A critical look through the eyes of youth: a study examining high school student experiences of disrespect from teachers in relation to race and anxiety and depression

Annika L. Marques Yokum

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ABSTRACT

This study examined high school students’ experiences of perceived disrespect enacted by a teacher. The study was grounded in a critical race theory approach that informed data collection and results. Quantitative and qualitative reports were evaluated to determine possible relations between race, non-clinical reports of anxiety and depression and teacher-disrespect in high school. Participants were recruited from East Coast and West Coast regions and included current high school students and emerging adults creating a final sample size of 20 participants. Findings revealed that most participants discussed racial microaggressions when asked about disrespect and experienced significant symptoms of anxiety and depression in response to the event. This research provides a framework to better understand how teacher-student disrespect may impact youth.
A CRITICAL LOOK THROUGH THE EYES OF YOUTH: A STUDY EXAMINING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT EXPERIENCES OF DISRESPECT FROM TEACHERS IN RELATION TO RACE AND ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

A project based upon a collaborative investigation, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social Work.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

This study seeks to address possible associations between racial microaggressions and anxiety and depression symptomology among adolescent students as reported based on the remembered experiences of high school students and recent high school graduates. There is growing concern around anxiety and depression among middle school and high school students and the impact that negative mental health may have on life and cognitive development. For the purpose of this study, depression will be defined as a persistent feeling, inhibiting one’s desire to engage in typical interests and passions. Anxiety is often experienced alongside depression, or one may serve as a catalyst to the other (Seligman & Ollendick, 1998). In the context of this study, anxiety will be conceptualized as a conflation of fear and stress responses.

Previous studies focusing on general bullying and other types of aggression have found links to higher levels of anxiety and depression in schools among victims of bullying (Benner & Graham, 2011; Bond et al., 2007; Bond, Carlin, Thomas, Rubin, & Patton, 2001; Craig, 1998; Salmon, James, & Smith, 1998). However, there is need for better understanding of racially associated forms of aggression and possible impacts on anxiety and depression among students. For the purpose of this study, race will be defined within this study as the social categorization of groups of people based on ancestry, genetics, physical traits, or social relations.

While there is significant literature covering the impacts of overt discrimination, there is less known about microaggressions among middle school and high school age youth (Clark,
Coleman, & Novak, 2004; Hearld, Budhwani, Chavez-Yenter, 2015; Huynh & Fuligni, 2010; Smith-Bynum, Lambert, English, & Ialongo, 2014; Whitbeck, Mcmorris, Hoyt, Stubben, & Lafromboise, 2002). In this study, microaggressions will be held in a context of race and defined as the more ambiguous, every day experiences of covert discrimination (Kohli & Solórzano, 2012; Sue et al., 2007).

Studies that have explored racial microaggressions tend to discuss college and adult experiences, failing to include possible impacts on adolescents, particularly within school contexts (Boysen, 2012; Sue et al., 2007; Wang, Leu, & Shoda, 2011; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009). Additionally, much of the research focusing on youth is either quantitative or has been collected through reports from school faculty and parents. This limits the data in that it neglects to fully reflect the subjective experiences of the students.

This study is rooted in Critical Race Theory (CRT), a framework which will allow us to better examine society and culture and its intersection with power and race through a critical lens (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). This approach will also allow the voices of marginalized youth to be centered through their own narratives, enabling data to reflect their authentic experiences in their own words.

The intention behind this research is to better understand the ways in which racial discrimination or microaggressions impact marginalized youth in schools and how these experiences may contribute to anxious and depressive symptoms. Through the use of self-reported qualitative and quantitative data collection, we will assess the impact racial discrimination from teachers has on minority youth in school, how these experiences may be translated into microaggressions, and if these experiences contribute to greater anxious and depressive symptoms, allowing us to expand from previous knowledge.
CHAPTER II

Literature Review

This chapter will seek to explore potential links between microaggressions and depressive and anxious symptoms among racially marginalized adolescents in school through credible research and literature. First, critical race theory will be discussed as this will inform the lens through which the literature will be examined. Exploration of this theory will be followed by previous work discussing anxiety and depression. In discussing anxiety and depression, I will consider the impact anxiety and depression has on adolescents, specifically marginalized youth.

Further, I will examine causes behind anxiety and depression symptomology and risk factors impacting marginalized youth, looking closely at racial discrimination, particularly experiences of microaggressions which will be discussed. Lastly, I will review potential protective factors against negative outcomes of racial discrimination, looking specifically at ethnic identity and school belonging as potential moderators for anxiety and depression in youth belonging to marginalized ethnic groups.

Theoretical Framework

The field and practice of social work is considered by many to represent a commitment to social justice. One approach to upholding this commitment is to prevent and deconstruct systems which allow racial inequities to exist. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a theoretical framework which centralizes race through a critical lens and highlights concerns of racial privilege and inequities (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Roithmayr, 1999) CRT is useful to the field of social
work because it can help professionals to address and challenge racial privilege both individually and systemically (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Roithmayr, 1999). This approach arose in the 1980’s, as a response to the unmet promises of the Civil Rights movement to end racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Predating CRT, the desegregation of schools in 1954 informed a need for continued awareness and revision around race and differential treatment. The desegregation of schools did not necessarily mean equal opportunity for students of color (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 1995). To address the needs of students of color in schools, a cultural competence model, otherwise known as the multicultural model, was created.

The idea behind the cultural competence model was that it attend to the needs of diverse populations; more specifically, individuals and groups from non-white ethnic, racial, or cultural backgrounds (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 1995). Today, cultural competence is marked as a standard of the National Association of Social Work (NASW) Code of Ethics (1996) as well as by the National Education Association (Diversity Toolkit, n.d.). The meaning of diversity has since been amended to include a broader range of groups. According to the NASW’s Standards and Indicators for Cultural Competence (2015):

Diversity, more than race and ethnicity, includes the sociocultural experiences of people inclusive of, but not limited to, national origin, color, social class, religious and spiritual beliefs, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, and physical or mental disabilities. (p. 11)

Although the social competency model addresses many social identities which may define a person or group, it also fails to examine how multiple social identities may interact with one another as well as the setting in which identities are highlighted, fundamentally impacting experiences of oppression, discrimination and domination (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). This concept is a key feature, which is identified in CRT, known as intersectionality.
In addition to intersectionality, Critical race theorists hold a series of beliefs that make up the basic tenets of CRT (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). These beliefs not only break down common misconceptions of how race and racism function, but also provide a deeper understanding of racial oppression. Delgado & Stefancic (2001)’s book, Critical Race Theory: An Introduction, provides a clear understanding of the six tenets of CRT.

The first tenet argues that racism is not an infrequent occurrence, but rather the ordinary experience of all people of color. This tenet disputes liberalism ideas of color-blindness because these approaches only address issues of overt discrimination and ignore the more subtle everyday experiences of discrimination, such as microaggressions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Sue et al., 2007).

The second tenet of CRT addresses racism in service of those in power and recognizes incentives for enabling racial privileges. This argument is supported by Derrick Bell’s response to the success of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas. Bell’s argument was that the success of the act and the advancement for people of color at this time, also favored the self-interest of white elitists and therefore was only approved out of convenience (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

The third tenet posits that race is socially constructed and thereby not fixed or objective. This leads into the fourth tenet, which acknowledges differential racialization and the ways in which the dominant culture works to racialize particular marginalized groups at specific times to adjust to the needs of society, such as shifts in the labor market (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

The fifth tenet expands on Crenshaw’s theory of intersectionality and recognizes how racial groups are essentialized. In recognition of the impact intersectionality has on the experience of oppression, the final sixth tenet of CRT places value on the subjective experiences
of people of color as sources of knowledge (Caton, 2012; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Mirza, 1999; Yosso et al., 2009). This highlights a need for counterstorytelling, which is a method that centers the voices of people of color, or marginalized groups, through stories and storytelling (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Yosso, et al., 2009).

Counterstorytelling as critical race theory. Counterstorytelling began as a way to challenge the misleading narratives in law that portrayed black criminality as fact (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Counterstorying is in many ways a tangible product of CRT, allowing for redistribution of power which has been taken by the oppressed. In listening to stories which center the voices of marginalized groups and individuals, we are able to understand the truths of those who have previously been silenced (Caton, 2012; Ladson-Billions, 1998; Yosso et al., 2009). Gloria Ladson-Billings (1998) explains, “Stories provide the necessary context for understanding, feeling, and interpreting” (p.13). Throughout history, storytelling has also carried therapeutic qualities in easing pain that has been inflicted by an oppressor and stories can serve as a cognitive wake-up call to the oppressor (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Critical race theory in K-12 education. Gloria Ladson-Billings has been greatly influential in detailing how CRT can inform K-12 education, research, practice, and policy. Through her seminal work, Ladson-Billings acknowledges vulnerabilities in the curriculum, instruction, assessment, and funding of schools (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 1995). This can allow professionals to deconstruct the ways in which these systems sustain inequities experienced by students of color.

Ladson-Billings (1998) explains that in public education, curriculum often reflects a narrative of white supremacy. Classroom material often represents white, upper-class, and male dominant voices, leaving out multiple perspectives and creating falsely standardized knowledge.
Curriculum also implements a color-blind approach, which can have damaging impacts on students of color. She explains,

The race-neutral or colorblind perspective, evident in the way the curriculum presents people of color, presumes a homogenized “we” in celebration of diversity … Thus, students are taught erroneously that ‘we are all immigrants,’ and, as a result, African American, Indigenous, and Chicano students are left with the guilt of failing to rise above their immigrant status like “every other group” (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 18).

Incorporating a CRT framework into K-12 curriculum would address impacts of intersectionality and allow for voices of color to be better represented, therefore providing a more complete and truthful academic narrative.

Further, Ladson-Billings addresses how CRT critiques ways in which classroom instruction and strategies can assume deficit in African American students. “Cast in a language of failure, instructional approaches for African American students typically involve some aspect of remediation” (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 19). This dynamic exhibits greater need for counterstorytelling as a tool to mitigate these assumptions. A similar shortcoming in K-12 education is in assessment measures and their ability to measure what student’s do not know, but not what they do know (Ladson-Billings, 1998). This is an area where intersectionality is useful because it can explain other factors that may impact a student’s lack in knowledge of standardized material, and also provide outside strengths and knowledge the student may possess.

School funding is another area of K-12 education which facilitates racial inequities. “CRT argues that inequality in school funding is a function of institutional and structural racism” (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 20). School district funding does not effectively account for disparities among underserved communities. Under a CRT lens we can see how funding distribution can foster white privilege by disregarding differential employment opportunities,
resources, and other intersecting factors which impact a community’s need for funding. This exposes one of the key elements of CRT, which is that racism does not just live within individuals, but within systems as well.

K-12 education benefits from grounding in a CRT framework in order to better meet the needs of students of color. By dismantling a color-blind approach, we allow for the legitimization of experiences of microaggressions. As microaggressions are often experienced as silencing (Sue et al, 2007), students may benefit from counterstorytelling methods, which enable the voices of people of color to be centered. Further, an acknowledgment of intersectionality deconstructs misconceptions and false narratives of racial groups. A CRT approach is essential in better informing educators and social workers on how to serve all students effectively and equitably.

**Anxiety and Depression in Youth**

Negative emotional states, such as anxiety and depression, put youth at risk for continued challenges. Anxiety and depression may contribute to lower levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy, higher school drop-out rates, and an increase in prolonged mental health issues through adulthood (Benner & Graham, 2011; Bond et al., 2007; Gulley, Hankin, & Young, 2015; Pine, Cohen, Gurley, Brook, & Ma, 1998; Roeser, Lord, & Eccles, 1994).

However, not all youth experience anxiety and depression equally. For example, females tend to exhibit higher levels of anxiety and depression or anxious or depressive symptoms than their male counterparts, impacting how they internalize negative experiences (Chavous, Rivas-Drake, Smalls, Griffin, & Cogburn, 2008; Saunders, Davis, Williams, & Williams, 2003; Solórzano, 1998; Tummala-Narra & Claudius, 2013). In addition to gender, ethnicity also plays a role in the level of anxiety and depression (Donovan et al., 2013; Harris, Edlund, & Larson,
Lived experiences and different resources can shape how individuals respond to events and determine differential outcomes. The aforementioned variations in the way anxiety and depression may be experienced reminds us why intersectionality as discussed through critical race theory (CRT) is important to consider. The multiple interactions between social identities, environments, etc., create subjective experiences, which is important in considering how individuals may experience anxiety and depression.

**Depression and anxiety among marginalized youth.** Adolescence is known to be a particularly challenging time because youth are developing their sense of self and identity, and can be strongly impacted by external forces such as family dynamics, school, peer relationships and teachers (Berzoff, 2016; Erikson, 1968; Rosenberg, 1965). Anxious and depressive symptoms are not uncommon among youth as youth are still developing and susceptible to a wide range of emotional outcomes due to specific and interacting factors. For example, Keil (2014)’s textbook, *Developmental Psychology* explains that theorists suggest parenting and attachment can have a large impact on the emotional presentation of youth. In addition, cognitive factors such as a tendency to assume the worst or difficulty disengaging with distressing stimuli may impact anxiety in youth. Biological effects are also influential in anxiety and depression. Adolescents’ neural pathways in their brain can alleviate or increase risk of anxiety and depression based on production of serotonin, dopamine, stress-related hormones and other neurological variables. Social systems, including peer relationships, family, mentors, teachers, etc. can also impact the presentation of anxiety and depression depending on how the individual views these relationships as supportive and safe (Keil, 2014).
Other risk factors based on environment and identity also play a role in anxious and depressive symptoms among youth (Keil, 2014). In general, marginalized youth are put at further risk for experiencing emotional distress such as anxiety and depression which can lead to increased risk of early school-dropout, adult mental health concerns, substance use, and other deleterious outcomes (Benner & Graham, 2011; Caton, 2012; Cardinali, Migliorini, Andrighetto, Rania, & Visintin, 2016; Donovan et al., 2013; Gummadam, Pittman, & Ioffe, 2016; Nadal, Griffin, Wong, Hamit, & Rasmus, 2014).

For example, Nadal and colleagues (2014) found a connection between positive reports of anxious and depressive symptoms and experiences of microaggressions. Their study consisted of 506 adult participants of multiple racial identities, and included participation in an online survey implementing a mental health inventory which assessed for anxiety and depression. Participants were also asked about racial and ethnic microaggressions, including the various ways they experienced them. Results of this study revealed a positive correlation between reported microaggressions and anxiety and depression symptomology, however the correlation was relatively weak, suggesting that there were other contributing factors to these results. This link between microaggressions and anxiety and depression affirms a need for further research in this area in both similar and new populations as this study (Nadal et al., 2014).

While we know that marginalized youth generally tend to be at higher risk for negative psychological symptoms, studies have also found variation within different marginalized ethnic groups and experiences of emotional wellbeing as well as the types of discrimination they experience (Gummadam et al., 2016; Huynh, 2012; Twenge & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2002). For example, Twenge and Nolen-Hoeksema (2002) conducted a meta-analysis exploring depression results among adolescents of varying ethnicities. Their results show that studies looking at
depression rates among adolescents suggest that Hispanic youth seem to experience higher rates of depression when compared to both black and white youth as measured by the Children’s Depression Inventory (CDI) scale, a highly reliable and widely used measure. Twenge and Nolen-Hoeksema’s (2002) meta-analytic treatment revealed that CDI scores of Hispanic children were around two thirds of a standard deviation greater than the scores of White children and also more than one standard deviation greater than scores of Black children. This suggests a strong likelihood for clinical significance. Twenge and Nolen-Hoeksema (2002) explain that, “It is also important to realize that this difference is probably based in culture and/or life situation, given that individuals of Hispanic origin may be of any race”.

Other studies support the theory that whites tend to show lower levels of anxiety and depression compared with people of color (Chun-Chung Chow, Jaffee, & Snowden, 2003; Garland et al., 2005; Harris et al., 2005; Williams, Yu, Jackson, & Anderson, 1997). Harris and colleagues (2005) examined cross sectional data from National Surveys on Drug Use and Health, which included a sample of 134,875 adults identifying as white, African American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Mexican, Central and South American, Puerto Rican, other Hispanic-Latino, as well as those with multiple racial or ethnic identities. Their data revealed that American Indian/Alaskan Natives higher self-reported unmet need in addition to higher mental health issues in relation to whites. Their data also found lower use of mental health services among African American, Asian, Mexican, Central and South American, and other Hispanic-Latino groups. Similarly, Chun-Chung Chow and colleagues (2003) also found disparities among racial and ethnic groups in their access and use of mental health care, particularly in looking at different poverty levels.
Chun-Chung Chow and colleagues (2003) examined clinical characteristics and demographics in use of services, assessing for patterns among Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians living in low-poverty or high-poverty areas. Their data suggests higher racial and ethnic disparities exists in lower poverty areas in regards to use of mental health services. This data draws light to the importance of considering the impacts of socio-economic status and regional differences in considering variations among racial and ethnic groups. Literature discussing ethnic and racial differences among adults will better inform what kinds of variations may also occur for adolescents.

A large body of research connects experiences of racial discrimination and microaggressions with increased negative psychological health outcomes such as anxiety and depression among marginalized ethnic groups. Extending from this data, other studies conclude that different marginalized ethnic groups report different levels of anxious and depressive symptoms, which may be related to the different types of microaggressions they experience based on racial identity. Additionally, findings may be impacted by other social identities or environmental factors such as socioeconomic status. This highlights the importance of critical race theory in holding the subjective experiences of individuals and understanding of the complexity in intersectionality.

**Racially Associated Discrimination and Adolescence**

Akin with research on depression and anxiety among marginalized youth, research suggests that there are differences in marginalized youths’ experiences of racially associated discrimination (Allen, 2012; Garland, et al., 2005; Henfield, 2011; Kiang, Witkow, & Thompson, 2015; Rosenbloom & Way, 2012).
For example, Rosenbloom and Way (2004) through qualitative data, found that African American and Latino students experienced higher rates of discrimination from adults in positions of power, including teachers, police and store management. This study also found that compared to Black and Latino students, Asian American students showed more experiences with peer discrimination rather than from adults. Further, the researchers hypothesize that peer discrimination may be less harmful to academic and career success than discrimination enacted by teachers or other adults in position of power (Rosenbloom & Way, 2004).

A more recent study conducted by Huynh (2012), supports previous literature theorizing that African American as well as Latino students tend to experience racial microaggressions more frequently when compared to Asian American students. Differences in the frequency and type of microaggressions may be critical in considering how individuals experience anxiety and depression as a response.

Sellers, Copeland-Linder, Martin, & L’Heureux Lewis (2006) conducted a study looking at perceived stress and depressive symptomology among 314 African American adolescents between the ages of 11 and 17. This study discusses the relationship between racial discrimination and negative psychological functioning in general, which expands from previous research which explores racial discriminations as risk factors for deleterious effects on mental health. There is limited research exploring variability among different marginalized ethnic groups on mental health, specifically anxious and depressive symptoms. Further, most of the research uses overt discrimination as an independent variable, ignoring the strong impacts that less obvious forms of discrimination such as microaggressions, can have on individual health.

