribute to an understanding of how observer intervention can be enhanced, thereby supporting the aforementioned suggestion to consider contextual and structural factors with its implications by discarding the controversial approach to categorize microaggressions based on severity and rather concentrating on more contextual variables may help to make the boundaries of what contributes a microaggression and what not more clear.

4.4. Limitations and Future Directions

Several limitations of this study require further investigation. First, methodologically, we manipulated situation type within subjects leading to several methodological and conceptual restrictions. Although this approach was adopted as an attempt to increase statistical power, a between-subject design could have prevented considerable challenges related to our chosen approach. Particularly, structural equation modelling could not be considered as an analytical approach because, among other obstacles, the sample size was too small for the number of variables to be then included in the model. Thus, as the other supposedly available tool to address our proposed hypotheses, MEMORE (Montoya & Hayes, 2017; Montoya, 2018; 2019), was limited to moderators that were only measured once, what turns out inconsistent with regard to our research interest, we do not only suggest future research to consider adapting a structural equation modeling approach with a bigger sample size, but also to address this limitation related to MEMORE.

A second limitation concerns the generalizability of the present study's findings. The fictious scenario of microaggression only focused on one possible scenario. As suggested by Sue et al. (2007), microaggressions can, however, take several form and Torres et al. (2020) found that people have difficulties to recognize microaggressions when compared to overt discrimination. Therefore, future research should test whether the effects remain in different scenario constellations. Moreover, we only addressed only, in the German context, particularly stigmatized group. It is, thus, questionable if we would have obtained the same results if we would have considered other groups and related racial stereotypes. It is reasonable to argue, for example, that perceptions of microaggressions may vary by consciousness of stereotypes towards minority groups. There is, thus, investigation missing on the influence of consciousness of racial bias and stereotype on observer perceptions and behavior.

Finally, the primary focus of the present study lies on recognition and behavior. Certainly, there is much more that may explain and exacerbate third person behavior in the face of microaggressions. We suggest future research therefore to investigate other constructs such as motivations as well as contextual variables and social norms. Considering that our findings can be seen as an initial approach towards understanding the role of hierarchy with its implementations, future empirical research should take its influence on several levels (e.g., authority person in the position as the deliverer) into consideration. Moreover, it would be worthwhile to investigate how different hierarchical structures may impact our findings. The notion that microagressions are not necessarily unlawful (Jones et al., 2016) may be a fruitful starting point to explain why people choose not to intervene despite of recognizing an incident in the sense of (intended) discrimination. In this context, an understanding of how norms and

the shift from the individual to a normative focus may contribute to behavioral intentions can lead to important and comparatively easier implementable interventions at the workplace and beyond it.

Conclusion

The present study found empirical support that microaggressions can be perceived by third-person observers. Perceptions of microaggressions, furthermore, were found to mediate the effect of situation type (i.e., microaggression or neutral situation) on behavioral intention (i.e., directly support, indirectly support, confront, and ignore). An examination of the role of authority figure presence on behavioral intentions as well as its interplay with perceptions of responsibility suggest that the classical bystander effect (Latané & Darley, 1968) and the associated concept of diffusion of responsibility may be applicable on observer behavior in the light of microaggressions.

The study adds both theoretical and practical value. Considering that some scholars (e.g., Sue, 2019) are providing receivers and observers of microaggressions with tools to combat and confront these subtle forms of discrimination that have yet to undergo scientific approval, the expected results can contribute to develop more fruitful, empirically grounded and hence effective interventions in workplace settings, particularly for third-person observers, possibly contributing to more effective diversity management in organizational settings.

