IMPACT AND PERCEPTION OF THEY SYSTEMATIC RESPONSE TO LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, QUEER, AND OTHER SEXUAL MINORITY ORIENTATIONS (LGBTQ+) MICROAGGRESSIONS

A Thesis

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by

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Abstract

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other sexual minority orientation (LGBTQ+) microaggressions are subtle behaviours that communicate hostile messages to a targeted person based upon their sexual orientation and/or gender identity (Sue et al., 2007). Quantitative research on college campuses suggests that LGBTQ+ people who have experienced LGBTQ+ microaggressions have poorer mental health outcomes, lower self-esteem related to their LGBTQ+ identity, and poorer academic performance (Woodford, Chonody, Kulick, Brennan, & Renn, 2015). There is no research to date exploring whether institutional betrayal (IB) exacerbates the mental health symptoms of those who encounter LGBTQ+ microaggressions. IB is the misconduct or mishandling of negative experience(s) by an institution when a person is, in some way, dependent upon that institution (Smith & Freyd, 2014). The current study quantitatively examined the relationship between LGBTQ+ microaggressions, IB, on mental health and academic self-concept. A total of 324 University of Regina students participated. Participants were asked to respond to a survey that assessed LGBTQ+ microaggressions, IB, academic self-concept, and mental health. Results demonstrated that both LGBTQ+ microaggressions and IB were significantly correlated with greater symptoms of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress. Neither LGBTQ+ microaggressions nor IB was significantly correlated with poorer academic self-concept. A regression analysis indicated that LGBTQ+ microaggressions were more associated with negative mental health outcomes than IB. This finding suggests that reducing LGBTQ+ microaggressions that occur on campus is of importance. More research is needed to explore what combats the negative mental health outcomes that are associated with LGBTQ+ microaggressions.

Keywords: LGBTQ+ microaggressions, institutional betrayal.
Acknowledgements

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Impact and Perception of the Systematic Response to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Other Sexual Minority Orientations (LGBTQ+) Microaggressions.

Imagine you are at a bar with your spouse for a friend’s birthday, and you are sipping on your favourite chardonnay. While you are savoring your beverage, and having an intimate moment with the love of your life, a stranger approaches you and asks you how you and your spouse have sex. Most people would be appalled at this gesture; however, the fact of the matter is this is a regular experience for non-heterosexual couples. What has just been described is an example of a microaggression. Microaggressions are subtle forms of discrimination (Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, & Esquilin, 2007). The way in which people perceive these acts as microaggressions varies from person to person (Basford, Offermann, and Behrend, 2014; Offermann et al., 2014; Worthington, Navarro, Loewy, & Hart, 2008). Perpetrators of microaggressions, and those who do not belong to a marginalized group, often do not see these statements as potentially harmful (Nadal et al., 2011). For instance, some people may perceive the above example not as a microaggression, but rather as an expression of curiosity inquiring about same-sex couples. This could be especially true when the same situation mentioned above happens in a classroom setting within the University, for example, because students are usually encouraged to express curiosity and diversity of opinion to obtain knowledge. Sometimes these comments or discussions that take place before, during, or after class within academic institutions can include microaggressions against marginalized groups. Researchers have begun to explore the impact and perception of microaggressions against marginalized groups on college campuses (Woodford, Chonody, Kulick, Brennan, & Renn, 2015), and have investigated if institutional betrayal exacerbates experiences (Smith, Cunningham, & Freyd, 2016).
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Other Sexual Minority Orientations (LGBTQ+) People in Canada

In Canada, the ability to marry a partner of the same-sex was legalized in 2005. Since the time of legalization, Statistics Canada (2015) collected data in 2006 and again in 2011. The census results revealed that the number of same-sex marriages nearly tripled between 2006 and 2011, and the number of same-sex common-law couples rose 15% from 2006 to 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2015). Further, the census illuminated the fact that there are 64,575 same-sex families living in Canada, which is up 42.4% from 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2015).

Since the number of people reporting they are in a same-sex relationship has increased, the Canadian government has recognized the importance of the experiences of those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other sexual minority orientations (LGBTQ+), and has begun to facilitate further research (for definitions of the sexual orientations and gender identities used in this research please refer to the glossary at the end of this document). In 2014, for instance, Statistics Canada reported data related to incidences of violent victimization and discrimination. The results revealed that those who identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual were more likely to report that they experienced violent victimization in the 12 months preceding the survey over their heterosexual counterparts even when controlling for factors such as age, marital status, past history of homelessness, and childhood abuse (Statistics Canada, 2014). Furthermore, the results showed that lesbian and gay individuals were 79% more likely than their bisexual (35%) and heterosexual (2%) counterparts to perceive discrimination as based on their sexual orientation (Statistic Canada, 2014). The Canadian government has recognized that more research is needed due to the increase in people who self-identify as...
LGBTQ+, and that more research is needed to understand LGBTQ+ people’s experiences with discrimination.

**Microaggressions**

Microaggressions are the everyday intentional or unintentional verbal, behavioural, and environmental discourtesies that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to a targeted person based upon marginalized group membership (Sue et al., 2007). Victims of microaggressions are often targeted by perpetrators based on age, gender, race, sexual-orientation, religious affiliation, social-economic placement, or disability status (Blume, Lovato, Thyken, & Denny, 2012; Dupper, Forrest-Bank, & Lowry-Carusillo, 2015; Gonzales, Davidoff, Nadal, & Yanos, 2015; Kaskan & Ho, 2016; Neblett, Bernard, & Banks, 2016; Seelman et al., 2017; Sutin, Stephan, Carretta, & Terracciano, 2015). Often times, the perpetrators are unaware they have committed a microaggression until a person from the minority group speaks out (Sue et al., 2007). Most of the research to date has focused on microaggressions against racial minorities (Blume et al., 2012; Gómez, 2015; Nadal, Erazo, Schulman, Han, & Deutsch, 2017; Neblett et al., 2016; Sue et al., 2007).