**Racial microaggressions.** Public disavowal of overt forms of racism has pushed many experiences of racism into less-discernable and more covert experiences of aversive racism and
microaggressions. Sue and colleagues (2007) define racial microaggressions as “brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of color because they belong to a racial minority group” and argue that these slights “impair performance in a multitude of settings by sapping the psychic and spiritual energy of recipients and creating inequities” (p. 273). The authors break down these more covert experiences of discrimination into three distinct forms. The first is the “microassault,” or “explicit racial derogation characterized primarily by a verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions;” the next is a “microinsult” which are subtle “communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person’s racial identity or heritage;” and finally, the “microinvalidation” is a communication in which the recipient’s thoughts, feelings, and experiential reality are negated and nullified (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274).

Racial microaggressions are different from overt forms of racism because they are often subtle insults, both verbal and nonverbal, directed towards people of color and “often carried out automatically or unconsciously” (Kohli & Solórzano, 2012, p. 447). Researchers have emphasized that it is their layered and cumulative nature take their toll on people of color; in isolation an individual microaggression may not have much meaning or impact, but as repeated slights they have a profound effect (Kohli & Solórzano, 2012, p. 447, Sue et al., 2007). For example, a comprehensive review of the literature on racial discrimination generally amongst adults found that the resulting stress from microaggressions had severe and long-lasting psychological and physical health implications (Williams, Neighbors, & Jackson 2003). The review suggests that perceived racial bias is an important determinant contributing to racial health disparities in the United States (Williams et al., 2003). More recent research has built
upon this, demonstrating the link between racial discrimination experiences and trauma symptoms (Helms, Nicolas, & Green, 2012; Lowe, Okubo & Reilly, 2012).

Additionally, research specific to racial microaggressions in adults has examined various themes including how subtypes of racial microaggressions that may differ according to ethnicity (Nadal et al., 2014) and how consistent, less overt forms of discrimination predicts social anxiety disorder more than overt incidents of discrimination (Levine et al., 2014). However, the 2014 review demonstrates that there are still critical gaps to address, including conceptual gaps (a distinction between overt racism and microassaults, differential experiences of different racial groups and immigrants, experiences of non-visible racial and ethnic minorities, the role of internalized oppression), methodological gaps (limited quantitative research, the need for experimental and longitudinal studies, and questions about the reliability of self-report measures); and consequences yet to be explored (long-term physical and psychological effects, the immediate reaction phase, the impact of the racial identity of the perpetrator, and the efficacy of coping mechanisms) (Nadal et al., 2014).

Furthermore, the research on racial microaggressions in adolescents is scant, and much of the literature on racial discrimination among youth focuses on how individuals cope with and receive support around experiences of overt racism rather than on subtler forms of discrimination (Neblett et al., 2008). In addition, most of this research on adolescents’ focuses on “everyday” discriminations outside of school and the negative socioemotional, academic, and mental health outcomes associated with such experiences (Clark, et al., 2004; Pahl & Way, 2006; Sue, Lin, Torino, Capodilupo, & Rivera, 2009). As such, the literature only minimally addresses this phenomenon in schools, where adolescents spend much their time.
Microaggressions in educational settings may be particularly harmful because they “communicate derogatory slights and insults toward individuals of underrepresented status” which creates “invalidating and hostile learning experiences” (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015, p. 151). This is consistent with the many studies showing that experiencing more overt racial discrimination at school has detrimental effects on students’ mental health and academic success (Allen, Scott, & Lewis, 2013; Chavous et al., 2008; Donovan et al., 2013; Hearld et al., 2015; Huynh, 2012; Huynh & Fuligni, 2010; Levine et al., 2014). For example, in a study of twelfth grade students, Latin American and Asian American students’ experiences of discrimination predicted lower grade point averages and self-esteem, and more depressive symptoms, distress, and physical complaints (Huynh & Fuligni, 2010). Additionally, the negative effects of discrimination which occur can be found across all major minority ethnic groups in the United States. Researchers in a study of Asian-American, Black, and Hispanic/Latinx students on multiple college campuses found that perceived discrimination was positively associated with depressive symptoms, and found that factors related to identity confusion did not mediate this relationship (Donovan et al., 2013). The impacts of discrimination also influence anxiety and sleep. For example, discrimination, alongside alcohol and tobacco use, increased chances of panic attacks amongst minority American adolescents (Hearld et al., 2015) and sleep problems (Gillen-O’Neel, Huynh, & Fuligni, 2013; Levy, Heissel, Richeson, & Adam, 2016). However, these do not distinguish overt racism and racial microaggressions. Our research will build upon this gap in the research to explore the socioemotional outcomes particular to experiences of racial microaggressions.

Furthermore, much of the literature specific to racial microaggressions in schools focuses on higher education settings. One area that this research addresses is how to respond once a
microaggression has occurred. In multiple studies, Sue and colleagues (Sue, Lin, Torino, Capodilupo, Rivera, 2009; Sue et al., 2007) found that microaggressions in college classrooms caused powerful cognitive, behavioral, and emotional reactions and often resulted in difficult dialogues about race. Several studies found that instructors need to facilitate dialogue when microaggressions occur (Boysen, 2012, Sue et al., 2009). However, given the often unintentional nature of microaggressions, it is not always clear to the instructor that a microaggression has happened. Following a study demonstrating that others responses to individuals’ stories about racial discrimination incidents help to mitigate harm or, conversely, increase negative effects (Lowe, Okubo, & Reilly, 2012), it is likely that others’ responses to microaggressions are crucial because they mediate the impact of such experiences. The researchers conclude that individuals are insightful about what responses to incidents would be helpful to them (Lowe et al., 2012), and as such our narrative research methodology will speak directly to youth about such experiences and their aftermath.

Though minimal, the research on microaggressions in K-12 educational environments emphasize their negative effects on students. Kohli and Solórzano (2012) examined students of color’s experiences of “cultural disrespect” in regards to names in classrooms, and argue that the mispronunciation of names should not be understated or ignored because these racial microaggressions have a lasting impact students’ self-perception and worldview. Additionally, the research demonstrates that microaggression experiences differ across racial and ethnic identities, as do the impact of such experiences. Qualitative studies have begun to examine Black male adolescents’ experiences of racial microaggressions in schools and demonstrate common themes within these narratives were assumptions of deviance, pejorative views of intelligence assumed universality of Black experience, perceived valuing of White cultural values and
communication styles, pejorative views of intelligence, and differential treatment in school
discipline (Allen, 2012; Henfield, 2011). Another study demonstrated that model minority
stereotyping of Asian-American adolescents in schools plays a role in students’ identity
development and well-being and find that the stereotype can be a protective factor against the
negative outcomes of racial discrimination and thus call for more research of this phenomenon in
which youth themselves are the experts (Kiang et al., 2015). As K-12 education is compulsory in
the United States and therefore affects a larger and more socioeconomically diverse percentage
of the population, and occurs during an important time of adolescent identity development,
experiences of microaggressions in earlier school settings across demographic categories are
critical for further study.

One important element that is missing from the microaggression literature in schools is
the particular outcomes associated with who perpetrator of the microaggression was (i.e., teacher
versus peer). Understanding whether or not the identity of the perpetrator matters is important, as
racial and ethnic discrimination occurs not only in peer to peer interactions but also between
school staff and students (Allen et al., 2013; Kohli & Solórzano, 2012; Nadal et al., 2014;
Rosenbloom & Way, 2004).

Suárez-Orozco and colleagues (2015) conducted an exploratory study in which
researchers sat in and observed classrooms in community colleges in the New York City metro
area and found that microaggressions and are most frequently perpetrated by instructors rather
than peers (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). Yet little is known about whether or not students
respond to microaggressions from peers differently than from teachers. It is problematic that the
research has not yet explored this distinction, because given differing power dynamics,
individuals might be impacted differently and respond differently. For the purpose of this study, I
will focus on teacher to student microaggression experiences because they are more frequent and because the findings of the study may be more practically used by administrators and educators to address this issue directly.

**Protective Factors**

We know that anxiety and depression can have both concurrent and longitudinal detriments for youth, particularly for at-risk youth. In exploring the negative effects of discrimination and the potential for heightened levels of anxiety and depression in racially marginalized youth who have been subject to microaggressions, it is also essential to examine possible protective factors which may help mediate negative outcomes.

**School connectedness.** Students who feel a sense of pride and belonging with their school tend to show more positive emotional and academic responses. Studies show that school connectedness along with social connection is likely to provide strong support against negative outcomes in adolescence (Bond et al., 2007; Cotterell, 1992; McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002). Negative outcomes may include lowered academic performance, underage drinking and use of marijuana, smoking, adjustment difficulties, along with anxiety and depression (Bond et al., 2007; Bond et al., 2001; Cotterell, 1992).

Newman, Lohman, Newman, Myers, & Smith (2000) found that among ethnic minority students in urban schools, lower achieving students typically faced more challenges than higher achieving students based on a longitudinal study assessing youth participants’ ability to adjust to high school. High achieving students appeared to have a wider range of supports compared to lower achieving students. Family support and parental encouragement showed positive correlations with academic success (Newman et al., 2000).
Microaggressions, by nature, can lead to increased feelings of isolation, making it especially important to invest resources into school connectedness, especially with marginalize Students who feel a sense of school membership tend to show resilience in that they tend to experience fewer negative mental health symptoms, such as anxiety and depression (Cotterell, 1992; Shochet, Dadds, Ham, & Montague, 2006). Ethnic identity may help amend these outcomes by increasing feelings of belonging for students of marginalized identities (Cardinali et al., 2016).

**Ethnic identity.** Ethnic identity has been shown across many studies to serve as a protective factor against the negative impacts of racial discrimination among marginalized ethnic groups. Jean Phinney (1990) defines ethnic identity as, “… the psychological relationship of ethnic and racial minority group members with their own group”. Ethnic identity provides a sense of group membership and belonging (Martinez & Dukes, 1997; Phinney, 1990). It is also important to consider that different ethnic groups may also experience ethnic identity in various ways which may determine its value as a protective factor (Gummadam et al., 2016)

Tummala-Narra & Claudius (2013), found that ethnic identity could serve as a mediator against depressive symptomology from adult or peer racial discrimination. Further, Cardinali and colleagues (2016), found through student self-reports that minority youth between the ages of 13-17 who held an established sense of ethnic identity were less likely to experience feelings of alienation and overall experienced an easier time with school adjustment. They also highlighted the importance of cross-group or ethnically diverse friendships. Additionally, it is useful to understand subjective and developmental needs of students, especially marginalized students, in order to foster positive attitudes towards school and a sense of school belonging (Cardinali, et al., 2016; Caton, 2012). Students are more likely to foster resiliency if the school structure honors a
rights-based approach and teachers demonstrate an authentic interest and respect for their
students through teacher-student reciprocity (Theron, Liebenberg, & Malindi, 2014).

Williams, Chapman, Wong, and Turkheimer (2012), found that strong, positive ethnic
identity was associated with protective factors against cognitive and somatic anxiety as well as
depression in African Americans among a sample of adult community members and college
students.

Martinez and Dukes (1997) examined the impact of ethnic identity on wellbeing, as
defined by three categories: self-esteem, purpose in life, and self-confidence. These results
showed that while White participants scored lowest on ethnic identity, they still scored highest
on measures of wellbeing. In contrast, Native Americans whom also scored low on ethnic
identity scales, scored low on wellbeing. This suggests discrimination was a factor in levels of
wellbeing, and that the privileged racial identities of white participants served as a protector.
Other participants of marginalized ethnic groups scored high on overall levels of ethnic identity
which appeared to defend against negative impacts of discrimination on wellbeing. This research
suggests a likelihood that ethnic identity might serve similar protective factors against racial
microaggressions on anxiety and depression. There is need to further explore protective factors
against microaggressions, especially among adolescent students.

The Present Study

Previous research provides a foundation of literature which informs our knowledge of
adolescence, school dynamics, racial discrimination and microaggressions, as well as anxiety and
depression. The present study explores students’ experiences of disrespect in high school enacted
by teachers and reports and possible relations to race as well as anxious and depressive
symptoms. This study asked high school and recent high school graduates to report on
experiences of disrespect in high school as well as anxious or depressive responses related to these experiences. Participant experiences are categorized into appropriate types of microaggressions or other experiences of disrespect from teachers. Qualitative and quantitative data has been analyzed to determine whether or not there is a relationship between student experiences of disrespect, race, or anxiety and depression.

Potential limitations to this study include that we will not control for variation among different minority ethnic backgrounds or gender differences, which may contribute to differences in the way participants experience microaggressions and how they respond. Additionally, participants may be impacted by the way they perceive mental health based on many variables such as cultural beliefs, family influence, socio-economic status, religion, age, and other factors.

While we know there is variation among specific marginalized ethnic groups in the way they experience and respond to microaggressions, this study will not focus on specific ethnic groups but will seek to evaluate the experiences of depression and anxiety among students of color when compared to White students within our sample size. In order to uphold a critical race theory approach, the study will implement a counter-story telling approach through qualitative methodology which allows participants to report their experiences in their own words. This will attend to the need to address intersectionality among participants and allow their subjective accounts to speak for what they see as critical to their subjective experience.
CHAPTER III
Methodology

The purpose of this study is to understand the relation among adolescents’ autobiographical narratives of disrespect experiences from teachers in school and potential relation to levels of anxiety and depression symptomology during the experience and after the experience. In addition, this study seeks to address whether or not students attribute negative experiences of disrespect from teachers and classmates to race, known as microaggressions. Sue and colleagues (2009) propose that microaggressions are often most hurtful when they are enacted by someone in a position of power towards an individual whom is disempowered.

Furthermore, Sue et al. (2009) argue that when, or if, people of color bring attention to these experiences, they are often dismissed. They may be named “oversensitive” or accused of overreacting to a “misinterpreted situation”. This is important to acknowledge when considering the impact that teachers may have on ethnically marginalized students in the classroom. Further, it is useful to understand how the presence of microaggressions or disrespect may lead to higher levels of anxiety and depression among youth in school. The questions that guide this study are: (1) Whether or not students attribute experiences of disrespect from teachers to race; (2) How students feel during an experience of disrespect from a teacher; and (3) How students feel after they experience disrespect from a teacher.
Research Design

The study was a cross-sectional, mixed method design which combined narrative methodology as well as self-reported survey data to triangulate adolescent student experiences of disrespect or microaggressions as well as anxiety and depression. This study was grounded in a critical race theory (CRT) lens, which can be more thoroughly reviewed in Chapter II. CRT was essential in guiding this study because it attends to the multiple dynamics and complexities that play into race and racism, such as the importance of acknowledging intersectionality and racial power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). We used narrative methodology to better allow the voices of marginalized students to be represented through counter-storytelling techniques, one of the core tenets of CRT (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Through use of narrative methodology we were better able to ensure that students’ subjective experiences were reflected in their own words in a way that was both authentic to the participants as well as consistent with critical race theory. This decreased the likelihood of asserting improper meaning or emotion to reported experiences.

Additionally, the study implemented quantitative data which allowed for a measurable understanding of participant depressive and anxious symptomology, based on a consistent and generalizable scale. Implementing both qualitative and quantitative methodology allowed for a more complete representation of students’ experiences and attitudes.

Sample

Participants in this study were 20 adolescents and emerging adults ranging in age from 16 to 21 years old. Sixteen participants were currently enrolled in high school, and four had graduated high school. Seventy-five percent of participants identified as people of color, with 30% of the total participant sample identified as Black or of African or Caribbean descent, 25% identified as of Asian descent, 20% identified as Hispanic or of Spanish heritage, 5% identified
as Indian, and the remaining 5% identified as mixed or other, including of Native American heritage. The remaining 20% identified as White or White/Jewish. Seventy percent \((n = 14)\) of participants identified as female, 25% \((n = 5)\) identified as male, and 5% \((n = 1)\) identified as non-binary. Participants ranged in age from 16-20 years old, with a median age of 18. Seventy-five percent \((n = 15)\) of participants reported that the teachers at their school were predominately White, which is important to note considering that 75% of our participants also identified as people of color which means that the majority of students did not see their racial or ethnic identity reflected in their school.

Participants were also asked to rate their level of pride for their own ethnicity on a scale of 1-5. Eight out of the 20 participants chose not to answer this question, however of the remaining participants, reports indicated an average value of 3.9 with 5 indicating strong pride in ethnicity. This suggests that most participants held strong feelings of pride for their ethnicity, which is important to note in considering: (1) teacher racial and ethnic demographics; and (2) how participants may experience disrespect in school.

Lastly, while most participants still lived with their caregivers, or were not financially independent, 55% of participants reported that they did not know their family’s annual income. 15% of participants reported that their family’s income was around 30-50k, 10% reported around 50-70k, 10% reported around 100-120k, 5% reported above 120k, and the remaining 5% did not report.

The study was originally designed to limit recruitment to high school age students, but because of the difficulties accessing this population through IRB regulations and need for parental consent as well as approval from schools or other identified confidential programs, the
study was expanded to include recruitment of college age or other recent high school graduates over the age of 18.

All research participants participated in the study through voluntary nature. Participants included: students on track to graduate from high school as well as recent high school graduates, participants between the age of 14 and 25, as these years best exemplify attitudes and experiences around secondary education. Participants of all gender or racial identifications were included, as well as participants belonging to marginalized ethnic groups, and those who identified as White. Participants belonged to both predominately White and racially diverse school populations in the Northeast region of the United States, more specifically Western Massachusetts as well as the Bay area in California.

In order to provide a consistent baseline and protect from potential outliers in data, this study did not include students at risk for dropping out or failing school. Participants were also required to read, write, and speak English fluently to ensure that participants could fully understand the research inquiries and provide answers that run less risk of being misinterpreted. Participants were excluded if they were undocumented immigrants or did not speak English fluently, so as to allow for a generalizable representation of high school experiences in the United States.

**Recruitment**

Prior to recruitment of this study, I obtained a waiver from the HSR for approval of this study (Appendix A) as it was previously approved by Smith College Institutional Review Board (Appendix B) to ensure that ethical standards were maintained. In addition, because we modified the procedures of the approved study to include demographic and survey questions, we also received IRB approval for our modified procedures (Appendix B).
The study implemented a non-probability, purposive sampling technique in selecting participants, more specifically, a snowball method (Engel & Schutt, 2017; Rubin & Babbie, 2016). This sampling method was chosen in order to best reach participants from the target population of the study. Engagement from students belonging to the target population allowed access to participants we may have otherwise had more difficulty reaching (Engel & Schutt, 2017; Rubin & Babbie, 2016), as students may likely have a rapport with eligible peers that I could not easily establish. Potential participants were informed of this study through advertisements or word of mouth from teachers or other school faculty, and were asked to refer friends after their interview. Those friends were then asked to recruit further participants, and so on.

