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# Unveiling Gender Microaggressions in Schools: Developing and Validating a Scale for Teachers' Perceptions*

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## ABSTRACT

This study sought to develop a robust and valid scale to unveil instances of gender microaggressions experienced by women teachers in school environments. Collecting data from 440 women teachers employed in Turkish schools, the "Teachers' Perceptions of Gender Microaggressions Scale" comprising 21 items distributed across five sub-dimensions. Upon exploratory factor analysis, the scale explained 50.14% of the total variance across its five factors. The identified subscales include "Weakness of Professional Authority," "Exposure to Abuse of Power," "Assumptions of Traditional Gender Roles," "Second-Class Citizen," and "Tendency to Masculine Behavior." The five-factor structure of the scale was confirmed by confirmatory factor analysis and the participants' experiences were evaluated between "never" and "always". The fit index values (RMSEA, NFI, CFI, GFI, and AGFI) indicated that the model reached acceptable levels of fit. In conclusion, the "Teachers' Perceptions of Gender Microaggressions Scale" is a validated instrument for assessing and quantifying the experiences of women teachers with gender microaggressions in the school context.

**Keywords:** Gender microaggressions, gender, sexism, microagression, women, teacher, scale development

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## Introduction

The manifestation of gender biases through microaggressions attracts gradually increasing attention in educational research (e.g., Boysen, 2012; Beaulieu, 2016; Steketee et al., 2021) underscoring their detrimental impact on students' academic performance, psychological well-being, and socio-emotional development. Gender microaggressions, often unrecognized and insidious, perpetuate inequality and marginalization within educational environments (Sue et al., 2007). These subtle, yet pervasive, expressions of bias and discrimination contribute significantly to the creation of a hostile or unwelcoming atmosphere, impacting the well-being and performance of both teachers and students (Nadal et al., 2016). While research on microaggressions has gained attention globally and well-documented the broader aspects of microaggressions on marginalized groups, such as racial (e.g., Lewis, 2018; Lobban et al., 2022) and sexual minorities (e.g., Platt, 2013), there remains a noticeable absence in the discourse concerning the nuanced experiences of teachers facing gender-based microaggressions specifically in Turkey.

Existing studies focus on school counselors and school administrators through qualitative design. In one of these studies (Yılmaz et al., 2023), which aims to determine how school principals conceptualize microaggression and how they react to microaggression, it was found that school principals were not aware of microaggression and needed to develop awareness, knowledge, skills, and attitudes for all three positions: perpetrator, target, and witness of microaggression (Torres-Harding et al., 2012). Another research highlighted forms of microaggressions, including denial of privacy, patronization, otherization, secondary gain, second-class citizenship, helplessness, denial of identity, minimization, positive discrimination, and spread effect, underscoring the complex nature of discriminatory behaviors directed at students with disabilities in Turkish educational contexts. It was concluded that "being compared with others" could be added to the definitions of microaggression's micro devaluation sub-dimension and the concept of "communicative abuse" could be used for its Turkish equivalent (Henden & Gümüşeli, 2023). Still, there exists a critical need for culturally sensitive understanding and instruments that accurately capture the nuances of these experiences within distinct socio-cultural contexts such as educational settings. In societies such as Turkey, where patriarchal structures continue to exist in a unique way with modernized gender relations (Kandiyoti, 2007), gender-based behaviors in the workplace are a significant problem for women (Fitzgerald, Swan, & Fischer, 1995). This study addresses this gap by focusing on the development and validation of the "Teachers' Perceptions of Gender Microaggressions Scale" (TPGMS) designed to assess how Turkish educators perceive and respond to gender microaggressions within their teaching environments. Understanding the perceptions and experiences of teachers regarding gender microaggressions is crucial not only for identifying and addressing discriminatory behaviors but also for fostering inclusive educational environments. This scale aims to provide educators, researchers, and policymakers with a robust instrument to assess, measure, and subsequently address gender microaggressions, ultimately promoting a more equitable and supportive learning environment for all.

## Literature Review

The conceptualization of sexism was initially articulated by Bird (1968) during the emergence of the women's movement in the 1960s. It was defined as the act of assessing an individual based on their gender, perpetuating hierarchical imbalances, and consolidating gender-related power in the hands of those in control. Sexism encompasses the unjust treatment of individuals in society due to their gender (Kaskan and Ho, 2016), resulting in any form of discrimination, exclusion, or restriction based on gender roles and norms that hinder the full

enjoyment of human rights. It encompasses attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that uphold the unequal status of both men and women, contributing to gender-based discrimination (Swim and Campbell, 2003). Although sexism is occasionally directed towards men, it predominantly manifests as negative attitudes and behaviors towards women, a focal point often reflected in the literature (Sakallı-Uğurlu, 2002). In the realm of working life, a key indicator of sexism is the classification of jobs into traditionally men or women domains. Occupations associated with maternal qualities and service, such as teaching, nursing, and stewardess roles, are deemed suitable for women, while positions requiring independence, strength, and leadership, such as engineering, management, and politics, are perceived as appropriate for men (Basford et al., 2014; Gonzales et al., 2015). These evaluations often prioritize gender over individual abilities or job performance (Lewis, 2018). Even when women possess comparable qualifications to men, they frequently find themselves in lower-status jobs, indicative of wage discrimination and discriminatory hiring practices as instances of sexism within professional contexts (Barreto et al., 2009; Keum et al., 2018; Periyakoil et al., 2020).

