

Microaggressions - Don't Underestimate The Little Things!

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Introduction

- Microaggressions are subtle or indirect forms of discrimination towards members of a marginalized group. Whether intentional/unintentional they communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights/insults toward people of color (Sue et. al 2007).
- Culturally Relevant Teaching refers to developing knowledge about cultural diversity, ethnic diversity in the curriculum & responding to diversity in the classroom (Ruiz et. al. 2013)
- Impacts of microaggressions on student's mental health are critical to understand the relationship of social support and cultural relevant teaching approaches have on a student's well being.

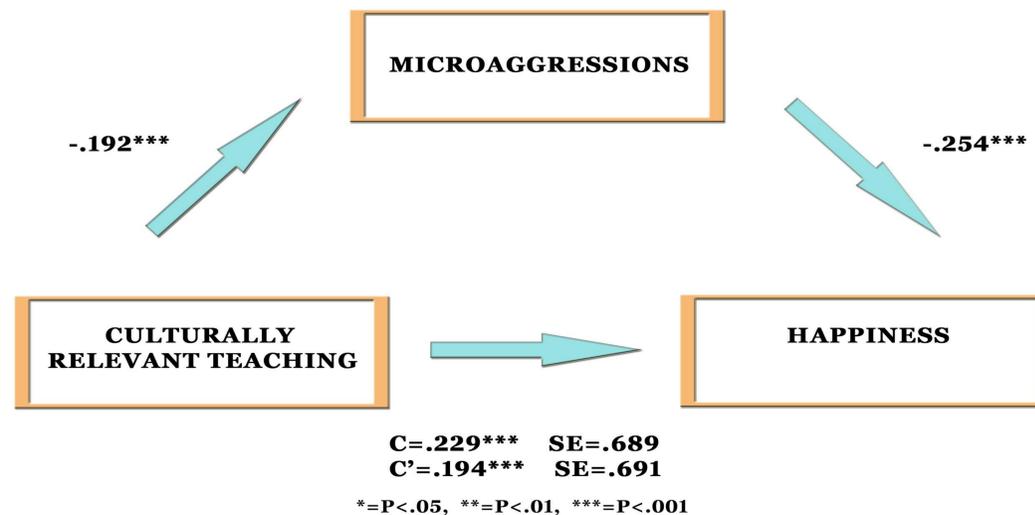
Theoretical Perspectives

- Moore (2012) studied the mental health outcomes of Latinx who experience racial microaggressions. They found that microaggressions increase the probability of having psychological distress; therefore our study wanted to greater understand how microaggressions influence happiness.
- Suldo et al. (2009) studied instructor support and students' well-being. Support from teachers led to greater life satisfaction and academic competence. These findings led us to question how CRT influences happiness.
- Ruiz and Cantú (2013) studied discrimination. This was done by integrating issues of equity into teacher preparation courses, showing that influence in the classroom affects how students perceive racial discrimination in society. Furthermore this paved our project to question the relationship between CRT and MA.

Purpose

- Our hypothesis was that culturally relevant teaching would increase perception of microaggressions due to its topic of study and exposure to different cultures.
- The purpose of this study was to determine if microaggressions mediate the relationship between culturally relevant teaching and happiness.
- We hope to help implement more culturally relevant teaching in schools due to its improvement in students overall well being and reduction of microaggressions perceived.

Results



A mediation analysis was conducted and a Sobel's test confirmed the relationships between our variables was significant, equals 2.47, SE equals .2, $p < .01$

Measures

- Our studied focused on Culturally Relevant Teaching, Microaggressions, and Happiness. These measures were assessed using the following scales:
- The CRT Teaching scale was derived from 2 subscales: diverse teaching practices and cultural engagement (Dickson et. al 2015).
- Racial-Ethnic Microaggressions Scale measured microaggressions. Aspects included assumptions of inferiority, criminality, and microinvalidations (Nadal, 2011).
- Oxford Happiness scale was used to measure overall well being and happiness. (Hills & Argyle, 2002).

Method

- This study was IRB approved.
- Data was collected using surveys of 294 college students in Fall 2015.
- Participants were between the ages of 17-33 and were either graduate or undergraduate students in a university on the west coast whom also expressed interested learning more about microaggressions.
- Participants were recruited by talking about the opportunity at different classes, visiting different organizations on campus, and emailing students.
- Data was collected using only a portion of results from a larger research projected that included several surveys.
- All participants were compensated and identification was kept confidential.

Discussion

- Our findings partially supported our hypothesis. We found that microaggressions are associated with decreased happiness while culturally relevant teaching is related to more happiness.
- This data suggests that culturally relevant teaching improves student well-being, in addition to minimizing the amount of microaggressions perceived. In modern times, the importance of reducing the harmful effects of microaggressions may help in promoting higher academic achievement, increased self-confidence, and healthier interpersonal relationships (Suldo et al., 2009).
- Culturally Relevant Teaching obtains positive outcomes that may serve as the answer to eliminating microaggressions for future generations.

Limitations

- We used a nonprobability sample method which focused only on one population of interest (college students).
- Lack of research in the field of Culturally Relevant Teaching in higher education
- Needs more focus on impacts CRT has on diverse races and socioeconomic background

Future Directions

- Future studies should incorporate samples of all grade levels, and account for ethnicity and race.
- Implement a greater focus on microaggressions, and the implications they have on student success.
- Studies should also illustrate the effect Culturally Relevant Teaching has on teachers.

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