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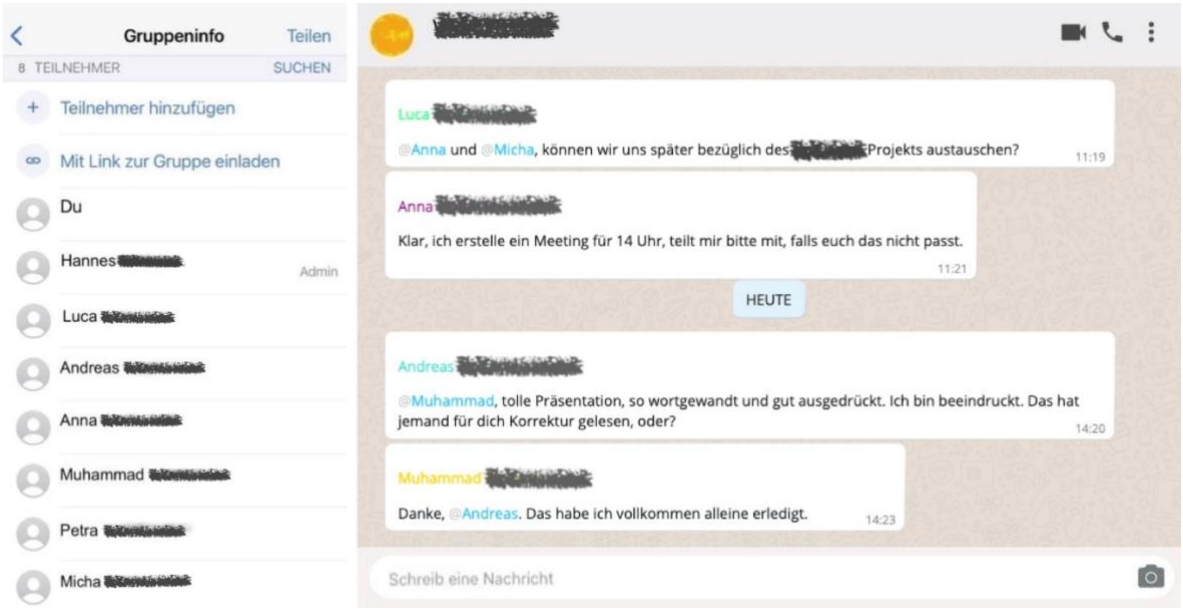
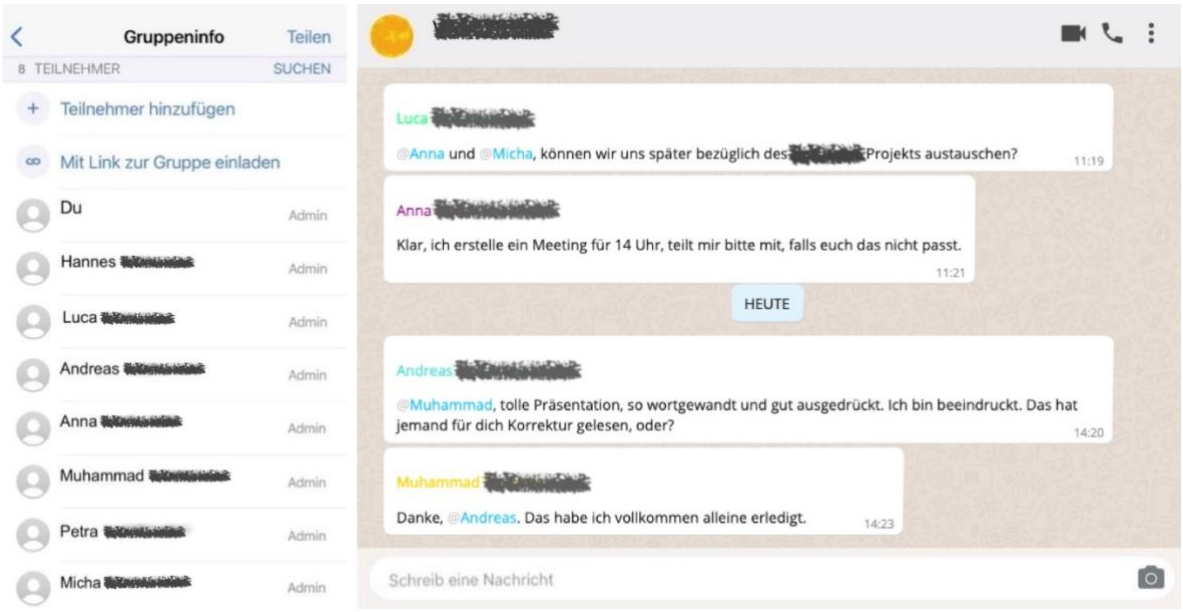
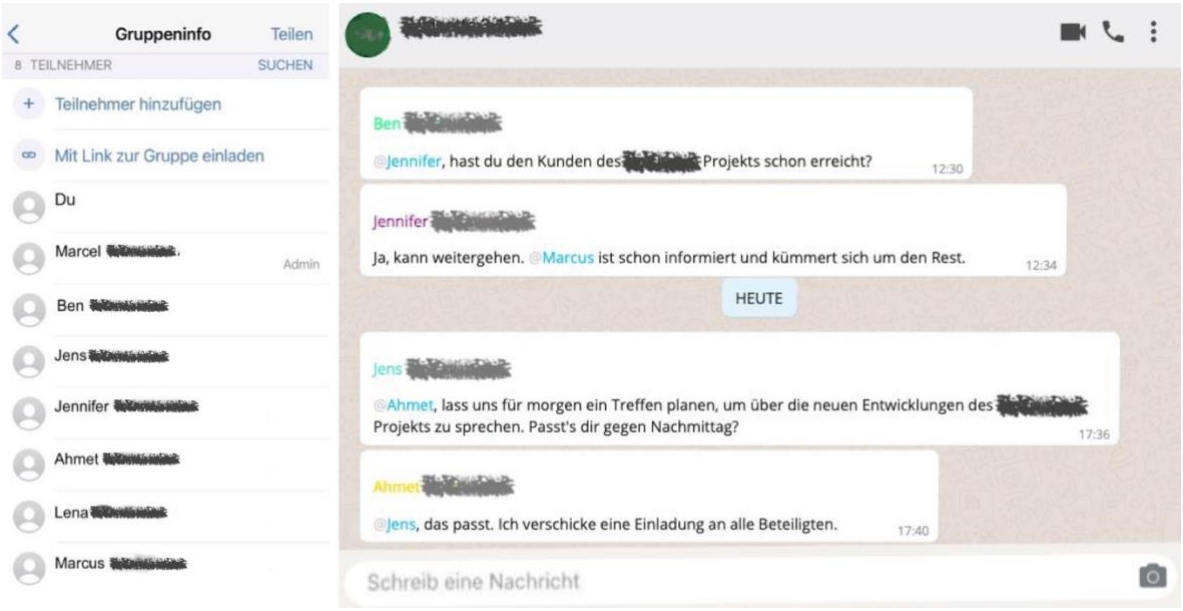
Appendix A - Vignettes