Covert sexism refers to unconscious and unintentional discrimination against women, often exhibited by individuals who are conscious of gender equality concerns but inadvertently engage in behaviors that discriminate between genders (Keum et al., 2018; Lewis, 2018). Although covert sexism and sexist microaggressions are distinct, they frequently overlap, with many incidents of covert sexism falling under the category of gender microaggressions (Nadal & Haynes, 2012). For instance, the expectation that women should manage cooking and cleaning may be considered covert sexism, stemming from unconscious expectations rather than deliberate intent to harm. This expectation aligns with the category of gender microaggressions, encompassing assumptions related to traditional gender roles (Sue, 2010b).

Jioni Lewis's work focuses on the intersectionality of gender-based microaggressions, particularly as they pertain to women of color. Lewis (2016) posits that gendered racial microaggressions are a unique form of microaggressions experienced by women of color, combining elements of both racial and gender discrimination. Her research underscores how these microaggressions can manifest in various contexts, including the workplace, and often result in psychological and emotional distress. Lewis (2013) also emphasizes that the intersectionality of gender and race creates a compounded form of discrimination that cannot be fully captured by examining gender or race alone. For instance, women of color may face microaggressions that question their competence or professionalism more frequently and intensely than their white counterparts or men of color. These experiences can lead to heightened stress, reduced job satisfaction, and overall negative impacts on mental health. Incorporating Lewis's work into the understanding of microaggressions provides a more nuanced perspective that highlights the complex and layered nature of discrimination faced by women of color. It emphasizes the need for an intersectional approach to fully grasp the breadth and depth of gender-based microaggressions and their impacts.

Solorzano et al. (2000) expanded the understanding of microaggressions using Critical Race Theory (CRT), which underscores the deep-rooted and systemic nature of racism and its intersections with other forms of oppression, such as sexism. CRT argues that racism is embedded within societal structures, influencing both individual behaviors and institutional policies. Consequently, microaggressions are not isolated incidents but are part of a broader pattern of systemic inequities. Their framework shows that microaggressions help sustain and reinforce racial and gender hierarchies, further marginalizing women of color. This intersectional approach indicates that gender microaggressions cannot be fully grasped without considering their racialized

context. For instance, women of color often experience microaggressions that combine racial and gender biases, such as being perceived as less competent or facing stereotypes about their sexuality or demeanor.

Microaggressions, as everyday verbal or nonverbal insults, convey hostile, derogatory, or negative messages solely based on marginalized group membership (Sprow et al., 2021). These messages, whether intentional or unintentional, manifest as short, commonplace, and daily verbal or behavioral expressions conveying hostility, humiliation, or negativity toward a specific group (Nadal, 2014). Frequently, such messages invalidate the group identity or reality of the target individuals, belittling them at a personal or collective level and implying inferior humanity or lack of belonging to the group, potentially leading to feelings of threat (Shore et al., 2017). These behaviors are the outcomes of implicit bias against one group by another structurally oppressed group, manifesting in various social, political, or economic slights and threats communicated to individuals and groups on individual, institutional, or societal levels (Sue, 2010).

Gender microaggression behaviors represent significant challenges faced by women, particularly in the context of professional life. The lack of awareness regarding gender microaggressive behaviors and the widespread acceptance of certain roles attributed to women contribute to the underrecognition of these behaviors as gender microaggressions. Examples of gender microaggression behaviors include attention drawn to women based on their attire, prominence attributed to their appearance, differential greetings when expressing opinions as women, unequal authority compared to men, pregnancy or motherhood affecting professional standing, encountering challenges without support from school administration or external entities, and various actions such as presuming women's inability to solve problems, assigning fewer administrative duties to women, and parents treating women teachers as friends (Sue et al., 2007). These behaviors encompass short-term verbal, behavioral, and environmental insults frequently encountered in daily life, whether intentional or unintentional.

In addition to gender and age, it is crucial to consider other factors such as race, sexuality, and income when examining microaggressions. Previous studies have demonstrated that these dimensions significantly impact the experiences and perceptions of individuals within marginalized groups. For example, Gutiérrez et al. (2019) highlighted how socioeconomic status influences the frequency and type of microaggressions experienced, with individuals from lower-income backgrounds facing unique challenges. Similarly, Nadal et al. (2011) explored the intersection of sexual orientation and microaggressions, showing that LGBTQ+ individuals often encounter distinct microaggressive behaviors compared to their heterosexual peers. Several studies have examined the validity of microaggression scales, which are essential for accurately capturing these subtle forms of discrimination. For instance, the Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS) developed by Nadal (2011) has been widely used to measure the prevalence and impact of racial microaggressions. Additionally, the Gender Microaggressions Scale by Lewis and Neville (2015) has provided valuable insights into gender-specific microaggressions. Incorporating these scales and their findings into your study will enhance the robustness of your analysis and address the reviewer's concern regarding the validity of microaggressions scales. Moreover, the Microaggression Experiences at Work Scale by Resnick and Galupo (2019) offers a reliable tool to measure workplace microaggressions experienced by LGBT individuals, ensuring a comprehensive assessment of microaggressions across different contexts and populations.