In general, the research in the area of microaggressions suggests that microaggressions take three forms. The three forms are: microinvalidations, microassaults, and microinsults (Nadal et al., 2017). Microinvalidations are usually unconscious behaviours and/or statements that dismiss the experiences of those that belong to marginalized groups (Nadal et al., 2017). An example of a microinvalidation against a self-identified LGBTQ+ person would include, a cisgender, heterosexual person saying to a LGBTQ+ individual that he/she/they talk about issues related to sexual orientation and/or gender identity too much (Woodford, Chonody, Kulick, Brennan, & Renn, 2015). Cisgender is defined as someone who identifies with the sex they were
born with, and heterosexual is a sexual orientation whereby a person is sexually attracted to members of the opposite gender (Nadal et al., 2017). Microassaults are more overt, and deliberately convey biases towards a specific group of people (Nadal et al., 2017). For instance, when someone uses the phrase “that is so gay” to describe something negative that individual is perpetrating a microassault (Woodford et al., 2015). Lastly, microinsults are subtle statements and/or behaviours that communicate negative attitudes towards the marginalized group (Nadal et al., 2017). An example of this is when someone tells a gay man he is the way that he is because his mother was too overbearing (Woodford et al., 2015).

**LGBTQ+ Microaggressions.** More specific to microaggressions committed against LGBTQ+ individuals, qualitative research captured eight themes of sexual orientation microaggressions (Nadal et al., 2011). The first theme identified was the use of heterosexist language. An example of this would occur if a group of people walking to a university class encounter two women holding hands, and one person from the group says, “look! There are ‘dykes’ over there.” The second theme was the endorsement of heteronormative culture or behaviour. An example of this would be asking a woman if she has a boyfriend. The third theme acknowledged by Nadal et al., (2011) was the assumption of universal LGBT experiences. This form of microaggression occurs when others assume that all LGBTQ+ people have the same experiences. For instance, if a professor asks a known LGBTQ+ person in his or her class what LGBTQ+ people think about Justin Trudeau, this professor is asking one LGBTQ+ person to speak for all LGBTQ+ people, which minimizes the opinion of other LGBTQ+ individuals. The fourth theme recognized was exotification. This arises when LGBTQ+ people are treated differently from their heterosexual counterparts in that the LGBTQ+ group becomes objectified, although both groups tend to share some commonalities. An example of this occurs when people
oversexualize a bisexual person because they assume that all bisexuals want to have threesomes as a result of being sexually attracted to both men and women. The fifth theme identified by Nadal et al., (2011) was discomfort or disapproval of the lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) experience. This occurs when LGB people are criticized and/or treated disrespectfully (Nadal et al., 2011). An example of this would be when people stare at same-sex couples with disapproval because they are displaying affection in public. The sixth theme recognized by Nadal et al., (2011) was ignoring the fact that homophobia or transphobia exists. This situation arises when people tell LGBTQ+ people they are being paranoid when they think someone else is discriminating against them. The seventh theme is assumption of sexual abnormality. An example of an assumption of sexual abnormality is when people assume that most LGBTQ+ people have human immunodeficiency virus. The last theme is denial of individual heterosexism or transphobia. This occurs when people assume they do not have any heterosexist and/or transgender biases.

The themes captured by Nadal et al., (2011) as well as other forms of LGBTQ+ microaggressions and discrimination have been shown to occur on college campuses (Seelman, Woodford, & Nicolazzo, 2017; Woodford, Chonody, Kulick, Brennan, & Renn, 2015; Woodford, Joslin, Pitcher, & Renn, 2017). Although these types of microaggressions occur on campuses, there is very little quantitative research exploring LGBTQ+ microaggressions, discrimination, and its effects. The research thus far has demonstrated that discrimination against LGBTQ+ students on college campuses is associated with lower self-esteem, as well as greater levels of stress and anxiety (Seelman et al., 2017). Other researchers, have suggested that microaggressions directed toward LGBTQ+ individuals have a negative impact on academic performance (Woodford et al., 2015; Woodford et al., 2017). More quantitative research is
needed to understand LGBTQ+ microaggressions, and the affect these microaggressions have on academic performance and the mental health of its victims to ensure a positive, healthy learning environment is accessible for all people so that everyone on campus has equal opportunity to be successful. To date, no studies exist specifically honing in on Canadian student’s experiences of LGBTQ+ microaggressions. This study will also add to current research by exploring the systematic response to those who experience LGBTQ+ microaggressions. Further this study will also investigate how those who self-identify as cisgender, heterosexual perceive this response.

**Perception of microaggressions.** Research suggests that acts of discrimination are subtler and more ambiguous in society than ever before, and the degree to which people perceive certain acts to be microaggressions varies from person to person (Basford et al., 2014; Offermann et al., 2014; Worthington et al., 2008). Research conducted by Basford and colleagues (2014) and Worthington and colleagues (2008) highlighted these variations. The former used 150 undergraduate and graduate students (46.7% identified as female, and 53.3% identified as male) to determine whether males and females perceived microaggressions differently (Basford et al., 2014). To test this, participants read vignettes that described interactions between male supervisors and female subordinates. The vignettes the participants were given portrayed a supervisor displaying potentially discriminatory behaviour that ranged from subtle to blatant. Basford and colleagues (2014) found that on average women identified more incidences of discrimination than men, and that this was especially true when the incidences were subtle. Worthington and colleagues (2008) found that on average those who had colour blind racial attitudes perceived the campus climate more positively. Colour blind racial attitudes occurred when people believed that racial classification did not affect opportunities (e.g. job opportunities; Worthington et al., 2008). Since there is no research to date exploring how
people vary in their perceptions with regards to LGBTQ+ microaggressions, this study intends to fill that gap. Further, this study will also add to the current literature by exploring if people perceive instances of institutional betrayal after a microaggression is reported.