While snowball sampling method allows for effective recruitment, it may have proposed limitations concerning diversity and representation. Students may have been more likely to recruit from the same school they attended, which may have impacted the data because participants may have experienced the same objective qualities in school climate. Further, students could have been more likely to recruit participants from their own friend group which may account for members to be more alike, in the same classes, have shared interests or values, or even experience disrespect from the same individual. Further, students that are more withdrawn or isolated may have been neglected from the data, but may also be most affected by disrespect and microaggressions. Similarities among participants may impact generalizability of research, but was buffered through recruitment from different schools, programs, and towns (Engel & Schutt, 2017). Lastly, as the subject of this research addresses negative experiences, emotionality, and other possibly personal qualities, participants may feel “outed” or concerned about why they have been asked to participate (Engel & Schutt, 2017).
**Individual recruitment procedures.** Participants were recruited from the Western Massachusetts area through word of mouth via in-person and telephone communication, as well e-mail and flyer distribution (Appendix C) after receiving approval from the principal investigator and Smith IRB (Appendix B). I informed community members I knew through personal and professional connections about the study through in-person communication, including colleagues from UMASS-Amherst campus, former employers at the Treehouse Foundation located in Easthampton Massachusetts, former colleagues at the JFK Middle School located in Florence Massachusetts, as well as a friend who works for The Hartsbrook School located in Hadley, Massachusetts. I was informed that these members would spread the word regarding this study, or have forwarded my recruitment e-mail and flyer. I e-mailed the local YMCA director, but did not receive a response. Additionally, I left several voicemails at the Northampton High School but did not hear back, and spoke directly via telephone with the director of the Pathways Adolescent Program connected with ServiceNet located in Northampton Massachusetts who informed me that I could not do outreach there because of the confidential nature of their program. Lastly, I was forwarded e-mails of interested participants through the principal investigator’s recruitment and followed up accordingly. Following e-mail confirmation, I interviewed one participant at the university lab.

**Group recruitment procedures.** In addition, as this is a group research project, participants were also recruited through purposeful sampling, described previously, and snowball sampling and in both Western Massachusetts and the San Francisco Bay area. Snowball sampling was included because the participants in our study, adolescents of color and immigrant origin adolescents, are a special population and were difficult to locate (Rubin & Babbie, 2016).
Both of these types of recruitment procedures are common in qualitative research centering oppressed populations (Knight, Roosa, Umaña-Taylor, 2009).

To recruit high school participants through purposeful sampling, group members identified adolescent youth organizations that targeted youth of color or after school programs that were connected with high schools. Then, they emailed letters of interest to the organizations (Appendix C). These letters included the purpose of the study, information related to the research topic, and inclusion information. Group members followed up with additional emails or phone calls where appropriate, and coordinated a time to allow for talking to potential participants, tabling recruitment, or posting flyers. Once participants were interviewed, group members used a snow-ball procedure to encourage participants to tell their friends about this study.

Emerging adult populations were located by contacting local colleges and organizations that work with youth and either asking the organization to tell potential participants about this study and hand out assent forms, or email students who might be interested in participating in the study. Interested participants responded via email or an assent form indicating their interest worked with the interviewer to coordinate a time to be interviewed.

In order to provide ethical support for our participants, before we collected data at each adolescent afterschool organization the host site signed an agreement that they understood the purpose of our study and that they gave us permission to interview participants on their site (Appendix C). Each organization also provided us with a point contact person in case any youth experienced difficulties during the interview or had questions regarding the nature of the interview questions or concerns following their reflection of injustice in schools.
Ethics and Safeguards

**Risks and benefits of participation.** It is important to consider the ethics of collecting this data as a social work student. For example, if the data indicates one or more students are showing high levels of depression or anxiety we will not know if they are at risk for suicidality. In addition, we have agreed to protect the confidentiality of all participants and will not be able to intervene in any way, except through our obligation as ethical reporters.

Donald Trump’s 2017 presidency has prompted additional awareness for precautions in collecting data. Recruitment was postponed until after the inauguration in order to provide more sensitivity to this issue. Trump’s presidency and the election leading up to it has had arguably made a large impact on the social and political climate of the United States. This impact has been noted across national and international news sources and was explored extensively through a survey conducted by The Southern Poverty Law Center (n.d.).

In November 2016, shortly after the presidential election, The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) asked K-12 educators from across the country take part in an online survey, the Teaching Tolerance project, posted on their website (The Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.). Over ten thousand teachers, counselors, and administrators from all states responded with collectively 25,000 comments. Ninety percent of responding educators reported that the current cultural atmosphere related to the political landscape is having a profoundly negative impact on their students and most believe the impact will be long-lasting. Eighty percent of the respondents described heightened anxiety and concern on the part of the students who were worried about themselves and their families (The Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.).

The Southern Poverty Law Center (n.d.) remarked that:

It’s (the election) producing an alarming level of fear and anxiety among children of color and inflaming racial and ethnic tensions in the classroom. Many students worry
about being deported. Other students have been emboldened by the divisive, often juvenile rhetoric in the campaign. Teachers have noted an increase in bullying, harassment and intimidation of students whose races, religions or nationalities have been the verbal targets of candidates on the campaign trail.

The results of the 2017 election are essential in framing this study in a way that supports, empowers, and protects youth, especially those who have been negatively impacted by the political climate.

The results of the election may also pose a threat to the validity of the study as data may be skewed after the recent election and Trump presidency. Students belonging to marginalized groups and students in general may be experiencing heightened levels of anxiety and depression due to outside variable that the recent election has created. This potential was kept in mind throughout data collection and analysis.

In addition, the participants may have felt uncomfortable when discussing their views on respect or disrespect in the classroom. Participants were reminded that they could stop the interview at any time, or choose to not answer a question in the interview. It was a possibility that the participants might feel uncomfortable or distressed with the questions concerning the microaggressions. Participants were reminded that they could skip questions at any time or stop the survey at any time. The order of the questions and the inclusion of positive questions have been purposively arranged to diminish distress, so that participants end thinking about a positive school experience. In addition, all participants were debriefed, reminded about the positive impact of the study, and given a general resource sheet on discrimination resources.

However, I believe that the risks of this study did not exceed that of everyday life. Students were provided optional referral information to local supports as a safeguard should they feel unsettled by the research process. If at any point members of the study appeared or expressed signs of fatigue, they were reminded that they could skip a question or stop the
interview. Additionally, research supports that merely discussing negative feelings and experiences with another person can often provide therapeutic qualities to individuals. Students had the opportunity to find affirmation in sharing their negative experience with another person. The study also allowed us to better understand school climate and how to improve student-teacher and peer relationships within the school system through current reports on areas of strengths and weaknesses within schools. Additionally, all youth participants had an identified faculty member at the school whom could be informed if they are struggling with a particularly concerning issue. Students were also supplied with additional resources to meet any emotional needs they could emerge. Lastly, for the survey, if a participant filled out at least one question, we entered those wishing to participate in a drawing for a $25 gift cards. In addition, for participants who completed the interview were given a $5 gift card to Amazon.

We feel that there are additional benefits for society from this research. This research provides a more nuanced picture of youth’s experiences in schools, both positive and negative experiences. Likewise, we have compared the school experiences from white students and students of color to document and expose any differences. This will allow current and future parents, teacher, school administrators, and teacher education to be more informed about microaggressions and their impacts on both the academic and psychosocial functioning of adolescents in high school. The research presented can inform school interventions at all levels—the individual, the classroom, and the school itself. More so, by understanding the protective factors that some youth use to navigate both disrespectful and microaggressive experiences, we can now inform parents, teachers, school administrators, and the youth themselves of steps that they can take to make the school experience a more harmonious one for everyone.
By understanding how youth successfully navigate disrespectful experiences, and by highlighting what they see as respectful experiences, we can teach children how to effectively deal with feeling disrespected in a way that promotes social harmony, rather than discord, and identify children early on that are experiencing difficulties and provide interventions and classroom solutions. We can also help teachers and social workers identify unintentional behaviors that their students deem disrespectful as a way to promote social harmony in the classroom.

Research Procedures

Steps were taken to ensure that the research followed a systematic format which was consistent with standards of ethics, participant needs, and IRB regulations. The guidelines we took are as follows:

Informed consent procedure. Participants of this study included youth who were under the age of 18, and are therefore a vulnerable population. This means that we ensured that we took extra steps to work with these participants. All participants under the age of 18 were provided with a consent form to pass along to their parents who could grant permission to participate in this study (Appendix D). Once a consent form was returned, then, and only then, was the participant given the assent form (Appendix D). Participants above the age of 18 were only required to self-consent (Appendix D).

Voluntary nature of participation. All participants partook in the study through their own interest and willingness. Participants were informed that they may withdraw from the study at any point in the process. Participants were also informed prior to beginning the study that they may choose not to answer any questions.
Precautions taken to safeguard confidentiality and identifiable information. All participants received an automated ID number, which was kept separately from the transcribed interviews. This information has been concealed with the principal investigator with password protection and a personal key. If participants provided written consent, interviews were audiorecorded using approved devices supplied by Smith College. Once each interview was complete, the recording was transferred to the principal investigator’s computer and transcribed through rev.com Audio recordings were deleted from the tape immediately after they are transferred, and prior to any additional interviews. All data has been stored on Google drive, stored on the principal investigator’s password protected computer inside of a locked office. Only the principal investigator will be responsible for codes or locks as well as removal of data. All data will be removed once the study is completed or after five years since collection.

Data Collection

This study asked participants to partake in a two-part data collection series. Students were recruited through flyers posted in schools, after-school programs, and youth programs, pending permission via e-mail from the agency. If participants were under the age of 18, parents/guardians were provided with a consent form informing them about the study, and were then asked to complete and return the consent form prior to data collection (Appendix D). Once a parent or guardian returned the consent form, the youth participant was informed of the voluntary nature of participation and then required to complete an assent form in order to proceed with the study (Appendix D).

Each interview took approximately 45-50 minutes, beginning with an overview and release of the participant assent form, followed directly by the mood scale which asked participants to rate the current mood on a scale from 1-5 (Appendix E). Completion of the assent
form and mood scale took approximately 5-7 minutes. Following the mood scale, participants completed a demographic form (Appendix F) asking closed-ended questions around their identity, this part of the interview took about 10 minutes to complete. Once participants completed the demographic form, we asked consent to be audio-recorded and if consented to, began recording. Participants were asked open-ended questions around experiences of disrespect in high school as well as quantifiable scales asking about participants’ emotions at the time they experienced or witnessed disrespect, as well as how they felt later (Appendix G). The audio-recorded section of the study took about 30-35 minutes to complete. Participants were then asked to report on their mood on the same 1-5 mood scale. Next, participants were debriefed on the purpose of the study, the nature of confidentiality, and resources should they need support (Appendix H). After participants were informed of support options, they were presented with the option of how they would like to receive their $5 Amazon card in appreciation of their participation and asked if they would like to participate in a follow-up survey.

Data Analysis

Participants were asked to complete quantitative demographic information, answer qualitative open-ended questions around experiences of disrespect in high school, as well as respond to measurable scales asking about the emotions associated with these experiences (Appendices F-G) Following Clarke & Braun (2006)’s steps, quantitative and qualitative data was analyzed accordingly. Data analysis was broken into three parts: (1) disrespect experiences, (2) emotions associated with experience of disrespect, and (3) anxiety and depression.

Disrespect experiences. Once all 20 interviews had been transcribed and uploaded to a shared Google Drive along with associated demographic information, I examined each narrative to select for stories which specifically reflected experiences of disrespect from a teacher towards
a student. Next, I thematically coded these stories based off of criterion meeting our codebook for racial microaggressions, determined by Sue et al. (2007)’s definitions using deductive analysis. Through this process I looked for themes presented in the codebook which matched themes presented in participants’ stories and also took into account demographics reported in the narratives. After deductive coding, I found that not all stories of disrespect fell into the category of racial microaggressions. I then amended the codebook using inductive analysis to reflect the data provided in participant stories and account for types of disrespect which did not fall under racial microaggressions (Appendix I). Four major themes of disrespect emerged from the data: 1) Racial microaggressions, which consisted of three subthemes including, a) Deny heritage/Essentialize ethnic or racial identity, b) Silence/Make feel inadequate, c) Deny individuality or personhood, and d) Invalidation of Oppression; 2) Gender microaggressions, 3) Authority/Power dynamics, and 4) Intersection of identities. I then categorized all corresponding participant ID codes into each theme or subtheme that emerged from their narratives.

It is important to note that many of participants’ stories revealed more than one theme, so while there are 20 participants in total there was overlap among themes, producing more reports of themes or subthemes than total sample population. This means that several of participants’ ID codes were categorized into more than one theme.

**Emotions associated with experience of disrespect.** Participants were asked to measure their emotions at the time of the event based on a numerical scale from 0-4, with zero indicating no emotion and four indicating strong emotion. Emotions assessed at time of event included: Disrespected, angry, hurt, humiliated, sad, confused, and ashamed. Participants were then asked to rate their emotions on the same scale, with the exclusion of “disrespected” based on how they felt currently, after the event had passed (Appendix G). Numerical reports taken from the
emotional scales were categorized to correspond with theme(s) or subtheme(s) associated with each participant ID code.

First, I wanted to examine how participants' reports on the emotion scales associated with their reported experience of disrespect compared or contrasted depending on the type of theme(s) or subtheme(s) they fell under, as well as any patterns that may have emerged. In my analysis of emotional reports correlated with specific themes or subthemes, I excluded all themes that had less than six reports. This would ensure that there was enough data and participants who experienced similar experiences of disrespect to gauge a more accurate idea of how these experiences impacted students emotionally. Further, it would highlight the types of disrespect students experienced most frequently by teachers. The three types of disrespected highlighted include: 1) Racial microaggressions subthemes: a) Deny Heritage/Essentialize ethnic or racial identity, b) Silence/Make feel inadequate. 2) Authority/Power dynamics.

Next I selected the quantitative reports taken from the emotional scales associated with: 1) Deny heritage/Essentialize ethnic or racial identity, 2) Silence/Make feel inadequate, and 3) Authority/Power Dynamics, and calculated the mean of each numerical value given for each emotion on the scale. Additionally, I found the range reported for each emotion (see Tables 1-3; Figure 3).

I also wanted to examine all emotional responses to all experiences of teacher disrespect among the total sample population, and more specifically analyze the emotional responses of White participants compared to participants of color both during and after an experience of disrespect from a teacher. I calculated the mean of each emotional response at the time of the event as well as after the event for all 20 participants and compared results between participants of color and White participants (see Figures 1-2).
**Anxiety and depression.** After analyzing emotional responses to experiences of disrespect from teachers, I wanted to know how these emotions related to non-clinical symptoms of anxiety and depression. I began by creating a codebook, which I used to identify symptoms of anxiety and depression associated with student reports of disrespect from teachers based from the interviews (Appendix J).

**Quantitative Analysis**

To create my anxiety and depression codebook, first I coded each emotion on the quantitative scales which asked participants to rate their emotions both during and after the experience of disrespect on a scale of 0-4, with zero indicating no emotion, and four indicating strong emotion. The emotions evaluated included, angry, hurt, humiliated, sad, confused, and ashamed. I identified “hurt”, and “sad” as emotions associated with symptoms of depression, in turn I identified “confused” as an emotion associated with symptoms of anxiety. Each emotion that was rated a “2” or greater I included as a symptom. Due to the co-morbidity of anxiety and depression, often emotions can be associated with both. With this understanding, I identified “angry”, “humiliated”, and “ashamed” as emotions associated with both anxiety and depression. It is important to note that for all reports of these emotions I counted them towards both anxious and depressive symptoms. Additionally, participants were asked at the end of the emotion scales to report whether or not there were any other emotions they felt at the time of the event or currently that were not asked. Emotions reported at the time of event included: frustrated, annoyed, shocked, and tense. I coded all of the aforementioned emotions as symptoms of anxiety. Additionally, participants were asked to report any emotions which has not been asked which the felt after the event, reported emotions included: uncomfortable, and frustrated, both of which were coded as symptoms of anxiety.
I used the collective data from these measures to evaluate the total sample populations’ experiences of anxious and depressive symptoms. First, using my codebook, I calculated the mean of each emotion coded as a symptom of anxiety as well as the mean for each emotion coded as a symptom of depression based on the quantitative reports of all 20 participants. I then compared anxious and depressive symptoms reported at the time of the experience of disrespect with anxious and depressive symptoms reported after the event (see Figure 4).

**Qualitative Analysis**

While most of my data reflecting anxious and depressive symptoms was collected through quantitative reports, participants also reported feelings through their narrative reports of experiences of teacher disrespect. This data is important to reflect because emotions are experienced and expressed in many different ways and consistent with a counter-storytelling approach, it was important that I accurately represent the voices of participants. Some of the themes and subthemes that emerged through the study reflected limited participant experiences due to few reports which met the criteria for the theme or subtheme. I chose to focus on themes or subthemes which reflected the narrative reports of six participants or more, which included: a) Deny Heritage/Essentialize ethnic or racial identity, b) Silence/Make feel inadequate, and c) Authority/Power dynamics. Next, using my codebook I thematically analyzed all narratives belonging to its associated theme or subtheme for anxious and depressive symptoms. Because most narrative reports of emotions or feelings were described in relation to how participants felt at the time of the event, I felt the qualitative data would not be best represented in assessing anxious and depressive symptoms after the time of the event.

Using my codebook, I combined qualitative and quantitative reports of anxious and depressive symptoms to evaluate experiences of anxiety and depression around the three selected...
disrespect themes and subthemes. I then translated this data into graphs, which represented anxious and depressive symptoms experienced at the time of each associated theme or subtheme reflecting a specific type of disrespect (see Figure 3).
CHAPTER IV

Findings

This study explores student reported experiences of teacher disrespect occurring in high school, and seeks to understand the relationship between experiences of disrespect and race as well as emotional responses to these experiences. This chapter discusses the findings from 20 semi-structured interviews with participants currently enrolled in high school as well as emerging adults whom have recently graduated from high school. Participants were either on track to graduate high school or had successfully completed their high school graduation. Participants documented experiences of disrespect in school that they had either personally been subject to or had witness or heard about. Themes around race and more specifically, microaggressions emerged through participant interviews. Data suggested relations among emotional responses to these experiences, how much disrespectful participants perceived the experience to be, and relation to race. Most participants were familiar with the definition and concept of microaggressions and racial dynamics, which was helpful in framing this study, and frequently related to their experiences with disrespect. Participants were able to thoroughly discuss experiences relating to race including the nuances often threaded into racial microaggressions.