As researchers, we acknowledge our positionality and the influence it has on our research. Our identities and experiences shape our understanding and interpretation of gender

microaggressions. Coming from diverse academic backgrounds and with personal experiences related to gender and education, we are committed to exploring these issues with sensitivity and rigor. This research is grounded in our belief in the importance of creating equitable and inclusive educational environments for all individuals, regardless of gender. Our goal is to contribute to a deeper understanding of gender microaggressions and to provide practical tools for educators to address these issues effectively. To test the comprehensibility of the questions and validate the TPGMS, we selected a diverse group of teachers and field experts. The teachers were chosen based on their years of experience, gender, and representation across various educational levels and schools within Turkey. This diverse sampling ensured that the questions were comprehensible and relevant across different teaching contexts. The field experts included individuals with extensive research backgrounds in gender studies, educational psychology, and sociology. Their selection was based on their published work and contributions to the field of educational equity and inclusion. The input from these experts was crucial in refining the scale to ensure its validity and reliability in capturing the nuanced experiences of teachers regarding gender microaggressions.

## Method

### Research Design

The scale development study was conducted in two stages and on two different samples. The first phase involved the development of questionnaire items and principal components analysis to explore the construct validity of the scale, as well as reliability analyses through Explanatory Factor Analysis (EFA). In the second stage, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted on the second sample to test whether the analyses conducted in the first stage were confirmed or not.

### Research Sample

In order to discover the factor structure of the microaggression scale designed for teachers working in the Turkish education system, EFA was conducted in the first stage. In determining the number of participants in scale development studies, Şencan (2005) stated that a sample size five times the number of items would be sufficient. Accordingly, 185 participant seem to be sufficient for the scale consisting of 37 items. Kline (2014) stated that a sample of 200 people would be sufficient as an absolute criterion to determine reliable factors in addition to the number of items. The study group included in the research for EFA consisted of 201 women teachers working in Kayseri high schools in December 2022. Ten data that were not suitable for analysis were removed. As a result, firstly factor analysis and then reliability analyses were performed on the scales collected from 190 women teachers. In data collection, 45 school principals were contacted and asked to share the online survey link in their schools' communication groups of the schools.

The mean age of the participants was 39.37 (SD = 8.15) with a range of 23-58. The average seniority of the teachers was 14,14 (SD = 8,231). Teachers were from diverse high school types such as general high schools (50,9%), science high schools (9%), arts high schools (3,7%), vocational schools (31,1%), and social science schools (5,3%). Participants included teachers from every branch of high school teaching. Most of the teachers (71,6%) had a undergraduate diploma while the rest of the teachers (27,4%) had a graduate level. About 70% of the participants were married.

### Data Analysis

TPGMS, was aimed to measure the women teachers' perception of microaggressions directed from school environment that occur during their careers. In the 5-point Likert-type scale

consisting of Never (1), Rarely (2), Sometimes (3), Often (4), Always (5) options, higher scores of teachers' ratings are correlated with increased occurrences of microaggressions based on gender in their teaching career. The scale used in the preliminary application consists of two parts. In the first part, there are seven questions about teachers' demographic variables such as age, seniority, education level, branch, school type and marital status, and in the second part, there are 37 statements about teachers' Microaggression Perceptions. SPSS 20 and LISREL package programs were used in the analysis of the data. As part of the study, the TPGMS was developed through the implementation of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and reliability analysis using SPSS. Additionally, the factor structure identified in the EFA was tested using LISREL, and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to evaluate model fit indices.

**Development of Instrument**

Several researchers have discussed a proposed categorization of gender-based microaggressions, initially introduced by Sue and Capodilupo in 2008. This taxonomy outlined various ways in which microaggressions might affect individuals belonging to marginalized groups. Within this taxonomy, six themes specifically addressed gender-related microaggressions: 1) sexual objectification, (2) second-class citizen, (3) assumptions of inferiority, (4) denial of the reality of sexism, (5) assumptions of traditional gender roles, and (6) use of sexist language. Nadal (2010) expanded the existing classification by introducing two more categories: (7) denial of individual sexism and (8) environmental microaggressions" (cited in Capodilupo et al., 2010). Considering this taxonomy, the theoretical and empirical studies (Eagly & Mladinic, 1993; Glick & Fiske, 1996; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Bolte, 2015; Gartner, 2019; Judson, 2014; Capodilupo vd., 2010) and qualitative interviews with teachers was utilized to generate the first item pool. Since the existing scales in the literature focus on professional groups other than teachers, the microaggression behaviors experienced by teachers in Turkish culture may differ and it may not fully cover the patterns of the dominant culture of the Turkish education system. Interviews were conducted to explore the unique aspects, conceptualizations and processes of microaggressions perceived by teachers in school context.

The female teachers who participated in the interviews were from different school types (primary school = 5; secondary school = 4; and high school = 8), their professional seniority ranged from 7 to 32 years and their ages ranged from 31 to 55 years (n = 5). The interview form included five questions about the gendered microaggression behaviors experienced by women teachers, by whom or by whom they were practiced, and what their causes and consequences were. The codes obtained based on content analysis were transformed into scale items by considering the relevant frame of reference. In the first draft, before it was submitted for expert opinion, there were 51 items in total, including sexual objectification (13 items), second-class citizen (11 items), use of sexist language (6 items) assumptions of inferiority (14 items), and assumptions of traditional gender roles (5 items). The draft of the scale was tested with two teachers for the comprehensibility of the questions before the pre-application. Subsequently, the draft scale was revised based on the opinions of eight field experts to ensure content validity finalized with 37 items, and made ready for pre-application.