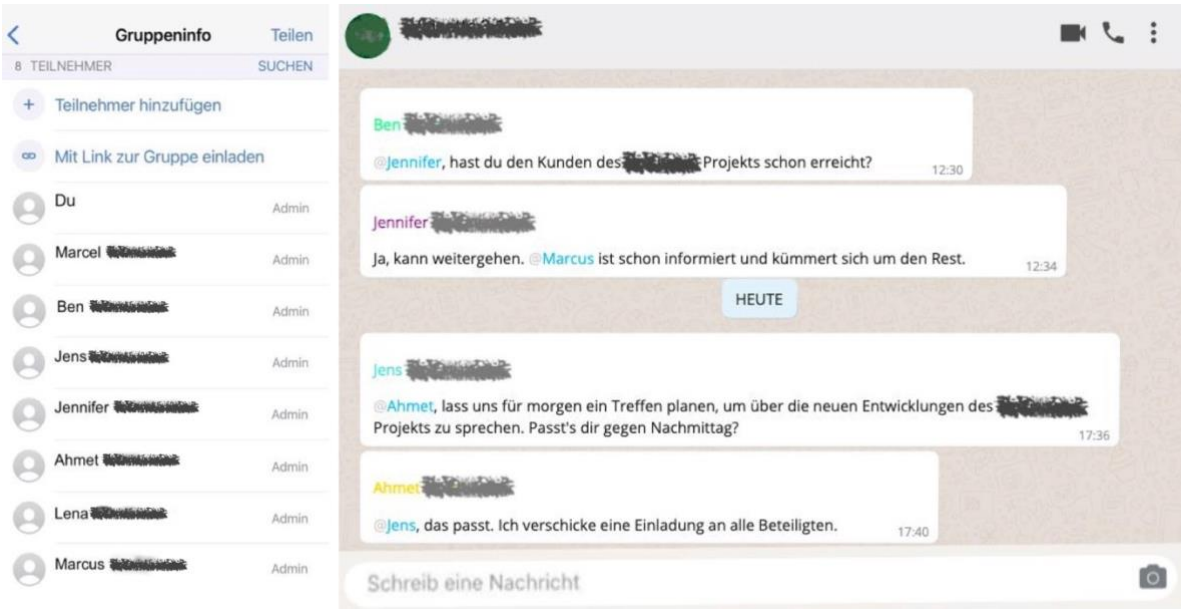
Vignette 1: Microaggression, Supervisor present



Vignette 1: Microaggression, Supervisor absent



Vignette 2: Neutral Situation, Supervisor present



Vignette 2: Neutral Situation, Supervisor absent

Appendix B - Questionnaire

Informed Consent

Liebe Teilnehmerin, lieber Teilnehmer,

wir danken Ihnen für die Teilnahme. Diese Studie ist Teil einer Abschlussarbeit an der Universität ISCTE-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa.

Die Studie hat es zum Ziel, einen tieferen Einblick in Dynamiken arbeitsplatzbezogener Kommunikation zu gewinnen. Durch Ihre qualifizierte Teilnahme leisten Sie einen wichtigen Beitrag zum Erkenntnisgewinn in diesem Forschungsbereich. Sie sollten daher nur an der Studie teilnehmen, wenn Sie sich wach und konzentriert fühlen, nicht aber, wenn Sie müde, erschöpft, leicht abgelenkt oder lustlos sind.

Die Richtlinien guter ethischer Forschung sehen es außerdem vor, dass sich Teilnehmende mit ihrer Zustimmung explizit und nachvollziehbar mit der Studienteilnahme einverstanden erklären, um damit zu dokumentieren, dass sie **freiwillig** an unserer Forschung teilnehmen. Aus diesem Grund möchten wir Sie bitten, die vorliegende Einverständniserklärung aufmerksam zu lesen und zu bestätigen.