The interview was comprised of three different sections: 1) participant demographic information, and 2) a 45-minute interview. Section one asked closed ended questions, which translated into quantitative data. Section one was mostly qualitative in nature, focusing on open-ended questions with the exception of corresponding quantitative scales assessing for emotions.
around participant experiences. For this study, section one consisted of participant demographics from the sample population as well as data around the school climate. This data was collected through the first section of the interview (Appendix F). This chapter will begin with Section One which will detail participant demographics. Next Section Two will follow, which has been divided into subsections including: participant demographics, and followed by a presentation of themes and subthemes found across the interviews which reflect different types of disrespect which emerged from the study. This will describe students’ experiences of disrespect from teachers in school, addressing: race, gender, authority and power dynamics, as well as intersections of identity that impact these experiences of disrespect. Next, I will discuss student responses to experiences of disrespect, including tangible ways students respond, emotional responses, and anxious and depressive symptoms related to these experiences. Finally, I will summarize my findings.

**Interview Section 1: Participant Demographics**

The participants interviewed included sixteen current high school students and four emerging adults. Of the twenty total participants, 70% \((n = 14)\) identified as female, 25% \((n=5)\) identified as male, and 5% \((n=1)\) identified as non-binary. Participants were between the ages of sixteen and twenty years old with a median age of 18. Seventy-five percent of sample participants identified as people of color, including 30% Black or of African or Caribbean descent, 25% identified as Asian of Korean, Filipino, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Indian descent, 20% identified as Hispanic or of Spanish heritage, 15% identified as White or White-Jewish, and 5% identified as mixed or other, including Native American heritage. All participants were on track to graduate from high school or had successfully completed their high school degree. It is important to note that while the study included both current high school students as well as
participants who have completed high school, there were no significant differences in their reports therefore participants were collapsed into one group sample.

**Themes**

Experiences of disrespect were categorized into different themes or subthemes in accordance with my codebook for disrespect experiences (Appendix I). The four major themes described in this chapter include: A) racial microaggressions; B) gender microaggressions; C) authority/power dynamics; and D) intersections of identity. These themes illustrate commonality and differences among student experiences of teacher disrespect, providing a better understanding of student needs and the impact teacher-student disrespect had on participants. It is important to note that while there were 20 participants in total, 10 out of 20 participants’ narrative reports of teacher disrespect reflected more than one theme or subtheme, highlighting the value of understanding how intersectionality and interacting variables can impact experiences of disrespect. Of the ten participants who reported between two to four themes or subthemes, nine identified as a person of color. Seven out of the ten participants identified as female, two identified as male, and one identified as non-binary.

**Theme A: Racial microaggressions.** Participant experiences of disrespect revealed that while not all students’ experiences could be classified into racial microaggressions, the majority of reported teacher disrespect experiences fell into racial microaggressions. Racial microaggressions are brief, everyday exchanges directed towards a person of color, which are often subtle in nature and may be enacted unconsciously or without intent. In order for reported experiences of disrespected to be considered racial microaggressions, the experience of disrespect had to be directed towards a person of color and relate to race or ethnicity. Among student experiences of racial microaggressions, I found several types of microaggressions, which
I broke down into different subthemes based on the previously established codebook. I found that not all racial microaggressions were included in the codebook; therefore, I adjusted the codebook to include new subthemes that emerged through the data. The four subthemes are as follows: (1) deny heritage/essentialize ethnic or racial identity; (2) silence/essentialize ethnic or racial identity; (3) deny individuality or personhood (4) invalidation of oppression.

Subtheme 1: Deny heritage/essentialize ethnic or racial identity. Eight out of the twenty participants interviewed for this reported elements meeting criteria for this subtheme, and all incidents discussed were experienced by a person of color. This subtheme is defined as a teacher’s tendency to highlight the dominant culture and therefore deny the heritage of people of color. In addition, this also may take the opposite form of essentializing the person of color’s racial identity. I grouped these two experiences together because they shared commonality in problematizing heritage and not dismissing subjective experiences of race and ethnicity as well as intersectionality. Further, many of these reports were related to course curriculum. First I will discuss issues of deny heritage followed by essentialism.

Students reported that denying heritage often was embodied by the school curriculum, as it most often focused on Eastern European/White-centric history including “Imperialism” and “colonization”, and teacher’s not only failed to provide space, but denied requested space for students to share their family history or heritage in the way that best reflects their personal story.

For example, Jerica discussed an experience where their teacher asked the class to complete an assignment regarding their family history and heritage. Jerica reported that:

He made us do this assignment towards the end of the year where you need to write what your family roots are, where you come from and stuff like that. He was like this bald, white guy. I’m obviously not white. The thing is, you have to relate the things back to American history - So you just set me up so I can’t talk about what happened when my grandma was living in Jamaica and her life around that. I have to talk about slavery or her
immigrating to America and how it turned into a sob story about how no one ever really achieves the American dream and stuff like that.

Jerica’s experience reflects one of the ways in which a teacher did not allow for a student’s heritage to be included in the classroom space, because the way they were required to discuss their background was not a truthful to the student’s experience of their own heritage. This example speaks for a need to adjust school curriculum to include all members of society. Requiring students to connect their family history and heritage to United States history limits the voices of many students of color and is problematic in that it forces students to present a negative self-identity and reject the positive qualities of their heritage.

Several participants shared similar experiences, for example, Danielle reported an experience in which she was asked to do a project for their World History class in which she had to interview a family member in regards to their history and connect it back to the United States. Danielle described feeling that this project did not allow students with a challenging history to reflect the positive aspects of their story in the way other students were able to, explaining that, “some people want to share positive family history.” Alike Jerica’s experience, Danielle was not able to provide their voice in the class which excluded their voice and heritage from the classroom.

Results revealed that along with participants’ experiences personal heritage being denied by teachers, teachers also enacted other microaggressions relating to the ways in which they made assumptions about heritage and who resides in the classroom. People of color are often essentialized in ways that relate to race, ethnicity, or heritage. Results revealed that teachers enacted microaggressions towards students by essentializing students’ identities. Participants reported that teachers made assumptions about students based on the perceived race or ethnicity of the student, which lead to expectations about who they were or that they provided a
representation of an entire race. This often manifests through assumptions about what one knows, what is important to them, and generally who they are as an individual. Two students were asked to translate a language which the teacher assumed they knew based on their perceived identity, and several students described feeling “forced” to explain their heritage, while others reported feeling singled out to “point on a map” where they were from. These are all examples of how a teacher made assumptions about what the student knew or represented, and also singled out the student to explain their identity that essentialized who they were.

Steph discussed an experience that occurred in English class:

We were reading a book. What was it called? [asking question to self] It was called A Step From Heaven. It was written by a Korean immigrant and it was kind of just her story of how she came to America and dealing with all the family and the culture and America, and things like that, you know? And so the teacher, upon finding out that I was Korean, she was so excited and so like, “Oh, my God. You’re Korean”. Things like this. “Can you translate? Can you read this part of the book? What does this mean? What does this mean?” And she had the whole, I think it was unnecessary, thing where she stopped the class and she was like, “Oh, my gosh. Your classmate is actually Korean”. And she pulled up a bunch of things about Korea and like, “Can you point out, like, oh, where were you born on this map? Do you know what this landmark is?” And things like that. It was just so extra. You really didn’t need to do that in order for us to read this book. That was the instance that made me stop willingly participating in class.

Steph’s experience is an example of a microaggression in which the teacher singled her out in front of the class, essentially asking her to explain what being Korean means with the expectation that they not only can represent the entire Korean ethnicity and immigration experience, but also insinuating that being Korean is what is most salient and important about her identity.

Steph elaborated that this experience made her become less active in school, which suggests she felt she needed to adapt to the school environment in order to protect against further microaggressions. Steph also explained that this new identity as a more reserved student, also made her feel as though she was perpetuating “the stereotype of the quiet Asian girl”. Continuing
that, “I didn’t really know how to be in that situation which made me really uncomfortable because the teacher kind of set it up so that I was a representation of my entire culture and the entire experience of immigrants to America”. Steph continued to explain, “I think, in order to be valid or in order to even engage in the class, you kind of had to prove your worth by volunteering information about you as a person of color”. Steph’s experience informs us how teachers can strongly influence their students’ sense of identity and safety in school. Further, it demonstrates how microaggressive experiences can have a domino effect and cause further deleterious impacts in addition to the initial microaggression.

Participants also reported feeling that students of color were often left to “explain racism” or teach heritage. Gabby reported that, “Teachers tend to focus on the African American students first whether it’s grades or for not being smart enough or for putting them on the spot to do things like teach a class about heritage when they’re not prepared”. Gabby elaborated that, “not everyone comes from the race or ethnicity that they are and that race or ethnicity is their identity, but it’s not who they are. They’re more than just what their race is”.

These results reveal the everyday nature of racial microaggressions for students of color and the commonality of microaggressions enacted by teachers. This data informs us that students of color are often singled out in class whether it is because the teacher is not inclusive of their heritage, or the teacher makes assumptions about their identity.

**Subtheme 2: Silenced/Made to feel inadequate.** Twelve out of the twenty participants interviewed reported themes of being silenced, made to feel inadequate or incompetent by a teacher. People of color regularly experience attitudes or treatment which suggest that they are less valuable than the dominant culture. People of color experience microaggressions in the ways their opinions, experiences, and knowledge is received as invaluable or inferior to the dominant
culture. Results revealed that students of color were ignored in class when raising their hand, trying to enter the room, or sharing an opinion, questioned in their effort or competence, and singled out to do menial tasks that their white counterparts were exempt of doing. These experiences from teachers create a silencing atmosphere or contribute to feelings of inadequacy.

Colleen reported that their English teacher told the class that they “weren’t smart enough”, and that they “don’t try hard enough”. Colleen reported that this was almost every day, elaborating that:

For me, it was really hard because I have an IEP. Well I did and I still do now. From where I was, then I was still working on doing my best and I have to try sometimes 10 times harder than everyone else so to be told you’re not smart enough really makes you not want to go to class.

Colleen’s experience is congruent with many experiences of microaggressions because it is subtle in nature and yet, a common experience reported by students of color. Colleen’s experience shows how regardless of their effort in class, they were made to feel inadequate.

**Subtheme 3: Deny individuality or personhood.** Two of the twenty participants reported that a teacher regularly confused them with another classmate of the same perceived ethnic or racial identity. Participants were often called by the wrong name or overlooked.

Ted reported:

So obviously on the baseball team, there are two Indians on the team, me and my friend, we’re in the same grade. He often times confuses our names when we do not lookalike at all. So it was during a game and he… There are two technological aspects in a game that need to be controlled- one is the iPad when someone keeps track of what’s going on through the game and the other’s the scoreboard to change it. And without giving it a second look, he gave the other Indian kid the iPad and told me to do the scoreboard, even though we’re seniors and I’ve been on the team for four years.

Ted’s experience exemplifies how teachers enact microaggressions towards students of color by not taking the time to get to know their students, and categorize students of the same perceived race as one entity. Ted’s experience exemplifies the teacher’s denial of Ted’s personhood and
individuality which also reflects the ways in which the teacher chooses to evaluate Ted’s worth and contributions. Ted elaborated:

We were disrespected that he was making us still do the labor when there were young kids on the bench. That wasn’t the worst part. Something happened like in the field and he turns around and he goes… This was the iPad person’s job, so my friend’s job. And he goes, “[Participant’s Name, did you get that?]” And I just looked around and I wasn’t doing, I wasn’t this iPad, I was like, “What?” And he goes, “Oh, [friend’s name], one of you…” And that, “one of you”, that he said was what made me feel disrespected and I think my friend also felt disrespected.

Ted explained that, “It kind of made us feel like to him, we all look the same like we’re one person, we’re not equal to other people on the team or something”. Ted’s experience of being “othered” in comparison to other white classmates, and mistaken for another classmate of a similar perceived race is a common microaggression for students of color. Further, it demonstrates how teachers can deny the personhood or sense of individuality of their students.

**Subtheme 4: Invalidation of oppression.** This subtheme was not included in the initial codebook for racial microaggressions and was deductive of data revealed through the study. Two of the twenty participants described themes, which met this category through lack of acknowledgement of the qualities of subjective experiences of oppression and racism. Teachers often present all experiences of oppression as equal or undermine the magnitude and complexities of racial oppression, which invalidates the pain associated with oppression, excluding intersectionality and other values consistent with critical race theory.

Leanna reported:

So we were talking about… I don’t even know, we got into the subject of women and women not having certain rights or whatever and my teacher is hella passionate about that, anyone should be. I’m not mad at her for that obviously. But she said that women in the 60’s was it… who were always at the house doing all the home whatever things, she compared it to… She literally said, “That was their slavery. They were slaves”. I don’t even remember what she said, I tried to block it out of my memory honestly. But she was basically saying the equivalent of, women in the home were as oppressed as slaves in that they didn’t have the rights that they should’ve.
Leanna continued that the teacher “also compared [housewives from the 60’s] to people in internment camps”, and reflected that, “[The teacher is] supposed to be this hella educated person, I just don’t get how you can make such a degrading comment”. Leanna explained that, “By saying those comments repeatedly, [students] just think that’s okay and it’s not helping them at all”. Leanna’s experience reflects a common microaggression enacted by many teachers and adults, who feel that all experiences of oppression are equally bad. This is especially harmful if the adult is a person with privileged identities discussing oppression they have never had to experience. There were not significant reports of this subtheme, however it is important to highlight how equating experiences of oppression is invalidating of the pain and nuances relating to oppression.

**Theme B: Gender microaggressions.** Several participants described gender related microaggressions when reporting disrespect experiences from teachers which fell outside the scope racial microaggressions. Gender microaggressions are every day, brief transgressions which target a group or individual based on their membership to a specific gender identity. This theme was included deductively from that data which emerged from the study, and was not included in the initial codebook. Three of the twenty participants interviewed reported themes which fell into this category. Two of the three were White-Jewish identified students and the third was a person of color; all students self-identified as female. Reports included what students described as “inappropriate” comments or requests to behave a particular way based on value judgments of how that gender should perform. All three reports of disrespect described a male teacher’s behavior towards a female student. Angela discussed an incident in which a White male teacher commented on a White female classmate’s attire, exclaiming, “Oh, those leggings are very flattering on you”. Angela, a White, Jewish female, explained that she felt this comment
was wrong because she did not “think that’s okay for a teacher in any way to talk to a student about their clothing choice or their body type at all- especially a man to a girl”. The classmate discussed in this event was essentially evaluated on appearance by a male teacher based on gender standards and singled out as female. This report is reflective of a gender microaggression, which was the most reported experience of disrespect among white female participants.

Jerica, a female student of color, described an incident in which a male teacher scolded her for the way she was sitting in class. The teacher remarked that, “girls don’t sit like that,” and that the way she was sitting was, “so not lady like”. Jerica explained that she felt the teacher’s behavior was disrespectful because:

I don’t like men in particular, telling me what to do with my bod. We already have all these men in control trying to take away all these things from women and take away control of their body. When you have Trump running for president talking about how he doesn’t want women to be able to have abortions… I can see that mentality reflected in the classroom that you don’t want me to do this certain thing with my body because it bothers you… That’s disrespectful. It’s not your body to comment on. I’m not hurting anyone.

Jerica reported that she stood up for herself which she felt did not damage her relationship with this teacher. The participant explains that in her response to the teacher’s behavior she feels that she, “definitely changed something in the way he thinks about how girls can behave in his class”.

These results suggest that White female students were more likely to identify an experience of disrespect, which related to their identity as female than any other form of disrespect when asked to describe an incident involving disrespect enacted a teacher. It is important to remember intersectionality when considering gender microaggressions and how gender interacts identities such as race, class, ability, or other social identities.

**Theme C: Authority/Power dynamics.** Nine out of the twenty participants interviewed discussed the ways teachers’ status as a figure of “authority” and their use of “power” impacted
their experiences of disrespect from teachers. Results revealed that many participants found teachers’ ownership of power to be a salient feature in their experience of disrespect. This reflected overtly in reports where teachers stated their authority or demanded respect, or covertly in ways where students felt undermined or restricted due to power imbalances. Eight of the nine participants who reported experiences of disrespect related to authority or power dynamics identified as a person of color. Additionally, the majority of the teachers identified in these reports were white, indicating compounding power imbalances.

Ariella who identified as female and a person of color was told by a white male teacher not to “question [his] authority”, or his “teaching methods” after she asked if he could not “skip” the section (only two pages) on her native country. The teacher informed the student that if she had a “problem then get out [of the classroom]”. Ariella responded to this experience by altering her seating habits so that she sat in the back of the class, and became generally less engaged in class.

Ariella’s report exemplifies strong power imbalances, which contributed to the experience of disrespect. The teacher used their power to disregard the Ariella’s request to briefly cover class curriculum could have created a more inclusive learning environment for her with just a simple adjustment in the curriculum.

Lindsey reported in an interview that their teacher told the class they were “not equal” and that their “opinions [did not] matter”, because they did not have their degree or that status of a teacher.

Through their reports, several participants described themes of not wanting to stand up for themselves or another student after experiences of disrespect enacted by a teacher because they did not want to “undermine” an “authority figure”, or feared it would jeopardize the
relationship with the teacher. This is important in understanding how power dynamics impact classroom dynamics and experiences of disrespect from teachers.

**Theme D: Intersection of identities.** The final theme addresses the intersectionality of identities and how interactions between identities can impact experiences of disrespect. This is important to the study because it recognizes intersectionality and upholds the values of critical race theory. Socioeconomic class, gender identity, ability status, and many other social identities interact with each other in various ways which impact individual’s experiences in the world. This is important for understanding how students’ may experience disrespect depending on other identities in addition to race and ethnicity. Four participants described other identities, which impacted their experiences of disrespect from teachers. It is important to note that because our sample population focused school experiences, these identities may look different in other populations. Several students identified that they had individual education plans (IEPs) as designated by the school which allowed for a particular management of schoolwork which could aid in the students’ success. This indicates an area where participants may feel additional marginalization or internalize experiences differently depending on how they may or may not identify as an individual with different learning needs.

Marcus, who identified as a black male reported that their teacher did not respect his management of schoolwork and questioned his capability. Marcus, shares several known social identities which may impact his interpretation and experience of disrespect from the teacher. For example, his identity as black, male, an adolescent, and on an IEP may determine how he perceives his sense of self or how these identities may interact with each other to create a compounding effect on the way he internalizes the experience.
Another student reported that their identity as a female also impacted with the way they were respected by teacher. Lastly, a female student of color reported feeling both ignored for their race as well as “attacked” for coming from a lower socioeconomic status, describing how her two identities as both a person of color as well as belonging to a lower socioeconomic status compounded in contributing to feelings of disrespect.

**Responses to Experiences of Teacher Disrespect**

Participants who discussed experiences of disrespect from a teacher in school reported several different responses to the experience. These responses include: 1) Retaliation or overt behavioral/attitude adjustment; 2) Emotional responses; 3) Anxious and depressive symptoms.

**Retaliation or overt behavioral/attitude adjustment.** The data from this study did not reveal significant patterns in the ways students responded to different types of disrespect from teachers. However, there were several responses that seemed to be more common among participants, including: a) disengaging by not speaking up as much or putting as much effort into coursework or school life, b) exerting more effort to achieve and prove self through school academics or athletics; c) discussing the event with friends or classmates. Most participants reported that they did not tell another faculty member about the event, some speculated that they may have told a parent, two participants reported that they informed the principal or a teacher they were close with, and one participant reported that they confronted the teacher about the experience later down the road.