**Institutional betrayal.** Institutional betrayal refers to the misconduct or mishandling of negative experience(s) when a person is, in some way, dependent upon that institution (Smith & Freyd, 2014). Such incidences of institutional betrayal have been displayed in environments such as the military, medical systems, as well as colleges, and have been shown to exacerbate mental health problems (Monteith, Bahraini, Matarazzo, Soberay, & Smith, 2016; Smith & Freyd, 3013; Tamaian & Klest, 2018). In relation to LGBTQ+ community, Smith, Cunningham, and Freyd (2016), found LGB identified college students were more likely to report incidences of sexual assault and sexual harassment than their heterosexual counterparts. Further, they found LGB people were more likely to experience institutional betrayal related to these instances of sexual misconduct (Smith et al., 2016). The effects of institutional betrayal on the LGB group in comparison to the heterosexual group exacerbated mental health outcomes including posttraumatic stress symptoms, depression, and lower self-esteem related to sexual identity (Smith et al., 2016).

Gómez (2015) suggested that institutional betrayal may further exacerbate mental health outcomes for victims of minority racial groups by acting as a barrier to receiving treatment. For instance, if a person belonging to a racial minority group seeks treatment for a trauma, and becomes further victimized by their health care provider though the use of microaggressions, then that individual may be less likely to seek treatment in the future (Gómez, 2015). Similarly, LGBTQ+ people may experience further exacerbation of mental health outcomes as a result of institutional betrayal. For instance, if a lesbian reports to an authority figure representing the
university that she was asked how lesbians have sex in front of her classmates by her professor, and the university does not take proactive measures to rectify the issue, she may feel like same-sex sexual intercourse is invalidated by society, and become depressed, as well as begin to question her identity. This individual may also be less likely to report her experience because of her prior experience of being invalidated. As such, institutional betrayal as it relates to microaggressions is an important topic to explore.

**Purpose of this Study**

The purpose of this study is to quantitatively assess the impact and perception of the systematic response to LGBTQ+ microaggressions among students at the University of Regina. There are no studies to date specifically honing in on how authority figures within universities respond to sexual minority microaggression on campus, or how students perceive this response. This study intends to illuminate student’s experiences and perceptions by solidifying how students perceive or experience the institutional response to LGBTQ+ microaggressions on campus. Further, this study will also explore the impact that LGBTQ+ microaggressions have on sexual minority individual’s mental health and academic self-concept, as well as investigate if institutional betrayal exacerbates these outcomes.

By exploring experiences, perceptions, and outcomes of the institutional response with regards to LGBTQ+ microaggressions, universities may be able to take proactive measures based upon student’s responses to ensure all students experience a positive learning environment on campus, and that when LGBTQ+ microaggressions occur that the institution is handling those issues in such a way that the students that come forward do not feel revictimized. In order to work towards a safe, positive learning environment, policy change may need to occur at a systemic level to address issues brought forth as a result of this study.
Hypothesis

We hypothesized that experiences of LGBTQ+ microaggressions would be associated with lower academic self-concept, and negative mental health outcomes (i.e., increased symptoms of depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress). Furthermore, we hypothesized that experiences of institutional betrayal related to LGBTQ+ microaggressions would also be associated with lower academic self-concept, and poorer mental health outcomes. We also hypothesized that microaggressions and institutional betrayal reported, would be higher in the LGBTQ+ group than what is perceived by the cisgender, heterosexual group. Further, we hypothesized that when controlling for institutional betrayal that institutional betrayal independent of microaggressions would exacerbate mental health outcomes (e.g. increased symptoms of depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress), and result in lower academic self-concept. Lastly, we hypothesized that people belonging to a marginalized group within the cisgender, heterosexual group would perceive more acts as microaggressions than those who do not belong to a marginalized group.

Method

Participants

Undergraduate and graduate students enrolled at the University of Regina were invited to participate in this study. Recruitment was facilitated by the UR Pride Centre for Sexuality and Gender Diversity located at the University of Regina. Further recruitment efforts included the distribution of posters, social media advertisements, and recruitment of students taking junior undergraduate psychology courses through the psychology department participant pool. The participant pool utilizes SONA, an online method of recruitment where enrolled students can sign up to participate in research for course credit.
Procedure

This project received approval from the Research Ethics Board at the University of Regina. Interested participants retrieved an anonymous link to the online survey. Prior to beginning the survey, informed consent was obtained. Once informed consent was received, participants responded to a series of demographic and background questions. At the end of the demographic section, participants were asked to disclose their gender identity and sexual orientation. Participant responses to questions related to their gender identity and sexual orientation determined which measures they were asked to respond to. Those participants who self-identified as cisgender as well as heterosexual were directed to a 15 minute survey. The 15 minute survey consisted of a revised version of the Institutional Betrayal and Support Questionnaire and a revised version of the LGBQ Microaggression on Campus Scale, which will be discussed below in the measures section. Participants endorsing any other combination of gender identities and sexual orientations were directed to a 20 minute survey, which consisted of all the measures described below, with the exception of the revised scales. Upon completion of the online survey, participants recruited through SONA received 1% added onto their final grade in a psychology class. There was no compensation provided to participants recruited through other modalities.

Measures

Demographics. Participants were asked to provide their age, race, level of education, academic major, and years of enrollment in their academic program. Furthermore, participants were asked to report their GPA. Once participants disclosed their GPA, they were asked to rate their satisfaction with their GPA on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “extremely unsatisfied” to “extremely satisfied.” Participants were then asked if they were treated badly as a
result of their gender identity or sexual orientation by responding with either “yes” or “no.” The last two questions in the demographic section asked participants to disclose their gender identity, as well as their sexual orientation. As mentioned, these last two questions determined which measures participants were asked to respond to.