Einverständniserklärung

Forschungsgegenstand und Ablauf: Diese Studie beschäftigt sich mit Interaktionssituationen, vermittelt durch Screenshots realitätsnaher Whatsapp-Gruppen-Unterhaltungen. Nachfolgend werden Ihnen verschiedene Situationen und Sachverhalte vorgelegt, die anhand diverser Fragen eingeschätzt werden sollen.

Dauer: Die Dauer der Teilnahme beträgt ca. 10-15 Minuten.

Vertraulichkeit: Die Aufzeichnung der Daten erfolgt **anonymisiert**. Es ist während und nach der Erhebung niemanden möglich, Ihre Daten mit Ihrem Namen in Verbindung zu bringen. Die erhobenen Daten dienen ausschließlich der statistischen Auswertung. Individuelle Antworten werden weder berichtet noch analysiert.

Freiwilligkeit: Ihre Teilnahme erfolgt **freiwillig**. Es steht Ihnen zu jedem Zeitpunkt frei, Ihre Teilnahme abzubrechen, ohne dass Ihnen daraus Nachteile entstehen. Ihr Einverständnis zur Aufbewahrung bzw. Speicherung Ihrer Daten kann während der Erhebung jederzeit widerrufen werden, ohne dass Ihnen daraus Nachteile entstehen; aufgrund der Anonymisierung der Daten im Anschluss der Studie ist dies allerdings nur bis zum Studienende möglich.

Falls Sie spezifische Fragen haben, kontaktieren Sie mich bitte direkt per E-Mail: Laura_Frederica_Schafer@iscte-iul.pt

- ○ ja (1)
- ○ nein (2)

End of Block: Intro1

Start of Block: Employment Situation

Q75 In dieser Studie geht es um das Kommunikationsverhalten über digitale Medien am Arbeitsplatz. Bitte beantworten Sie zunächst die folgenden Fragen, die sich auf Ihre derzeitige berufliche Tätigkeit beziehen.

Q74 Befinden Sie sich derzeit in einem Arbeitsverhältnis?

- ○ ja (1)
- ○ nein (2)

Q76 Gehört zu Ihrem Job auch das Arbeiten im Team?

- ○ ja (1)
- ○ nein (2)

Q77 Befinden Sie sich derzeit in einer Führungsposition?

- ja (1)
- nein (2)

End of Block: Employment Situation

Start of Block: Intro

Q12 Stellen Sie sich bitte vor, Mitarbeiterin oder Mitarbeiter in der Projektabteilung eines renommierten Unternehmens zu sein. Im Zuge der neuen Kommunikationsstrategie hat Ihr Arbeitgeber begonnen, mobile Sofortnachrichtendienste als Kommunikationsmedium zu nutzen. Jedes Team verfügt nunmehr über eine gemeinsame Chat-Gruppe, über die Sie **${e://Field/power}** **Ihren Kolleginnen und Kollegen** kommunizieren können.

Bitte lesen Sie sich die folgenden Gruppeninteraktionen **sorgfältig und aufmerksam** durch und beantworten Sie die anschließenden Fragen so, als wären Sie tatsächlich in dieser Situation. Bitte denken Sie nicht lange nach, sondern wählen Sie die Antworten spontan und intuitiv. Beachten Sie, dass es weder richtige noch falsche Antworten gibt.

End of Block: Intro

Start of Block: Vignette 1 – Microaggression

Between-subjects Condition 1:

Q76 Bitte schauen Sie sich den heutigen Nachrichtenverlauf in der aus **Ihnen, Ihren KollegInnen und Ihrem Abteilungsleiter** bestehenden Chat-Gruppe genau an und versuchen Sie sich bestmöglich in die Situation hineinzuversetzen. Bitte beachten Sie, dass Ihr Abteilungsleiter Mitglied dieser Chat-Gruppe ist.

Bitte fahren Sie erst dann fort, wenn Sie **alle** Nachrichten **sorgfältig** gelesen haben.

Between- subjects Condition 2:

Q141 Bitte schauen Sie sich den heutigen Nachrichtenverlauf in der **lediglich aus Ihnen und Ihren KollegInnen** bestehenden Chat-Gruppe genau an und versuchen Sie sich bestmöglich in die Situation hineinzuversetzen. Bitte beachten Sie, dass Ihr Abteilungsleiter kein Mitglied dieser Chat-Gruppe ist.

Bitte fahren Sie erst dann fort, wenn Sie alle Nachrichten gelesen haben.

Q80 Nun möchten wir Sie bitten, sich vorzustellen, wie Sie sich verhalten würden, wenn Sie einen solchen Nachrichtenverlauf im Arbeitskontext beobachten würden.

Im Folgenden werden Ihnen einige Aussagen vorgelegt. Bitte geben Sie auf einer Skala von 1 (trifft nicht zu) bis 5 (trifft zu) an, inwieweit die Aussagen auf Ihr Verhalten in einer solchen Situation zutreffen.