**Emotional responses.** Using the participants’ quantitative reports measuring how they felt at the time of the associated experience of disrespect, as well as the same measures indicating how they felt after the experience of disrespect (Appendix G). Emotions analyzed included, angry, hurt, humiliated, sad, confused, and ashamed. Participants rated emotions on a
scale from 0-4 with zero indicating no emotion, and four indicating strong emotion, based on how they felt at the time of the event (experience of disrespect) as well as after. I analyzed emotional responses to events experiences of disrespect which fell under themes and subthemes that included reports from six or more participants. The themes and subthemes analyzed included: a) Deny heritage/Essentialize ethnic or racial identity; b) Silence/Made feel inadequate; c) Authority/Power dynamics.

**Analysis of emotions associated with themes and subthemes.** There were several trends which emerged among all three themes and subthemes analyzed. Participants typically reported significantly greater scores for feeling “angry”, across all three types of disrespect both at the time of the event as well as after. Additionally, participants reported feeling “ashamed” significantly lower than all other emotions associated with experiences of disrespect both at the time of the event and after.

**Deny heritage/Essentialize ethnic and racial identity:** Participants who reported experiences of disrespect falling under this subtheme reported feeling “confused” at least two times greater than any other emotion at the time of the event. Participants’ reports of feeling “confused” decreased by about two and a half times after the time of the event. This is consistent with our knowledge of microaggressions as due to the subtle nature of them, people often to not realize until later that they have experienced a transgression. Additionally, participants reported feeling “angry” at least two and a half times greater than any other emotion reported after the time of the event. Reported feelings of anger after the time of the event increased by almost one and a half times more than reports at the time of the event. This data suggests that the decrease in feelings of confusion after the time of the event may be related to the increase in feelings of anger after the time of the event.
Table 1

*Emotions in response to denied heritage or essentialized identity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion at time of Event</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurt</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humiliated</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
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<td>0-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashamed</td>
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<td>0-2</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion After time of Event</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Range</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurt</td>
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<td>0-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confused</td>
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<td>0-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashamed</td>
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<td>0-1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Data reflects participant reports of emotions related to the first subtheme emerged from racial microaggressions enacted by teachers, *(n=6).*

*Silence/Make feel inadequate.* Participants who reported experiences of disrespect falling under this subtheme reported feeling “angry” more than any other emotion both at the time of the event as well as after the time of the event. Following reports of feeling “angry”, participants also reported greater feelings of “humiliated” at the time of the event. Often feelings of
humiliation are associated with feeling embarrassed, unintelligent, and inadequate. While reports of feeling “humiliated” significantly decreased by almost eleven times after the time of the event, reports of feeling “angry” after the time of the event decreased by around two times compared to reports at the time of the event. Reports of feeling “angry” remained significantly greater by at least two and a half times compared to any other emotion reported after the time of the event. Additionally, reports of feeling “confused” after the time of the event decreased almost four and a half times compared to reports at the time of the event.
Table 2

*Emotions in response to being silenced or made to feel inadequate*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Range</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humiliated</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashamed</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0-4</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion After time of Event</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurt</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humiliated</td>
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<td>0-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashamed</td>
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<td>0-4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Data reflects participant reports of emotions related to the second subtheme emerged from racial microaggressions enacted by teachers, *(n=10).*

*Authority/Power dynamics.* Participants who reported experiences of disrespect falling under this subtheme reported feeling “angry” more than any other emotion reported at the time of the event, followed by feeling “confused”. Reported feelings of anger after the time of the event decreased almost in half compared to feelings of anger at the time of the event. Additionally, reports of feeling “confused” after the time of the event also decreased by almost
half compared to reports at the time of the event. The difference between reported feelings of anger and confusion at the time of the event remained close to the same after the time of the event.

Table 3

*Emotions in response to authority and power dynamics*

<table>
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<th>Emotion at time of Event</th>
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<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Hurt</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humiliated</td>
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*Note.* Data reflects participant reports of emotions related to the experiences of disrespect belonging to Theme C, *(n=7).*

**Emotion responses to experiences of disrespect and relation to race.** In examining the total sample populations’ experiences with teacher disrespect and emotion responses, I several
trends and differences among White participants compared to participants of color. I analyzed the quantitative emotion reports associated with experiences of disrespect for all 20 participants and compared results from emotions reported at the time of the event as well as after the event. I found that while, participants of color reported relatively higher reports of feeling “angry”, both at the time and after the event, White participants reported considerably higher reports of feeling “confused” at the time of the event, and remained still significantly higher after the time of the event compared with participants of color. At the time of the event, participants reported significantly lower reports of feeling “hurt,” and “sad” and made no reports of feeling “humiliated” or “sad” compared to participants of color. Additionally, White participants reported higher reports of feeling “sad” after the event than participants of color, and made no reports of feeling “hurt”, “humiliated”, or “ashamed”.
Figure 1: Comparing race and emotion responses at time of event

Note. This data reflects emotions of the total sample population \((N=20)\) as reported in response to individual experiences of disrespect at the time of the event. Results compare emotion reports from white participants \((n=4)\) and participants of color \((n=16)\).
Figure 2: Comparing race and emotions responses after time of event

Note. This data reflects emotions of the total sample population \((N=20)\) as reported in response to individual experiences of disrespect after the time of the event. Results compare emotion reports from white participants \((n=4)\) and participants of color \((n=16)\).

**Anxious and Depressive Symptoms**

I examined participants’ numerical and narrative reports of emotions associated with experiences of disrespect and evaluated levels of non-clinical anxious and depressive symptoms based on my codebook (Appendix J). It is important to note that this data is reflective of participant’s experiences of experience of disrespect, and reoccurring or prolonged experiences of disrespect can impact emotion responses and different experiences of anxiety and depression.

I broke this analysis into two parts: 1) Anxious and depressive symptoms associated with specific types of teacher-disrespect, and 2) Total participant experiences of anxious and depressive symptoms.
Anxious and depressive symptoms and specific of teacher-disrespect experiences.

Consistent with previous analyses, I chose to evaluate experiences of disrespect for which included reports from at least six participants. The themes and subthemes analyzed included: (1) deny heritage/Essentialize ethnic or racial identity; (2) silence/Make feel inadequate; (c) authority/power dynamics. Additionally, as many of the symptoms coded for anxiety and depression were represented narratively, which was mostly reported through reports reflecting emotions at the time of the experience of disrespect; the data representing these subthemes and themes will only reflect anxious and depressive symptoms experienced at the time of the event.
Figure 3: Comparing anxiety and depression during time of different disrespect experiences

**Anxiety and Depression at Time of Event**

- **Silence/Make Feel Inadequate**:
  - Depression: [Bar Chart Value]
  - Anxiety: [Bar Chart Value]

- **Deny Heritage/Essentialize Ethnic or Racial Identity**:
  - Depression: [Bar Chart Value]
  - Anxiety: [Bar Chart Value]

- **Authority/Power Dynamics**:
  - Depression: [Bar Chart Value]
  - Anxiety: [Bar Chart Value]

*Note.* All scores are mean scores. Data reflects anxious and depressive symptoms reported at time of disrespect experience. Results compare disrespect experiences, including: Silence/Make Feel Inadequate (*n*=10); Deny Heritage/Essentialize Ethnic or Racial Identity (*n*=6); Authority/Power Dynamics (*n*=7).

**Deny heritage/Essentialize ethnic or racial identity.** Participant reports revealed the lowest level of depressive symptoms for this subtheme, and the second to highest level of anxious symptoms.

**Silence/Make feel inadequate.** Participant reports revealed the greatest level of depressive symptoms for this subtheme, as well as the lowest level of anxious symptoms.

**Authority/Power dynamics.** Participant reports revealed the second to greatest level of depressive symptoms for this theme, and the highest level of anxious symptoms.
Total Participant Experiences of Anxious and Depressive Symptoms

Using only quantitative data extracted from the emotion scales and interpreted by my codebook (Appendix J) to reflect participants’ anxious and depressive symptoms, I was able to determine levels of anxious and depressive symptoms both at the time of the experience of disrespect as well as after. This data is representative of all 20 participants and reveals that reports of anxious symptoms were equivalent to depressive symptoms at the time of the experience of disrespect. Additionally, while both depressive and anxious symptoms decreased after the time of the event, anxious symptoms remained slightly greater.

Figure 4: Comparing anxiety and depression during time of event and after event

Note. All scores are mean scores. Data reflects reports of anxious and depressive symptoms from total sample population.
Summary

The data represented in this chapter reflects the major findings from 20 interviews with current high school students and individuals who have recently completed high school who have experienced or witnessed an experience of disrespect from a teacher in high school. Significant findings were predominately derived from narrative reports discussing the experience of disrespect enacted by a teacher, as well as numerical data extracted from emotional scales associated with the experiences of disrespect. The findings revealed that most participants identified racial microaggressions when asked to report experiences of teacher-disrespect in school. Findings also revealed that participants experienced significant levels of anxious and depressive symptoms in response to experiences of teacher disrespect. The following chapter will further explore these findings and conclude interpretations from the data. The strengths and limitations of this study will be also discussed, as well as suggestions for future research.
Chapter V
Discussion

There were two major forces driving this study, beginning with the exploration of how students make meaning of experiences of disrespect from teachers, and more specifically how students may or may not attribute these experiences to race. The second focus of the study was to explore how reported experiences may evoke negative emotions linked to anxiety and depression. Students were interviewed using both qualitative and quantitative methods, including closed-ended questions regarding participant demographics, open-ended questions around witnessed or personal experiences of perceived disrespect enacted by a teacher or faculty, as well as both open and closed-ended questions regarding emotions associated with the reported experience of disrespect. All methods used in this study are more thoroughly addressed in Chapter III.

It is beneficial to social workers and the field of education to understand the different ways students may experience disrespect within schools from adults and how these experiences interact with racial and ethnic identities. This knowledge can inform teachers of what students find harmful, allowing for a better understanding of individual and group needs among students. More specifically, awareness around racial and ethnic dynamics in the classroom can reduce feelings of marginalization.

Additionally, it is also important to understand how teachers’ attitudes and behaviors impact students’ emotional states. Experiences of negative emotions can lead to anxiety and
depression, which have many deleterious effects on youth including school success, relationships, and future outcomes.

Results from this study revealed that most participants chose to report experiences of microaggressions when asked to discuss any experience of teacher-student disrespect. Data also revealed that participants tended to experience negative emotions related to anxiety and depression in response to experiences of teacher-disrespect.

This chapter discusses the findings emerged through this study in the following order: 1) student experiences of disrespect from teachers, discussing significance of teacher-student disrespect and relation to race and ethnicity, and connection to previous literature; 2) students’ emotional responses associated with experiences of disrespect from teachers, discussing relation to anxiety and depression, and connection to previous literature; 3) implications for social work and the field of education, discussing how educators and social workers can incorporate findings from this study into their work in order to better serve student populations; 4) limitations to the study and need for further research; 5) conclusion, summarizing the salient interpretations and meanings from the data.

**Student Experiences of Disrespect From Teachers**

Participants of this study were given the opportunity to discuss either personal or witnessed experiences in school regarding what they considered to an act of disrespect from a teacher. I will first discuss how their experiences often connected to race, followed by specific experiences to microaggressions, and end with the influence of power in the teacher-student relationship.

**Connection to race.** Participants were not asked to discuss racial microaggressions when asked to describe experiences of disrespect, however the vast majority of participants described a
relationship to race or ethnicity in their reports of teacher disrespect experiences. Critical race theory explains that racism is a frequent and ordinary experience, which acknowledges the prevalence of microaggressions in the lives of people of color (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Sue et al., 2007). The demographic reports of our sample population consisted mostly of participants who identified as people of color and who had attended a high school consisting of predominately White faculty. The significant reports of racial microaggressions among study participants is not unexpected given demographic results, and previous literature which speaks to the subtle, typically unconscious, and everyday nature of microaggressions among people of color (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Sue et al., 2007).

**Racial microaggressions.** Results from this study revealed that several participants identified similar experiences that could be construed as racial microaggressions from their teachers. Consistent with Sue and colleagues (2007)’ work on microaggressions, participants reported communications which degraded their racial identity or heritage, were rude, or disregarded their thoughts, opinions, knowledge or feelings. Participants also reported instances where they were ignored, and reported no instances where they were called derogatory names or experienced overt and purposeful attacks. Reported microaggression experiences related to course curriculum, as well as the way the teacher chose to hold space for the history of students who belong to marginalized racial or ethnic identities. For example, several students were asked to connect their heritage to United States history, which meant for many students of color, that they did not have the opportunity to explore the positive parts of their heritage. Students who were African American with ancestors brought to the United States through slavery, were required to tell this narrative rather than define what they felt was personally relevant or meaningful to their family story. These results are consistent with Ladson-Billings’ (Ladson-
Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) works, which highlight the importance of critical race theory (CRT) and K-12 education, which exposes a tendency for White supremacy to dominate public education curriculum. This dynamic limits the way students belonging to marginalized racial or ethnic groups may be able to engage with the class, some participants chose to sit in the back of the class after or speak less after their subjective history was excluded or tailored by a professor and reinforces power dynamics by forcing students who may not feel as connected to the United States. Additionally, it forces a specific narrative which the student may not identify with or wish to share. In response, one participant remarked that, “It is important to feel valued in your class”. It is understandable that students whose heritage is neglected from the class would be less likely to invest in school and care about their education because it does not reflect their story. This demonstrates need to hold a CRT approach within school curriculum and allow marginalized students to share their subjective stories in their own voice and affirm the experiential knowledge of people of color (Caton, 2012; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Mirza, 1999; Yosso et al., 2009).

Results from this study also revealed common experiences of microaggressions from teachers who singled out students of color to explain or discuss their ethnic background or make assumptions around their racial and ethnic identities on knowledge, interests, affect, and other characteristics. For example, a teacher asking a student they perceive to be of Asian descent to translate Mandarin, or an African American student to explain racism. In some instances, this may appear as though the teacher is making an effort to acknowledge a student with a marginalized racial or ethnic identity, such as asking a person of color to share where they are from, but this is actually a microaggression and similar to excluding students’ experiences from the curriculum, it can also create a sense of isolation. Results revealed that students felt that these
experiences were harmful and disrespectful. These experiences expose need to bring CRT values into the classroom, specifically an understanding and acknowledgment of intsectionality, room to hold the subjective experiences of people of color as sources of knowledge, as well as centering the voices of marginalized folks through counter-storytelling (Andrews, 2009; Caton, 2012; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Mirza, 1999; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000).

Participants who identified of color reported experiences of being ignored a teacher or treated inadequate or not equal. Others reported that their teacher could, or would not, distinguish them from a classmate of a perceived similar racial or ethnic identity. One student who was frequently mistaken for another classmate of color, explained that their teacher, “… was categorizing people of the same ethnicity, as like, one person- there’s no difference between [us], he can call us whatever he wants”. This student also expressed, “I don’t think he would have done it to any White person”. This microaggression creates a risk of impacting students’ perception of the world and self (Kohli & Solóranzo, 2012).

Impacts of power. Many participants explained that while they believed their teacher was in the wrong, they did not want to respond to the incident or stand up for themselves in order to preserve the relationship, or oftentimes because of the inherent power dynamics at play with the teacher’s representation as an “authority figure”.

Participants often connected their experiences of disrespect with hierarchal structures and power disparities between teachers and students based on status and age. Often, teachers’ ownership of power and the way this played into students’ experiences of disrespect, was also interactive with racial power dynamics. CRT acknowledges the ways in which racism serves to preserve status and power, even if it is just the perception of power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).
It is important to acknowledge how racial privilege can compound power dynamics which already exist in the teacher-student relationship. It is especially important that teachers belonging to dominant identities are aware how this can impact their relationship with students who belong to marginalized identities. Participants frequently made note of how the mere status of being a teacher related to their experiences of disrespect. One participant explained that disrespect, “… feels worse coming from teachers [than from peers] because if you’re an authority figure because they are in a position of power”.

Other participants also felt that experiences of disrespect were most harmful coming from a teacher, reporting that, “Students do say problematic stuff, but I guess I remember the teachers’ [disrespect] more just because it’s like, wow, they’re using their power to say things in front of so many people that are so easily influenced”. Another student explained that since teachers “dictate how the classroom atmosphere is” that peers tend to “think it’s okay to do the same thing”. These reports reveal that at least some students feel that disrespect from a teacher is more harmful than from a peer. Suárez-Orozco and colleagues (2015) found through an exploratory study that students experienced microaggressions more frequently from teachers than they did their own peers. This is consistent with one participant’s report that, “it’s often the teacher that says something disrespectful and the students tend to agree”. This trend is important to note because teachers are responsible for setting the tone for class dynamics and model what is right or wrong to their students. Additionally, these results provide information on how school environments may impact adolescents’ psychological health. For example, previous literature informs us that the adolescents have a more challenging time disengaging from distressing stimuli because of their developmental maturity which can lead to greater levels of anxiety (Keil, 2014). If we consider adolescents’ developmental stage, as well as structural systems which
force students to stay in class, it is especially important that we are aware of how to mitigate distressing stimuli in school environments. Students are essentially at the will of their school environments which means disrespect from their teachers can put them at risk for increased anxiety and other negative psychological outcomes like depression (Keil, 2014).

**Emotional Responses of Disrespect: Anxiety and Depression**

Adolescence is symbolic of defining new, interests, relationships, taking risks, and generally developing a sense of identity (Erikson, 1968). As adolescents are exposed to new environments, experiences, and sometimes challenging transitions, it is not surprising that they also experience negative emotions (Keil, 2014). While it is not necessarily uncommon for youth to experience negative emotions, previous literature suggests that these emotions can lead to anxiety and depression creating a range of deleterious impacts such as decreased self-esteem or self-efficacy, school success, and mental health issues carrying into adulthood (Benner & Graham, 2011; Bond et al., 2007). I will first discuss how their emotional responses are impacted by race/ethnicity, followed by their specific experiences to microaggressions.

**Impacts of race and ethnicity.** A large body of research indicates that racially marginalized youth are at even greater risk for experiencing anxious and depressive symptoms (Chun-Chung Chow et al., 2013; Garland et al., 2005; Harris et al., 2005; Williams et al., 1997). This literature is consistent with the results of our study which suggest that participants who identified as students of color experienced more symptoms of anxiety and depression than participants who identified as White.

In continuation, there was a large discrepancy in experiences of humiliation between White identified participants and participants who identified as a person of color. White students reported no feelings of humiliation or shame during an experience of disrespect from a teacher.
nor after the event, whereas participants who identified as a person of color reported significant experiences of humiliation and notable levels of shame associated with teacher disrespect. While humiliation is often linked with feelings of shame, we also know that there is a common relationship between shame and oppression, which may explain this discrepancy (Comstock et al., 2008). Participants who belonged to ethnic or racially marginalized groups may have felt stronger feelings of humiliation shame based on pre-existing feelings of oppression compared to participants who belonged to the dominant ethnic and racial group (Comstock et al., 2008).