## Findings

**Validity and Factorial Structure**

It was observed that the scale items created based on the literature and interview questions showed normal distribution. A common factor analysis was performed using principal component

factoring to determine what kind of factorial structure the scale items, which were created based on the literature and interview questions, show and whether they are included in the predicted dimensions. The preliminary examination of the 37-item TPGMS indicated Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO=.82) shows that the sample is appropriate for EFA and Bartlett's tests of Sphericity ($X^2$=1716,87) was statistically significant, p<.05 as outlined by Shrestha (2021). A maximum likelihood factor analysis was performed using varimax rotation (Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). A factor loading value of .40 or higher is deemed acceptable based on the research (Lindeman et al.,1980). Similarly, reliability assessments were carried out using Cronbach's α value of .70 or above, which is considered an acceptable threshold according to Nunnally (1978).

**EFA**

In the first factor analysis, twelve factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were identified. As a result of the twelve-dimensional structure trial, almost none of the dimensions did not form meaningful components by the theoretical knowledge and interview data. Also, many of the dimensions covered two items. Item 4, 23, 20, 5, 20, and 23 were removed from the scale since factor commonalities were below .40. Other items (2, 3, 6, 7, 11, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 22, and 37) were removed because they were and loaded more than one-factor (overlapping). Items 1 and 19 were removed as they did not load to any factor. Thus, alternative dimensions were tested to determine the most suitable structure and factors. Alternative dimensions were tested by decreasing from 12 to five dimensions. It was determined that the most statistically and theoretically meaningful and appropriate structure was the five-factor. However, the five-factor EFA results showed consistency with only two of the dimensions identified in previous studies (Factor 3. Assumptions of traditional gender roles; Factor 4. Second-class citizen), and new components (Factor 1. Weakness of professional authority; Factor 2. Exposure to Abuse of Power; Factor 5. Tendency to Masculine Behavior) were discovered in the current analyses that is thought to be unique to the Turkish culture. Based on an examination of the sums of squared loadings after rotation, these factors explained 23.64%, 8.02%, 7,23%, 6,06%, and 5,23% of the total variance and were labeled as Factor 1: Weakness of Professional Authority (WPA), Factor 2: Exposure to Abuse of Power (EAP), Factor 3: Assumptions of Traditional Gender Roles (ATGR), Factor 4: Second-class Citizen (SCC), Factor 5: Tendency to Masculine Behaviour (TMB) (Table 1).

Table 1. Factor loadings of TPGMS

| | **Factor 1** | **Factor 2** | **Factor 3** | **Factor 4** | **Factor 5** | **h2** | **Item-total correlation** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Factor 1: Weaknes of Professional Authority** | | | | | | | |
| 32. I am expected to show more compliant behaviour. | .633 | -.040 | .104 | .038 | .173 | .445 | .375 |
| 24. I think that my competence related to my branch is questioned more often. | .616 | .323 | .037 | -.093 | .175 | .534 | .466 |
| 35. I think that women parents see women teachers as their friends rather than teachers. | .601 | -.044 | .138 | .215 | .026 | .439 | .373 |
| 27. My professional performance is considered to be lower. | .584 | .397 | .104 | .000 | .036 | .534 | .489 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26. My command of the classroom is questioned more. | .546 | .160 | -.024 | .323 | .118 | .465 | .441 |
| 28. It is thought that I will need more support from the school administration to solve my professional problems. | .504 | .263 | .146 | -.017 | .378 | .530 | .502 |
| **Cronbach's α = .724; PoVE= 23.640** | | | | | | | |
| **Factor 2: Exposure to Abuse of Power** | | | | | | | |
| 36. I think I receive more warnings from school administrators. | .281 | .630 | -.172 | .158 | -.027 | .567 | .375 |
| 29. I think I am exposed to more pressure from school administrators. | .192 | .630 | .108 | .085 | .062 | .503 | .437 |
| 14. I think I am more exposed to aggressive behavior. | .087 | .604 | .209 | .260 | .077 | .536 | .478 |
| 12. I have more problems with men school administrators. | -.029 | .557 | .108 | .261 | .405 | .561 | .420 |
| **Cronbach's α = .663; PoVE= 8.029** | | | | | | | |
| **Factor 3: Assumptions of Traditional Gender Roles**<br>**At school, when compared to men teachers;** | | | | | | | |
| 18. I think that a women teacher having a child is seen as a disadvantage by the school administration. | .198 | .123 | .791 | -.001 | -.110 | .759 | .350 |
| 17. I think that pregnancy is seen as a disadvantage by the school administration. | .115 | .074 | .647 | .336 | -.119 | .741 | .359 |
| 34. I think that administrative tasks are given less to women teachers. | .159 | -.102 | .644 | -.040 | .290 | .628 | .312 |
| 13. I feel that I am criticised more often when I defend my views strongly. | -.152 | .374 | .470 | .058 | .188 | .431 | .300 |
| **Cronbach's α = .625; PoVE= 7.323** | | | | | | | |
| **Factor 4: Second-Class Citizen**<br>**At school, when compared to men teachers;** | | | | | | | |
| 16. I think that the workload of women teachers is less. | .046 | .069 | .020 | .680 | .115 | .521 | .303 |
| 8. I think I am less valuable. | .123 | .347 | .091 | .605 | -.022 | .553 | .409 |
| 10. I feel less respected | .099 | .313 | -,011 | .569 | .101 | .485 | .388 |
| 9. I think I have fewer opportunities. | .073 | -.156 | .225 | .493 | .316 | .537 | .328 |
| **Cronbach's α = .589; PoVE= 6,066** | | | | | | | |
| **Factor 5: Tendency towards Masculine Behaviour** | | | | | | | |
| 31. I feel that I need to show tough behaviour in order to appear more competent. | .215 | .011 | -.051 | .183 | .697 | .742 | .361 |
| 30. I think I can exert more authority by taking on masculine roles. | .269 | .173 | .002 | .106 | .529 | .401 | .392 |
| 15. I feel that my authority is less recognised. | .064 | .367 | .332 | -.100 | .501 | .660 | .449 |
| **Cronbach's α= .492; PoVE= 5.239** | | | | | | | |
| **TPGMS Cronbach's α= .837; TVE = 50.298, N=190** | | | | | | | |