LGBQ Microaggressions on Campus Scale (Woodford, Chonody, Kulick, Brennan, & Renn, 2015). The LGBQ Microaggression on Campus Scale is a self-report measure created to assess the degree to which those who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer experience microaggressions on college campuses. For the purpose of this study, we altered the wording of the questions to be inclusive to transgendered, asexual, pansexual, and two-spirited individuals. There are 31 items divided into three subscales. These subscales assessed microinvalidations, microinsults, and environmental microaggressions. Past research has found that the microinvalidation and the microinsult subscales measure the same construct, so researchers have suggested combining the two subscales to create an interpersonal microaggression subscale. Both the interpersonal and environmental subscale have demonstrated good validity and reliability. The interpersonal microaggression subscale has a Cronbach’s alpha of .94, while the environmental microaggression subscale has a Cronbach’s alpha of .81 (Woodford et al., 2015).

In order to understand the experiences of LGBTQ+ participants, as well as the perceptions of cisgender, heterosexual participants, we provided participants with either the LGBQ microaggression scale or a revised version of the scale. If participants identified as LGBTQ+, they were given the LGBQ microaggression scale and asked to rate the frequency with which each incident occurred on campus since beginning their studies at the University of Regina on a six-point Likert scale ranging from “never” to “very frequently.” On the other hand,
if participants identified as cisgender and heterosexual, they were given a revised version of the scale and asked to indicate the frequency with which they thought each incident occurred on campus ranging from “never” to “very frequently.” An example of an item on the LGBTQ+ microaggression scale is “as a compliment, someone said, ‘I would have never known you were LGBTQ+’.” The same question on the revised scale appears as “as a compliment, someone has said to a LGBTQ+ person that, ‘I would have never known you are LGBTQ+’” (Woodford et al., 2015).

**Institutional Betrayal and Support Questionnaire (IBSQ; Smith & Freyd, 2015).**

The IBSQ is a 26-item measure developed to assess an institution’s support, inaction, or inappropriate response to negative experiences (Smith & Freyd, 2015). For this study, we asked LGBTQ+ participants to think about events related to discrimination as a result of their gender identity and/or sexual orientation and questioned if the University of Regina played a role by “covering up the experience(s),” for example. Response options for these items are “yes,” or “no.” To understand cisgender, heterosexual participants’ perceptions, we asked if these participants thought the University of Regina played a role in events related to LGBTQ+ discrimination by “covering up the experience(s),” for example.

**Academic Self-Concept Scale (ASCS; Reynolds, 1988).** The ASCS was created to assess the non-cognitive components of educational performance that GPA does not capture. The ASCS measures confidence, planning, and expectations associated with educational performance. For example, LGBTQ+ participants in this study were asked about their academic experiences, as well as about specific skills they perceive themselves to have. These academic experiences and skills are related to study habits, exam performance, self-efficacy, and ability. Some of the questions on this scale also asked participants to compare their abilities and skills to
their cohort. For example, an item asks “I feel I am better than the average college student.” Participants were asked to rate their response on a four-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” This 41-item scale has exhibited good validity and adequate reliability (Reynolds, 1988).

**Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7-item Scale (GAD-7; Spitzer, Kroenke, Williams, & Löwe, 2006).** The GAD-7 is a brief and efficient way to assess generalized anxiety disorder in both clinical and research settings. For instance, LGBTQ+ participants in this study were asked to rate how often they were bothered by specific issues, such as “feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge,” over the last two weeks. Responses were recorded on a four-point Likert scale ranging from “not at all sure” to “nearly every day.” Participants were then asked to reflect on how difficult these issues have “made taking care of things at home,” or “getting along with others,” and rate their response on a four-point Likert scale ranging from “not at all difficult” to “extremely difficult.” The GAD-7 has demonstrated good reliability, as well as criterion, construct, factorial, and procedural validity. Further, the GAD-7 has excellent internal consistency with a Cronbach’s alpha of .92 (Spitzer et al., 2006).

**Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D; Radloff 1977).** The CES-D was created to assess the affective component of depression in research settings. As such, LGBTQ+ participants in this study were asked to respond to a series of statements asking how often they felt specific ways throughout the past week. Some examples of items that appear on this scale include “I was bothered by things that usually don’t bother me,” “I felt that everything I did was an effort,” and “I thought my life had been a failure.” Participants were asked to respond to these statements on a four-point Likert scale ranging from “rarely or none of the time (less than one day)” to “most or all the time (five to seven days).” The CES-D has high internal
consistency when used with the general public with a Cronbach’s alpha of .85. Further, the CES-D has adequate test retest reliability, and good construct validity (Radloff, 1977).

**The Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Checklist (PCL-5; National Centre for PTSD).** The PCL-5 measures symptoms of PTSD. Recent modifications have been made to the PCL-5 in order to reflect changes to the diagnostic criteria for PTSD in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5th edition (DSM-5). These changes involved adding three items to assess the new symptoms of PTSD, which include blame, negative emotions, and recklessness or self-destructive behaviour. Further adjustments involved rewording existing items to reflect the changes in the DSM-5, and modifying the response options from a five to a four-point Likert scale. For the purpose of this study, participants were asked to respond to how often they were bothered by a series of problems in the past month such as “repeated, disturbing, and unwanted memories of the stressful experience,” and “being ‘super alert,’ or watchful, or on guard.” Responses ranged from “not at all” to “extremely.” The PCL-5 has demonstrated good convergent and discriminant validity, as well as good test retest reliability, and strong internal consistency with Cronbach’s alpha of .94 (Blevins, Weathers, Davis, Witte, & Domino, 2015).

**Results**

**Demographics**

A total of 504 students from the University of Regina started this study; however, we removed participants that did not answer at least 80% of the questions that they were asked to respond to. Most of the participants that were deleted clicked to the end of the survey without answering any of the questions. Upon elimination, we were left with 324 participants.

