

A Qualitative Exploration of Women's Perceptions of Optimal Bystander Interventions in Gender Microaggressions



Radboud University Nijmegen

Master Thesis
Year 2022-2023

Master: Strategic Human Resources Leadership

Topic: Speak Up – From being a bystander to becoming a constructive supporter

Name student: mr. L.L.M.A. Derksen

Student number: s1009914

Date: June 23, 2023

Abstract

This research examines women's perceptions of key features of optimal bystander interventions in relation to gender microaggressions targeting women in the workplace. To this day, gender microaggressions perpetuate gender biases that marginalize women, yet little is known about how to best quell them. By employing an abductive approach through incorporating existing research literature and semi-structured interviews, this research underscores the importance of active bystander intervention, mostly by supporting the target and by addressing the microaggression to prevent future occurrences. However, this study also demonstrates that there is no one-size-fits-all optimal bystander intervention. Various contextual factors play a crucial role, and this research has identified multiple circumstances that influence women's perceptions of optimal interventions. Recognizing the influence of the Gender Identity Theory further enhances our understanding of how women perceive and respond to gender microaggressions (differently), thereby informing the development of effective bystander interventions. Optimal bystander interventions require bystanders to carefully tailor their responses to the specific situation and to the individuals involved. By taking into account the proposed considerations for optimal bystander interventions, active bystanders ensure that targets receive the necessary support while taking an important step towards making expressions of gender bias collectively unacceptable.

Keywords: gender microaggressions, bystander interventions, key features of optimal bystander interventions, gender bias, Gender Identity Theory, bystander intervention guide.

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Literature review	7
<i>Gender microaggressions</i>	7
<i>Gender Identity Theory to explore gender microaggressions</i>	8
<i>Bystander interventions in relation to gender microaggressions</i>	9
<i>Optimal bystander interventions</i>	9
<i>Factors influencing bystander intervention</i>	12
<i>Gender Identity Theory to explore (optimal) bystander interventions</i>	13
<i>Conceptual Framework</i>	14
Methodology	15
<i>Research design</i>	15
<i>Data collection</i>	15
<i>Quality criteria</i>	18
<i>Data analysis</i>	18
Research results	21
<i>Influential contextual factors</i>	21
<i>Strategic goal of bystander intervention</i>	22
<i>Reactive behaviors</i>	23
<i>Proactive behaviors</i>	23
<i>Dependent on circumstances</i>	24
<i>Perceived effectiveness of bystander intervention</i>	24
<i>Person(ality) of the intervening bystander</i>	25
<i>Manner of intervening</i>	26
<i>Time and place of intervening</i>	27
<i>Proposed Conceptual Framework</i>	28
<i>Practical guidelines</i>	30
Discussion	31
<i>Contribution to knowledge</i>	33
<i>Practical and managerial implications</i>	34
<i>Limitations and considerations for future research</i>	35
<i>Conclusion</i>	36
References	37
Appendices	43
<i>Appendix 1 – Consent Form</i>	43
<i>Appendix 2 – Interview guide</i>	47

<i>Appendix 3 – Initial coding template</i>	51
<i>Appendix 4.1 – Final coding template 1/2</i>	52
<i>Appendix 4.2 – Final coding template 2/2</i>	53
<i>Appendix 5 – Extract from research diary</i>	54
<i>Appendix 6 – Interview analysis per respondent</i>	57
<i>Appendix 7 – Codebook</i>	59

Introduction

Blatant forms of gender bias, such as sexism, harassment, and violence, have been linked to negative short- and long-term health outcomes, which disproportionately impact women (Campbell et al., 2003). Although overt gender bias against women within organizations has started to decline due to social unacceptability (Gartner et al., 2020), discrimination is not disappearing, but rather has become more subtle in nature (Basford et al., 2014). To explore the breadth of gender bias facing women, scholars are increasingly dedicating attention to expressions of subtle gender biases in the workplace, also called gender microaggressions (e.g., Basford et al., 2014; Haynes-Baratz et al., 2021a). This research defines *gender microaggressions* targeting women as “intentional or unintentional actions or behaviors that exclude, demean, insult, oppress, or otherwise express hostility or indifference toward women” (Basford et al., 2014, p. 341). The study by Deloitte Global (2023), involving 5,000 working women across 10 countries over 2022-2023, revealed that 44% reported experiencing non-inclusive behaviors, with 88% of these behaviors being microaggressions. Hence, nearly half of women have experienced microaggressive situations at work in the past year (Deloitte Global, 2023).

Being the target of gender microaggressions has been linked to health problems such as depression, anxiety, and lower self-esteem (Nadal, 2010), and to emotional responses like stress, feelings of worthlessness, guilt, and anger (Sue, 2010a). In the workplace, gender microaggressions can make women feel overlooked, devalued, disrespected, and objectified by their male colleagues (Sue, 2010a). There is also ample evidence that experiencing workplace gender microaggressions negatively impacts women’s job satisfaction, work productivity, and turnover rates (Haynes-Baratz et al., 2021a). By draining individuals of physical and emotional resources, microaggressions uphold inequity and diminish the quality of life of marginalized groups, thereby perpetuating barriers for marginalized groups to enter and advance in the workplace (Bond & Haynes-Baratz, 2022; Sue, 2010a). Furthermore, gender microaggressions can be risk factors for blatant forms of bias, because “work environments that are seen as tolerating daily disrespect and hostility toward women tend to also be workplaces where explicit forms of harassment are more prevalent” (Bond & Haynes-Baratz, 2022, p. 223).

Gender microaggressions can even have a stronger negative impact than blatant forms of gender bias (Jones et al., 2017; King & Jones, 2016). This may be because targets of microaggressions must spend time and emotional energy trying to figure out what just happened and why, unlike their reactions to blatant expressions of bias (Haynes-Baratz et al., 2021a). It is important to note that ‘women’ are not a homogeneous group, meaning every woman can experience gender microaggressions in different ways (Haynes-Baratz et al., 2021a). This especially holds for women with multiple marginalized identities who might face bias in multiple ways (Haynes-Baratz et al., 2021a).

To this day, gender microaggressions perpetuate gender bias and inequity (Gartner et al., 2020), and have detrimental consequences (e.g., Bond & Haynes-Baratz, 2022; Nadal, 2010; Sue, 2010a). Despite ample knowledge on blatant gender bias targeting women, relatively little is known about

gender microaggressions, or how best to quell them (e.g., Gartner et al., 2020; Haynes-Baratz et al., 2021a). The study by Deloitte Global (2023) revealed that over half of women who experienced microaggressions did not report these experiences, with the most cited reason for this being the feeling that the behavior was not serious enough to report. Research also found that when targets of gender microaggressions do speak up, they risk “being seen as overreacting or too sensitive; yet, if they do not challenge the behavior, others may assume they did not find it offensive” (Bond & Haynes-Baratz, 2022, p. 224). Given the limited (effectiveness of) reports by targets, following Haynes-Baratz et al. (2021a), this research considers activating bystanders to be promising in challenging gender microaggressions. According to Banyard (2011), *bystanders* are “individuals who are not directly involved in the situation as a victim or perpetrator but by their very presence, have the potential to do nothing, to step in and diffuse a high-risk situation and help and make it better, or to make the situation worse by condoning a perpetrator’s behavior or being unsupportive in responding to a victim” (p. 216).

Whereas the term bystander in traditional literature was used to imply passivity (e.g., Darley & Latané, 1968), more recent literature moves the focus to active intervention (e.g., Basford et al., 2014). Following Bond and Haynes-Baratz (2022), this research uses the term *bystander intervention* to highlight the notion of actively doing something if one sees something. Activating colleagues as bystanders can ensure quick responses, as colleagues are most proximal to daily exchanges (Bond & Haynes-Baratz, 2022). Bystanders can mitigate the harm microaggressions inflict, support targets, and challenge perpetrators, thereby taking an important step towards making expressions of gender bias collectively unacceptable (Bond & Haynes-Baratz, 2022; Johnson et al., 2021; Sue, 2019). By raising awareness about gender microaggressions, bystanders can also encourage reporting or confronting microaggressions and promote self-reflection on individual behavior (Basford et al., 2014).

Previous research has identified contextual factors which might facilitate or hinder bystander intervention (e.g., Bond & Haynes-Baratz, 2022; Haynes-Baratz et al., 2021a). Of these contextual factors, some (inter)personal factors have been linked to one’s gender identity by the Gender Identity Theory (GIT). Whereas GIT has only been applied to blatant gender bias (e.g., Burns et al., 2019; Yule & Grych, 2017), this research utilizes GIT as a lens through which gender microaggressions and bystander interventions can be understood (Hogg, 2016; Salin, 2021; Schmader & Block, 2015; Wood & Eagly, 2015). This allows for an exploration of linkages between one’s gender identity and actual or preferred bystander behavior and possible gendered differences in bystander interventions (e.g., Banyard, 2011; Jóhannsdóttir & Ólafsson, 2004; Schmader & Block, 2015).

Additionally, previous research has suggested strategies on how to intervene, which generally involve recognizing and analyzing the microaggression, deciding whether and how to respond, and employing various response techniques in the moment (Bullock et al., 2021). However, this research has focused on blatant forms of gender bias, like sexual assault, and other types of microaggressions, like racial microaggressions (e.g., Johnson et al., 2021; McMahon & Banyard, 2012; McMahon et al., 2013; Sue et al., 2019). To date, there is absence of work on bystander interventions to combat gender

microaggressions targeting women (e.g., Sue et al., 2019). More specifically, there is absence of work on women's perceptions of optimal bystander interventions to address gender microaggressions in the workplace. Though prior research provides guidance for responding to gender microaggressions, need exists for an evidence-based understanding of optimal bystander interventions to effectively disarm microaggressions, from the perspective of female targets (Bullock et al., 2021; Haynes-Baratz et al., 2021a). Therefore, the following research question has been formulated:

How can bystanders optimally intervene in relation to gender microaggressions targeting women in the workplace?

This research contributes to literature and practice in several ways. First, a contribution to existing literature (by e.g., Banyard, 2011, 2015; Gartner et al., 2020; McMahon & Banyard, 2012; McMahon et al., 2013) is made by focusing in-depth on gender microaggressions in the workplace, thereby generating more awareness and knowledge of gender microaggressions as a contemporary social issue. Second, optimal bystander intervention is investigated in relation to gender microaggressions targeting women in the workplace, thereby extending existing literature on bystander intervention beyond blatant forms of gender bias and other types of microaggressions (e.g., Bond & Haynes-Baratz, 2022; Bullock et al., 2021; Haynes-Baratz et al., 2021a; Johnson et al., 2021; McMahon & Banyard, 2012; McMahon et al., 2013; Sue et al., 2019). In doing so, GIT will be utilized beyond blatant gender bias to explore how women perceive (optimal) bystander interventions in relation to gender microaggressions, including potential gendered differences in actual and preferred behaviors.

With these theoretical contributions, the current research also contributes to practice. That is, to date, literature lacks consensus regarding how to best address gender microaggressions (Gartner et al., 2020). Given the promising role of bystander interventions, this research investigates what, according to women, constitutes optimal bystander interventions to effectively address and combat gender microaggressions. This knowledge can enable individuals to become effective bystanders in microaggressive situations. Moreover, organizations can use this knowledge to create an inclusive working environment and to potentially design and implement bystander intervention training programs, which, to date, are not prevalent in workplaces (EEOC, 2016). On macro level, society can benefit from knowledge on helpful and effective bystander interventions in relation to gender microaggressions, to make expressions of gender bias collectively unacceptable (Bond & Haynes-Baratz, 2022).

To answer the research question, the next chapter will provide a review of relevant existing literature on gender microaggressions and bystander interventions. To gain further understanding on the topic of bystander interventions in gender microaggressions, qualitative interviews were conducted. The rationale for choosing the adopted methodological approach and a detailed account of how the research was conducted will be provided in the Methodology chapter. Afterwards, the results of the study will be presented. Finally, the discussion will include the interpretation of the results, the contribution to both theory and practice, a critical reflection on the limitations of the research and directions for further research.

Literature review

In this literature review, first gender microaggressions and their different manifestations will be discussed. Afterwards, bystander interventions in gender microaggressions will be explored, focusing on (optimal) bystander interventions and factors influencing bystander intervention. The Gender Identity Theory will be incorporated into both sections to explore how one's gender identity can explain gender microaggressions and (women's perceptions of) optimal bystander interventions. The literature review will conclude with a conceptual framework incorporating the preceding research literature.

Gender microaggressions

Originally, microaggressions referred to derogatory representations of African Americans (Pierce et al., 1977). Today, the concept of microaggressions encompasses any marginalized group in society; they can be gender-based, sexual-orientation-based, class-based, and/or disability-based (e.g., Sue, 2010a; Sue, 2010b). This research focuses on gender microaggressions targeting women in the workplace, as a covert form of gender bias. Microaggressions differ from blatant forms of gender bias because of their often-ambiguous nature, the ways in which single microaggressions are often dismissed as minor, and the cumulative nature of their negative impact (Bond & Haynes-Baratz, 2022; Sue, 2010a).