Bitte antworten Sie spontan, ohne lange über die einzelnen Aussagen nachzudenken.
Beachten Sie, dass es weder richtige noch falsche Antworten gibt.

BB MA

Ich würde ...

	trifft nicht zu (28)	trifft eher nicht zu (29)	weder noch (31)	trifft eher zu (32)	trifft zu (38)
… das Gespräch ignorieren, weil es keine allzu große Sache sein kann, wenn niemand sonst etwas dagegen unternimmt. (15)	○	○	○	○	○
… mich nicht einmischen, da es bereits genug Leute gibt, die sich darum kümmern können. (18)	○	○	○	○	○
... mit meiner Arbeit weiter machen und mich nicht weiter um die Unterhaltung kümmern. (16)	○	○	○	○	○
… die Situation ignorieren, weil ich nicht sicher bin, die vollständige Vorgeschichte zu kennen. (17)	○	○	○	○	○
... mich stark verantwortlich fühlen, auf diese Nachrichten zu reagieren. (19)	○	○	○	○	○
... es als meine Pflicht ansehen, meinem Kollegen zu helfen. (20)	○	○	○	○	○

... es als meine Verpflichtung ansehen, etwas gegen diese Situation zu tun. (21)	○	○	○	○	○
... auf diese Unterhaltung in irgendeiner Weise reagieren. (4)	○	○	○	○	○
... wenn Sie diese Aussage lesen, wählen sie bitte "trifft zu" aus. (23)	○	○	○	○	○
… eine öffentliche Nachricht in die Gruppe schreiben, um Muhammad darauf hinzuweisen, dass ich Andreas' Nachricht nicht in Ordnung finde. (5)	○	○	○	○	○
… eine private Nachricht an Muhammad schreiben, um ihn darauf hinzuweisen, dass ich Andreas' Nachricht nicht in Ordnung finde. (6)	○	○	○	○	○
… eine öffentliche Nachricht in die Gruppe schreiben, um Muhammad zu bestärken. (7)	○	○	○	○	○

… eine private Nachricht an Muhammad schreiben, um ihn zu bestärken. (8)	○	○	○	○	○
… eine öffentliche Nachricht in die Gruppe schreiben, um Andreas darauf hinzuweisen, dass ich seine Nachricht nicht in Ordnung finde. (9)	○	○	○	○	○
… eine private Nachricht an Andreas schreiben, um ihn darauf hinzuweisen, dass ich seine Nachricht nicht in Ordnung finde. (10)	○	○	○	○	○
… die Personalabteilung kontaktieren, um den Vorfall zu melden. (11)	○	○	○	○	○
… den Abteilungsleiter kontaktieren, um den Vorfall zu melden. (12)	○	○	○	○	○

PM MA Im Folgenden sehen Sie einige Aussagen zur Einschätzung der heutigen Interaktion zwischen Andreas und Muhammad. Bitte geben Sie auf einer Skala von 1 (trifft nicht zu) bis 5 (trifft zu) an, wie sehr Sie den jeweiligen Aussagen zustimmen.
Bitte antworten Sie spontan, ohne lange über die einzelnen Aussagen nachzudenken.
Beachten Sie, dass es weder richtige noch falsche Antworten gibt.

	trifft nicht zu (1)	trifft eher nicht zu (5)	weder noch (7)	trifft eher zu (8)	trifft zu (9)
Andreas war sich nicht bewusst, wie sich Muhammad bei dem, was er schrieb, fühlen würde. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Andreas' Nachricht war dazu gedacht, Muhammad zu schaden. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Andreas war sich nicht bewusst, welche Wirkung sein Verhalten auf Muhammad haben könnte. (3)	○	○	○	○	○
Andreas' Nachricht war diskriminierend. (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Andreas' Nachricht war fair. (5)	○	○	○	○	○
Andreas' Nachricht war voreingenommen. (6)	○	○	○	○	○
Andreas war sich bewusst, dass seine Nachricht als rassistisch beleidigend wahrgenommen werden würde. (7)	○	○	○	○	○

Andreas beabsichtigte, sich auf rassistisch unsensible Weise zu verhalten. (8)	○	○	○	○	○
Andreas' Nachricht war gerecht. (9)	○	○	○	○	○
Die Nachricht von Andreas basierte auf seinen Vorurteilen. (10)	○	○	○	○	○
Andreas ist sich des Stigmas bewusst, das damit verbunden ist, einer Minderheit anzugehören. (11)	○	○	○	○	○
Andreas' Nachricht war absichtlich diskriminierend. (12)	○	○	○	○	○
Andreas' Nachricht war speziell darauf ausgerichtet, Muhammad zu diskriminieren. (13)	○	○	○	○	○
Andreas' Nachricht war nicht fair. (14)	○	○	○	○	○

Q79 Wir möchten Sie noch einmal bitten, sich an die betrachtete Interaktion zwischen Andreas und Muhammad zu erinnern.