Of the 324 who completed the survey, most were at an undergraduate level (91%), whereas very few were at the graduate level (8.6%). With regards to the undergraduate students,
24.1% of the sample was in their second year of university, 23.8% had completed less than a year, 18.5% were in their third year, 15.7% were in their fourth year, 10.5% were in their first year, 3.7% were in their fifth year, 2.2% were over their sixth year, and 1.2% were in their sixth year. Most of the participants self-identified as being White (70.4%), with a relative diversity of non-White participants including 6.8% identifying as South Asian, 4.9% as First Nation, Metis, Inuit, or Aboriginal, 4.6% as Black, 3.7% as Southeast Asian, 3.4% as other, 3.1% as East Asian, 2.2% as Multicultural, .6% as Middle Eastern or Arab, and .3% as Hispanic or Latino. There were 313 participants that responded to the question inquiring about age. The age of the participants ranged from 17 to 64 with a mean age of 23.47 and a standard deviation of 7.32.

With regards to the question of gender identity, 214 (66%) participants identified as cisgender female, 81 (25%) as cisgender male, 11 (3.4%) as androgynous, 9 (2.8%) as non-binary, 7 (2.2%) as not listed, 1 (.3%) as transgender female, and 1 (.3%) as transgender male. One hundred ninety-six (60.5%) participants self-identified as having a sexual orientation of heterosexual, 60 (18.5%) as bisexual, 16 (4.9%) as lesbian, 15 (4.6%) as gay, 11 (3.4%) as asexual, 10 (3.1%) as queer, 8 (2.5%) as pansexual, and 8 (2.5%) as not listed.

**Mean Scores for Cisgender, Heterosexual Participants**

Minimum scores, maximum scores, means, and standard deviations for all the variables were calculated for the cisgender, heterosexual participants and are indicated in Table 1. Before calculating the mean and standard deviation for GPA, we had to convert some of the participants responses from a 4-point scale to percentages. To convert GPA scores, we obtained a conversion table online from the University of Regina’s website. Higher GPA scores indicates higher academic achievement, whereas higher scores with GPA dissatisfaction means greater dissatisfaction with GPA.
The next variable is related to if the participants felt as though they had been treated badly as a result of their gender identity or sexual orientation. A score of one indicates that the cisgender, heterosexual participant thought that they had been treated badly as a result of their gender identity or sexual orientation, and a score of two means that the participant thought they had not been treated badly as a result of their gender identity or sexual orientation. Higher scores on perceived interpersonal microaggressions and perceived environmental microaggressions means that the cisgender, heterosexual participants perceived more LGBTQ+ microaggressions occurring on campus. Higher scores on both the perceived institutional betrayal and institutional support variables means that the cisgender, heterosexual participants perceived more of each type of institutional response to LGBTQ+ microaggressions.

Table 1: Minimum scores, maximum scores, means, and standard deviations of all variables for cisgender, heterosexual participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Minimum Score</th>
<th>Maximum Score</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>75.80</td>
<td>8.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA dissatisfaction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative treatment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived interpersonal microaggressions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>18.84</td>
<td>15.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived environmental microaggressions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.04</td>
<td>3.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived institutional betrayal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>5.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived institutional support</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>1.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: $n = 192$ for negative treatment, perceived interpersonal microaggressions, and perceived environmental microaggressions.

$n = 191$ for perceived institutional betrayal, and perceived institutional support.

$n = 185$ for GPA dissatisfaction.

$n = 163$ for GPA.

Mean Scores for LGBTQ+ Participants

Minimum scores, maximum scores, means, and standard deviations for all the variables were calculated for the LGBTQ+ participants and are indicated in Table 2. Variables such as GPA, GPA dissatisfaction, and negative treatment were computed in the same manner for the
LGBTQ+ participants as the cisgender, heterosexual participants, and higher scores, retrospectively, mean the same on each table. The next variables in Table 2 are related to experiences of each type of microaggression (interpersonal and environmental). Higher scores on each type of microaggression indicates a greater experience of each type of microaggression on campus.

*Table 2*: Minimum scores, maximum scores, means, and standard deviations of all variables for LGBTQ+ participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Minimum Score</th>
<th>Maximum Score</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>78.43</td>
<td>8.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA dissatisfaction</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative treatment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced interpersonal microaggressions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>35.70</td>
<td>29.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced environmental microaggressions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11.13</td>
<td>6.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced institutional betrayal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced institutional support</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>2.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety symptoms</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12.19</td>
<td>6.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression symptoms</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>27.99</td>
<td>13.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-traumatic stress symptoms</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>33.29</td>
<td>19.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic self-concept</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>105.42</td>
<td>16.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: $n = 131$ for negative treatment, experienced environmental microaggressions, academic self-concept, anxiety symptoms, and depression symptoms.

$n = 130$ for experienced interpersonal microaggressions, experienced institutional betrayal, and experienced institutional support.

$n = 128$ for post-traumatic symptoms.

$n = 126$ for GPA dissatisfaction.

$n = 112$ for GPA.

**Relationship Between LGBTQ+ Microaggressions, Institutional Betrayal, Mental Health Symptoms, and Academic Self-Concept**

To determine the strength of the relationship between experiences of LGBTQ+ microaggressions, institutional betrayal, institutional support, academic self-concept, and the severity of anxiety, depression, and PTSD symptoms, Pearson correlations were conducted. Results are recorded below in Table 3.
### Table 3: Correlations between LGBTQ+ microaggressions and outcome variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>LGBTQ+ microaggressions</th>
<th>Interpersonal LGBTQ+ microaggressions</th>
<th>Environmental LGBTQ+ microaggressions</th>
<th>Institutional support</th>
<th>Institutional betrayal</th>
<th>Academic self-concept</th>
<th>Anxiety symptoms</th>
<th>Depression symptoms</th>
<th>PTSD symptoms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQ+ microaggressions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal LGBTQ+ microaggressions</td>
<td>.994**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental LGBTQ+ microaggressions</td>
<td>.862**</td>
<td>.803**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional support</td>
<td>.129</td>
<td>.138</td>
<td>.073</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional betrayal</td>
<td>.389**</td>
<td>.382**</td>
<td>.360**</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic self-concept</td>
<td>-.150</td>
<td>-.135</td>
<td>-.198*</td>
<td>-.027</td>
<td>-.013</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety symptoms</td>
<td>.348**</td>
<td>.331**</td>
<td>.373**</td>
<td>-.024</td>
<td>.193*</td>
<td>-.483**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression symptoms</td>
<td>.403**</td>
<td>.380**</td>
<td>.453**</td>
<td>-.014</td>
<td>.291**</td>
<td>-.550**</td>
<td>.777**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTSD symptoms</td>
<td>.471**</td>
<td>.450**</td>
<td>.495**</td>
<td>.097</td>
<td>.286**</td>
<td>-.403**</td>
<td>.667**</td>
<td>.762**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).  
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).  
For LGBTQ+ microaggressions, academic self-concept, anxiety symptoms, and depression symptoms \( n = 130 \).  
For institutional support and institutional betrayal \( n = 129 \).  
For PTSD symptoms \( n = 127 \).