Microaggressions have several manifestations. For example, microaggressions can occur interpersonally through comments and actions of a perpetrator (Sue, 2010a) and environmentally through organizational and societal norms, structures, practices, policies and/or social media (Bond & Haynes-Baratz, 2022; Sue et al., 2007). This research will focus on interpersonal gender microaggressions targeting women in the workplace, as they are expressed by an identifiable perpetrator to which a bystander can respond. Interpersonal microaggressions may differ for people belonging to the same target group, as individuals occupying multiple marginalized identities often experience bias in ways that are unique to those intersectional identities (e.g., Nadal et al., 2015). The content of a microaggression can therefore differ as a function of the marginalized statuses a target occupies (Haynes-Baratz et al., 2021a). To make delineated statements about gender microaggressions, this research attempts to focus purely on gender microaggressions, thereby controlling for other possible intersecting identities (e.g., race or disability).

Sue et al. (2007) expanded the concept of racial microaggressions by introducing a tripartite categorization, involving: microinsults, microinvalidations, and microassaults. Research has found this tripartite categorization to be equally valid for gender microaggressions (Capodilupo et al., 2010). In terms of gender microaggressions, microinsults are rude and/or insensitive comments with a hidden insulting message that demean a person's identity (Sue et al., 2007). An example is when an employer tells a prospective female job applicant: "I believe the most qualified person should get the job, regardless of gender", which may convey the message that women are not qualified (Sue et al., 2007). Microinvalidations are communications that exclude, negate, or nullify someone's experiences and/or

feelings (Sue et al., 2007). An example is that when a woman contributes an idea, people look the other way and take no notice, but when a man poses an identical idea, he is applauded and praised by fellow colleagues, hinting that contributions of women are perceived as less worthy than those from men (Sue, 2010a). Microassaults, the most egregious form, are explicit discriminations meant to hurt the intended target, like name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions (Sue et al., 2007). Examples of microassaults are sexist jokes or referring to women as ‘bitches’ (Capodilupo et al., 2010).

Previous research on gender microaggressions has mentioned Sue et al.’s (2007) tripartite microaggression categorization (e.g., Johnson et al., 2021; Miyake, 2018). However, according to Gartner et al. (2020), most studies on gender microaggressions merely describe and define the tripartite categorization, yet they do not incorporate this categorization into their frameworks or measures. Contrary, Basford et al. (2014) and Bullock et al. (2021), for example, utilized the tripartite microaggression categorization in their studies to explore differences across microaggression categories. For instance, Basford et al. (2014) found that microassaults are the most perceived microaggression and result in the most negative work outcomes, whereas microinvalidations are the least perceived and result in the least negative work outcomes. Moreover, Bullock et al. (2021) found that microassaults necessitate immediate bystander responses, whereas responding to microinsults and microinvalidations is more dependent on context and intent. Given the previously found differences between different categories of microaggressions, the design of this research will utilize Sue et al.’s (2007) tripartite microaggression categorization to examine whether women perceive optimal bystander interventions to differ between microinsults, microinvalidations, and microassaults.

Gender Identity Theory to explore gender microaggressions

To further understand gender microaggressions as a social issue, the Gender Identity Theory (GIT) is used as a lens. GIT reflects people’s understanding of themselves in terms of categorizing oneself as part of either the male or female social group, and in terms of ascribing certain traits that are associated with being male or female to oneself (Schmader & Block, 2015). GIT posits that individuals make comparisons between their own group(s), also called the in-group(s), and other groups to which they do not belong, also called the out-groups (e.g., Hogg, 2016; Tajfel, 1974; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). With this comparison, individuals ensure that the in-group is positively differentiated from and more favorably evaluated than out-groups, which provides a basis for intergroup bias (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dovidio et al., 2017; Hogg, 2016; Salin, 2021).

Following Robinson et al. (2018), gender microaggressions imply that a particular gender group is devalued in a social context. Men often perceive themselves as the superior in-group as opposed to marginalized out-groups like women, thus forming grounds for gender bias, such as gender microaggressions, to maintain their privileged position at the expense of women (Kende & Shnadel, 2017; Salin, 2021; Sue, 2010a). Previous research has shown the over-representation of male perpetrators in relation to gender bias (e.g., Salin, 2021). Therefore, in this research, Dutch white men

are seen as the perpetrator group, whereas Dutch white women are seen as the target group. It is, however, important to acknowledge that men and women can both be perpetrators and targets of gender bias, in both same-sex and other-sex incidents (Salin, 2021; Stockdale et al., 2004).

Bystander interventions in relation to gender microaggressions

In many workplaces, the dominant approach to gender bias is after-the-fact policies and mechanisms for reporting and seeking redress (Bond & Haynes-Baratz, 2022). According to Bond and Haynes-Baratz (2022), these approaches are “limited in their effectiveness given that the vast majority of cases of workplace harassment are never formally reported” (p. 223). Targets who experience harassment fail to report these incidents because “they fear disbelief of their claim, inaction on their claim, blame, or social or professional retaliation” (EEOC, 2016, paragraph II.C). To add to this, the ambiguous nature of microaggressions increases the barrier to report such incidents (Bond & Haynes-Baratz, 2022). Issues of gender microaggressions will therefore never be fully dealt with through a complaint approach (EEOC, 2016). In line with Haynes-Baratz et al. (2021a), this research recognizes the activation of bystanders as a promising approach for addressing gender microaggressions. That is, according to Haynes-Baratz et al. (2021b), evidence suggests that bystanders are often more effective than targets when responding to expressions of bias.

Optimal bystander interventions

Research has been conducted on bystander interventions in situations of sexual assault, indicating that bystanders are faced with many options on how to intervene (e.g., McMahon & Banyard, 2012; McMahon et al., 2013). McMahon and Banyard (2012) distinguish between reactive and proactive bystander interventions. Reactive bystander interventions may occur when perceiving risk that an assault might happen, when witnessing the assault or when hearing of the assault afterwards (McMahon & Banyard, 2012). Possible reactive interventions in relation to sexual assault are provision of support to the target (either publicly or privately), confronting the perpetrator, reporting the perpetrator to authorities, and cooperating with police or judicial investigations (McMahon & Banyard, 2012). McMahon and Banyard (2012) define proactive bystander interventions as “positive actions that bystanders can take to demonstrate a commitment to addressing sexual violence regardless of whether they have witnessed an explicit behavior of sexual violence” (p. 10). Possible proactive interventions in relation to sexual assault are strengthening individual knowledge and skills, promoting community education, fostering coalitions and networks, changing organizational practices, and influencing policy and legislation (Cohen & Swift, 1999; McMahon & Banyard, 2012).

Sue et al. (2019) focused on bystander interventions in relation to racial microaggressions. Table 1 provides an overview of the several bystander interventions Sue et al. (2019) suggested to disarm racial microaggressions, as well as the classification of these interventions into four major strategic goals

in relation to microaggressions: (1) make the invisible visible; (2) disarm the microaggression; (3) educate the perpetrator; and (4) seek external reinforcement or support. A combination of these strategies is also possible (Sue et al., 2019).

Table 1

Bystander interventions to disarm racial microaggressions

Strategic Goal	Tactics	Objectives
<i>Make the invisible visible</i>	Undermine the bias	Bring the microaggression to the forefront of the person's awareness. Strike back, defend the target.
	Name and make the bias explicit	Indicate to perpetrator that they've said something offensive.
	Challenge the stereotype	Force the perpetrator to consider the impact of what was said.
	Ask for clarification	Force the perpetrator to realize the meaning of what was said and ask for the reasoning behind it.
<i>Disarm the microaggression</i>	Express disagreement	Instantly stop or deflect the microaggression.
	State values and set limits	Communicate disagreement or disapproval towards the perpetrator in the moment (e.g., urge perpetrator to show more respect).
	Describe what is happening	Communicate disapproval (e.g., you as bystander feel uncomfortable because of offensive or hurtful comments).
	Use an exclamation	Communicate disapproval (e.g., 'Ouch!').
	Nonverbal communication	Communicate disapproval (e.g., shaking head).
	Interrupt and redirect	Communicate disapproval (e.g., redirect conversation to task at hand).
<i>Educate the perpetrator</i>	Remind perpetrator of the rules	Communicate disapproval (e.g., express that behavior is against code of conduct).
	Differentiate between intent and impact	Engage in dialogue with perpetrator to indicate how and why what they have said is offensive.
	Appeal to the perpetrator's values and principles	Facilitate a possible more enlightening conversation and exploration of the perpetrator's biases (e.g., 'acting this way undermines your intentions of being inclusive').
	Point out the commonality	Encourage the perpetrator to explore the origins of their beliefs and attitudes towards targets (e.g., point to shared factor between perpetrator and target).
	Promote empathy	Encourage the perpetrator to explore the origins of their beliefs and attitudes towards targets (e.g., 'how would you feel if someone held this bias against you?').
<i>Seek external reinforcement or support</i>	Point out how they benefit	Encourage the perpetrator to explore the origins of their beliefs and attitudes towards targets (e.g., 'learning about biases will make you better employee').
	Alert leadership	Partake in regular self-care to maintain psychological and physical well-being.
	Report	Check in with self and others to ensure optimal levels of functioning, this reminds targets they are not alone.
	Therapy or counseling	Send message to perpetrators that behavior will not be tolerated or accepted.
	Buddy system	Send message that behavior will not be tolerated or accepted (e.g., choose colleague to check in with regarding biases).
	Support group	Send message that behavior will not be tolerated or accepted.

Note. Adapted from "Disarming racial microaggressions: Microintervention strategies for targets, White allies, and bystanders", by D.W. Sue, S. Alsaidi, M.N. Awad, E. Glaeser, C.Z. Calle & N. Mendez, 2019, *American Psychologist*, 74(1), pp. 136-138 (DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000296>).

Another potential bystander intervention is to remain passive, retreat, or give up, which can be perceived as bystanders abandoning the target and condoning the perpetrator's behavior, thereby leaving gender biases unchallenged (Bond & Haynes-Baratz, 2022; Sue et al., 2019). Not only is the microaggression harmful to targets, but inaction of bystanders leaves targets wondering if the bystanders noticed the microaggression, and if so, why they did not speak up (Johnson et al., 2021).

Following Haynes-Baratz et al. (2021a), bystander intervention does more harm than good when the intervention conveys doubt about the target's ability to handle the situation, or when issues are too

private to address publicly, or when the bystander has concern about betraying the target's trust. Other harmful bystander interventions are labeled 'secondary microaggressions', which are responses to microaggressions "in ways that further invalidate or deny the target's experience of the microaggression, exacerbate the given situation and inflict even more harm on the target" (Johnson et al., 2021, p. 1027). These secondary microaggressions include (a) victim blaming, which places the responsibility of an objectively negative outcome onto the target (e.g., painting target as overly sensitive); (b) gaslighting, which upholds stereotypes and tries to manipulate targets into doubting themselves or questioning their sanity or memory; and (c) 'splaining (derived from mansplaining or whitesplaining), in which those of dominant groups provide rationale to those of marginalized groups about topics related to oppression and inequity (Johnson et al., 2021). Therefore, it is important for bystanders to operate with perspicacity and to understand the repercussions (both positive and negative) of their interventions (Sue et al., 2019).

Whereas Sue et al. (2019) imply that the bystander interventions to disarm racial microaggressions may be equally applicable to gender microaggressions, there is absence of work on interventions that can be used to specifically combat gender microaggressions. As Haynes-Baratz et al. (2021a) note, literature to date on gender bias has mostly focused on bystander intervention in relation to sexual assault. Considering the extensive body of literature detailing the profound impact of gender microaggressions, this research aims to address optimal bystander interventions in relation gender microaggressions targeting women in the workplace, thereby keeping the aforementioned intervention strategies in mind.

While ample research focuses on general bystander intervention strategies and contextual facilitators or barriers to intervention (e.g., Banyard, 2011; Bond & Haynes-Baratz, 2022; Haynes-Baratz, 2021a; McMahon & Banyard, 2012; McMahon et al., 2013; Sue et al., 2019), only a few studies have examined target perception of key features of optimal bystander intervention (e.g., Bullock et al., 2021). On this, Sue et al. (2019) suggested future research to examine whether and how targets want bystanders to intervene, to ultimately provide bystanders with an intervention guide to ensure optimal interventions (Bond & Haynes-Baratz, 2022; Bullock et al., 2021). Bullock et al. (2021), for instance, have examined target perceptions of ideal bystander interventions and found the microaggression context (e.g., involved identities, power dynamics) and the timing of the intervention (before, during, or after the microaggression) to be influential. To date, there is absence of research on women's perceptions of optimal bystander interventions in gender microaggressions in the workplace. This research will explore working women's preferences of ideal bystander behaviors, in which 'optimal' interventions will be derived from, among more, the timing and context of the ideal response to maximize the effectiveness of the intervention in terms of disarming (the impacts of) gender microaggressions (Bullock et al., 2021).

Factors influencing bystander intervention

Whether a bystander intervenes, and the specific bystander intervention chosen are often influenced by contextual considerations (e.g., Sue et al., 2019). Influential contextual factors are important to consider, as gaining knowledge on these factors provides the opportunity to increase facilitators and decrease barriers of prosocial bystander behaviors (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2008).