Bitte beantworten Sie die folgenden Fragen zu Ihrer Einschätzung der Situation spontan, ohne lange nachzudenken. Es gibt weder richtige noch falsche Antworten.

PS MA **Wie empfanden Sie die Situation?**

Bitte beantworten Sie diese Frage auf einer Skala von 1 (nicht bedrohlich / beunruhigend / gefährlich) bis 5 (sehr bedrohlich / beunruhigend / gefährlich).

	neutral	

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	(5)	
nicht bedrohlich	○	○	○	○	○	sehr bedrohlich
nicht beunruhigend	○	○	○	○	○	sehr beunruhigend
nicht gefährlich	○	○	○	○	○	sehr gefährlich

End of Block: Vignette 1 - Microaggression

Start of Block: Vignette 2 - Neutral Interaction

Q225 Bitte schauen Sie sich den heutigen Nachrichtenverlauf in der aus **Ihnen, Ihren KollegInnen und Ihrem Abteilungsleiter** bestehenden Chat-Gruppe genau an und versuchen Sie sich bestmöglich in die Situation hineinzuversetzen. Bitte beachten Sie, dass Ihr Abteilungsleiter Mitglied dieser Chat-Gruppe ist.

Bitte fahren Sie erst dann fort, wenn Sie **alle** Nachrichten **sorgfältig** gelesen haben.

Q226 Bitte schauen Sie sich den heutigen Nachrichtenverlauf in der **lediglich aus Ihnen und Ihren KollegInnen** bestehenden Chat-Gruppe genau an und versuchen Sie sich bestmöglich in die Situation hineinzuversetzen. Bitte beachten Sie, dass Ihr Abteilungsleiter kein Mitglied dieser Chat-Gruppe ist.

Bitte fahren Sie erst dann fort, wenn Sie alle Nachrichten gelesen haben.

BB N Question Nun möchten wir Sie bitten, sich vorzustellen, wie Sie sich verhalten würden, wenn Sie einen solchen Nachrichtenverlauf im Arbeitskontext beobachten würden.

Im Folgenden werden Ihnen einige Aussagen vorgelegt. Bitte geben Sie auf einer Skala von 1 (trifft nicht zu) bis 5 (trifft zu) an, inwieweit die Aussagen auf Ihr Verhalten in einer solchen Situation zutreffen.

Bitte antworten Sie spontan, ohne lange über die einzelnen Aussagen nachzudenken. Beachten Sie, dass es weder richtige noch falsche Antworten gibt.

BB N

Ich würde ...

	trifft nicht zu (28)	trifft eher nicht zu (29)	weder noch (30)	trifft eher zu (31)	trifft zu (32)
… das Gespräch ignorieren, weil es keine allzu große Sache sein kann, wenn niemand sonst etwas dagegen unternimmt. (15)	○	○	○	○	○
… mich nicht einmischen, da es bereits genug Leute gibt, die sich darum kümmern können. (18)	○	○	○	○	○
... mit meiner Arbeit weiter machen und mich nicht weiter um die Unterhaltung kümmern. (16)	○	○	○	○	○
… die Situation ignorieren, weil ich nicht sicher bin, die vollständige Vorgeschichte zu kennen. (17)	○	○	○	○	○
... mich stark verantwortlich fühlen, auf diese Nachrichten zu reagieren. (19)	○	○	○	○	○
... es als meine Pflicht ansehen, meinem Kollegen zu helfen. (20)	○	○	○	○	○

... es als meine Verpflichtung ansehen, etwas gegen diese Situation zu tun. (21)	○	○	○	○	○
... auf diese Unterhaltung in irgendeiner Weise reagieren. (4)	○	○	○	○	○
... wenn Sie diese Aussage lesen, wählen sie bitte "trifft zu" aus. (23)	○	○	○	○	○
… eine öffentliche Nachricht in die Gruppe schreiben, um Ahmet darauf hinzuweisen, dass ich Jens' Nachricht nicht in Ordnung finde. (5)	○	○	○	○	○
… eine private Nachricht an Ahmet schreiben, um ihn darauf hinzuweisen, dass ich Jens' Nachricht nicht in Ordnung finde. (6)	○	○	○	○	○
… eine öffentliche Nachricht in die Gruppe schreiben, um Ahmet zu bestärken. (7)	○	○	○	○	○
… eine private Nachricht an Ahmet schreiben, um ihn zu bestärken. (8)	○	○	○	○	○

… eine öffentliche Nachricht in die Gruppe schreiben, um Jens darauf hinzuweisen, dass ich seine Nachricht nicht in Ordnung finde. (9)	○	○	○	○	○
… eine private Nachricht an Jens schreiben, um ihn darauf hinzuweisen, dass ich seine Nachricht nicht in Ordnung finde. (10)	○	○	○	○	○
… die Personalabteilung kontaktieren, um den Vorfall zu melden. (11)	○	○	○	○	○
… den Abteilungsleiter kontaktieren, um den Vorfall zu melden. (12)	○	○	○	○	○

PM N

Im Folgenden sehen Sie einige Aussagen bezüglich der heutigen Interaktion zwischen Jens und Ahmet. Bitte geben Sie auf einer Skala von 1 (trifft nicht zu) bis 5 (trifft zu) an, wie sehr Sie den jeweiligen Aussagen zustimmen.