Additionally, results showed that White participants felt significantly less sad or hurt in response to experiences of teacher disrespect than participants of color did at the time of the event. Emotions such as feeling hurt or sad are often internalized and relate to lowered self-efficacy or self-esteem, which can be linked to depression. In congruence with the literature, these results may suggest that White participants were less likely to internalize the experience of disrespect (Benner & Graham, 2011; Caton, 2012; Cardinali, et al., 2016; Gummadam et al., 2016; Nadal et al., 2014).

**Racial microaggressions.** The results of this study revealed several significant findings regarding participant reports of anxious and depressive symptoms related to racial microaggressive experiences enacted by a teacher. Similar to experiences of disrespect, microaggressions evoke comparable emotional responses but also include other responses such as confusion. Collective data revealed that participants experienced greater levels of anxious symptoms during racial microaggressive experiences which involved a teacher making them feel silenced or inadequate by ignoring them or treating them as though they not capable of achievement when compared to other experiences of teacher disrespect.
These results may indicate that when students feel as though their teacher does not value their opinion or see them as competent that they may feel less confident in themselves. These experiences may impact whether or not students feel they should speak up in class or engage in school life, how much they feel they can trust their teacher, and ultimately how they feel about their own chances of success. Further, these experiences may evoke feelings of uncertainty, self-doubt, and confusion linking to anxiety.

In addition, results revealed that participants who reported the greatest levels of depressive symptoms were those who experienced racial microaggressions from teachers who denied their heritage or essentialized them. Some of the ways teachers enacted these racial microaggressions was through excluding specific students’ heritage from class discussion or curriculum, other times a teacher held an expectation of the student based on a preconceived idea of who they are or are supposed to be. Participants who experienced these types of racial microaggressions explained that these experiences made them feel unequal, “othered”, “dumb”, “reduced”, a need to prove themselves, among other negative emotions. These results revealed a common theme of emotions relating to lowered self-esteem, and isolation which are linked to depression (Benner & Graham, 2011; Bond et al., 2007).

Finally, results from this study showed that participants of color reported strong feelings of confusion at the time they experienced disrespect from a teacher, which decreased significantly after the incident. Participants’ narrative reports supported this trend, sharing a common response of not understanding what was happening at the time, connecting the experience to race, or generally interpreting the incident as “wrong”. Many noted that it was through their discussion with peers that that they were able to see the experience as disrespectful. Participants expressed that it took weeks or sometimes even a year to make meaning of the
event. Additionally, several participants shared that the more times they were disrespected, the “more frustrated” they became. These results are congruent with the literature, which discusses the inherent nature of microaggressions as confusing and covert (Sue et al., 2007). These reports provide a space for marginalized students’ experiences to be affirmed and to challenge the ways in which microaggressions are often allowed or dismissed.

**Implications for Social Work Practice and Education**

Youth spend a significant amount of time of their lives in school and are also in an especially vulnerable and influential stage of development, which means that their relationships with teachers and school faculty are crucial. It is useful to the field and practice of social work as well as the field of education to understand the subjective and unique experiences of students in order to better accommodate differential needs and facilitate growth and achievement both within and outside of schools. This study provides a deeper look into what types of experiences students perceive as disrespectful from teachers and how they make meaning of those experiences. More specifically, this study identifies how racially marginalized students typically experienced teacher-disrespect in the form of microaggoggressions. This knowledge is beneficial to professional development as microaggressions often occur every day, are usually without intent, and may occur unconsciously, therefore understanding dynamics which sustain microaggressions can instill corrective awareness. This allows professionals to ensure that schools are safe and trusting spaces for all students, and mitigates the risk of classrooms being hostile and invalidating environments (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015).

Additionally, it is essential to the academic success and mental development of youth to decrease risk of anxiety and depression. This study revealed that experiences of disrespect often elicit feelings or emotions that are linked to symptoms of depression and anxiety. Student
experiences of teacher disrespect were explored thoroughly through participant narrative reports, allowing us to better understand the subjective experiences of students, and how they create meaning from experiences with teachers in school. By following a counter-story telling approach consistent with critical race theory, this study allowed for the voices of students who may otherwise feel marginalized or unheard, to be centered (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Several participants reported common experiences in which a teacher, typically a White teacher, held certain stereotypes, assumptions or expectations about their identity which was often related to their race or perceived race. These experiences are disrespectful and reject the values of critical race theory by ignoring intersectionality, the importance of subjective experiences, racial privilege, and undermines the value of subjective experiences.

Many of our participants reported that they experienced disrespect from a teacher frequently, indicating that it is especially useful to social workers and educators to understand the impact of these experiences, how they occur, so we can educate professionals and mitigate teacher disrespect allowing us to better serve diverse student populations. We can learn from participants’ narrative reports, utilizing students’ voices as a “cognitive wake-up call” to professionals who may be participating in harmful behavior without knowledge or intent (Ladson-Billings, 1998). In reducing the occurrence of microaggressions and other forms of disrespect from teachers, we can create a safer community in school and reduce anxious and depressive symptoms, particularly for students who belong to marginalized groups.

Professionals can help mitigate racial inequities and create inclusive spaces for marginalized students by integrating critical race theory into philosophy and education. Professionals will benefit from further trainings on implicit biases, examination of racial privilege, and reconstruction of curriculum (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Rothmayr, 1999).
Additionally, schools can work to hire more faculty of color. Students who feel that their ethnic and racial identities are reflected among faculty may feel a greater sense of ethnic identity. Ethnic pride and identity may protect students from some of the deleterious impacts of disrespect reducing risk of anxiety and depression (Cardinali et al., 2016; Caton, 2012; Martinez & Dukes, 1997).

**Limitations and Future Research**

This study consisted of twenty participants that is a relatively small sample size and may limit the generalizability of our results. Additionally, a snowball method of sampling may restrict the diversity of student experiences, as participants may be likely to recruit friends who are similar in interests or values. However, as participants were recruited from East Coast as well as West Coast regions, we were able to include a more diverse range of participants. Further, we were able to thoroughly explore students’ experiences through narrative interviews which may have been more challenging with a larger sample population. In addition, given the smaller sample size, we were not able to make comparisons on other variables that may impact students’ experiences such as social class, gender, or disabilities. However, narrative reports and demographics allowed intersecting identities to be reflected in participants’ own interpretation of their experience.

As participants were not measured by clinical standards for anxiety and depression, we were required to evaluate other emotions reported and link them to symptoms of anxiety and depression. This may have challenged consistency across assessments of anxious and depressive symptoms between participants. However, as participants were likely to interpret and respond emotionally to events differently based on cultural and gender variation (Rosenbloom & Way,
2004; Solórzano, 1998; Tummala-Narra & Claudius, 2013), allowing participants to report emotion more fluidly may be more representative of emotional impacts.

Results revealed that anxious and depressive symptoms decreased over time, however, participants were only asked discuss emotions associated with an isolated incident of disrespect. It is important to consider the impact that multiple experiences of teacher disrespect may have on individual students over a prolonged period of time. By nature microaggressions are considered everyday experiences for people of color, which means that while participants were only asked to report emotions on one event, they likely experienced more which is known to have a compounding effect on negative psychological states (Kohli & Solórzano, 2012; Sue et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2003). This is consistent with reports which emerged from this study describing increased feelings of frustration or anger in relation to the frequency participants experienced microaggressions or other forms of disrespect.

Further research on how microaggressions vary across students in relation to other intersecting identities of privilege or marginalization would be useful in the future. Additionally, we could benefit on continued research examining anxiety and depression in youth, related to accumulated microaggressive experiences longitudinally.

Conclusion

The results of this study reflect twenty participants’ experiences related to teacher disrespect during high school. They revealed that the majority of participants reported microaggressions, typically experienced by a student of color and enacted by a White faculty member and relating to race. Additionally, participants reported significant symptoms of anxiety and depression which later declined after the experience of disrespect. This research is important because it highlights and affirms the subjective voices of marginalized students who may not
otherwise be represented, and addresses critical race theory values which can be incorporated into education and social work practice. More specifically, holding sensitivity to intersecting identities, racial privilege, and a salient need to legitimize experiences of microaggressions.
References


Wang, J., Leu, J., & Shoda, Y. (2011). When the seemingly innocuous "stings": Racial


Appendix A: HSR Waiver Approval

Approval of HSR Waiver

Smith College

School for Social Work
Smith College
Northampton, Massachusetts 01063

October 27, 2016

Annika Yokum

Dear Annika,

The Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee approves your request for exemption from Smith College School for Social Work HSC review based on the fact that the Smith College is the IRB of record and the study’s use of secondary data. We wish you the best with your research.

Sincerely,

Elaine Kersten, Ed.D.
Co-Chair, Human Subjects Review Committee

CC: Shannon Audley, Research Advisor
Appendix B: IRB Approval

SMITH COLLEGE

NOTICE OF IRB APPROVAL

TO: SHANNON AUDLEY-PIOTROWSKI
FROM: PHILIP PEAKE, CHAIR, INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD, SMITH COLLEGE
SUBJECT: HUMAN SUBJECTS PROPOSAL
DATE: MAY 29, 2015

PROPOSAL TITLE: RESPECT INTERVIEWS WITH URBAN YOUTH AND TEACHERS
REVIEW TYPE: FULL REVIEW
PROJECT NUMBER: 1415-131
APPROVAL DATE: 5-21-15

The Institutional Review Board at Smith College has reviewed and approved the research protocol referenced above. Please note the following requirements:

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of the study (such as design, procedures, consent forms or subject population), you must submit these changes to the IRB by filling out and submitting a Change of Protocol form.

Adverse Event Reporting/Deviations from Approved Procedures: Should any adverse events occur during the conduct of your research, you should report them immediately to the chair of the IRB. Additionally, any procedural deviations from your approved proposal must be reported. Explanations of these events and related forms can be found on the IRB website.

Completion: When you have completed your study (i.e. data collection is finished), you are required to inform the IRB by submitting a signed Research Project Continuation Form with appropriate box checked.

Additional Requirements: None.

Be sure to use the project number provided above in all subsequent correspondence to the Institutional Review Board at Smith College. Please contact me at 413-585-3914 or ppeake@smith.edu if you have any questions.

For Committee Use Only:
Any and all requirements completed, final approval given:

[Signature]
Philip K. Peake, PhD
Chair, Institutional Review Board
NOTICE OF IRB APPROVAL FOR CHANGE OF PROTOCOL

TO: SHANNON AUDLEY
FROM: NNAMDI POLE, CHAIR, INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD, SMITH COLLEGE
SUBJECT: HUMAN SUBJECTS PROPOSAL
DATE: JULY 21, 2016

PROPOSAL TITLE: RESPECT INTERVIEWS WITH URBAN YOUTH AND TEACHERS
REVIEW TYPE: FULL
PROJECT NUMBER: 1415-131

The Institutional Review Board at Smith College has reviewed and approved the research protocol referenced above. Please note the following requirements:

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of the study (such as design, procedures, consent forms or subject population), you must submit these changes to the IRB by filling out and submitting a Change of Protocol form.

Adverse Event Reporting/Deviations from Approved Procedures: Should any adverse events occur during the conduct of your research, you should report them immediately to the chair of the IRB. Additionally, any procedural deviations from your approved proposal must be reported. Explanations of these events and related forms can be found on the IRB website.

Renewal: You must promptly return annual Research Project Continuation Forms sent by the IRB in order to continue to be authorized to conduct research.

Completion: When you have completed your study (i.e. data collection is finished), you are required to inform the IRB by submitting a signed Research Project Continuation Form with appropriate box checked.

Consent Forms: All subjects should be given a copy of the consent form. If signed consent is to be collected, as noted in your proposal, you must retain signed consent documents for at least three years past completion of the research activity.

Additional Requirements: None.

Be sure to use the project number provided above in all subsequent correspondence to the Institutional Review Board at Smith College. Please contact me at 413-585-3914 or ppeake@smith.edu, if you have any questions.

For Committee Use Only:
Any and all requirements completed, final approval given:

[Signature]

Nnamdi Pole, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board
NOTICE OF IRB CONTINGENT APPROVAL – CHANGE OF PROTOCOL

TO: SHANNON AUDLEY
FROM: NNAMDI POLE, CHAIR, INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD, SMITH COLLEGE
SUBJECT: HUMAN SUBJECTS PROPOSAL
DATE: FEBRUARY 21, 2017

PROPOSAL TITLE: RESPECT INTERVIEWS WITH URBAN YOUTH AND TEACHERS
REVIEW TYPE: CHANGE OF PROTOCOL - EXPEDITED
DATE OF CONTINGENT APPROVAL: 21-FEB-2017
ORIGINAL REVIEW: FULL REVIEW AND APPROVAL ON 21 JUL-2016

Dear Shannon Audley,

The Smith Institutional Review Board has reviewed your Change of Protocol proposal and decided to approve it contingent upon the following revisions:

- This approval is contingent upon you obtaining signed letters from the after school programs and submitting them to the IRB. That is, you may begin collecting data from a specific site once the IRB is in possession of signed letters indicating that the specific after school program is aware of your procedures and supportive of you recruiting students from their site and conducting your study there.
- Please remove the following from the signature prompt of the parental consent document: “Please which part of the research study you consent to have your child participate in.”

Please note: This is for the amended Change of Protocol request that was submitted on February 16, 2017. A full review of the Change of Protocol request that was submitted on February 2, 2017 will be conducted on March 2, 2017.

- We reserve the right to reconsider elements of this approval once the full board has had a chance to consider the larger project and the new elements that you are proposing to carry out. In other words, we may ask for changes in procedures that are currently approved based on feedback from the full board.

Again, approval of this proposal is contingent upon the request above. Once requested revisions are made, we will review your documents, and you will be contacted for clarification and/or confirmation of approval.

We are available to discuss any aspect of this response and to assist with your revised proposal. Feel free to contact me at zpole@smith.edu, or the IRB office at irb@smith.edu, or 413-585-3562.

Sincerely,

Nnamdi Pole, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board
NOTICE OF IRB APPROVAL

TO: SHANNON AUDLEY
FROM: NNAMDI POLE, CHAIR, INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD, SMITH COLLEGE
SUBJECT: HUMAN SUBJECTS PROPOSAL
DATE: MARCH 10, 2017

PROPOSAL TITLE: THE RETROSPECTIVE EXPLORATION OF (DIS)RESPECT AND SUBTLE RACISM IN US HIGH SCHOOLS
REVIEW TYPE: EXPEDITED
PROJECT NUMBER: 1617-047
APPROVAL DATE: 8-MAR-2017

The Institutional Review Board at Smith College has reviewed and approved the research protocol referenced above. Please note the following requirements:

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of the study (such as design, procedures, consent forms or subject population), you must submit these changes to the IRB by filling out and submitting a Change of Protocol form.

Adverse Event Reporting/Deviations from Approved Procedures: Should any adverse events occur during the conduct of your research, you should report them immediately to the chair of the IRB. Additionally, any procedural deviations from your approved proposal must be reported. Explanations of these events and related forms can be found on the IRB website.

Completion: When you have completed your study (i.e. data collection is finished), you are required to inform the IRB by submitting a signed Research Project Continuation Form with appropriate box checked.

Additional Requirements: None.

Be sure to use the project number provided above in all subsequent correspondence to the Institutional Review Board at Smith College. Please contact the IRB office at 413-585-3562 or irb@smith.edu if you have any questions.

For Committee Use Only:
Any and all requirements completed, final approval given:

NNamdi Pole, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Appendix C: Materials for Request of Recruitment

**Smith College of Social Work Email Recruitment**

Hi,

My name is __________. I'm a graduate student at Smith College School for Social Work. I am currently working on a thesis project centering on the voices of youths. The research project is about young people's experiences of disrespect and respect in high schools (e.g., how teachers can earn respect, subtle racism). We are looking for participants of all racial backgrounds. Participation involves participating in an in-person interview and completing a demographic questionnaire, which should take around 45 minutes to complete. Participants must be current college students or recent college graduates. Participants will be compensated with a $5 gift card to amazon.com.

Please feel free to forward this email to students at your school. If they are interested in participating they can contact me (contact info goes here).

Warm wishes,

XXXX

**Social Media Recruitment**

Hello friends and colleagues!

I am currently recruiting participants for my masters thesis and would like to see if you know anyone who might be interested! The research project is about young people's experiences of disrespect and respect in high schools (e.g., how teachers can earn respect, subtle racism). We are interested in youth from all racial backgrounds. Participation involves participating in an in-person interview and completing a demographic questionnaire, which should take around 45 minutes to complete. Participants must be current college students or recent college graduates. Participants will be compensated with a $5 gift card to amazon.com.

If you know of any students who qualify and might be interested, please send them my way!

I have attached the recruitment flyer for your reference. To participate, or with any questions, please contact XXXX by email at XXXX or by phone at XXXXX

This study is being conducted by Smith College faculty and graduate students at Smith College School for Social Work. This study protocol has been reviewed and approved by the Internal Review Board of Smith College.

Thank you for your time and help!

Best,

XXXX

Master of Social Work Candidate, 2017
Smith College School for Social Work
**General Program/High School Recruitment**

Hi,

My name is ___________. I'm an Assistant Professor at Smith College in the department of Education and Child Study. I am currently working on a project centering on the voices of youths. In this project, I am working with a team to find out what experiences teens have surrounding disrespect and respect in high schools (e.g., how teachers can earn respect, subtle racism) and how schools can help reduce these experiences. I am looking for participants from all racial backgrounds to participate in this study.

Participation involves participating in an in-person interview and completing a demographic questionnaire, which should take around 45 minutes to complete. Participants must be current college students or recent college graduates. Participants will be compensated with a $5 gift card to amazon.com.

Please feel free to forward this email to students at your school. If they are interested in participating they can contact me (contact info goes here).

You can reach me via this e-mail address or via phone: __________

**Social Media Recruitment**

Hello friends and colleagues!
I am currently recruiting participants for a new study would like to see if you know anyone who might be interested! I am currently working on a project centering on the voices of youths. In this project, I am working with a team to find out what experiences teens had surrounding disrespect and respect in high schools (e.g., how teachers can earn respect, subtle racism) and how schools can help reduce these experiences. I am looking for participants from all racial backgrounds to participate in this study.

Participation involves participating in an in-person interview and completing a demographic questionnaire, which should take around 45 minutes to complete. Participants must be current college students or recent college graduates. Participants will be compensated with a $5 gift card to amazon.com.

If you know of any students or recent grads who qualify and might be interested, please send them my way!
To participate, or with any questions, please contact XXXX by email at XXXX or by phone at XXXXX

This study protocol has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of Smith College.

Thank you for your time and help!

Best,
Recruitment Flyer

Are you currently in high school or a recent high school graduate?