Banyard (2011), Bond and Haynes-Baratz (2022) and Haynes-Baratz et al. (2021a) argued that facilitators of bystander intervention can occur at multiple levels of analysis. First is the individual level, with possible facilitating factors being one's gender, personality, emotions, cognitions, and previous experiences (Haynes-Baratz et al., 2021a). Second is the interpersonal level, including possible facilitating factors like interpersonal relations, supportive peers, or when others have modeled intervention in similar solutions (Haynes-Baratz et al., 2021a). Third is the organizational level, with possible influential factors being the organizational culture and atmosphere, ground rules of appropriate behavior, and hierarchical structures (Haynes-Baratz et al., 2021a). And fourth is the societal level, possibly facilitating bystander intervention due to powerful societal events, like the #MeToo- and #TimesUp-movements (Bond & Haynes-Baratz, 2022).

There are also barriers at these levels of analysis that can hinder bystanders from intervening when witnessing a microaggression (Bond & Haynes-Baratz, 2022). For example, empirical studies show that people are less likely to help in microaggressive situations due to their subtle, covert, and ambiguous nature that makes microaggressions hard to recognize as an emergency (Banyard, 2011; Haynes-Baratz et al., 2021a). Moreover, Latané and Darley (1970) found that the speed as well as frequency of positive intervention decline when people believe others are also witness to the event. Other factors hindering bystander intervention as found by Haynes-Baratz et al. (2021a) are the lack of knowledge about how, when, where and with whom to intervene; the lack of confidence in the effectiveness of intervening; the fear of doing more harm than good; the fear of retribution in terms of a negative impact on one's own career; and the fear of jeopardizing collegial relationships.

Considering the different contextual factors influencing bystander behaviors, Bond and Haynes-Baratz (2022) argue that there is no one-size-fits-all bystander intervention. Further, the decision process on bystander intervention is not static or linear, as factors influencing bystander intervention change over time because of changing experiences, attitudes, or policies (Banyard, 2011). According to Haynes-Baratz et al. (2021b), bystanders should employ an environmental scan to know what particular intervention a bystander might adopt in a given situation, with elements of such a scan including "one's goals for intervention (e.g., get it to stop in the moment, support the target, and express one's value); the relationships among all involved in the incident (target, perpetrator, and bystander); the institutional context in which the incident occurs; and, the power dynamics amidst the individuals involved" (p. 3).

Gender Identity Theory to explore (optimal) bystander interventions

Though bystander intervention has not yet been linked to the Gender Identity Theory (GIT) in relation to gender microaggressions, GIT's implications regarding gender categorization and ascribing stereotypical gendered traits to oneself and others can provide valuable insights into when and how bystanders tend to respond to gender microaggressions. Research shows that people tend to sympathize more with individuals belonging to the in-group (e.g., same-sex colleagues) and less with individuals belonging to the out-group (e.g., opposite-sex colleagues) (Salin, 2021). Considering gender microaggressions targeting women, women are expected to be more likely to intervene than men, possibly due to a difference in personal experience with gender bias (Banyard, 2011; Basford et al., 2014). Additionally, according to Xie (2019), perpetrators are more likely to accept feedback from bystanders belonging to their in-group, as bystanders who are target group members are often perceived as an extension of the target and are thus likely to receive similar biased comments. This potentially causes women to prefer male bystanders to intervene rather than women.

Moreover, research has found gender differences in how bystanders respond in line with masculine and feminine stereotypes, with men more likely to assertively confront the perpetrator and women more likely to provide emotional support and avoid conflict (Banyard, 2011; Jóhannsdóttir & Ólafsson, 2004; Schmader & Block, 2015). These gendered differences could influence women's perceptions of optimal bystander behaviors they ascribe to men and women. For instance, women might desire a prompt, forceful, and objective response from male bystanders, whereas receiving emotional support afterwards might be preferred from female bystanders (Banyard, 2011; Heilman, 2012; Schmader & Block, 2015). Moreover, ascribing stereotypical gendered traits to oneself might influence one's perception of optimal bystander behavior. For instance, women ascribing communal behavior such as maintenance of relationships and conflict avoidance (e.g., Heilman, 2012) to themselves might desire lighthearted bystander responses that provide support instead of fierce and confronting responses that might jeopardize relationships.

In this regard, it is important to note that these arguments are based on general trends and do not imply uniform preferences or behaviors among all men or women. Individual differences, such as intersecting identities, can significantly influence women's preferences and bystander responses (e.g., Wood & Eagly, 2015). Moreover, according to Wood and Eagly (2015), "although gender identities foster behavior in line with gender roles, they also promote variability in sex differences because these identities differ across individuals and situations" (p. 469). For example, one's personal background, previous experiences, norms and values, but also changes in social roles in a society, yield variation in gender identities (Wood & Eagly, 2015). This variation in gender identities is important to acknowledge, to be aware of potentially differing preferences among women.

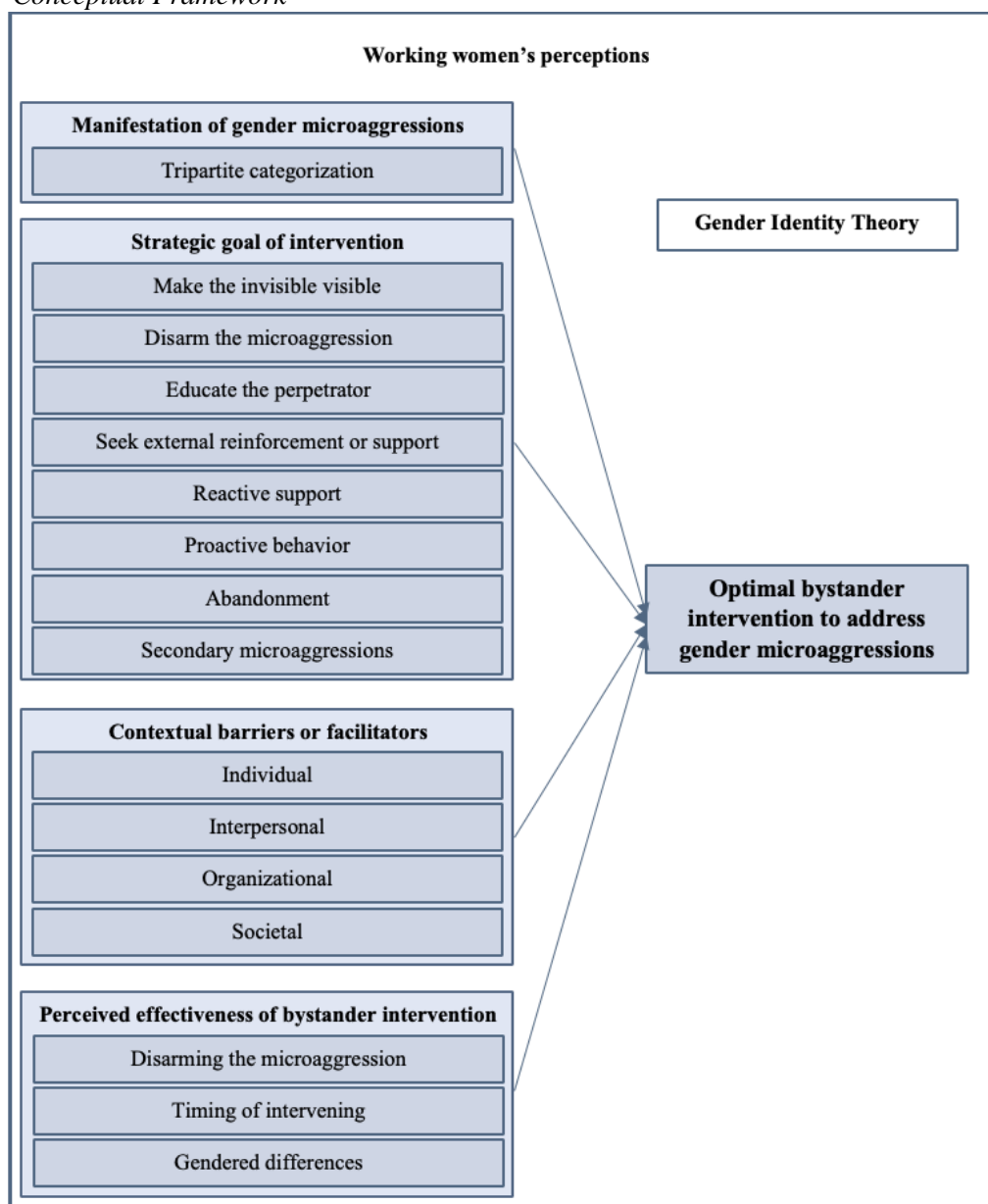
Given the foregoing, this research considers gender identity as a factor possibly influencing women's perceptions of optimal bystander interventions, thereby examining whether women perceive differences between male and female bystanders on how they could and/or should ideally respond.

Conceptual Framework

To answer the research question, based on the preceding literature review, a conceptual framework was created (see Figure 1). This framework incorporates the different factors that are expected to influence optimal bystander intervention to address gender microaggressions. In this research, all depicted factors, as well as optimal bystander interventions, are dependent upon working women's perceptions. Additionally, the depicted factors, optimal bystander interventions, and working women's perceptions are all to some extent expected to be influenced by the Gender Identity Theory.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Note. Conceptual framework of expected influential factors on optimal bystander interventions to address gender microaggressions, from the perspective of working women, as derived from research literature.

Methodology

To answer the research question, qualitative data was collected. The qualitative research method used was semi-structured interviews, with the dataset comprising 13 interviews with working women.

Research design

The aim of this research is to explore women's preferences of bystander interventions in depth, thereby providing valuable insights into gender microaggressions as a contemporary social issue. To do so, this research adopted a qualitative method. Qualitative research allows for the in-depth investigation of (people's experiences with) a real phenomenon, enabling researchers to make meaningful statements about the phenomenon in question (Bleijenbergh, 2015; Myers, 2020).

The design of this qualitative research is a cross-sectional study (Flick, 2007). A cross-sectional research design is a type of observational study that collects data from multiple respondents at one specific point in time, with no follow-ups (Wang & Cheng, 2020). Cross-sectional research is flexible, can cover many different areas of human behavior and conditions and is relatively quick to conduct when information is needed about contemporary events (Connelly, 2016). A limitation of cross-sectional research that should be considered is that it can merely provide a snapshot, meaning that different results might be found if another timeframe had been chosen (Connelly, 2016). Keeping this limitation in mind, a cross-sectional design is appropriate for this research given the limited time and number of empirical contacts with the research field, interviewing a single sample of women at one time only.

This research employed an abductive approach in both the data collection and data analysis. First, gender microaggressions and bystander interventions were approached from existing research literature (Bleijenbergh, 2015). The resulting conceptual framework (see Figure 1) was utilized as the main source for drafting the interview's guiding questions (see Appendix 2), thereby guiding the data collection, and for drafting the initial coding template (see Figure 2), thereby guiding the data analysis (King & Brooks, 2017; Myers, 2020). During the data collection, interview questions were added and altered as new and interesting themes emerged. After conducting the interviews, top-down and bottom-up analysis was combined, with codes stemming from existing research literature and emerging from the collected data (Myers, 2020). The researcher therefore went back and forth between theory and data to make sense of the gathered data, which is especially helpful if the theory at hand does not cover all interesting parts of the findings.

Data collection

Semi-structured interviews were selected as the qualitative research method for data collection. Interviews offer a rich source of data, allowing researchers to gather detailed information from participants in various roles and situations (Myers, 2020). Specifically, semi-structured interviews were chosen, thereby establishing the general structure prior to the interviews, including topics to cover and

some pre-formulated questions, while the actual flow and direction of the conversation developed as the interviews progressed (Drever, 1995). This approach provided interviewees with the freedom to express their thoughts and experiences in their own words and allowed for flexibility to pursue emergent themes, thereby possibly gaining new and important insights (Corbin & Morse, 2003; Meyers, 2020).

As targets of gender microaggressions in the workplace, working women are the most insightful in sharing their preferences of optimal bystander interventions. This research approached women who have previously experienced microaggressions in the workplace, as these experiences allow them to understand the complexities and impacts of such situations, which makes them best suited to imagine themselves in similar situations and formulate informed opinions and preferences regarding bystander interventions. By involving women who solely occupy the marginalized status of being a native Dutch white woman, thereby controlling for race as a potentially intersecting identity (Nadal et al., 2015), the researcher aimed to frame the research purely to gender microaggressions. The interviewed women are employed in various sectors, as gender microaggressions targeting women in the workplace can occur in all types of sectors (Sue, 2010a).

To gain access to working women, convenience sampling was used by approaching participants of the research population that were easily accessible to the researcher (Given, 2008). To access Dutch white working women, the researcher used her (LinkedIn) network and snowball sampling. Additionally, practical criteria were considered, such as availability at a given time and the willingness to participate in the research (Dörnyei, 2007). A total of 13 interviews were conducted for this research, see Table 2 for an overview. Given the research population, all interviews were conducted in Dutch.