Bitte antworten Sie spontan, ohne lange über die einzelnen Aussagen nachzudenken. Beachten Sie, dass es weder richtige noch falsche Antworten gibt.

	trifft nicht zu (1)	trifft eher nicht zu (5)	weder noch (7)	trifft eher zu (8)	trifft zu (9)
Jens war sich nicht bewusst, wie sich Ahmet bei dem, was er schrieb, fühlen würde. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Jens' Nachricht war dazu gedacht, Ahmet zu schaden. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Jens war sich nicht bewusst, welche Wirkung sein Verhalten auf seinen Arbeitskollegen haben könnte. (3)	○	○	○	○	○
Jens' Nachricht war diskriminierend. (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Jens' Nachricht war fair. (5)	○	○	○	○	○
Jens' Nachricht war voreingenommen. (6)	○	○	○	○	○
Jens war sich bewusst, dass seine Nachricht als rassistisch beleidigend wahrgenommen werden würde. (7)	○	○	○	○	○
Jens beabsichtigte, sich auf rassistisch unsensible Weise zu verhalten. (8)	○	○	○	○	○

Jens' Nachricht war gerecht. (9)	○	○	○	○	○
Die Nachricht von Jens basierte auf seinen Vorurteilen. (10)	○	○	○	○	○
Jens ist sich des Stigmas bewusst, das damit verbunden ist, einer Minderheit anzugehören. (11)	○	○	○	○	○
Jens' Nachricht war absichtlich diskriminierend. (12)	○	○	○	○	○
Jens' Nachricht war speziell darauf ausgerichtet, Ahmet zu diskriminieren. (13)	○	○	○	○	○
Jens' Nachricht war nicht fair. (14)	○	○	○	○	○

Q83 Wir möchten Sie noch einmal bitten, sich an die betrachtete Interaktion zwischen Jens und Ahmet zu erinnern.

Bitte beantworten Sie die folgenden Fragen zu Ihrer Einschätzung der Situation spontan, ohne lange nachzudenken. Es gibt weder richtige noch falsche Antworten.

PS N **Wie empfanden Sie die Situation?**

Bitte beantworten Sie diese Frage auf einer Skala von 1 (nicht bedrohlich / beunruhigend / gefährlich) bis 5 (sehr bedrohlich / beunruhigend / gefährlich).

	neutral	

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
nicht bedrohlich	○	○	○	○	○	sehr bedrohlich
nicht beunruhigend	○	○	○	○	○	sehr beunruhigend
nicht gefährlich	○	○	○	○	○	sehr gefährlich

End of Block: Vignette 2 - Neutral Interaction

Start of Block: Perceived Status

Q84 Bitte erinnern Sie sich noch einmal an die verschiedenen Personen aus den präsentierten Gruppen-Unterhaltungen. Wir möchten Sie bitten, die Personen, ohne lange nachzudenken, auf einer Skala von 1 (nicht kompetent/wichtig/angesehen/einflussreich) bis 5 (kompetent/wichtig/hoch angesehen/einflussreich) hinsichtlich verschiedener Dimensionen einzuschätzen.

Dabei gibt es weder falsche noch richtige Antworten. Es wird nicht erwartet, dass Sie Ihr Gefühl begründen oder sich an jedes Detail zu den einzelnen Personen erinnern können.

Status Andreas
Andreas ist ...

	1 (1)	(2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
nicht kompetent	○	○	○	○	○	sehr kompetent
nicht wichtig	○	○	○	○	○	sehr wichtig
nicht angesehen	○	○	○	○	○	hoch angesehen
nicht einflussreich	○	○	○	○	○	einflussreich

Status Muhammad
Muhammad ist ...

	1 (1)	(2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
nicht kompetent	○	○	○	○	○	sehr kompetent
nicht wichtig	○	○	○	○	○	sehr wichtig
nicht angesehen	○	○	○	○	○	hoch angesehen
nicht einflussreich	○	○	○	○	○	einflussreich

Status Jens
Jens ist ...

	1 (1)	(2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
nicht kompetent	○	○	○	○	○	sehr kompetent
nicht wichtig	○	○	○	○	○	sehr wichtig
nicht angesehen	○	○	○	○	○	hoch angesehen
nicht einflussreich	○	○	○	○	○	einflussreich

Status Ahmet
Ahmet ist ...