N*otes. 1. Excluded items were not included, 2. The primary loadings for the kept item are emphasized in bold., 3. h2= Communalities, 4. PoVE=Percentage of Variance Explained, 5. TVE=Total Variance Explained*

As can be seen from Table 1, 21 items had factor loading values above .40 in the EFA analysis, were not overlapping, and the dimensions were interpretable, the procedures were continued with reliability analysis. The highest score that can be obtained from the scale is 105 and the lowest score is 21. Increases in scores indicate that teachers experience high levels (5:

Always) of gender microaggression behaviors. All factors were significantly positively correlated with each other, ranging from .257 to .817 ($p < .01$). These relationships are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Intercorrelations among the factors and descriptive statistics (N=190)

| Factor | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Weakness of Professional Authority | 3.82 | .90 | 1 | | | | |
| 2. Exposure to Abuse of Power | 3.72 | .74 | .461** | 1 | | | |
| 3. Assumptions of Traditional Gender Roles | 3.68 | .77 | .301** | .296** | 1 | | |
| 4. Second-Class Citizen | 3.83 | .77 | .350** | .439** | .257** | 1 | |
| 5. Tendency towards Masculine Behaviour | 3.76 | .83 | .481** | .422** | .296** | .360** | 1 |
| TPGMS Average | 3.76** | .57** | .768** | .817** | .597** | .674** | .724** |

** $p < .01$

## Reliability

To assess the reliability of the scale, Cronbach's alpha for the total scale and sub-dimensions were calculated by examining item-total correlations. Cronbach's alpha signifies the extent to which each item in a scale correlates with the total sum of the other items. An alpha exceeding 0.70 was deemed satisfactory, indicating independence among individual items while belonging to the same scale (Schmitt, 1996).

The 21-item TPGMS demonstrated an acceptable internal consistency reliability, yielding a satisfying coefficient alpha of 0.837 ($M$ = 3.76, $SD$ = .57). Reliability of subscales include the following: Subscale 1: Weakness of Professional Authority (α = .724, $M$ = 3.82, $SD$ = .90); Subscale 2: Exposure to Abuse of Power (α = .663, $M$ = 3.72, $SD$ = .74); Subscale 3: Assumptions of Traditional Gender Roles (α = .625, $M$ = 3.68, $SD$ = 757); Subscale 4: Second-Class Citizen (α = .589; $M$ = 3.83, $SD$ = .77); Subscale 5: Tendency towards Masculine Behaviour (α = .492, $M$ = 3.76, $SD$ = .83). Descriptive information and Cronbach's alpha values of TPGMS are presented in Table 3. Cronbach's alpha values for the total scale are appropriate while subdimensions of "4. Second-Class Citizen" and "5. Tendency towards Masculine Behaviour" are poor. According to Schmitt (1996), if a measurement has good qualities like covering a subject well and being mostly consistent, it might not pose a major obstacle to its utilization. Therefore, other indicators were evaluated to decide on reliability.

## CFA

CFA was conducted with the second half of the data set (N = 201). Based on the principal-components factor analysis, five first-order latent variables consisting of 21 items representing the subscales of TPGMS were tested using CFA in LISREL version 8.7. In evaluating CFA, various fit statistics are used to assess the fit of the model to the data from different aspects. The most frequently used fit index, $\chi 2$, is followed by RMSEA, NFI, NNFI, CFI, AGFI, and GFI values (Sümer, 2000). The acceptance criteria used in the CFA (Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, & Müller, 2003) and the goodness of fit values calculated for TPGMS are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Model evaluation criteria and the goodness of fit values calculated for TPGMS (N=201)

| Fit Measure | Good Fit | Acceptable Fit | TPGMS (First-Order CFA) | TPGMS (Second-Order CFA) |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **$\chi 2$/df** | $0 \leq \chi 2 / df \leq 2$ | $2 < \chi 2 / df \leq 3$ | 2.25 | 2.060 |
| **p value** | $.05 < p \leq 1.00$ | $.01 \leq p \leq .05$ | .00 | .00 |
| RMSEA | $0 \leq RMSEA \leq .05$ | $.05 < RMSEA \leq .08$ | .06 | .06 |
| NFI | $.95 \leq NFI \leq 1.00$ | $.90 \leq NFI < .95$ | .83 | .83 |
| NNFI | $97 \leq NNFI \leq 1.00$ | $.95 \leq NNFI < .97$ | .88 | .88 |
| CFI | $.97 \leq CFI \leq 1.00$ | $.95 \leq CFI < .97$ | .90 | .90 |
| GFI | $.95 \leq GFI \leq 1.00$ | $.90 \leq GFI < .95$ | .88 | .87 |
| AGFI | $.90 \leq AGFI \leq 1.00$ | $85 \leq AGFI < .90$ | .84 | .84 |

Table 3 shows that all the goodness of fit values calculated for TPGMS are in the acceptable and good fit range. Figure 1 shows the standardized path coefficients and error variances of the model.