Table 2

Overview of conducted interviews

Respondent	Age	Sector	Profession	Working experience in years	Duration of interview	Conducted in person / online
R1	25 – 35 years	Tourism	Sales for hotels	4 years	01:05:53	Online
R2	< 25 years	Healthcare	Healthcare worker	2 years	00:46:02	Online
R3	56 – 65 years	Education	Employee practice office	40 years	01:01:47	In person
R4	46 – 55 years	Construction	Senior construction planner	24 years	01:15:33	Online
R5	56 – 65 years	Education	Roster maker	45 years	01:14:01	Online
R6	< 25 years	Education	Junior scientific assistant	1 year	00:46:31	Online
R7	36 – 45 years	Human Resources	HR-consultant	10 years	00:57:28	In person
R8	36 – 45 years	Human Resources	HR-consultant	14 years	00:59:46	In person
R9	25 – 35 years	Education	Management assistant	2 years	01:23:52	In person
R10	< 25 years	Security	Airport security	2 years	01:04:13	Online

R11	25 – 35 years	Construction	Construction engineer	5 years	00:58:06	Online
R12	56 – 65 years	Financial services	Tax employee	44 years	01:10:48	In person
R13	46 – 55 years	Consultancy	HR-consultant	20 years	00:43:21	Online

Note. An overview of the gathered dataset comprising 13 interviews with native Dutch white women.

Adhering to research ethics principles, before partaking in the interviews, respondents were asked to read and sign an informed-consent form, which outlined the research purpose, duration, their rights to decline or withdraw from participation, and the procedures for contact and data handling (see Appendix 1). Explicit permission to record and transcribe the interviews was also obtained. After conducting the interviews, the interviews were transcribed with respect for confidentiality by ensuring the transcripts cannot be linked to the identity of the respondent. As soon as possible after the completion of this research, any personal data of the respondents will be deleted.

To conduct semi-structured interviews, an interview protocol was developed, which included a set of guiding interview questions as well as instructions on introducing the research, obtaining informed consent, and concluding the interview (see Appendix 2). By following the interview protocol, each interview began and ended the same, thereby ensuring that important information about the research and informed consent was shared with all respondents.

The interview protocol included around 30 questions, ranging from introductory questions about the respondent, to questions about their previous experiences with gender microaggressions, to questions about sketched scenarios of gender microaggressions, thereby focusing on the experienced and/or desired bystander interventions. To explore previous experiences with gender microaggressions, a critical incident approach (e.g., Chell, 1998) was used, which focuses on events that actually happened and were experienced or observed by respondents (Haynes-Baratz et al., 2021a). According to Haynes-Baratz et al. (2021a), this approach allows respondents “to indicate what was most relevant to them about their experience with bystander action (or inaction), rather than fitting their descriptions to response categories predetermined by the research” (p. 524). After the critical incident approach, to explore potential differences in optimal bystander interventions across microaggression types, following Bullock et al. (2021), scenarios of microinsults, microinvalidations, and microassaults were created based on the literature review. These scenarios depicted Dutch white women as targets of gender microaggressions in the workplace by male perpetrators in the presence of bystanders. Male was chosen as the gender of the perpetrator due to men’s over-representation as a perpetrator in excluding behaviors targeting women (Salin, 2021).

Considering the Gender Identity Theory, to explore whether the gender of the bystander was considered an important contextual factor which could influence optimal bystander interventions, respondents were initially asked to provide their views on optimal bystander responses without explicitly considering gender, followed by a later prompt to reflect on the potential impact of the bystander's gender on optimal responses.

Quality criteria

To ensure the quality of this research, the criteria for qualitative research outlined by Guba and Lincoln (1989) were taken into consideration. Credibility was addressed by allowing respondents to review both the interview transcripts and the results of the interviews, thereby providing an opportunity for member checking and validating the researcher's interpretations (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Moreover, the researcher kept track of the progress and adjustments made throughout the research in a research diary, to ensure dependability (for an extract from the research diary, see Appendix 5). Confirmability was enhanced by using extensive background literature, interview transcripts, and a codebook for coding the interviews (for the codebook, see Appendix 7), so future research can examine whether the results of this research came from the gathered data (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Additionally, the extensive background literature ensured accommodation, by connecting the findings of this research to existing theory on gender microaggressions and bystander interventions (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

To promote transferability, the interview transcripts and codebook served as a database of this research that allows for judgments of transferability among potential applicators (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, it is important to note that qualitative research has limited statistical generalizability (e.g., Cook & Campbell, 1979; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Instead, other modes of generalization, such as *moderatum* generalization (if characteristics point to particular structures in one situation, it can be hypothesized that the presence of such structures in other situations will lead to similar characteristics) or *naturalistic* generalization (the readers of the research findings naturally consider if those findings are prevalent or would work in their own contexts), may be more applicable (Buchanan, 2012, p. 365).

Finally, reliability was enhanced by utilizing a semi-structured interview design, ensuring that every interviewee answered the same set of main questions. This approach promoted consistency and reliability in data collection, allowing for meaningful comparisons and analysis of the responses (Bleijenbergh, 2015).

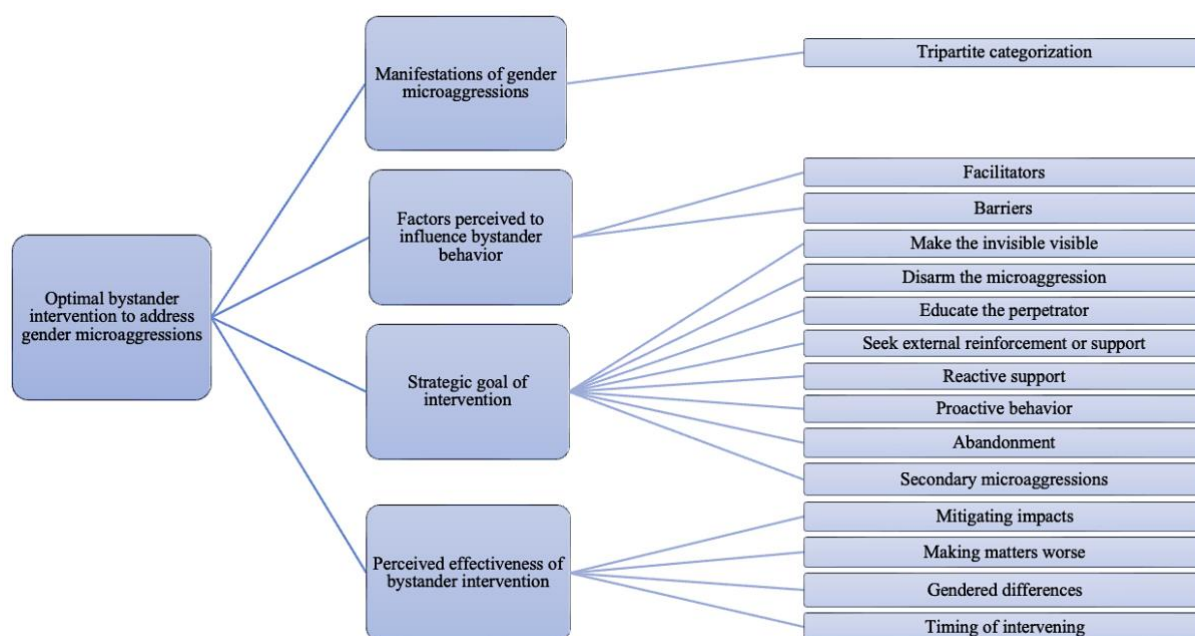
Data analysis

Coding the interview transcripts using ATLAS.TI-software was employed as data analysis to select relevant fragments from the interviews and interpret them (Bleijenbergh, 2015). As a form of abductive qualitative data analysis, template analysis was utilized, which strikes a balance between flexibility and structure in coding texts (King & Brooks, 2017). The theory-based codes were organized into meaningful and hierarchical groups (Bleijenbergh, 2015; King & Brooks, 2017), such as the strategic goals of intervention as derived from existing literature (Johnson et al., 2021; McMahon & Banyard, 2021; Sue et al., 2019). This resulted in aggregate dimensions and second-order themes, which can be seen in Figure 2. The literature review also resulted in first-order categories to observe the overarching dimensions, such as the tactics mentioned in previous research associated with the strategic goals of intervention (Johnson et al., 2021; McMahon & Banyard, 2021; Sue et al., 2019). Given the

size of the template, the initial coding template completed with the first-order categories can be seen in Appendix 3.

Figure 2

Initial coding template



Note. The initial aggregate dimensions and second-order themes as derived from the literature review.

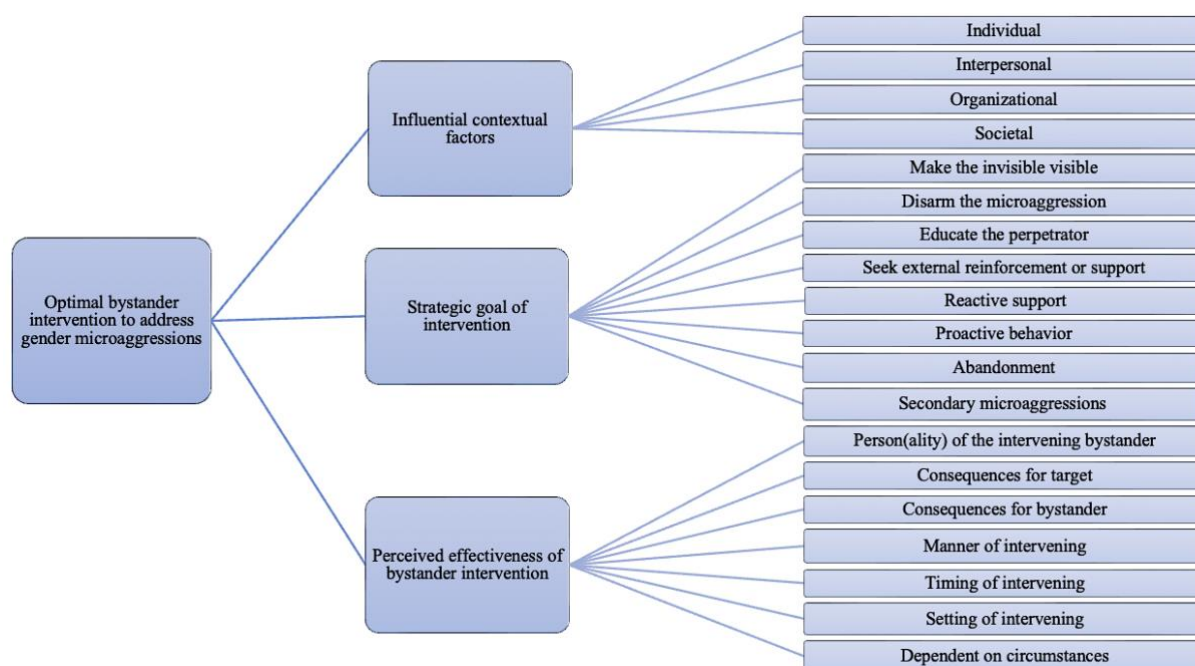
In line with the template analysis, this research employed a hybrid approach to coding. Following Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006), first the theory-based initial codes were applied to identify interesting segments of the transcripts. This was done by inserting the initial coding template into ATLAS.TI, and then coding segments of text that are representative of a specific code.

After conducting the interviews, the coding template was further developed by amending the hierarchical order of the codes derived from the literature review and by incorporating inductively derived codes that emerged from the data. For instance, it was found that contextual factors have a greater influence on (women's preferences of) bystander interventions than was initially thought. This resulted in adding relevant subcodes to the individual-, interpersonal-, organizational-, and societal-factors as part of the overarching theme of influential contextual factors perceived to facilitate or hinder (women's preferences of) bystander behavior. For individual factors, for example, the first-order categories of person(ality) of the perpetrator, the target and the bystander were added, with specific in-vivo codes to observe these person(alitie)s, such as one's character traits, hierarchical position, personal background, and previous experiences. And for the second-order theme perceived effectiveness of bystander intervention, more subcodes emerged from the interviews than had been derived from existing literature, such as the setting and manner of intervening, and more broadly the person(ality) of the intervening bystander. Again, relevant first-order categories were added, for instance for the setting of

intervening being in a group setting or in a one-on-one setting and before or after the target responds. Finally, whereas the initial coding template depicted the tripartite microaggression categorization as a separate second-order theme, the final coding template incorporated this as a first-order category, since the interviews revealed that this categorization affects the perceived effectiveness of bystander intervention. The foregoing resulted in a final template that ensured coverage of all relevant data. The aggregate dimensions and second-order themes of the final coding template can be seen in Figure 3. Given the size of the template, the final coding template completed with the first-order categories and in-vivo codes to observe the overarching dimensions can be seen in Appendices 4.1 and 4.2.

Figure 3

Final coding template



Note. The final aggregate dimensions and second-order themes as derived from existing research literature and emerged from the gathered data.