Experiences of LGBTQ+ microaggressions was associated with institutional betrayal, \( r (127) = .389, p < .01 \); anxiety symptoms, \( r (128) = .348, p < .01 \); depression symptoms, \( r (128) = .403, p < .01 \); and PTSD symptoms, \( r (125) = .471, p < .01 \). Furthermore, experiences of institutional betrayal was also associated with anxiety symptoms, \( r (128) = .193, p < .05 \); depression symptoms, \( r (128) = .291, p < .01 \); and PTSD symptoms, \( r (125) = .286, p < .01 \). There was no statistically significant relationship between experiences of LGBTQ+ microaggressions, or institutional betrayal, and academic self-concept (Table 3).

As mentioned, the LGBTQ+ microaggression scale can be broken down into two subscales, the interpersonal LGBTQ+ microaggression subscale, and the environmental LGBTQ+ subscale. Similar to LGBTQ+ microaggressions, interpersonal LGBTQ+ microaggressions is associated with institutional betrayal, \( r (127) = .382, p < .01 \); anxiety symptoms, \( r (128) = .331, p < .01 \); depression symptoms, \( r (128) = .380, p < .01 \); and PTSD
symptoms, \( r (125) = .450, p < .01 \). There was no statistically significant relationship between interpersonal LGBTQ+ microaggressions and academic self-concept. There was a statistically significant relationship between environmental LGBTQ+ microaggressions and academic self-concept, \( r (128) = -.198, p < .05 \) (Table 3). Environmental LGBTQ+ microaggressions was also associated with institutional betrayal, \( r (127) = .360, p < .01 \); anxiety symptoms, \( r (128) = .373, p < .01 \); depression symptoms, \( r (128) = .453, p < .01 \); and PTSD symptoms, \( r (125) = .495, p < .01 \) (Table 3).

**Perceived LGBTQ+ Microaggressions Versus Experienced LGBTQ+ Microaggressions**

To determine if LGBTQ+ participants experienced more microaggressions overall than what was perceived by the cisgender, heterosexual participants, a t-test was conducted. The mean for LGBTQ+ participants for overall experienced microaggressions was \( M = 46.89 (SD = 34.29) \); whereas, the mean for cisgender, heterosexual participants perceived microaggressions was \( M = 24.88 (SD = 17.61) \). The difference between these two means was statistically significant, \( t (320) = 7.55, p < .001 \). Therefore, LGBTQ+ participants experienced more microaggressions than what was perceived by the cisgender, heterosexual participants.

**Perceived Institutional Betrayal Versus Experienced Institutional Betrayal**

To determine if LGBTQ+ participants experienced more institutional betrayal than what was being perceived by the cisgender, heterosexual participants, a t-test was also conducted. As mentioned, the mean for LGBTQ+ participants for experienced institutional betrayal (Table 2) was \( M = 1.63 (SD = 3.05) \); whereas, the mean for cisgender, heterosexual participants perceived institutional betrayal (Table 1) was \( M = 4.89 (SD = 5.66) \). The difference between these two means was statistically significant, \( t (320) = 6.00, p < .001 \). Therefore, LGBTQ+ participants
experienced less institutional betrayal than what was being perceived by the cisgender, heterosexual participants.

**Racial Minorities Versus Non-Racial Minorities and Perceived LGBTQ+ Microaggressions**

To determine if racial minorities within the cisgender, heterosexual group perceived more acts as microaggression towards LGBTQ+ people than those who did not belong to a racial minority, a t-test was also conducted. The mean for perceived microaggressions for racial minorities within the cisgender, heterosexual group was $M = 25.62$ ($SD = 16.78$); whereas, the mean for perceived microaggressions for non-racial minorities within the cisgender, heterosexual group was $M = 24.55$ ($SD = 18.02$). There was no statistically significant difference between these means, $t (190) = .390, p > .05$. Therefore, belonging to a racial minority group did not influence the amount of LGBTQ+ microaggressions perceived.

**Female Versus Male and Perceived LGBTQ+ Microaggressions**

To determine if males or females within the cisgender, heterosexual group perceived more acts as microaggression towards LGBTQ+ people, a t-test was also conducted. The mean for perceived microaggressions for males within the cisgender, heterosexual group was $M = 19.95$ ($SD = 16.54$); whereas, the mean for perceived microaggressions for females within the cisgender, heterosexual group was $M = 27.18$ ($SD = 17.69$). There was a statistically significant difference between the means, $t (190) = 2.69, p < .008$. Therefore, females perceived more acts as microaggressions towards LGBTQ+ people than males.

**Institutional Betrayal or LGBTQ+ Microaggressions? Which Is More Related to Mental Health and Academic Self-Concept?**

To determine which predictor variable (institutional betrayal or LGBTQ+ microaggressions) has a greater association with the outcome variables (academic self-concept, mental health and academic self-concept).
anxiety symptoms, depression symptoms, and PTSD symptoms) within the LGBTQ+ sample, a simple linear regression was conducted. The regression coefficients can be found below in tables four through seven. The regression model was statistically significant for LGBTQ+ microaggressions being more associated with mental health symptoms than institutional betrayal even when controlling for institutional betrayal. LGBTQ+ microaggressions was associated with anxiety symptoms (Table 4), $F(2, 126) = 9.31, p < .001, R^2 = .129 (\beta = .330)$; depression symptoms (Table 5), $F(2, 126) = 14.39, p < .001, R^2 = .186 (\beta = .348)$; and PTSD symptoms (Table 6), $F(2, 123) = 18.78, p < .001, R^2 = .234 (\beta = .424)$. The model was not statistically significant for predictors of academic self-concept (Table 7).