As shown in Figure 1, the standardized parameter estimates between the latent variable (teacher microaggression scale) and the indicators ($\Lambda$) range from .27 to .93 in the first-order CFA. When the t values were analyzed, it was determined that all values were above 2.56 and therefore significant at the .01 level. The second-order CFA is performed to test whether the teachers' perceptions of gender microaggressions converge on a single latent factor (Figure 2).

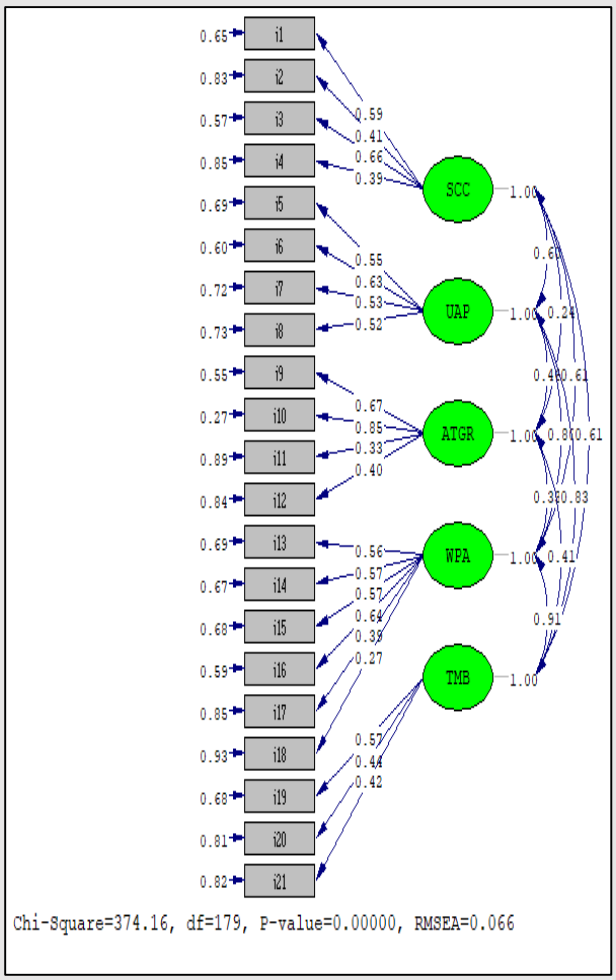


Figure 1. First-order path diagram of the TPGMS

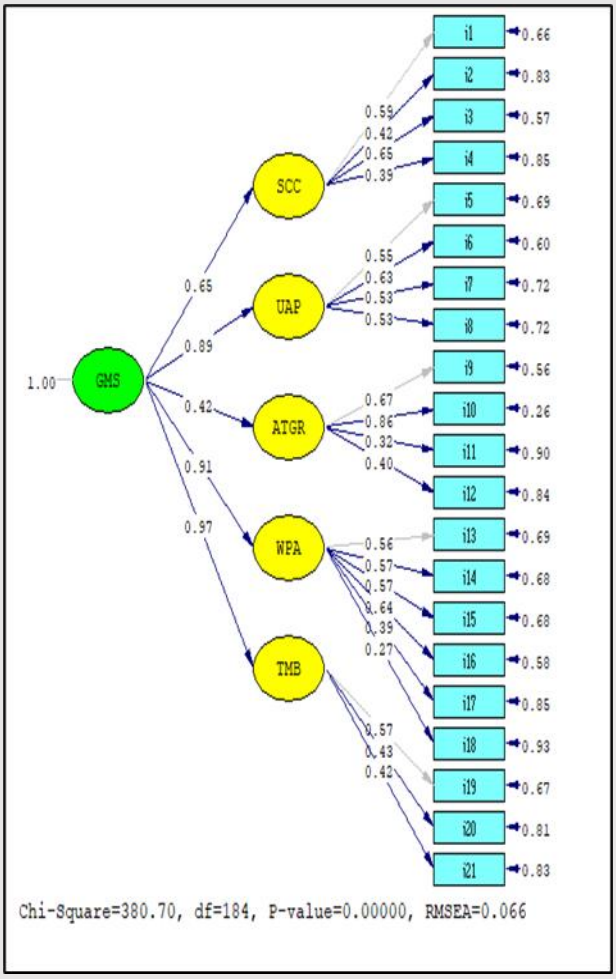


Figure 2. Second-order path diagram of the TPGMS

When the second level CFA results in Figure 2 are analyzed, $\chi 2/SD$ ratio was acceptable ($\chi 2/sd = 2.06$). Other critical indices (RMSEA= .066; SRMR= .070; NFI= .83, NNFI= .88, CFI= .9; GFI= .87; AGFI= .84) showed an acceptable fit. When the relationships between the factors were analyzed, it was determined that the highest relationship was between WPA and TMB (.87) and the lowest relationship was between SCC and ATGR (.27). $R^2$ for the factors were mostly turned out to be high (SCC = .43; UAP = .80; ATGR = .18; WPA = .82; TMB = .93). AVE and CR values were calculated to determine the convergent validity of the scale, and the square root of the AVE (√AVE), MSV, and ASV were calculated for divergent validity. Convergent validity refers to how much a measurement aligns positively with other measures assessing the same concept. To confirm the convergent validity, composite reliability (CR), and the average variance extracted (AVE) should be considered. A widely used method to assess convergent validity at the construct level is the AVE, where each construct should ideally have an AVE of at least 0.50 (Hair et al, 2021). These values are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. AVE, √AVE CR, MSV and ASV of the TPGMS Scale

| Factors | AVE | (√AVE | CR | MSV | ASV |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **SCC** | 0.542 | 0.736 | 0.822 | .090 | 0.367 |
| **UAP** | 0.493 | 0.702 | 0.795 | .087 | 0.167 |
| **ATGR** | 0.474 | 0.688 | 0.757 | .066 | 0.082 |
| **WPA** | 0.554 | 0.744 | 0.879 | .066 | 0.401 |
| **TMB** | 0.597 | 0.773 | 0.815 | .087 | 0.156 |