In line with the hybrid approach to coding, this final coding template was then inserted into ATLAS.TI, after which the interview transcripts were coded for a second time with the final codes. This hybrid approach allowed for testing existing research literature on bystander intervention in relation to gender microaggressions while also allowing for themes to emerge directly from the data.

Research results

The results from the interviews will be discussed according to three main dimensions of optimal bystander intervention that emerged from previous research and the interviews, namely: influential contextual factors; strategic goals of bystander intervention; and the perceived effectiveness of bystander intervention. The results section will describe interesting and/or surprising findings of the interviews in comparison to the literature review. For a complete overview of the factors mentioned by respondents, please refer to the final coding template (Appendices 4.1 and 4.2).

Influential contextual factors

To find out how bystanders can optimally intervene in gender microaggressive situations, respondents have noted that it is important to consider various contextual factors that can either facilitate or hinder optimal bystander intervention. Surprising is that, according to respondents, these contextual factors not only influence bystander behaviors, as was found in previous research, but they also influence women's perceptions of optimal bystander interventions. The latter will be illustrated by discussing interesting findings on individual-, interpersonal-, organizational-, and societal contextual factors.

The purpose of asking for examples of previous experiences with gender microaggressions was to invite respondents to recall bystander interventions they have experienced or would have desired, to enable them to formulate their preferences in the sketched microaggressive scenarios. What was surprising is that all respondents have been targets of gender microaggressions, yet most of them were unaware of the potential impact of the situation or had differing thoughts on the severity of the situation. For example, whereas some respondents find a sexist joke 'just a joke' and "too small to spend your time and energy on" (R3, R7, R11, R12), others find it belittling and offensive, "nearing transgressive behavior" (R4, R6, R8). According to respondents, their individual perception of the situation's severity influences whether and how they, as targets, would desire bystander intervention.

Most respondents expressed a desire for bystander intervention in gender microaggressions, especially when the target is unaware of the microaggression, unresponsive, or struggling to respond (R1, R3, R6, R8, R10). However, there are situations in which respondents do not want bystanders to respond. Reasons cited for this are: their own conflict-avoiding nature and reluctance to escalate the situation (R7, R8); the feeling that letting bystanders speak for them demonstrates weakness and that they are (now) articulate and confident to respond themselves (R1, R5, R9, R12, R13); and their perception of the perpetrator as being unable and unwilling to change (e.g., due to one's conservative views on gender roles, narcissistic traits, or a limited ability to reflect on oneself) (R3, R8, R9). Overall, respondents desire bystander intervention in most microaggressive situations, but from the foregoing follows that bystanders should be aware of the target's individual preferences to prevent them from intervening in situations where the target might not have wanted them to do so.

An interesting interpersonal factor influencing respondents' thoughts on optimal bystander intervention is the male-female ratio of the group in which the gender microaggression occurs. For instance, respondents assumed that female bystanders would be deterred from intervening in predominantly male groups, and that responding as a woman in such situations would have little chance of succeeding, hinting that they would rather have an intervention from a male bystander or no intervention at all (R2, R3, R6, R8, R13). This shows that bystanders must be attentive to the group composition in which the microaggressive situation occurs before deciding (how) to respond.

A newly found organizational factor that potentially influences preferences of bystander intervention is the organization's sector. For example, respondent 11 mentioned: "I think that you are kind of expected to accept more of these 'jokes' as a woman in certain places. After all, I work in the construction sector, so some jokes are like a part of the job". This was emphasized by respondent 4, who also works in the construction sector. In contrast, respondents working in healthcare-, education-, or HR-sectors reported a more feminine culture in which gender microaggressions rarely occur, and if they do, people are more eager to speak out (R5-R8). An organization's sector hence potentially influences the occurrence(s) of gender microaggressions and women's preferences of bystander interventions.

An interesting societal factor identified by respondents that influences optimal bystander interventions is generational differences. Generational differences are influential, as older individuals with often more conservative views on gender roles are perceived to be resistant to change, whereas younger generations are perceived to be more progressive. Respondent 10 highlighted this, stating:

I wonder if you can really create awareness amongst the perpetrators. It were only the older men, so for example the students who worked there did not do it. It is completely ingrained, and I think it is very difficult to change anything within them. (R10)

This statement emphasizes the influence of generational differences and traditional worldviews on the expression of gender microaggressions and the difficulty of educating those perpetrators, thereby influencing the target's desire for (no) bystander intervention.

Regarding societal norms and practices, despite still living in a 'men's world', respondents noted a positive shift towards breaking down gender roles with, for instance, more and more women working in construction (R4, R11), creating more equal opportunities for women with more women in higher positions in various sectors (R3, R12), and generating more awareness of gender bias with more people speaking out (R3, R8). The foregoing influences both the occurrence(s) of interpersonal gender microaggressions and women's perceptions of optimal bystander interventions, since most respondents feel that the time is now more appropriate to speak out and to desire bystander intervention against gender bias.

Strategic goal of bystander intervention

Overall, all strategic goals as proposed by previous literature (Johnson et al., 2021; McMahon & Banyard, 2012; Sue et al., 2019) were mentioned by respondents as potential optimal bystander

intervention strategies. Respondents' opinions on the strategic goals of optimal bystander intervention in the sketched microaggressive scenarios varied, although there were some shared preferences.

Reactive behaviors

The most optimal strategic goals identified by respondents are 'disarming the microaggression', 'making the invisible visible' and 'providing reactive support', which entail behaviors like openly addressing the perpetrator's inappropriate comments (R2-R4, R8-R12); openly questioning what was said and why it was said (R1, R4, R8, R13); openly suggesting the perpetrator's perspective when faced with a similar comment (R5); turning to the perpetrator afterwards to explain why the comment is problematic (R6); and/or offering support to the target afterwards (R11). Most respondents argued that an optimal intervention both supports the target and points out the microaggression to prevent future occurrences. Respondent 8, for example, mentioned: "Giving the victim the insight that they are not alone, like a form of solidarity, but also giving the perpetrator the insight that what he is saying is not normal, so urge him to start reflecting on himself". This statement stresses the importance of a twofold goal of optimal bystander intervention. This is an interesting finding, as it shows how the optimal intervention is perceived by most respondents to encompass more than one strategic goal, which bystanders should consider when deciding how to intervene.

Other interesting findings include respondents' varying opinions on the consequences and usefulness of bystanders reporting perpetrators to confidants. For instance, respondent 10 mentioned that she feels as if a microaggression is too small to be reported, and respondent 7 explained that she felt reporting would negatively increase the severity of the situation. Contrary, respondent 8 noted that reporting a microaggression is the most effective route to take, especially if the perpetrator persistently expresses microaggressions and is believed to be non-self-reflecting. Overall, most respondents preferred addressing the situation directly with the perpetrator and bystanders, before bystanders might seek external support.

Proactive behaviors

Some respondents believed that bystander interventions would not be needed if all colleagues proceed in 'proactive behavior' to prevent microaggressions from happening. A surprising finding is that, when asked to think about previous experiences with gender microaggressions, many respondents acknowledged that they subconsciously experienced more than they initially thought. Given this finding, most respondents reflected on the need to become more aware of gender microaggressions, but also of individual boundaries in relation to gender microaggressions (R3-R5, R7, R10, R13). Next to individual education, respondent 12 was adamant in the fact that gender microaggressions would not occur in her team because they discussed transgressive behavior and thereby educated each other on gender bias. The foregoing stresses the importance of individual and organizational education on gender bias to prevent gender microaggressions and to create knowledge and readiness about bystander intervention.

Related to the preceding finding is the substantial influence of the organizational culture and atmosphere on bystander interventions. An organizational atmosphere of cockiness, male dominance, and traditional gender biases acts as barrier to (the desire for) bystander intervention (R1, R3-R6). Therefore, respondents emphasized the importance of establishing social and psychological safety within an organization by creating an open and trusting atmosphere which allows targets and bystanders to express themselves (R12, R13). This could be achieved by openly discussing (gender) bias, for example following societal events regarding gender bias, by strengthening interpersonal relationships among colleagues, or by setting and enforcing ground rules on inclusive behavior (R8, R12, R13). The foregoing demonstrates the influence of the organizational culture and atmosphere on (the target's desire for) bystander interventions in response to gender microaggressions.

Dependent on circumstances

Consistent with previous research (e.g., Bond & Haynes-Baratz, 2022), all respondents acknowledged that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' bystander intervention. To further understand how bystanders should ideally behave, respondents were asked to consider the impacts of the situational and contextual factors and of the tripartite microaggression categorization. According to all respondents, the situational and contextual factors are most decisive for determining optimal bystander behaviors. For instance, respondent 10 stated: "It is actually more down to the scenario itself rather than the categorization into different microaggressions". From this follows that intervention techniques should be adaptable to different situations, with situational and contextual factors guiding the response.

The tripartite microaggression categorization was perceived by all respondents to be less relevant for optimal bystander behaviors, and respondents mentioned the same strategic goals of bystander intervention to be applicable to all gender microaggression categories. What was surprising is that half of the respondents argued that the microassault scenario, despite being the most egregious category (Sue et al., 2007), is either best ignored by bystanders (R1, R2, R7, R12), or that bystanders should only provide reactive support to the target (R3, R11). Contrary, some respondents found the microassault the most outrageous scenario and desired a fierce and confrontational bystander intervention (R8, R9, R10). This again shows how the target's individual perception of the situation's severity influences their preferences of optimal bystander behaviors. Overall, the tripartite microaggression categorization was found to be of negligible influence on women's perceptions of optimal bystander behaviors.

Perceived effectiveness of bystander intervention

The results on perceived effectiveness of bystander intervention are divided into the person(ality) of the intervening bystander, the consequences for both the target and the bystander, the manner of intervening, and the timing and setting of intervening.

Person(ality) of the intervening bystander

Given respondents' differing preferences of optimal bystander interventions, respondents emphasized the importance of bystanders knowing the target and her preferences (R1, R2, R4, R7, R11, R12). For instance, respondent 11 stated: "I would rather have bystanders who know me react than people who do not know me", which was endorsed by other respondents. Contrary, respondent 9 mentioned that bystanders should intervene regardless of interpersonal relations with the target, but that knowing the target would allow bystanders to intervene more substantively. On knowing the target's preferences, respondent 7 added: "If you know that someone is having a really hard time with something, as a bystander you are more likely to respond seriously than if you know that she does not mind it that much". Respondent 13 further suggested that bystanders should logically consider what the target would have wanted, and after intervening, check with the target if she found the intervention satisfactory. The familiarity of bystanders with the target therefore not only determines whether respondents want bystanders to respond, it also influences how bystanders should ideally respond.

In line with previous research on the Gender Identity Theory (GIT), the bystander's gender was mentioned by all respondents as significantly influencing the effectiveness of intervening. Respondent 13 made a striking comment:

I personally think that if a straight white man expresses a microaggression to a woman, a straight white man can best correct that man. And if it is a woman then you might get a reaction of 'oh you are just sticking up for each other'. And therein lies the difficulty, because I think women are more inclined to stick their necks out than straight white men, as they feel they have much more to lose than women. (R13)

More respondents considered male bystanders generally more effective and taken more seriously by male perpetrators, because "if the perpetrator does not respect the female target, then he will not have respect for a female bystander either" (R1). However, this does not suggest that female bystanders should refrain from responding, as respondents expressed doubts about male bystanders' awareness of microaggressions (R6, R13). Moreover, according to respondents, female bystanders are more understanding of the impact of microaggressions and are more able to intervene from a place of recognition and to speak more emotionally in the first-person, whereas male bystanders tend to respond more neutrally and factually (R6-R8, R11). Surprisingly, while acknowledging gendered differences in (the effectiveness of) interventions, some respondents mentioned a desire for men and women to respond the same, and ideally have the same effect (R2, R4, R5, R12). The foregoing is somewhat contrary to GIT but is an interesting avenue for further exploration to examine under what conditions male and female bystanders can intervene the same with the same effect.

Consequences of bystander intervention

Bystander intervention was perceived to be most optimal when it mitigates the impacts of the gender microaggressions for the target and others involved. Respondents emphasized the importance of

bystander intervention in making the target feel acknowledged, heard, and supported. Also, “if someone else notices it and also says something about it, then it will probably be taken more seriously” (R1). Respondents agreed that bystanders should respond even if they are uncertain of their intervention, because “at least you know that if you do not do anything, nothing will change” (R13).

However, respondents also mentioned potential negative consequences of bystander interventions, thereby indicating several behaviors that could worsen the situation. For instance, supporting the target afterwards can be seen as promoting gossip and creating a negative atmosphere (R5, R9). Conversely, doing nothing as a bystander or laughing at the perpetrator’s comments could give targets the feeling that bystanders abandon them and support the perpetrator (R1, R2, R4, R6, R9-R11, R13). Even more harmful is expressing secondary microaggressions. Examples mentioned by respondents of secondary microaggressions are: “You are making it all up in your emotional head” (R1); “How nice that you then have more time to take care of your children” (R6); “If you look like that I would give you a promotion straight away” (R6); “It is just a joke” (R9); “I did not know you were that sensitive” (R13). Following respondents, bystanders must proceed with caution when responding, and prevent that their responses exacerbate the situation for the target.