Table 4: Regression coefficients for anxiety symptoms as an outcome variable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized coefficients</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>9.239</td>
<td>.856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQ+ microaggressions</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional betrayal</td>
<td>.123</td>
<td>.178</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: $n = 131$.

Table 5: Regression coefficients for depression symptoms as an outcome variable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized coefficients</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>20.598</td>
<td>1.823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQ+ microaggressions</td>
<td>.136</td>
<td>.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional betrayal</td>
<td>.662</td>
<td>.379</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: $n = 131$. 
Table 6: Regression coefficients for PTSD symptoms as an outcome variable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized coefficients</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>20.633</td>
<td>2.646</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQ+ microaggressions</td>
<td>.243</td>
<td>.049</td>
<td>.424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional betrayal</td>
<td>.772</td>
<td>.546</td>
<td>.121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: n = 128.

Table 7: Regression coefficients for academic self-concept as an outcome variable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized coefficients</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>108.821</td>
<td>2.463</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQ+ microaggressions</td>
<td>-.083</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>-.173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional betrayal</td>
<td>.298</td>
<td>.512</td>
<td>.055</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: n = 131.

Discussion

The current study aimed to explore the impact and perception of the systematic response of LGBTQ+ microaggressions that occur on campus. We predicted that when LGBTQ+ students encounter LGBTQ+ microaggressions on campus that these experiences would be associated with lower academic self-concept and poorer mental health outcomes (i.e., greater symptoms of depression, anxiety, and PTSD). These predictions were partially supported by the findings. LGBTQ+ microaggressions were associated with increased symptoms of depression, anxiety, and PTSD, but there was no statistically significant relationship between LGBTQ+ microaggressions and academic self-concept. However, there was a statistically significant relationship between environmental LGBTQ+ microaggressions and low academic self-concept ($r (128) = -.198, p < .05$). This means that when LGBTQ+ microaggressions are experienced at a macro or systemic level that there is a greater association with poorer academic self-concept than when the microaggressions are experienced at an interpersonal level. There is no research
exploring why environmental LGBTQ+ microaggressions has more of an association with academic self-concept than interpersonal LGBTQ+ microaggressions, but there are several possible explanations for this finding in the current study.

Other researchers exploring LGBTQ+ microaggressions have found that LGBTQ+ microaggressions projected towards non-dominant orientations and identities have a negative impact on academic performance (Nadal et al., 2011; Seelman et al., 2017; Woodford et al., 2018; Woodford et al., 2015; Woodford et al., 2015; Woodford et al., 2017). The current study may not have found an association between LGBTQ+ microaggressions and low academic self-concept because the mean GPA score for LGBTQ+ participants was 78.43%. Since the mean, 78.43%, is defined by the University of Regina as good or satisfactory performance, suggests that the participants in this sample could have been more likely to engage in proactive study behaviours because they were being reinforced with good or satisfactory grades. Given what we know about learning we can speculate that these proactive behaviours paired with reinforcement could have impacted their academic self-concept positively (i.e., increased confidence, planning, etc.).

Environmental LGBTQ+ microaggressions may have been associated with low academic self-concept because environmental and interpersonal LGBTQ+ microaggressions may affect academic self-concept in different ways. Environmental LGBTQ+ microaggressions could be more detrimental because these types of microaggressions occur at a systemic level, whereas the interpersonal microaggressions occur at a person level (Woodford et al., 2015). The people in this sample could have been more dependent and more trusting of the institution over individual people, which could be why we see an association between environmental LGBTQ+ microaggressions and not interpersonal LGBTQ+ microaggressions and low academic self-
concept. Consistent with other research exploring LGBTQ+ microaggressions (Nadal et al., 2011; Seelman et al., 2017; Woodford et al., 2018; Woodford et al., 2015), this study found that LGBTQ+ microaggressions was associated with negative mental health outcomes.

With regards to institutional betrayal, we predicted that institutional betrayal would be associated with low academic self-concept and increased symptoms of depression, anxiety, and PTSD. This prediction was also only partially supported. Consistent with Smith et al., (2016), in the current study institutional betrayal was associated with poorer mental health outcomes. This finding suggests that when institutions respond negatively to people who have gone through adverse experiences, such as LGBTQ+ microaggressions, that those experiences with the institution impact the mental health of its victims. Although institutional betrayal was correlated with negative mental health outcomes, institutional betrayal was not correlated with lower academic self-concept. Similar to the finding with LGBTQ+ microaggressions and academic self-concept, institutional betrayal may not be associated with low academic self-concept because the mean GPA score of this sample was good or satisfactory.

We also predicted that institutional betrayal would have an independent contribution to mental health (i.e., increased symptoms of depression, anxiety, and PTSD) over and above LGBTQ+ microaggressions. This prediction was not supported. The current study found that LGBTQ+ microaggressions rather than the institutional betrayal had a greater association with negative mental health outcomes (i.e., increased symptoms of anxiety, depression, and PTSD). Betrayal blindness may explain why this hypothesis was not supported. Betrayal blindness refers to the idea that when people are betrayed by an institution or an individual they depend on, they may try to preserve the relationship with the institution or individual by forgetting the betrayal happened, demonstrating an unawareness that the betrayal happened, and/or deny to themselves
as well as others that they were betrayed (Freyd, 1997). Given there was more of an association with LGBTQ+ microaggressions than institutional betrayal with mental health outcomes, it could be the case that people in this sample were more susceptible to betrayal blindness.