As can be seen in Table 4, the AVE values of SCC, WPA, and TMB factors are above .50. On the other hand, although ATGR (.47) and UAP (.49) factors are below the expected value, they are close to .50 and the other criteria have expected values, and it is concluded that discriminant validity is also acceptable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Hair et al. (2021) suggest that the CR should be greater than .70 and AVE (CR > .70; CR>AVE). All the constructs (factors) have higher CR values than the AVEs, as follows;

SCC-CR = .822 > AVE = .542,

UAP - CR = .795 > AVE = .493;

ATGR-CR = .757 > AVE = .474;

WPA-CR = .879 > AVE = .554;

TMB - CR = .815 > AVE = .597)

For the divergent validity of TPGMS, √AVE, MSV, and ASV values were measured (Table 4). Discriminant validity signifies the extent of association between related factors within a single measurement tool (Kline, 2023). Scholars typically utilized the Fornell-Larcker criterion as a means of measuring discriminant validity. This criterion involves contrasting the square root of the AVE with the correlations among latent variables. In particular, the AVE for each construct must exceed its maximum correlation with any other construct (Hair et al., 2021). For the present study, all constructs (factors) have higher √AVE values than the maximum correlation with any other construct. Furthermore, other calculations displayed in Table 4 verify the discriminant validity.

The MSV (Maximum Squared Variance) represents the highest variance shared by a factor with any other factor, squared. Meanwhile, the ASV (Average Shared Square Variance) is calculated by dividing the sum of variances a factor shares with other factors by the number of shared variances (Yaşlıoğlu, 2017). To demonstrate divergent validity, it's crucial that both MSV (SCC= .090; UAP = .087; ATGR = .066; WPA= .066; TMB= .087) and ASV (SCC= .367; UAP = .167; ATGR = .082; WPA= .401; TMB= .156) is less than AVE. As can be seen from Table 4, each construct ensures this criterion (MSV<AVE, ASV<AVE, Hair et al., 2014).

## Discussion and Conclusion

This research aimed to develop a comprehensive scale for assessing the perception of gender microaggression behaviors directed toward teachers. Data were collected from 391 women teachers working across 45 diverse schools in Kayseri. The study employed a two-phase data collection process, initially gathering information from 190 teachers for EFA analysis. In the subsequent phase, data from an additional 201 teachers, forming a distinct sample, were collected for CFA to validate the developed scale.

The findings revealed that the scale comprises five discernible sub-dimensions, elucidating specific aspects of gender microaggression behaviors towards women teachers. These sub-dimensions include weakness of professional authority, exposure to abuse of power, assumptions of traditional gender roles, second-class citizenship, and tendencies toward masculine behavior. Reviewing the existing literature, it becomes evident that gender microaggression behaviors are intricately associated with various situations, such as exposure to abuse of power, assumptions of traditional gender roles, tendencies toward masculine behavior (associating specific behaviors or professions with gender), and the differential application of authority or power based on gender (Gonzales et al., 2015; Nadal & Haynes, 2012; Sue et al., 2007; Torres-Harding et al., 2012; Watson & Henderson, 2023). Consequently, these behaviors manifest as disturbing phenomena spanning social, psychological, and economic dimensions, particularly impacting women due to their gender (Barthelemy et al., 2016; Miyake, 2018).

Contrary to assumptions of solely gender-based exposure, the study by Basford et al. (2014) revealed that both men and women experience gender microaggression behaviors, although women may be more vulnerable in certain instances. Similarly, recent research by Gartner et al. (2020) underscored the increasing focus on gender microaggression behaviors targeting women. However, the existing knowledge on the subject remains somewhat limited, marked by inconsistencies in the theoretical and conceptual features of gender microaggression behaviors. Consequently, scholars emphasize the necessity of developing a psychometrically sound and standardized criterion valid for women's groups.

The study identified the weakness of professional authority as a pivotal factor contributing to gender microaggression behaviors faced by women. This corroborates with findings from Kawai (2005), Sue et al. (2007), and Wong et al. (2011), highlighting that women often encounter discrimination due to a lack or weakness of authority. The underrepresentation of women in positions of strong authority, coupled with weaknesses in confronting cultural codes, contributes to microaggression behaviors in the form of gender-based discrimination. Moreover, exposure to abuse of power emerged as a substantial factor influencing gender microaggression behaviors toward women. Similar findings were noted in the study by Vyjayanthi et al. (2020), particularly in the field of health, revealing microaggressive behaviors such as underestimating women's abilities, encountering sexually inappropriate comments, being directed to mundane tasks, and experiencing feelings of exclusion or marginalization. These findings collectively contribute to the understanding of gender microaggression behaviors directed toward women teachers. The identified sub-dimensions and associated factors emphasize the nuanced nature of these behaviors, offering insights for future research and interventions to foster more inclusive and equitable educational environments.