There are also potential consequences of bystander intervention for bystanders themselves. For example, respondent 5 stated: “You are easily classified as annoying and heavy-handed”. Other respondents mentioned the risk of being labeled as overreacting or whining, which could influence their personal assessment and career progression (R8, R10, R12, R13). This implies a potential barrier for bystanders to intervene, but also again shows that bystanders need to be aware of the potential consequences of their responses and strive for satisfactory outcomes for all parties involved.

Manner of intervening

Respondents held varying opinions on the optimal manner of intervening as a bystander. Some emphasized the need for a fierce response, as stated by respondent 8: “I think you do have to go hard into this to also make it clear that it really cannot be said”. Respondents preferring a fiercer intervention argued that subtle responses can be easily overlooked, leading to no meaningful change (R8, R6, R9, R12). On the other hand, some respondents preferred a lighthearted response. For example, respondent 7 mentioned: “I think it often helps if someone makes a bit of a joke about it, but that it makes clear that they think it is inappropriate, and that the perpetrator is triggered to think about it”. This approach is especially useful if the perpetrator tends to speak thoughtlessly but means no actual harm (R10). Respondents preferring a lighthearted intervention argued that responding too fiercely can unnecessarily escalate the situation and result in a yes-no argument with the perpetrator, hindering reflection and genuine change (R6, R7, R10, R12). Overall, respondents agreed that bystanders should respond thoughtfully and respectfully. For instance, respondent 10 stated: “If you just come up with real arguments and calmly explain to someone why it is not good what he said, then someone can start thinking about it”. Moreover, respondents recognized that some individuals tend to blurt out remarks

without considering the impact, which may not be helpful in all situations (R12). Respondent 5 therefore finds it crucial that a bystander can give a constructive and well-considered response. To sum up, though agreeing on a thoughtful and respectful intervention, respondents have diverse thoughts on the optimal manner of responding, ranging from fierce to lighthearted.

Additionally, respondents mentioned that sometimes it could be best for bystanders to respond as if they were personally addressed, especially when bystanders doubt whether the target feels negatively affected or whether she desires bystander interventions (R5-R9, R12). For instance, respondent 5 indicated that as a bystander, she would say: “I see this happening, but if you did that to me, I really would not appreciate it”. This approach ensures that the bystander does not speak on behalf of the target or deprive the target of the opportunity to stand up for herself (R5-R9). Given the foregoing, bystanders could, or sometimes should, consider intervening as if they were personally addressed.

Time and place of intervening

Respondents expressed varying views on the timing of optimal bystander interventions, thereby confirming Bullock et al.’s (2021) finding of timing being an influential factor on optimal bystander behavior. Some respondents preferred intervening immediately after the expressed microaggression, as addressing the issue in the moment raises awareness among others present (R3, R10), allows for immediate resolution to prevent lingering tensions (R7) and demonstrates support for the target (R9). According to these respondents, post-microaggression conversations are typically one-on-one, making it challenging to recreate the microaggressive situation (R5), and the perpetrator may dismiss the incident as a joke (R1). According to those favoring immediate responses, only when bystanders are unaware of the microaggression or unable to intervene immediately, it is still effective to respond afterwards to both the target and the perpetrator (R6, R12). Other respondents, however, felt that responding directly after the microaggression is not the most effective approach. For instance, respondent 6 mentioned: “Maybe you really embarrass someone. And to what extent does the perpetrator then take the time to let it sink in?”. Respondents suggested that addressing the issue one-on-one afterwards would allow perpetrators to reflect on their actions, facilitating attitudinal or behavioral change (R6, R7). Furthermore, in the heat of the moment it might not be the appropriate time or place for a lengthy and deep conversation, making post-incident discussions more effective (R10). The preceding shows that in deciding when to intervene, bystanders should be attentive to both the target’s preferences and the potential consequences of their intervention at a specific time.

Next to timing in absolute terms, what was surprising is that respondents held different opinions on whether bystanders should respond before or after the target, providing the target herself responds. For example, respondent 8 preferred bystanders to wait until after the target herself has spoken, indicating that: “there is also a strength here that you say something yourself first and then others can acknowledge that or support you in that”. Others also acknowledged that bystanders should alter their interventions to the target’s response or actions. An effective intervention would, for instance, differ if

the target struggles to respond and appears disheartened versus when she can provide a fierce reaction (R5, R9, R11). Conversely, some respondents preferred bystanders to intervene before the target reacts. For instance, respondent 10 explained: “I think the step is smaller for me to respond if first someone else intervenes. Because otherwise you might think no one is going to respond and then you feel even more embarrassed”. The foregoing once again demonstrates the importance of timing on women’s (differing) perceptions of optimal bystander interventions.

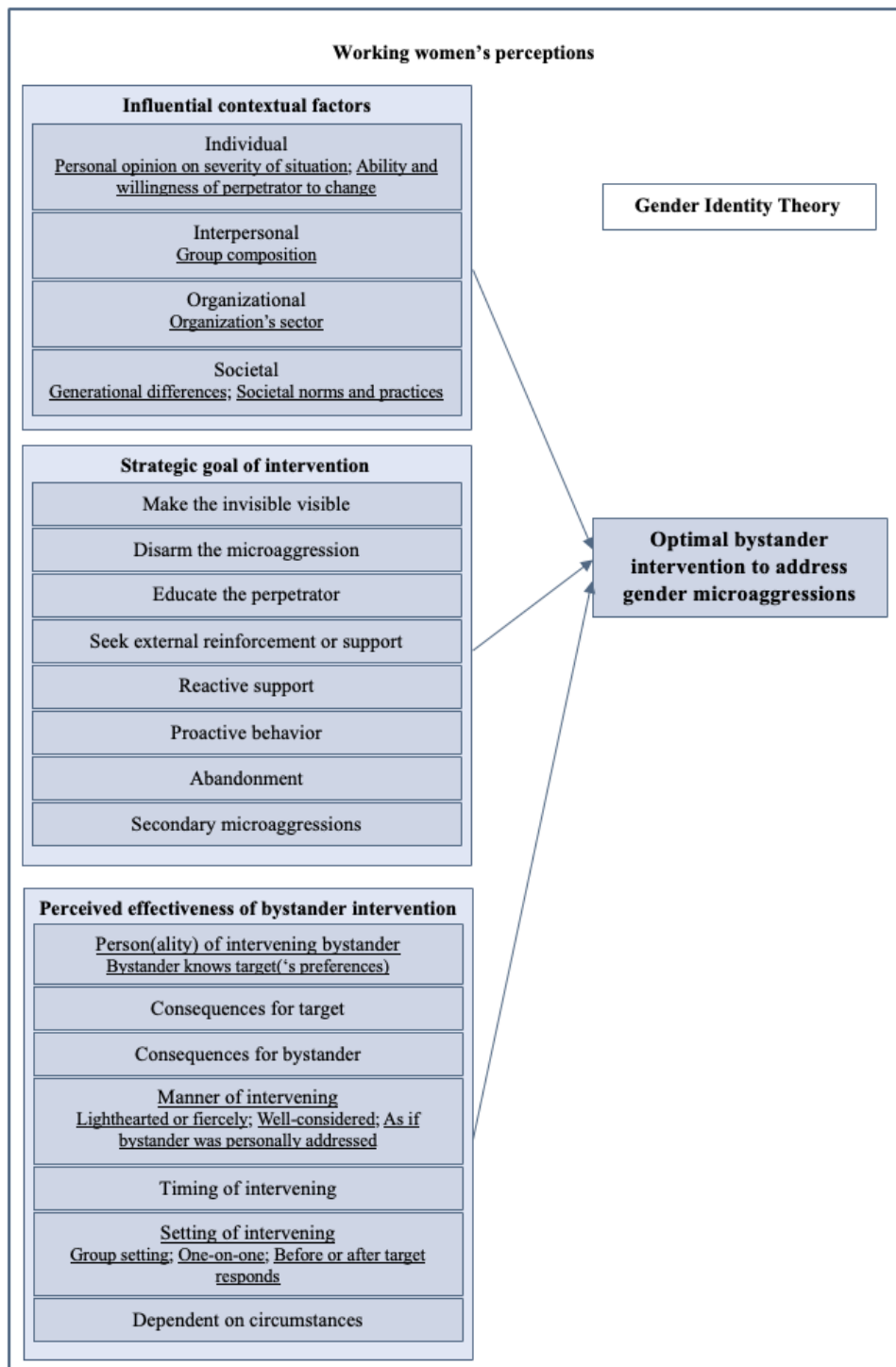
Another interesting point of contention among respondents is the optimal setting of bystander intervention. Most argued that intervening in a group setting with others involved would be most effective, as this places the perpetrator in the spotlight, potentially pressuring them to engage in self-reflection, while also raising awareness among others about the microaggressive situation (R1, R3, R8, R10). On this matter, some commented that it is better to intervene in a group setting in which those involved are familiar with each other, like with team members instead of colleagues you barely see (R1, R13). However, some respondents preferred bystander intervention in a one-on-one setting. Respondent 6, for instance, stated:

I think giving such feedback in group form is never effective, because you want to give someone a chance to think about it. Nobody likes to get constructive feedback and that is difficult for many people. I think it is always better to do it one-on-one. (R6)

More respondents mentioned something in line with the foregoing statement, indicating that reacting in a group setting would make the perpetrator feel attacked, impeding personal reflection (R4, R7). The preceding shows that women’s perceptions of optimal bystander interventions in terms of the setting of intervening differ greatly. Though all viewpoints were supported with valid arguments, the optimal approach ultimately depends on the target’s preference and on the specific situational and contextual factors.

Proposed Conceptual Framework

The initial conceptual framework, derived from the literature review (see Figure 1), has been updated considering the findings of the interviews (see Figure 4). To emphasize the proposed changes made to the initial conceptual framework, the inductively found factors have been underscored (see Figure 4). Furthermore, interesting and surprising sub-factors, as were discussed in the preceding results section, have been added to the proposed conceptual framework and have been underscored, to emphasize their inductively found influence on women’s perceptions of optimal bystander interventions (see Figure 4). This is not to say that the factors discussed in the literature review are not influential, since most influential factors were confirmed in the interviews, but Figure 4 attempts to show this study’s contributions to existing research literature.

Figure 4*Proposed Conceptual Framework*

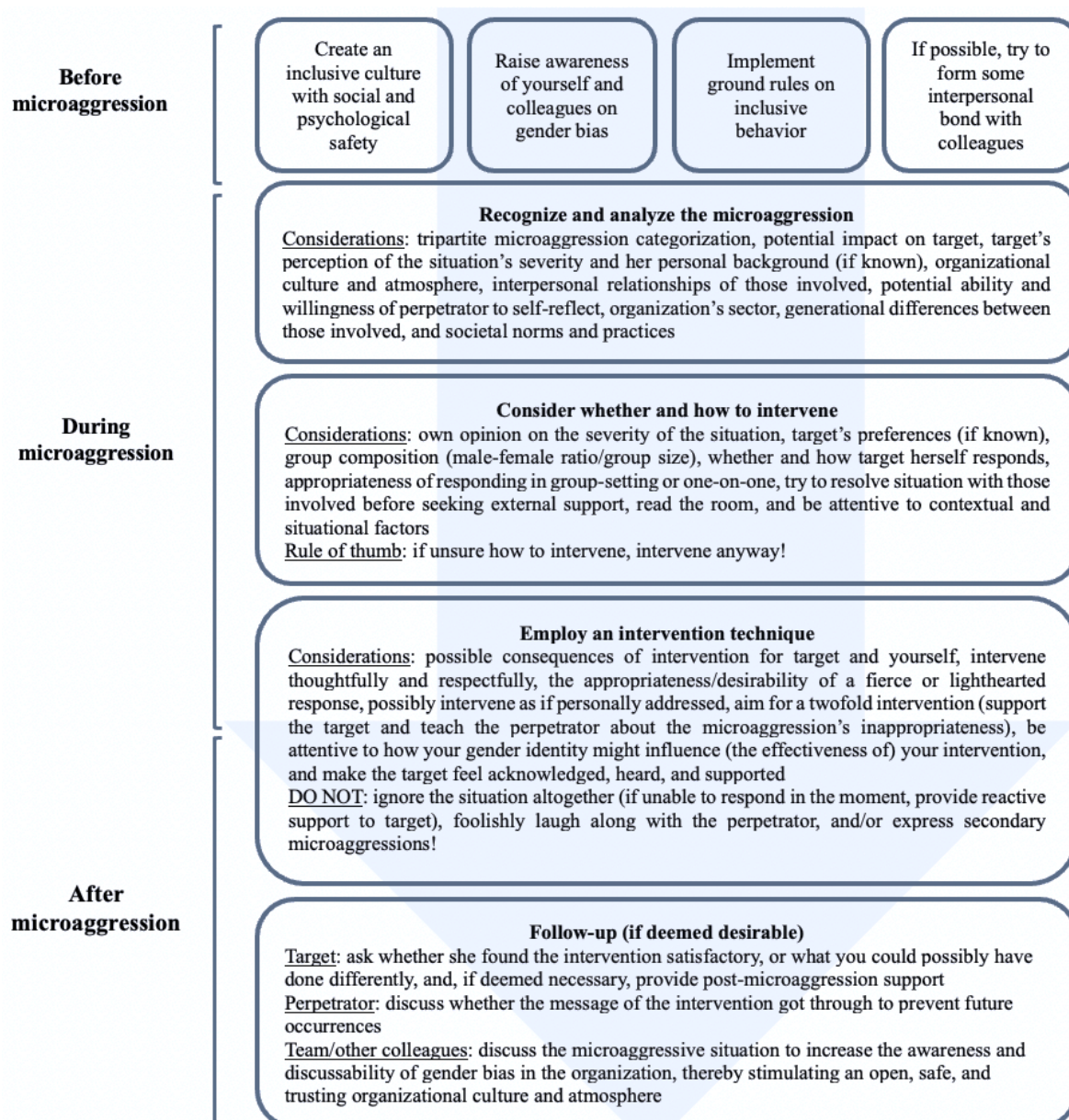
Note. Proposed conceptual framework as abductively derived from existing research literature and findings of the interviews. The underscored words emphasize inductively found influential (sub-)factors.