**Share your Story!**

**SEEKING STUDENTS TO SHARE THEIR STORIES OF DISRESPECT AT SCHOOL**

I am a graduate student at Smith College School for Social Work, currently working on a thesis project centering on the voices of youths. The research project is about young people's experiences of disrespect and respect in schools (e.g., how teachers can earn respect, subtle racism). We are looking for participants of all racial backgrounds.

- Be part of a research study and use your voice to help improve student life across schools
- Participants will complete a 20-30 minute interview and survey.
- All participants will receive a $5 gift card to Amazon.
- Please contact Annika Yokum: ayokum@smith.edu or [redacted]

Participation involves participating in an in-person interview and completing a demographic questionnaire, which should take around 45 minutes to complete. Participants must be current high school students or recent HS graduates. Parental consent is required for all participants under the age of 18.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Smith College School for Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee (HSRC).
Appendix D: Consent Forms

Emerging Adult Consent Form

SMITH COLLEGE

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Smith College • Northampton, MA

Title of Study: A Retrospective Exploration of (Dis)Respect and Subtle Racism in US High Schools
Investigator(s): Shannon Audley, Education and Child Study, (413) 585-3257

Introduction
• School is a very important setting for social interactions. Two important aspects of social interaction are (dis)respect and social identity, which includes ethnicity and heritage.
• You are being asked to be a participant in a research study about your high school experiences about respect, disrespect, and social and personal identity.
• We ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Purpose of Study
• A goal of the study is to understand how respect, disrespect, and social identity influence the school experience. This will help teachers better promote positive interactions among students in the school setting.
• Ultimately, this research may be published as a paper or used to facilitate teacher training.

Description of the Study Procedures
• If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to participate in one audio-recorded 45-minute interview that encourages you to discuss the ways in which you perceived your teachers in high school, or your peers, to be both respectful and disrespectful in the classroom. We will also ask about whether you experienced or witnessed subtle racism in your high school.
• In addition you will fill out a brief demographic survey asking general information about yourself your high school.
• The interview will occur in a private space on your college campus.

Risks/Discomforts of Being in this Study
• We believe there are minimal physical and psychological risks involved for participation in this study. People often talk about their experiences with fellow students and teachers as part of the normal, everyday classroom experience. However, we do acknowledge that you might become upset after talking to the researchers.
• You will receive a list of resources that offers guidance about dealing with disrespect and subtle racism in schools. In addition, we will also debrief with you after the interview to address any further questions or concerns that you may have.

Benefits of Being in the Study
• Sometimes people feel empowered telling researchers about their own experiences in school.

Confidentiality
• All information will be kept completely confidential. No real names, schools, or locations will be used. If writing styles requires quotations, a pseudonym will be given and identifying information will be changed. We will not include any information in any report we may publish that would make it possible to identify you.
• The records of this study will be kept strictly confidential. Research records will be kept in a locked file, and all electronic information will be coded and secured using a password protected file. Audio recordings will be transcribed verbatim, and once transcribed, the audio file will be deleted from the hard drive of the computer.

Payments
• For completing at least one interview question you will be given a $5 Amazon gift card.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw
• The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study at any time without affecting your relationship with the your college, the researcher, or Smith College.
• Your decision to refuse will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely from the study at any point during the process; additionally, you have the right to request that the researcher not use any of your study material.

Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns
• You have the right and are welcome to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during, or after the research.
• If you have any questions about the study, feel free to contact me, Shannon Audley at saudley@smith.edu or by telephone at 413-585-3257.
• If you have any problems or concerns that occur as a result of your participation, you can report them to Nnamdi Pole, the Smith College Institutional Research Board (IRB) Chairperson, (413-585-3936).
• Alternatively, concerns can be reported by completing a Participant Complaint Form, which can be found on the IRB website at www.smith.edu/irb/compliance.htm

Consent
• Your signature below indicates that you have decided to volunteer as a research participant for this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above. You will be given a signed and dated copy of this form to keep, along with any other printed materials deemed necessary by the study investigators.
1. I agree to be audio taped for this interview:

Name of Participant (print): _______________________________________________________
Signature of Participant: _________________________________ Date: _____________
Signature of Investigator(s): _______________________________ Date: _____________

2. I agree to be interviewed, but I do not want the interview to be taped:

Name of Participant (print): _______________________________________________________
Signature of Participant: _________________________________ Date: _____________
Signature of Investigator(s): _______________________________ Date: _____________

Parent Consent Form

Smith College

Parent Consent to Participate in a Research Study Smith College ● Northampton, MA

Title of Study: Interviewing Students and Teachers about Respect and Disrespect
Investigator(s): Shannon Audley, Education and Child Study, (413) 585-3257

Introduction

• School is a very important setting for social interactions. Two important aspects of social interaction are (dis)respect and social identity, which includes ethnicity and heritage.

• Your child is being asked to be in a research study about his or her experiences about respect, disrespect, and social identity in school. **Purpose of Study**

• A goal of the study is to understand how respect, disrespect, and social identity influence the school experience. This will help teachers better promote positive interactions among students in the school setting.

• If you agree to allow your youth to participate, your child will also be asked for his or her written consent. **Description of the Study Procedures**

• We will ask your child to participate in one audio-recorded 45-minute interview that encourages him or her to think about respect, disrespect, ethnicity, and microaggressions
in the school setting.

• We also ask them to discuss the ways in which they perceive teachers, their fellow students, and themselves as being both respectful and disrespectful in the classroom. In addition we will ask about their experiences of microaggressions in the school setting.

• Children will not be asked for teachers’ names.

• Participants will be told that they do not have to complete any part of the interview that they do not wish to complete. They will be assured that there will be no consequences should they decide not to participate.

• The interview will occur in a location that is comfortable to your child. At least two adults will be present with your child. **Risks/Discomforts of Being in this Study**

  \(^\downarrow\) We believe there are minimal physical and psychological risks involved for children who participate in this study. Children often talk about their experiences with fellow students and teachers as part of the normal, everyday classroom experience.

**Benefits of Being in the Study**

  \(^\downarrow\) Sometimes children feel empowered telling researchers about their own experiences in school. Your child will be encouraged to talk about their answers or concerns with the researcher or with you.

**Confidentiality**

  \(^\downarrow\) The interviews will be recorded outside of the child’s school. No one affiliated with the school will know about your child’s participation.

• No information about any individual child will be made available to any teacher or administrator. Our information will be kept completely confidential. No real names, schools, or locations will be used. If writing styles requires quotes, a pseudonym will be given.

• Again, no individual participant will ever be identified by name. **Payments**

  \(^\downarrow\) There are no payments or reimbursements. **Right to Refuse or Withdraw**

  \(^\downarrow\) The decision to have your child participate in this study is entirely up to you and your child. Declining to have your child participate in this study will not affect your relationship with the [afterschool program], the researcher, or Smith College.
Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns

• You have the right and are welcome to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during, or after the research.

• If you have any questions about the study, feel free to contact me, Shannon Audley at saudley@smith.edu or by telephone at 413-585-3257.

• If you have any problems or concerns that occur as a result of your participation, you can report them to Nnamdi Pole, the Smith College Institutional Research Board (IRB) Chairperson, (413-585-3936).

• Alternatively, concerns can be reported by completing a Participant Complaint Form, which can be found on the IRB website at www.smith.edu/irb/compliance.htm

Consent

Your signature below indicates that you consent to having your child participate in this study, and that you have read and understood the information provided above. A copy of this form is enclosed for you to keep for your records.

Name of Youth: _____________________________________________________
Name of Parent/Guardian (print): ____________________________________________ Signature of Parent/Guardian: ________________________________ Date: _____________
Signature of Investigator(s): __________________________________ Date: _____________

Youth Assent Form

SMITH COLLEGE

Youth Assent to Participate in a Research Study

Smith College ● Northampton, MA ...............................................................................................

Title of Study: Interviewing Students and Teachers about Respect and Disrespect
Investigator(s): Shannon Audley, Department of Education and Child Study, 413-585-3257

..................................................................................................................................................

We are doing a study to understand how students think about respect, disrespect, and social
identity, which includes ethnicity and heritage, in the classroom.

We are asking you to help because we don’t know very much about how youth experience respect, disrespect, and microaggressions in the classroom. What we learn in this research may help teachers promote respect in their classrooms.

You parent/guardian has said it is OK for you to participate, but it is up to you to decide if you want to or not. If you agree to be in our study, we will ask you to answer questions about how you think about respect and disrespect at school, and your experiences with respect and disrespect among your classmates and teachers. In addition we will ask about your or your classmates experiences of microaggressions in the school setting.

You will be interviewed once for approximately 45 minutes. You might feel tired after answering the questions. If you feel tired you can take a break or stop completely. You may be worried that you will feel bad after answering these questions. If you feel bad you can stop, talk about it with the researcher or with someone at home. Some youth find it empowering to share their experiences with researchers.

You may ask us questions if you don’t understand. You may ask us questions at any time. You may ask to skip a question, or to stop at any time. No one will be upset. The questions we ask are only about what you think. There are no right or wrong answers.

No information about you or anything else will be made available to any teacher or administrator. Our information will be kept completely confidential.

If you sign this paper, it means you have read and have been told about our study and you want to be in it. If you don’t want to be in the study, don’t sign the paper. Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be upset if you don’t sign the paper, or if you change your mind later.

1.) I agree to be audio recorded for this interview. Name of Participant (print): ____________________________________________________ Signature of Participant: _______________________________ Date: _____________ Signature of Researcher(s): _________________________________ Date: _____________

2.) I agree to be interviewed, but I do not want the interview to be taped. Name of Participant (print): ____________________________________________________ Signature of Participant: _______________________________ Date: _____________ Signature of Researcher(s): _________________________________ Date: _____________
Appendix E: Pre and Post Interview Mood Rater

Mood Rater
Please circle the number the best corresponds to how you are feeling **RIGHT NOW.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very bad</td>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>OK (not good or bad)</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Really good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F: Background Information and Demographics

The items include questions about your background. Please read each question carefully and thoughtfully.

A1. Age (✓)☐ 18  ☐ 19  ☐ 20  ☐ 21  ☐ 22  ☐ 23  ☐ 24  ☐ 25  Other: __________

A2. College class year (circle one): Freshman  Sophomore  Junior  Senior

A3. How would you describe your High School grades? Circle one:
 Mostly A’s  Mostly B’s  Mostly C’s  Mostly D’s  Mostly F’s
 A’s and B’s  B’s and C’s  C’s and D’s  D’s and F’s

A5 Gender (write in) ______________

A6. Where were you born?  State: ______________ Country: ______________


A8. If you were born outside the US, how many years have you lived in the US? ______

A9. When thinking about your family, check all that apply:
☐ at least one parent was born outside of the U.S.
☐ at least one grandparent was born outside of the U.S.
☐ at least one great-grandparent was born outside of the U.S.
☐ none of the above

A10. What language(s) do you speak at home? ________________________________

A11. What language(s) do you speak with friends? (e.g., English, Spanish, etc.)
______________________________

A12. Please select the category that best describes your family’s average annual income (before taxes)? ☐ I don’t know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $6,000</td>
<td>$6,000-$8,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$6,000-$8,999</td>
<td>$9,000-$11,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$9,000-$11,999</td>
<td>$12,000-$15,999</td>
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<td>$12,000-$15,999</td>
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<td>$70,000-$99,999</td>
<td>$100,000-$119,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000-$119,999</td>
<td>$120,000 or more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A14: Parent(s) Educational Level: At least ONE parent or guardian has the equivalent of (US or abroad schooling):
Completed some high school or less  Completed some college  Completed some graduate work
Graduated High school  Has a bachelor’s degree  Has a graduate degree

In the United States, people come from many different countries and cultures, and there are many different words to describe ethnicities or ethnic groups that people come from. Some examples of ethnicity are Dominican, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Black, Chinese, White, and many others.

A15: What is your ethnic group or ethnicity (you may write in more than one)?
________________________________

A16: What is the race or ethnicity that OTHER PEOPLE most often see you as?
☐ White  ☐ Black  ☐ Latino/a  ☐ American Indian  ☐ Asian

For the next few questions, think about YOUR HIGH SCHOOL and answer to the best of your knowledge.

A17. In my high school (✓) ☐ most students were people of color
☐ there were about equal numbers of students who were people of color and white
☐ most students were white

A18. In my high school (✓) ☐ most teachers were people of color
☐ there were about equal numbers of teachers who were people of color and white
☐ most teachers were white

A19. In my high school, I took classes that included lessons, readings, or other information that positively portrayed people of my ethnicity (✓) ☐ yes  ☐ no

A20. In my high school, my ethnicity was well represented within the student body (✓) ☐ yes  ☐ no

Please circle the number that BEST corresponds to how you feel RIGHT NOW
1 = Not Proud at all and 5 = Extremely Proud

A21. How much pride do you feel about you/your family’s country of origin?  1  2  3  4  5
A22. How much pride do you feel about being American?  1  2  3  4  5
A23. How much pride do you feel about your race or ethnicity?  1  2  3  4  5
Appendix G: Emerging Adult Interview

VERSION A
(Updated 2.24.17)

1. Go over the consent form with the youth. Make sure they sign before continuing. Check yes or no. No consent means NO INTERVIEW.

2. Make sure that the youth signs whether not they want to be audio recorded.
   ○ If okay, start recording and check to make sure recording is on.
   ○ If not okay, take very detailed, clear notes.

3. TURN ON THE AUDIO DEVICE (Make sure Audio is on).

4. MAKE SURE YOU ARE TAKING NOTES.

5. State the date, the time, your name, and the person you are interviewing.

6. Next, tell the participant:
   ○ “We’re going to ask about your experiences with teachers and peers during the interview and we may ask you for their genders and ethnicities, but we won’t ask for names. So if you could, give them a fake name. However, if you give us a name, we’ll change it so their identity remains confidential. Please make sure to also not disclose any other information, such as undocumented status, about those you talk about in the interview.

   DURING THE INTERVIEW, MAKE SURE TO ENCOURAGE THE STORY ALONG BY SAYING...UH-HUH.. OR Directly repeating what was just said, “so she told you...”

   DO NOT ASK QUESTIONS DURING THE STORY!!!!!
   BUT you may probe when asking the follow-up questions.

PART I: Disrespect Stories

1. [Teacher Disrespect]
Tell me about a time when a teacher or another adult at your high school disrespected you or made you feel disrespected. Pick a time you remember really well and tell me everything you can remember.

[If the participant has never experienced this ask about a time where they witnessed or heard about a teacher or another adult at school disrespect a student]

a. Is there anything else you remember about that time?

b. Did anyone witness this event? If so who? What did they do (i.e., walk away, intervene?) Why do you think they responded the way that they did?

c. Did you report the incident to other adults [parents/teachers/administrators] or other peers [friends/classmates]? Why/Why not?

d. Did you get back [retaliate] (or try to get back) at the [teacher/other adult] for [behavior/incident?] Why/why not?

e. Did you forgive the [teacher/other adult] for [behavior/incident]? Why/why not?

f. "Do you think it was okay or not okay for [teacher/other adult] to do [behavior/incident]?

g. Why do you think it was [okay/not okay] for [teacher/other adult] to do that?"

h. When the [teacher/other adult] did [behavior/incident], why do you think [he/she] did that?

i. Do you think this was a good reason, or not a good reason? Why was it a good reason/not a good reason?

j. Why do you think [behavior] was disrespectful?

k. On a scale from 1 (little bit) to 4 (A lot) how disrespectful was the experience?

1 2 3 4

l. Now I am going to ask you how you felt AT THE TIME of the experience, using the same scale as before. If you did not experience the emotion, then say zero.

How…………………… did you feel at the time the incident occurred?

i. angry 0 1 2 3 4
ii. hurt 0 1 2 3 4
iii. humiliated 0 1 2 3 4
iv. sad 0 1 2 3 4
v. confused 0 1 2 3 4
vi. ashamed 0 1 2 3 4

Were there any other emotions that you felt that I didn’t ask about?  
[If so, ask how much and ask for a description]

m. I want to you think about how you FEEL NOW about the experience.

How……………………  do you feel NOW about the experience?

i. angry 0 1 2 3 4
ii. hurt 0 1 2 3 4
iii. humiliated 0 1 2 3 4
iv. sad 0 1 2 3 4
v. confused 0 1 2 3 4
vi. ashamed 0 1 2 3 4

Were there any other emotions that you felt that I didn’t ask about?  
[If so, ask how much and ask for a description]

2. [Student Disrespect]

Tell me about a time when a classmate or another kid at your high school disrespected you or made you feel disrespected. Pick a time you remember really well and tell me everything you can remember.

[If the participant has never experienced this ask about a time where they witnessed or heard about a teacher or another adult at school disrespect a student]

a. Is there anything else you remember about that time?

b. Did anyone witness this event? If so who? What did they do? (i.e., walk away, intervene) Why do you think they responded the way that they did?

c. Did you report the incident to other adults [parents/teachers/administrators] or other peers [friends/classmates]? Why/Why not?

d. Did you get back [retaliate] (or try to get back) at the [classmate] for [behavior/incident?] Why/why not?
e. Did you forgive the [classmate] for [behavior/incident]? Why/why not?

f. "Do you think it was okay or not okay for [classmate/kid] to do [behavior]?

g. Why do you think it was [okay/not okay] for [classmate/kid] to do that?

h. When the [classmate/kid] did [behavior], why do you think [he/she] did that?

i. Do you think this was a good reason, or not a good reason? Why was it a good reason/not a good reason?

j. Why do you think [behavior] was disrespectful?

k. On a scale from 1 (little bit) to 4 (a lot) how disrespectful was the experience?  
   1  2  3  4

l. Now I am going to ask you how you felt AT THE TIME of the experience, using the same scale as before. If you did not experience the emotion, then say zero.

How…………………. did you feel AT THE TIME the incident occurred?

   i. angry       0  1  2  3  4
   ii. hurt       0  1  2  3  4
   iii. humiliated 0  1  2  3  4
   iv. sad        0  1  2  3  4
   v. confused    0  1  2  3  4
   vi. ashamed    0  1  2  3  4

Were there any other emotions that you felt that I didn’t ask about?  
[if so, ask how much, and ask for a description]

m. I want to you think about how you FEEL NOW about the experience.

How…………………. do you feel NOW about the experience?

   i. angry       0  1  2  3  4
   ii. hurt       0  1  2  3  4
   iii. humiliated 0  1  2  3  4
   iv. sad        0  1  2  3  4
   v. confused    0  1  2  3  4
   vi. ashamed    0  1  2  3  4
Were there any other emotions that you felt that I didn’t ask about?  
*[if so, ask how much, and have them describe it.]*

3. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about either of those two disrespect experiences that I hadn’t asked?

4. What is one thing you wish your teachers knew about disrespect in the classroom?

**PART II: Microaggressions At School**

*read definition first; you can re-read it if participant wants OR you can reword it if a participant asks*

Racial Microaggressions are defined as “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000).” These are comments that may be unintentionally racist as well.

Some examples include ……”when I look at you I don’t see color, you speak good English, you are so articulate, where were you born.”