	1 (1)	(2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
nicht kompetent	○	○	○	○	○	sehr kompetent
nicht wichtig	○	○	○	○	○	sehr wichtig
nicht angesehen	○	○	○	○	○	hoch angesehen
nicht einflussreich	○	○	○	○	○	einflussreich

Q91 Die Chat-Gruppen bestanden aus ...

▼ ausschließlich KollegInnen (1) ... KollegInnen und Abteilungsleiter (3)

Q97 Dies ist eine Kontrollfrage, um sicherzustellen, dass Sie Ihre Antworten nicht willkürlich wählen. Bitte wählen Sie die Antwort "trifft zu".

- ○ trifft nicht zu (1)
- ○ trifft eher nicht zu (2)
- ○ weder noch (3)
- ○ trifft eher zu (4)
- ○ trifft zu (5)

End of Block: Perceived Status

Start of Block: Social Desirability

SD
Im Folgenden finden Sie eine Reihe von Aussagen zu persönlichen Einstellungen und Eigenschaften. Lesen Sie jeden Punkt und entscheiden Sie, wie er auf Sie zutrifft. Bitte antworten Sie entweder mit "trifft nicht zu" oder "trifft zu" auf jeden Punkt.

Bitte antworten Sie spontan, ohne lange über die einzelnen Aussagen nachzudenken. Dabei gibt es weder richtige, noch falsche Antworten.

	trifft nicht zu (1)	trifft zu (2)
Es ist manchmal schwer für mich, mit meiner Arbeit weiterzumachen, wenn ich nicht ermutigt werde. (1)	○	○
Ich bin manchmal verärgert, wenn ich meinen Willen nicht bekomme. (2)	○	○
Bei ein paar Gelegenheiten habe ich etwas aufgegeben, weil ich meine Fähigkeiten zu gering einschätzte. (3)	○	○
Es gab Zeiten, in denen ich das Bedürfnis hatte, mich gegen Menschen mit Autorität aufzulehnen obwohl ich wusste, dass sie im Recht waren. (4)	○	○
Egal, mit wem ich spreche, ich bin immer ein guter Zuhörer. (5)	○	○
Es gab schon mal Situationen, in denen ich jemanden ausgenutzt habe. (6)	○	○
Wenn ich einen Fehler mache, bin ich immer bereit, das einzugestehen. (7)	○	○
Ich versuche manchmal, mich zu rächen, anstatt zu vergeben und zu vergessen. (8)	○	○
Ich bin immer höflich, auch zu Leuten, die unsympathisch sind. (9)	○	○
Ich habe mich noch nie darüber aufgeregt, wenn Leute Ansichten äußerten, die sich von meinen unterscheiden. (10)	○	○

Es gab Zeiten, in denen ich ziemlich neidisch auf das Glück anderer war. (11)	○	○
Ich bin manchmal genervt von Leuten, die mich um einen Gefallen bitten. (12)	○	○
Ich habe noch nie wissentlich etwas gesagt, das die Gefühle von jemandem verletzt hat. (13)	○	○

End of Block: Social Desirability

Start of Block: End Questions

Q250 Was denken Sie, ist das Thema dieser Studie?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: End Questions

Start of Block: Demographic Questions

Q42 Um diese Untersuchung abzuschließen, möchten wir Sie nun noch um einige demographische Informationen zu Ihrer Person bitte.

Welchem Geschlecht fühlen Sie sich zugehörig?

- ○ weiblich (1)
- ○ männlich (2)
- ○ Mann-zu-Frau-transsexuell/transident (3)
- ○ Frau-zu-Mann-transsexuell/transident (4)
- ○ intersexuell/zwischengeschlechtlich (5)
- ○ anderes, und zwar: (6) _____

Q43 **Wie alt sind Sie?**

_____

Q85 Was ist Ihre Muttersprache?

_____

Q44 **Welche berufliche Stellung haben Sie?**

- ○ Angestellte(r) (1)
- ○ Arbeiter(in) (2)
- ○ Beamter(/-in) (3)
- ○ Vetragsbedienstete(r) (4)
- ○ Freie(r) Dienstnehmer(in) (5)
- ○ Selbstständig ohne Arbeitnehmer(in/-innen) (6)
- ○ Selbstständig mit Arbeitnehmer(n)(in/-innen) (7)
- ○ Mithelfende(r) Familienangehörige(r) (8)
- ○ andere, und zwar: (9) _____

Q46 In der Politik spricht man von "links" und "rechts". Wo würden Sie sich auf einer Skala von 1 (stark links) und selbst einordnen?

- stark links (1)
- eher links (2)
- Mitte (3)
- eher rechts (4)
- stark rechts (5)

Politics In der Politik spricht man von "liberal" und "konservativ". Wo würden Sie sich auf einer Skala von 1 (sehr liberal) bis 5 (sehr konservativ) einordnen?

- sehr liberal (1)
- eher liberal (2)
- weder liberal noch konservativ (3)
- eher konservativ (4)
- sehr konservativ (5)

End of Block: Demographic Questions