Practical guidelines

Given the findings of the interviews and the proposed conceptual framework of factors influencing women's perceptions of optimal bystander intervention (see Figure 4), this research aimed to develop a practical bystander intervention guide to ensure the most optimal interventions (see Figure 5). Concrete prescriptions on how to intervene cannot be provided given the strong influence of (changing) situational and contextual factors, but Figure 5 aims to present bystanders with general considerations to think about when deciding whether and how to intervene in gender microaggressions.

Figure 5

Bystander intervention guide to address gender microaggressions



Note. Bystander intervention guide providing considerations to address gender microaggressions in the workplace, as derived from research literature and the findings of the interviews.

Discussion

To answer the question how bystanders can optimally intervene in relation to gender microaggressions targeting women in the workplace, the results of the interviews have been interpreted alongside existing research literature. According to respondents, 'optimal' bystander intervention is influenced by contextual factors, strategic goals of intervention, and specific circumstances shaping the perceived effectiveness of intervention.

Previous research has identified various individual-, interpersonal-, organizational- and societal-contextual factors as influential facilitators or barriers to bystander intervention (e.g., Banyard, 2011; Bond & Haynes-Baratz, 2022; Haynes-Baratz et al., 2021a). An interesting finding which follows from the interviews is that these factors also significantly influence women's perceptions of optimal bystander interventions. Therefore, not only should bystanders consider contextual factors in the given microaggressive situation to determine whether they are able and willing to intervene, they should also acknowledge that these factors influence how female targets would ideally want them to intervene. Whereas respondents acknowledged the importance of contextual factors found by existing research, this research also found contextual factors influencing women's perceptions of optimal bystander intervention that have not been previously mentioned in existing research literature. These factors include individual perceptions of the severity of the situation; the ability and willingness of the perpetrator to change their behavior; the group composition in terms of group size and male-female ratio; the organization's sector; generational differences; and societal norms and practices. Clear claims about how these factors affect women's perceptions cannot be made, as this study has made it abundantly clear that the optimal bystander intervention highly depends on the individual target's preferences and the specific circumstances.

Whereas previous research by Basford et al. (2014) and Bullock et al. (2021) found differences in the tripartite microaggression categorization in terms of the effects of the categories and desired bystander behaviors, the respondents of this study perceived the categorization to be of negligible relevance and argued that optimal bystander behaviors mainly depend on situational and contextual factors. Therefore, carefully tailoring interventions to the specific microaggressive situation is crucial.

Regarding different bystander intervention strategies, respondents recognized both proactive and reactive strategies from existing literature on blatant gender bias and racial microaggressions (Cohen & Swift, 1999; McMahon & Banyard, 2012; Sue et al., 2019) as relevant for combating gender microaggressions. Regardless of differing opinions on exactly how bystanders should respond, respondents agreed that the optimal goal of bystander intervention is twofold; supporting the target and teaching the perpetrator that the microaggression is inappropriate to prevent future occurrences. This confirms Sue et al.'s (2019) comment that a combination of the strategic goals is also possible, and perhaps more effective.

Given the limited previous research on target's perceptions of key features of optimal bystander intervention (e.g., Bullock et al., 2021), perhaps most interesting are the interview's findings on women's perceived effectiveness of bystander interventions. Bullock et al. (2021) found timing in terms of intervening before, during, or after the microaggression to be influential. This research confirms this finding and acknowledges that the optimal bystander intervention in terms of timing is highly dependent on the target's preferences. Additionally, the manner of intervening was found to be a key feature influencing thoughts on optimal bystander interventions. Whereas respondents agreed on a thoughtful and respectful manner of intervening, whether bystanders should intervene fierce or lighthearted was undecided, as this was found to depend on the target's own personality and preferences. Another point of contention related to optimal bystander interventions is the setting of intervention, with on one hand respondents desiring interventions in a group setting, whereas on the other hand respondents desire interventions in a one-on-one setting. Additionally, the familiarity of the bystander to the target was discussed as a factor influencing optimal bystander interventions, as respondents preferred familiar bystanders to respond in a substantive manner over unfamiliar bystanders. To conclude, respondents differed greatly in their opinion on how the preceding factors could influence optimal bystander interventions. This again shows that the optimal approach ultimately depends on the target's preference.

While the Gender Identity Theory (GIT) does not dictate specific (preferences of) bystander interventions, it provides a framework for understanding gender microaggressions and bystander interventions (e.g., Banyard, 2011; Basford et al., 2014; Salin, 2021). When asked what the optimal bystander intervention would be, the first hunch of almost all respondents was that female bystanders would be more likely to intervene than male bystanders. However, when asked to reflect on potential gender differences, most respondents acknowledged a gender difference in both the manner and effectiveness of bystander interventions. These perceptions could be influenced by stereotypical traits ascribed to men and women (Banyard, 2011; Heilman, 2012; Schmader & Block, 2015). Female bystanders were seen as fierce and emotional, but less effective, while male bystanders were seen as objective, factually, and more effective. The latter indicates that women perceive male perpetrators to be more open to receive remarks on their behavior from men belonging to their in-group, as was suggested by Xie (2019). Overall, the influence of GIT on women's preferences of bystander interventions in relation to gender microaggressions is multifaceted and can vary from person to person. It is important to recognize that one's gender identity and understanding of gender dynamics can inform one's actions and preferences.

In line with Wood and Eagly (2015), this research found that female targets, despite having the same gender, have varying gender identities influencing their needs and preferences. In an attempt to explain the divergence of women's preferences of optimal bystander intervention, the researcher analyzed respondents' answers considering personal backgrounds and previous experiences (see Appendix 6). Noteworthy is that respondents who have experienced microaggressive situations, especially those categorizing as microassaults, often desired a fiercer and more direct intervention than

respondents who have not (consciously) experienced microaggressions, as the latter preferred lighthearted interventions or even ignoring and moving on. Another potential influential factor on women's preferences is their age. The interviews showed that women above the age of 46 years preferred lighthearted interventions, whereas women below the age of 35 years desired fiercer interventions. Between the ages of 36 – 45 years, women were torn between lighthearted and fierce interventions, which may be due to a difference in previous personal experience. The foregoing might be explained by generational differences in terms of the view on gender bias. The preceding factors confirm Wood and Eagly's (2015) research on individual differences in gender identities stemming from different personal backgrounds, previous experiences and norms and values. However, as previously mentioned, this research also identified contextual factors, such as the sector of work and the organizational culture and atmosphere, as influential in shaping one's gender identity. This shows the complexity of one's gender identity and points to the need for more research on GIT to possibly arrive at a comprehensive definition of gender identity. Given the limited sample of this research, the aforementioned factors should not be assumed to be true without question, but make for an interesting avenue of further research.

Contribution to knowledge

This research contributes to existing knowledge in multiple ways, thereby ultimately increasing awareness and knowledge of gender microaggressions as a significant contemporary social issue. Most important, this research investigated women's preferences of optimal bystander interventions to combat gender microaggressions in the workplace, thereby extending existing literature on bystander intervention beyond blatant forms of gender bias and other types of microaggressions (e.g., Bullock et al., 2021; Johnson et al., 2021; McMahon & Banyard, 2012; McMahon et al., 2013; Sue et al., 2019), and beyond general research on factors that could influence bystander behaviors (e.g., Banyard, 2011; Bond & Haynes-Baratz, 2022; Haynes-Baratz et al., 2021a). Whereas previous studies on blatant forms of gender bias and racial microaggressions have found multiple different bystander intervention strategies (Cohen & Swift, 1999; McMahon & Banyard, 2012; Sue et al., 2019), this research explored and combined these strategies to form an integrative overview of possible bystander intervention strategies in relation to gender microaggressions (see Figure 4 under 'Strategic goal of intervention').

Besides creating this overview, this research identified circumstances under which women perceive intervention strategies to be most optimal, providing insights into what constitutes an 'optimal' intervention. Whereas Bullock et al. (2021) found 'optimal' interventions in microaggressive situations to encompass timing and context, this research added the dimensions of the manner and setting of intervening, careful consideration of the consequences for both the target and bystander, and the person(ality) of the bystander (see Figure 4 under 'Perceived effectiveness of bystander intervention').

Moreover, this research took the contextual factors either facilitating or inhibiting bystander intervention, as identified by Banyard (2011), Bond and Haynes-Baratz (2022) and Haynes-Baratz et al. (2021a) and expanded their effects to also influence women's preferences of optimal bystander

interventions. Additionally, this research has identified even more contextual factors that shape women's perceptions of optimal bystander interventions and incorporated these to propose a more comprehensive conceptual framework (see Figure 4 under 'Influential contextual factors').

Furthermore, despite finding no perceived influence of the tripartite microaggression categorization, this research has gone beyond previous studies (e.g., Johnson et al., 2021; Miyake, 2018) by explicitly incorporating the categorization into the conducted study. This increases our knowledge of the tripartite categorization as a possible influential factor on optimal bystander interventions.

Regarding the Gender Identity Theory (GIT), this research explored the relationship between gender identity, bystander interventions and women's preferences of optimal interventions. By explicitly linking GIT to bystander intervention in the context of gender microaggressions, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of gender differences in interventions and the impact of the gender identity of both the target and the bystander on perceived optimal strategies. Additionally, this research identified contextual factors with potential influences on one's gender identity, thereby moving beyond the mere identification of personal factors influencing one's gender identity (Wood & Eagly, 2015).

Practical and managerial implications

This research has relevant practical implications by showing the importance of optimal bystander interventions to mitigate impacts of gender microaggressions. Going beyond existing research, this research identified crucial factors that influence (women's preferences of) optimal interventions. Knowing these factors provides the opportunity to increase facilitators and decrease barriers of prosocial bystander behaviors (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2008).

Individuals can apply the findings of this research to guide their own behavior as bystanders when witnessing gender microaggressions. In an attempt to clarify the various considerations that bystanders can or should take, this research provides bystanders with a bystander intervention guide (see Figure 5). This eminently demonstrates the practical added value of this study.

Moreover, organizations can benefit from the findings of this research as they stress the importance of creating a workplace environment where gender microaggressions are minimized or non-existent, and where bystanders actively address incidents when they occur. This can be accomplished by fostering an inclusive organizational culture and atmosphere, as well as implementing bystander training programs. Regarding the latter, despite previous research on bystander training programs (e.g., Bond & Haynes-Baratz, 2022), such programs are not commonly found in contemporary workplaces (EEOC, 2016). Given the proven importance of bystander interventions and possible detrimental consequences of bystander inaction, this research urges organizations to invest in preventing and/or combating (gender) microaggressions. The bystander intervention guide (see Figure 5) could serve as a starting point for creating such training programs.

At a societal level, increased attention for gender microaggressions can raise awareness of their severity and negative consequences, making them more visible and perhaps more likely to be reported.

Finally, society can benefit from knowledge about effective bystander interventions that challenge gender microaggressions to make expressions of gender bias collectively unacceptable (Bond & Haynes-Baratz, 2022).

Limitations and considerations for future research

When interpreting the findings of this research, certain limitations should be considered. The most important considerations relate to the interviewees. The exclusive use of respondents from the researcher's social network through convenience sampling introduces the potential for sampling bias and a skewed representation of experiences. Participants from a social network may share similar socioeconomic backgrounds, values, and/or perspectives (Gill, 2020). Future research should aim for a more diverse and representative sample to mitigate the effects of sampling bias. This could be achieved by adopting a judgmental sampling approach, intentionally selecting participants from various socioeconomic backgrounds, professions, and/or cultural contexts (Marshall, 1996). Furthermore, the study's restriction to respondents who have previously experienced microaggressions may overlook the preferences of women who have not encountered such incidents. This means that this research may not capture the full spectrum of women's experiences with microaggressions. Future research should include a broader range of participants, encompassing those who have and have not previously experienced microaggressions. Additionally, the sole focus on native Dutch white women neglects the unique experiences of women who occupy multiple marginalized and intersecting identities. Considering the growing attention given to intersecting identities, the methodology of this research might be oversimplified (Hornsey, 2008). Following Haynes-Baratz et al. (2021a), "future work is needed that adopts a social-ecological analysis that more clearly centers microaggressive instances stemming from other identities and the intersections among them" (p. 531). This would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how microaggressions intersect and impact individuals from different backgrounds.