Within the scope of this research, second-class citizenship emerged as a pivotal factor influencing gender microaggression behaviors encountered by women. This observation aligns with the findings of a study conducted by Rosemary et al. (2022), which delved into the practical manifestations of gender microaggression behaviors. These behaviors were noted to have detrimental effects on individuals' well-being, perpetuating gender-based inequalities. In the study by Smith et al. (2022), an exploration of gender microaggression behaviors in the context of business life revealed a spectrum of microaggressive behaviors associated with characteristics such as ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and age. The research determined that these behaviors contributed to the narrowing of women's professional spheres, leading to their devaluation and relegation to the background.

Miyake (2018) expounded on the persistence of microaggression behaviors faced by women, particularly in business settings, clarifying how these behaviors contribute to the constriction of women's opportunities and their marginalization within the workplace. This resonates with Franklin and Boyd-Franklin's (2000) study, where microaggression behaviors manifested as delegitimization, ignoring, and cultural invalidation. In the comprehensive study conducted by Sue et al. (2007), women were identified as being subjected to gender microaggression behaviors, positioned as second-class citizens with accompanying assumptions of inferiority. This echoes the significance of the second-class citizenship factor in understanding and addressing gender microaggression behaviors.

The research also identified masculine behavior tendencies as a noteworthy factor influencing gender microaggression behaviors experienced by women. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Kaskan and Ho (2016), which explored the relationship between women athletes and microaggression behaviors. The research highlighted three key themes: objectification towards women, imposition of restrictive gender roles, and the assumption of women's inferiority. It was concluded that societal perceptions often limit the recognition of women's achievements and talents, reinforcing traditional (masculine) roles and perpetuating a sexist approach that diminishes their success. Sprow et al.'s (2021) study, focused on the evaluation of studies related to gender microaggression behaviors, emphasized the persistence of such behaviors across various work domains. It underscored the inadequacy of women's representation in the workforce, particularly highlighting the insufficiency of gender parity in professional settings. Collectively, these findings contribute to a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted impact of gender microaggression behaviors, shedding light on specific factors such as second-class citizenship and masculine behavior tendencies. These insights are crucial for devising strategies to mitigate and eradicate gender-based microaggressions in diverse societal contexts, especially within professional environments.

## Limitations

This study sought to construct a comprehensive scale for measuring the gender microaggression behaviors experienced by women teachers in their professional roles. The developed scale, comprising 21 items and organized into 5 sub-dimensions, proved instrumental in assessing and categorizing these behaviors. Utilizing a 5-point Likert scale, with scores ranging from 21 to 105, a higher score on the scale indicates a heightened prevalence of gender microaggression behaviors. The identified sub-dimensions encompass weakness of professional authority, exposure to abuse of power, assumptions of traditional gender roles, second-class citizen treatment, and the manifestation of a tendency towards masculine behavior. TPGMS has been shown to be valid and reliable in identifying gender microaggressions experienced by teachers in their professional lives.

The study’s findings are significant in terms of both the scale’s development process and its intended purpose. Moreover, the alignment of these results with comparable studies in the literature enhances the robustness of the research. However, it is imperative to acknowledge certain limitations, notably the regional specificity of the sample drawn solely from Kayseri province and the exclusive focus on women teachers. Recognizing that gender microaggression behaviors may vary based on factors such as profession, age, and cultural characteristics underscores the need for caution in generalizing the findings beyond the studied demographic.

## Suggestions

The findings revealed that gender microaggression behaviors towards women teachers are multifaceted and include various dimensions such as weakness of professional authority and exposure to abuse of power. These behaviors have significant social, psychological, and economic impacts. The study's results align with existing literature, emphasizing the persistence and detrimental effects of gender microaggression behaviors across different contexts. This includes manifestations like delegitimization, cultural invalidation, and imposition of traditional gender roles, which contribute to the marginalization and devaluation of women in professional settings. Policymakers should use the findings from this study to develop and enforce policies aimed at reducing gender microaggressions in educational settings. This includes creating guidelines and support systems for reporting and addressing instances of microaggressions. Specifically, an examination of gender microaggression behaviors can equip school psychologists with insights to effectively address and counteract microaggressions when formulating strategies for their stakeholders. Moreover, heightened awareness of gender microaggression behaviors can empower school administrators within both public and private institutions to implement preventive measures against such behaviors.

This scale offers a versatile tool for identifying the gender microaggression behaviors experienced by women teachers and assessing the severity of these behaviors across diverse samples. Future research should consider expanding the sample population beyond the Kayseri province to include a more diverse demographic. This would help generalize the findings and ensure they apply to a broader range of educational contexts and cultural settings. Future studies should explore the intersectionality of gender microaggressions with other identity factors such as race, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation. Understanding these intersections can provide deeper insights into the compounded effects of multiple forms of discrimination. Consequently, the scale's utility extends beyond its initial development, offering a robust instrument for ongoing investigations into the nuanced dimensions of gender microaggressions in different contexts and populations.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

## Ethics

All ethical rules were followed during the collection and analysis of the research data. The ethics application for the study was made on 21.12.2022 and the research was carried out with the approval of Hacettepe University Educational Sciences Ethics Committee dated 13.12.2022 and numbered 2534752. It was stated that the data obtained from the research will be used only for scientific purposes and will not be shared with third parties.

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