Do you have any questions about microaggressions as I described them? Can you think about one that you have experienced or witnessed?

**FOR PARTICIPANTS WHO IDENTIFY AS STUDENTS OF COLOR:**

Tell me about a time when a teacher or other adult at your high school acted in a way that was microaggressive towards you. If this has never happened to you, can you tell me about a when you witnessed a microaggression from a teacher or another adult to a classmate or another student at school? Pick a time you remember really well and tell me everything you can remember.

*[If the participant doesn’t have a story go to the microaggressive question #2]*

**FOR PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE WHITE:**

Tell me about a time when you witnessed or heard about a teacher or other adult at your school act in a way that could be considered microaggressive towards a classmate or
another student of color. Pick a time you remember really well and tell me everything you can remember.

[If the participant doesn’t have a story go to the earning respect question]

a. Is there anything else you remember about that time?

b. Did anyone witness this event? If so who? What did they do (i.e., walk away, intervene?) Why do you think they responded the way that they did?

c. Did you report the incident to other adults [parents/teachers/administrators] or other peers [friends/classmates]? Why/Why not?

d. Did you get back [retaliate] (or try to get back) at the [teacher/other adult] for [behavior?] Why/why not?

e. Did you forgive the [teacher/other adult] for [behavior]? Why/why not?

f. "Do you think it was okay or not okay for [teacher/other adult] to do [behavior]?

g. Why do you think it was [okay/not okay] for [teacher/other adult] to do that?"

h. When the [teacher/other adult] did [behavior], why do you think [he/she] did that?

i. Do you think this was a good reason, or not a good reason? Why was it a good reason/not a good reason?

j. Do you think [behavior] was disrespectful? Why or why not?

k. [If the participant answers that the behaviors was not disrespectful, then circle a 0 and do not ask the next question]

On a scale from 1 (little bit) to 4 (A lot) how disrespectful was the experience? 0 1 2 3 4

l. Now I am going to ask you how you felt at the time of the experience, using the same scale as before. If you did not experience the emotion, then say zero.

How……………….. did you feel AT THE TIME the incident occurred?

i. angry 0 1 2 3 4
ii. hurt 0 1 2 3 4
iii. humiliated 0 1 2 3 4
iv. sad 0 1 2 3 4
Were there any other emotions that you felt that I didn’t ask about? 
[if so, ask how much, and have them describe]?

I want to you think about how you FEEL NOW about the incident.

How………………. do you feel NOW about the experience?

Were there any other emotions that you felt that I didn’t ask about?

[if so, ask how much, and have them describe]?

Microaggressive question #2 [skip here if there wasn’t a story about microaggression; have ALL participants answer these questions]

2. In what ways, if any, do you think teachers, from the past or present, have expressed microaggressions in the classroom?

3. In what ways, do you think your teachers, either in the present or the past, are sensitive and thoughtful about their treatment of race and ethnicity in the classroom?

4. What is one thing you wish your teachers realized about microaggressions or racism in the classroom?

5. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about microaggressions or racism in the classroom that I hadn’t asked?

Part III: [Teacher Earning Respect]

Tell me about a time when a teacher or another adult at your high school earned your respect. Pick a time you remember really well and tell me everything you can remember.
a. Is there anything else you remember about that time?

b. Did you share this experience to other adults [parents/teachers/administrators] or other peers [friends/classmates]? Why/Why not?

c. Did you make it a special point to show this teacher respect after [he/she] [behavior]? Why/why not?

d. When the [teacher/other adult] teacher did [behavior], why do you think [he/she] did that?

e. Do you think this was a good reason, or not a good reason? Why was it a good reason/not a good reason?

f. What specifically about [behavior] made it respectful or earned your respect?

g. On a scale from 1 (little bit) to 4 (a lot) how much respect did the teacher earn? 
   1  2  3  4

h. Now I am going to ask you how you felt at the time of the experience, using the same scale as before. If you did not experience the emotion, then say zero.

   How...................... did you feel AT THE TIME the incident occurred?

   i. proud                 0  1  2  3  4
   ii. surprised            0  1  2  3  4
   iii. happy               0  1  2  3  4
   iv. grateful             0  1  2  3  4

   Were there any other emotions that you felt that I didn’t ask about? [if so, ask how much, and have them describe]?

K. I want to you think about how you FEEL NOW about the experience.

   How………………….. do you feel NOW about the experience?

   i. proud                 0  1  2  3  4
   ii. surprised            0  1  2  3  4
iii. happy 0 1 2 3 4
iv. grateful 0 1 2 3 4

Were there any other emotions that you felt that I didn’t ask about (if so, ask how much, and have them describe)?

1. What is one thing you wish your teachers knew about how to earn students’ respect?

Part IV: Final Thoughts

2. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about you experience at school classroom or school that I hadn’t asked?

THANK THE PARTICIPANT FOR PARTICIPATING!!!
SHOW LOTS OF GRATITUDE!!!!!
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Appendix H: Debrief and Resources

Debriefing Form for Participation in a Research Study

Smith College

Thank you for your participation in our study! Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Purpose of the Study:

We previously informed you that the purpose of the study is to understand how respect, disrespect, and social identity influence the school experience, including witnessing or experiencing microaggressions. The goal of our research is to help teachers and other school administration understand the ways in which teachers can promote positive student teacher interactions and the ways in which teachers may unknowingly promote subtle racism in their classrooms. We hope to use this information to shape teacher education and help schools rethink how they approach racial and ethnic diversity in their schools.

We realize that some of the questions asked may have provoked strong emotional reactions. As researchers, we do not provide mental health services and we will not be following up with you after the study. However, we want to provide every participant in this study with a comprehensive and accurate list of clinical resources that are available, should you decide you need assistance at any time. Please see information pertaining to local resources at the end of this form.

Confidentiality:

You may decide that you do not want your data used in this research. If you would like your data removed from the study and permanently deleted please email Shannon Audley [saudley@smith.edu] and let her know that you do not want your data used in this research. Because this research will be used for research presentations and papers, requests to have data removed from the study must occur by June 1st, 2017.

Whether you agree or do not agree to have your data used for this study, you will still receive a $5 amazon gift card for your participation.

Final Report:

If you would like to receive a copy of the final report of this study (or a summary of the findings) when it is completed, please feel free to contact us.

Useful Contact Information:

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, its purpose or procedures, or if you have a research-related problem, please feel free to contact the researcher(s), Shannon Audley, saudley@smith.edu, 413-585-3257
If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Smith College Institutional Research Board (IRB) Chairperson, Nnamdi Pole (413-585-3936) or irb@smith.edu.

If you feel upset after having completed the study or find that some questions or aspects of the study triggered distress, talking with a qualified clinician may help. If you feel you would like assistance please contact The Counseling Service at Smith College 413-585-2843 (M-F 9am to 4:30pm) or counselingservices@smith.edu. There are also clinical support options in the Northampton Area, 413-586-5555. In a serious emergency, remember that you can also call 911 for immediate assistance.

The following websites may also connect you with others who have had similar experiences.

**Spaces of Solidarity**
Microaggressions.com
A tumblr that posts anonymous microaggression experiences.

**Speakyourstory.net**
A webpage that collects and shares stories about microaggressions against women in STEM.

**International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR)**
http://imadr.org/
This international non-profit, non-governmental human rights organization devoted to eliminating discrimination and racism, forging international solidarity among discriminated minorities and advancing the international human rights system.

**Hotlines**
**Discrimination and Anti-Hate Line**
1-800-649-0404

**Minority Health Resource Center**
800-444-6472
www.omhrc.gov
An informative public health site which focuses on issues affecting American Indians and Alaska Natives, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, Black/African Americans, and Hispanics/Latinos.

**Further Reading(s):**
If you would like to learn more about microaggressions please see the following references:
Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation, by Derald Wing Sue. (Wiley, 2010)
Microaggressions and Marginality: Manifestation, Dynamics, and Impact, edited by Derald Wing Sue (Wiley, 2010)

***Please keep a copy of this form for your future reference. Once again, thank you for your participation in this study!***
Appendix I: Disrespect Codebook
Framework, Definitions, and Criteria

This codebook was originally designed to address racial microaggressions only, and was based off of data pertaining to adult, working populations. Through inductive analysis of this study, the codebook has been amended to reflect the data collected from school-age reported experiences of disrespect. First, it has been amended to include further subthemes belonging to racial microaggressions, as well as gender microaggressions. Next, it was expanded to include other themes which emerged from our data that impacted or contributed students’ experiences of disrespect in school, including authority and power dynamics as well as intersections of identity.

Section I will review racial microaggressions, including amended categories which had been added or changed to reflect the data from this study and include gender microaggressions; all amendments will be marked with an asterix. Additionally, section II has will cover authority and power dynamics, and intersections of identity, two themes which emerged from the study.

I.

Microaggressions

Some researchers believe separating microaggressions into three categories is not necessary because the impact is negative and determining what category a microaggression falls in can be difficult.

Microaggressions: are brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals because of their group membership. Often the person who said the microaggression does not know they said it. Sue (2010) divides and categorizes microaggressions into three groups;
**Environmental microaggressions:** refers to the numerous demeaning and threatening social, educational, political, or economic cues that are communicated individually, institutionally, or societally to marginalized groups.

- May be delivered visually (i.e. symbols, mascots, media portrayals, etc.)
- From a stated philosophy (i.e. such as “colorblindness”)
- “Campus climate”

*Note: these cues do not necessarily involve interpersonal interactions.*

1. **Microinvalidations:** characterized by communications or environmental cues that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of certain groups.
   - Microinvalidations may potentially represent the most damaging form of the three microaggressions because they “directly and insidiously deny the racial reality of these groups”. (37)

2. **Microinsults:** characterized by interpersonal or environmental communications that convey stereotypes, rudeness, and insensitivity and that demean a person’s racial, heritage, or identity. These incidences are frequently outside the conscious awareness of the perpetrator and are conveyed in insulting messages.

**Microinequities:** (term most often used in the world of business) describes patterns of being overlooked, underrepresented, and devalued because of one’s race or gender.

- Subtle snubs
- Dismissive looks, gestures, tones, etc.

3. **Microassaults:** most similar to “old fashioned” or blatant racism, sexism, or heterosexism conducted on an individual level – these are conscious and deliberate acts.
   - Verbal microassaults: use of racial epithets, ethnic and racial jokes
• Forbidding a son/daughter to marry outside of one’s race
• Any message with the intent to threaten, intimidate, and make an individual or group feel unwanted and unsafe because they are inferior, subhuman, and lesser beings that do not belong on the same level as others in this society

Since there is a strong public condemnation of such behavior, microassaults are most likely to be committed under conditions that afford the perpetrator some form of protection, such as;
• Anonymity
• In presence of people who share their beliefs and attitudes (i.e. can “get away” with offensive works and deeds)
• Caught in situations where conscious concealment and judgment break down (i.e. extreme emotions like anger/“losing control”, inebriation, etc.)

Microaggression Categories

Make one feel invisible *(coded as “deny heritage”)*- Ignoring a person's existence either on the individual level or on the historical level.

Verbal- ‘The U.S is a country of immigrants’

Behavioral- Someone not greeting a black person when they walk into a room, though they greeted white people walking into room. Not shaking hands with the only person on color in the

You Are Not Like the Rest of Your Race- Pointing out when a person of color does not fit into the microaggressor’s racial stereotypes.

Verbal- “You don’t sound Black”

Behavioral- Being surprised when a Black woman says she listens to Taylor Swift

Ascription of Intelligence- Assigning intelligence to a person of color based on their race/gender.
Verbal- "You are a credit to your race."

**Invalidate/ imply that someone is not very intelligent** *(coded as “make feel inadequate”)*-
Say something that might lead someone to believe that you did not think they were very intelligent, or invalidating everything a person says.

Verbal- A teacher calling a student professor every time the student participates in class.

Behavioral- Believing that someone plagiarized with no evidence of them doing so.

**Alien in Own Land**- When Asian Americans and Latino Americans are assumed to be foreign-born.

Verbal- “Where are you really from?”

**Assuming Subordination**- Occurs when a target group member receives differential treatment from the power group

Mostly Behavioral- assuming a latina/o person is a waiter, assuming a black person in a clothing store works there

**Assumption of Hyper Sexuality**- Often happens to women but sometimes men. A person assumes that the person has had a lot of sexual activity based on race, gender, or other identity*

Example: Asking invasive questions about personal sexual lives. Making comments on a person’s clothes, calling someone exotic.

**Assuming Criminality**- A person of color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant based on their race.

Verbal “are a lot of people in your family incarcerated”

Mostly Behavioral- woman clutching purse when she sees a black or Hispanic man
Being Abnormal Generally/ Bodily Abnormalities/ Imposing Eurocentric Beauty

**Standards**- A person of color’s body is thought to vary from some imagined norm and beauty standards that are in line with Eurocentric beauty standards.

Verbal- asking an Asian person if they can “see as much as a white person”

Behavioral- touching someone’s hair

**Color Blindness**- Statements that indicates that a White person does not want to acknowledge race.

Verbal- "When I look at you, I don't see color." (Sue)

**Denial of Individual Racism**- A statement made when bias is denied.

Verbal- "I’m not racist. I have several Black friends." (Sue)

**Myth of Meritocracy**- Statements which assert that race or gender does not play a role in life successes.

Verbal- "I believe the most qualified person should get the job." (Sue)

**Not Listening to Someone/ Ignoring Someone** *(coded as “silence”)*- Ignoring someone’s existence, or ignoring what someone has said.

  Behavioral- Not shaking the hand of a person of color in the group.

  Verbal- Calling someone the wrong name after they have corrected them. Describing someone as the wrong race after the have corrected them.

**Pathologizing Cultural Values/ Communication Styles**- The notion that the values and communication styles of the dominant/White culture are ideal.

Verbal- Asking a Black person: "Why do you have to be so loud/animated. Just calm down." (Sue)

**Only Use these if the data does not fit into another category first**
**Racist Jokes**- Thing that are meant to be funny but belittle a race of people. For this one you will have to code the microaggression as a racist joke and then pick from one of the other categories describe why it is racist. For this joke fits into *Being Abnormal Generally/ Bodily Abnormalities/ Imposing Eurocentric Beauty Standards* because it implies that black people do not exist naturally and are somehow white people gone wrong.

Example- What did God say when he made the first black man? "Damn, I burnt one."

**Stereotyping**- Assuming common stereotypes about a person of color. Many of the other categories cover specific stereotypes, but if there is a specific incident that does not go in another category code it in this one.

Example- Asking an Asian person if they are good at math.

**Lack of doing something**- When something that should happen does not. Only code in this category if incident does not fit into any other category.

Verbal- Never asking an Asian student if they need math help in a math class

Behavioral- A teacher or other authority figure ignoring when a student of color is bullied.

**Invalidation of Oppression**- A person holds attitudes or treats an experience of oppression as though it is representative of other forms of oppression, despite context, identities, and other factors.

Example, equating misogyny with racism.

**Deny Individuality or Personhood**- A person fails whether intentionally or not intentionally to distinguish between two or more members of the same perceived ethnic or racial identity.

**Deny Heritage**- When someone highlights the dominant culture and does not leave space for other experiences or backgrounds to be represented.
Example- Skipping class curriculum which covers the background or history of marginalized group members. Asking marginalized group members to relate their background, history, or experiences to the dominant culture.

*Essentialize Ethnic or Racial Identity- Assume a person of a perceived ethnic or racial identity represents that entire race or ethnicity, or make assumptions about a persons’ knowledge, interests, and personhood based on their perceived ethnic or racial identity.

Example- Ask a person of color to translate a language, explain racism, history, or a concept based on their perceived ethnic or racial identity.

Environmetal Microaggressions- When a microaggression is built in to the structure. When you cannot point to an individual as being cause of microaggression.

Example- Not having very many faculty of color in a College department.

*Gender Microaggressions- Hold beliefs about or treat someone differently based on their gender expression.

Example- Ask someone to present themselves a certain way solely based on their perceived gender identity. Or say sexualized or gender-based comments towards another person based on their gender presentation.

II.

*Authority/Power Dynamics- Differential respect or treatment based on status, or power, whether intentional or not intentional, or perceived.

Example- Being told your opinions do not matter because you do not have specific status, degree, or experience. Or not being able to defend yourself because you do not own the privilege or power another has.

*Intersection of Identities- Ways in which intersectionality impacts experiences of disrespect.

Example- How a female person of color may experience oppression differently than a white female. Or how someone of a lower socio-economic status may experience disrespect differently based on other marginalized or dominant identities they may belong to.
Appendix J: Anxiety and Depression Codebook

Framework, Definitions, and Criteria

When examining anxiety and depression in this study, I will be referring to non-clinical reports of anxious and depressive symptoms. This will include emotions that are commonly associated with feeling anxious or depressed. Many of the emotions covered are internalizing emotions which lead to feelings of anxiety and distress. Some believe that when emotions are externalized they may alter the way people experience feelings of anxiety or depression. Literature supports that anxiety and depression of often experienced alongside one another or as a pre-cursor to the other. Because of the co-morbidity of anxiety and depression, some emotions are associated with both. Emotions and feelings will be categorized based on their connection to A) Anxiety, B) Depression, or C) Anxiety and Depression.

A) Anxiety: includes feelings associated with loss of control, uncertainty, and internal conflict.

Quantitative Reports (based on numerical measures scored on a scale from 0-4):

Confused: reported value “2” or greater.

Narrative Reports:

Feelings of discomfort due to event or experience: Described feeling “irritated”, “frustrated”, “uncomfortable”, “annoyed”, “tense”, “awkward”, “bothered”.

Feelings of uncertainty due to event or experience: Described feeling “shocked”, feeling “complicated”.

B) Depression: includes feelings associated with being put down, not valued, feeling alone, or upset.

Quantitative Reports (based on numerical measures scored on a scale from 0-4):

Hurt: reported value “2” or greater.
Sad: reported value “2” or greater.

Narrative Reports:

Feelings of incompetence/lack of intelligence due to event or experience: Described feeling “dumb”, “not smart”, “not capable”, “need to prove” self, described others as “overly surprised”.

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Feelings of isolation due to event or experience: Described feeling “alone”, “isolated”, “othered”, “friends couldn’t relate”.

Feelings of being, less than, due to event or experience: Described feeling “undermined”, “not equal”, “reduced”, “need to prove”, “belittled”, their “opinions don’t matter”, not “valued”, “no difference between [self and others of same race]”.

C) **Anxiety and Depression:** includes feelings associated with being targeted, guilt, shame or embarrassment, trapped or defensive.

**Quantitative Reports** (based on numerical measures scored on a scale from 0-4):

- Humiliated: reported value of “2” or greater.
- Ashamed: reported value of “2” or greater.
- Angry: reported value of “2” of greater.

**Narrative Reports:**

Feelings of being targeted or trapped due to event or experience: Described feeling, “attacked”, “forced”.

\[1\] Anger is often expressed as an externalizing emotion which may impact the way anxiety or depression is experienced.