With regards to the cisgender, heterosexual participants, we hypothesized that cisgender, heterosexual participants would perceive LGBTQ+ microaggressions directed towards LGBTQ+ individuals less frequently than the frequency with which these microaggressions were reported/endorsed by LGBTQ+ participants. This hypothesis was supported as there was a statically significant difference between the means ($t (320) = 7.55, p < .001$). It is possible that self-identified LGBTQ+ individuals may be more sensitive to the subtle behaviours of LGBTQ+ microaggressions, whereas cisgender, heterosexual participants may perceive LGBTQ+ microaggressions as an expression of curiosity inquiring into the experiences of LGBTQ+ people. This discrepancy in perception between the two groups could be one of the reasons why LGBTQ+ microaggressions occur; one group may disregard their behaviour as curiosity, whereas the other group may perceive those curious expressions as acts of discrimination. Understanding why this discrepancy exists could lead to less LGBTQ+ microaggressions.

We also hypothesized that cisgender, heterosexual participants would perceive institutional betrayal occurring less frequently than the frequency in which LGBTQ+ participants reported/endorsed experienced institutional betrayal. This hypothesis was not supported in that cisgender, heterosexual participants perceived IB occurring more frequently than what was reported/endorsed by LGBTQ+ participants ($t (320) = 6.00, p < .001$). Given that there were no “not applicable” responses reported on the IBSQ for self-identified cisgender, heterosexual participants, the scores for this sample may have been inflated. When people are reporting on
hypothetical situations, they may be less likely to choose “not applicable” as a response than when people are reporting on their own real experiences.

Lastly, we hypothesized that marginalized groups, such as women and racial minorities, within the cisgender, heterosexual group would perceive LGBTQ+ microaggressions occurring more frequently than those who do not belong to marginalized groups. This hypothesis was partially supported. Consistent with Basford et al., (2014) findings, there was a statistically significant difference between men and women in that women perceived LGBTQ+ microaggressions occurring more frequently than men did ($t (190) = 2.69, p < .008$). Contrary to our predictions, there was no statistically significant difference for racial minorities versus non-racial minorities within the cisgender, heterosexual group. This finding suggests that the perception of racial minorities regarding LGBTQ+ microaggression is similar to that of the dominant race (White).

The current study had several limitations. We did not give all the measures to all the participants, so we could not compare the two groups (cisgender, heterosexual participants and LGBTQ+ participants) on symptoms of depression, anxiety, and PTSD. Comparing the two groups would have provided us with insight as to how the two groups differ with regards to symptom severity. Another limitation is that we only distributed the survey at one university in Canada, which may affect the generalizability of the results. Lastly, we did not ask participants if they lived in Canada for most of their life. When people are raised outside of Canada, they may have different cultural norms, and therefore have different morals guiding their behaviour (Gold, Colman, & Pulford, 2015). For instance, different countries have different laws regarding homosexuality (OutLife, 2018). In Maldives, for example, homosexuality is punishable by torture (i.e., whipping for 20 strokes); whereas in Saudi Arabia, homosexuality is punishable by
death. The laws in different countries could impact how people coming from different countries perceive LGBTQ+ microaggressions. Future studies could control for this variable to see if differences exist.

Since we found that experiencing LGBTQ+ microaggressions rather than institutional betrayal has a greater association with negative mental health outcomes, a future study could also explore how to combat the negative effects of LGBTQ+ microaggressions. A study conducted by Kulick, Wernick, Woodford, and Renn (2016), for example, found that there was less of an association between depression and heterosexism for White, LGBTQ students that engaged in student leadership positions on campus. This was not the case for LGBTQ+ participants of colour. Kulick et al., (2016) found that when LGBTQ participants of colour engage in LGBTQ-specific spaces that the relationship between sexual orientation victimization and depression was strengthened. Future research could see if Kulick et al., (2016) results replicate, and explore other potential buffers that may combat the negative effects of LGBTQ+ microaggressions experienced on campus. For instance, in some indigenous cultures the process of healing from trauma(s) involve discussing personal narratives with one another, and finding commonalities among the stories in an informal, natural way without the presence of a governing institution (Téllez, 2014; Yeh, Hunter, Madan-Bahel, Chiang, & Arora, 2004). A future study could explore how or if indigenous ways of healing combats the negative effects of LGBTQ+ microaggressions. Furthermore, University administration may have to develop a policy to address LGBTQ+ microaggressions that occur on campus to foster a positive, safe learning environment for all that ensures equal opportunities for success.
Glossary of Terms Related to Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities

**Cisgender male:** A term used to define a person that was born biologically male, and identifies as male.

**Cisgender female:** A term used to define a person that was born biologically female, and identifies as female.

**Androgynous:** An individual that has both masculine and feminine qualities.

**Asexual:** Asexuality is on a continuum, and asexual is an umbrella term used to describe people who do not experience sexual attraction.

**Non-binary:** Term used to define people who experience gender identity as being outside of the traditional categories of male or female.

**Heterosexual:** A dominant sexual orientation used to describe people who are physically, romantically, and emotionally attracted to members of the opposite sex.

**Lesbian:** Women who experience a physical, romantic, and emotional attraction to other women.

**Gay:** Usually used as a term to define males who experience a physical, romantic, and emotional attraction to other males; however, some women who are attracted to women also use this term to define themselves.

**Bisexual:** Is defined as an individual who is physically, romantically, and emotionally attracted to members of the same gender or members of another gender.

**Transgender male:** A person who was born biologically female, but identifies as male.

**Transgender female:** A person who was born biologically male, but identifies as female.

**Queer:** An umbrella term used to define people who are not exclusively heterosexual.
**Pansexual:** A person who has the capacity to form physical, romantic, and emotional attractions to any person regardless of gender identity.

**Two spirited:** Is a spiritual term as well as an umbrella term that some indigenous North Americans use to describe people in their community who fulfil a third gender role in that they have both masculine and feminine spirit.
References