Other limitations of this research relate to the design of the study. This study's exclusive focus on male perpetrators in relation to female targets overlooks same-sex microaggressions perpetrated by women. Future research could include the prevalence, nature, and impact of same-sex microaggressions, examining the experiences of women as both perpetrators and targets. This could provide a more comprehensive understanding of microaggressions across various gender dynamics. Moreover, despite employing a critical incident approach to gather information about specific previously experienced microaggressions, this research relied on women's assumed preferences on the different sketched scenarios, which might differ from their preferences when experiencing a microaggression real-time. Research into gender microaggressions and bystander interventions would, therefore, greatly benefit from research methods that allow for gathering information real-time, such as daily diary approaches (Haynes-Baratz et al., 2021a). With this suggestion for future research also comes the consideration to employ a longitudinal qualitative research design. A potential downside of using a cross-sectional research design is that the results could be influenced by contemporary trends on individual-,

interpersonal-, organizational-, and societal-level. This could be overcome by using a longitudinal approach, which allows for covering the potential development and change in women's perceptions of optimal bystander interventions (Flick, 2007).

Finally, this research was conducted by only one researcher. The absence of other researchers may create research bias, implying that researchers might find what they want to find, and then write up their results (Johnson, 1997). Moreover, whereas one researcher allows for consistency in the method, it might fail to provide multiple perspectives from a variety of people with different backgrounds or expertise, also called triangulation (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Despite allowing for member checking to promote the validity of this research, future research could consider incorporating triangulation by involving multiple researchers in the data collection and analysis processes.

The preceding limitations present valuable opportunities for future research. By addressing these limitations and incorporating the suggested improvements, researchers can strive for a more comprehensive understanding of bystander interventions in gender microaggressions.

Conclusion

Today, despite a decrease in overt forms of gender bias, gender bias persists in covert forms like gender microaggressions (e.g., Swim & Cohen, 1997). Though these gender microaggressions may be difficult to detect due to their subtle and ambiguous nature, their impact can be detrimental (Bond & Haynes-Baratz, 2022; Haynes-Baratz et al., 2021a; Jones et al., 2017; King & Jones, 2016; Nadal, 2010; Sue, 2010a). To mitigate the impacts of gender microaggressions, Haynes-Baratz et al. (2021a) suggested the activation of bystanders. The purpose of the current study was to explore preferences of working women regarding optimal bystander interventions to disarm gender microaggressions.

This study highlights the ongoing presence of gender microaggressions in the workplace and emphasizes the importance of active bystander interventions in addressing them, mostly by supporting the target and by addressing the microaggression to prevent future occurrences. In line with Bond and Haynes-Baratz (2022), there is not one optimal bystander intervention. Various contextual factors play a crucial role, and this research has identified multiple circumstances that influence women's perceptions of optimal interventions. Recognizing the influence of the Gender Identity Theory further enhances our understanding of how women perceive and respond to gender microaggressions (differently), thereby informing the development of effective bystander interventions.

In conclusion, optimal bystander intervention requires that bystanders operate with perspicacity (Sue et al., 2019), by carefully tailoring their responses to the specific situation and the individuals involved. This personalized approach ensures that the target receives the necessary support while avoiding any behaviors that could potentially exacerbate the situation, but also helps to reinforce a norm that values respectful and inclusive interactions. By taking into account the proposed considerations for optimal bystander interventions, active bystanders take an important step towards making expressions of gender bias collectively unacceptable.

References

- Antwi, S. K., & Hamza, K. (2015). Qualitative and quantitative research paradigms in business research: A philosophical reflection. *European journal of business and management*, 7(3), 217–225. <https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/EJBM/article/view/19543>.
- Ashburn–Nardo, L., Morris, K. A., & Goodwin, S. A. (2008). The confronting prejudiced responses (CPR) model: Applying CPR in organizations. *The Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 7(3), 332–342. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMLE.2008.34251671>.
- Ashforth, B. E., & Mael, F. (1989). Social identity theory and the organization. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(1), 20–39. <https://doi.org/10.2307/258189>.
- Banyard, V. L. (2011). Who will help prevent sexual violence: Creating an ecological model of bystander intervention. *Psychology of Violence*, 1(3), 216–229. <https://doi.org/10.1037/A0023739>.
- Banyard, V. L. (2015). *Toward the next generation of bystander prevention of sexual and relationship violence: Action coils to engage communities (SpringerBriefs in Criminology)*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-23171-6>.
- Basford, T. E., Offermann, L. R., & Behrend, T. S. (2014). Do you see what I see? Perceptions of gender microaggressions in the workplace. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 38(3), 340–349. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684313511420>.
- Bleijenbergh, I. (2015). *Kwalitatief onderzoek in organisaties* (2nd ed.). Boom Lemma Uitgevers.
- Bond, M. A., & Haynes-Baratz, M. C. (2022). Mobilizing bystanders to address microaggressions in the workplace: The case for a systems-change approach to getting a (collective) GRIP. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 69(1–2), 221–238. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12557>.
- Buchanan, D. A. (2012). Case studies in organizational research. In G. Symon & C. Cassell (Eds.), *Qualitative organizational research. Core methods and current challenges* (pp. 351–371). SAGE Publications.
- Bullock, J. L., O’Brien, M. T., Minhas, P. K., Fernandez, A., Lupton, K. L., & Hauer, K. E. (2021). No one size fits all: A qualitative study of clerkship medical students’ perceptions of ideal supervisor responses to microaggressions. *Academic Medicine*, 96(11S), 71–80. <https://doi.org/10.1097/ACM.0000000000004288>.
- Burns, V. L., Eaton, A. A., Long, H., & Zapp, D. (2019). Exploring the role of race and gender on perceived bystander ability and intent: Findings before and after exposure to an online training program to prevent sexual assault on campus. *Violence Against Women*, 25(8), 999–1017. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801218807089>.

- Campbell, R., Sefl, T., & Ahrens, C. E. (2003). The physical health consequences of rape: Assessing survivors' somatic symptoms in a racially diverse population. *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 31(1–2), 90–104. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40004554>.
- Capodilupo, C. M., Nadal, K. L., Corman, L., Hamit, S., Lyons, O. B., & Weinberg, A. (2010). The manifestation of gender microaggressions. In D. W. Sue (Ed.), *Microaggressions and marginality: Manifestation, dynamics, and impact* (pp. 193–216). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Chell, E. (1998). Critical incident technique. In G. Symon & C. Cassell (Eds.), *Qualitative methods and analysis in organizational research: A practical guide* (pp. 51–72). SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446280119.n5>.
- Cohen, L., & Swift, S. (1999). The spectrum of prevention: Developing a comprehensive approach to injury prevention. *Injury Prevention*, 5(3), 203–207. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/ip.5.3.203>.
- Connelly, L. M. (2016). Cross-sectional survey research. *Medsurg Nursing*, 25(5), 369–370. <http://www.medsurnursing.net/archives/16sep/369.pdf>.
- Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. T. (1979). *Quasi experimentation: Design and analysis issues for field settings*. Houghton Mifflin.
- Corbin, J., & Morse, J. M. (2003). The unstructured interactive interview: Issues of reciprocity and risks when dealing with sensitive topics. *Qualitative inquiry*, 9(3), 335–354. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800403009003001>.
- Darley, J. M., & Latané, B. (1968). Bystander intervention in emergencies: Diffusion of responsibility. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 8(4), 377–383. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0025589>.
- Deloitte Global. (2023). *Women @ work 2023: A global outlook*. Retrieved on May 20, 2023, from: https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/insights/articles/glob175810_global-women-at-work/Women_at_Work_2023.pdf.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.4000/asp.294>.
- Dovidio, J. F., Gaertner, S. L., & Abad-Merino, S. (2017). Helping behavior and subtle discrimination. In E. van Leeuwen & H. Zagefka (Eds.), *Intergroup Helping* (pp. 3–22). Springer.
- Drever, E. (1995) *Using semi-structured interviews in small-scale research: A teacher's guide*. The SCRE Centre.
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. (2016, June). *Select task force on the study of harassment in the workplace*. Retrieved on February 3, 2023, from: https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/task_force/harassment/report.cfm.
- Fereday, J., & Muir-Cochrane, E. C. (2006). Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690600500107>.

- Flick, U. (2007). Qualitative research designs. In U. Flick (Ed.), *Designing qualitative research* (pp. 36–50). SAGE Publications. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781849208826.n4>.
- Gartner, R. E., Sterzing, P. R., Fisher, C. M., Woodford, M. R., Kinney, M. K., & Victor, B. G. (2020). A scoping review of measures assessing gender microaggressions against women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *44*(3), 283–306. <https://doi-org.ru.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/0361684320920834>.
- Gill, S. L. (2020). Qualitative sampling methods. *Journal of Human Lactation*, *36*(4), 579–581. <https://doi-org.ru.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/0890334420949218>.
- Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G., & Hamilton, A. L. (2013). Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research: Notes on the Gioia methodology. *Organizational Research Methods*, *16*(1), 15–31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428112452151>.
- Given, L. M. (Ed.). (2008). *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. SAGE Publications. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412963909>.
- Guba, E., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1989). *Fourth generation evaluation* (1st edition). SAGE Publications.
- Hansen, Å. M., Hogh, A., & Persson, R. (2011). Frequency of bullying at work, physiological response, and mental health. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, *70*(1), 19–27. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychores.2010.05.010>.
- Haynes-Baratz, M. C., Bond, M. A., Allen, C. T., Li, Y. L., & Metinyurt, T. (2021a). Challenging gendered microaggressions in the academy. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, *15*(4), 521–535. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000315>.
- Haynes-Baratz, M. C., Metinyurt, T., Li, Y. L., Gonzales, J., & Bond, M. A. (2021b). Bystander training for faculty: A promising approach to tackling microaggressions in the academy. *New Ideas in Psychology*, *63*, 100882. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.newideapsych.2021.100882>.
- Heilman, M. E. (2012). Gender stereotypes and workplace bias. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, *31*: 113–135. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2012.11.003>.
- Hogg, M. A. (2016). Social Identity Theory. In S. McKeown, R. Haji & N. Ferguson (Eds.), *Understanding peace and conflict through Social Identity Theory. Contemporary global perspectives* (pp. 3–19). Springer.
- Jóhannsdóttir, H. J., & Ólafsson, R. F. (2004). Coping with bullying in the workplace: The effect of gender, age and type of bullying. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, *32*(3), 319–333. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069880410001723549>.
- Johnson, R. B. (1997). Examining the validity structure of qualitative research. *Education*, *118*(2), 282–292. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/R_Johnson3/publication/246126534_Examining_the_validity_structure_of_qualitative_research/links/54c2af380cf219bbe4e93a59.pdf.

- Johnson, V. E., Nadal, K. L., Sissoko, D. R. G., & King, R. (2021). "It's not in your head": Gaslighting, 'splaining, victim blaming, and other harmful reactions to microaggressions. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 16(5), 1024–1036. <https://doi-org.ru.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/17456916211011963>.
- Jones, K. P., Arena, D. F., Nitttrouer, C. L., Alonso, N. M., & Lindsey, A. P. (2017). Subtle discrimination in the workplace: A vicious cycle. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice*, 10(1), 51–76. <https://doi.org/10.1017/iop.2016.91>.
- Kende, A., & Shnabel, N. (2017). Benevolent sexism and cross-gender helping: A subtle reinforcement of existing gender relations. In E. van Leeuwen & H. Zagefka (Eds.), *Intergroup Helping* (pp. 3–22). Springer.
- King, N., & Brooks, J. M. (2017). *Template analysis for business and management students*. SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/978147393304>.
- King, E., & Jones, K. (2016, July 13). Why subtle bias is so often worse than blatant discrimination. *Harvard Business Review*: 34–40. Retrieved on January 24, 2023, from: <https://hbr.org/2016/07/why-subtle-bias-is-so-often-worse-than-blatant-discrimination>.
- Latané, B., & Darley, J. M. (1970). *The unresponsive bystander: Why doesn't he help?* Appleton-Century-Crofts.
- Lewin, K. (1951). *Field theory in social science*. Harper & Brothers.
- Lincoln, Y. & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. SAGE Publications.
- Low, K. D., Radhakrishnan, P., Schneider, K. T., & Rounds, J. (2007). The experiences of bystanders of workplace ethnic harassment. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 37(10), 2261–2297. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2007.00258.x>.
- Marshall, M. N. (1996). Sampling for qualitative research. *Family Practice*, 13(6), 552–526. <https://doi.org/10.1093/fampra/13.6.522>.
- McMahon, S., & Banyard, V. L. (2012). When can I help? A conceptual framework for the prevention of sexual violence through bystander intervention. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 13(1), 3–56. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838011426015>.
- McMahon, S., Hoffman, M. L., McMahon, S. M., Zucker, S., & Koenick, R. A. (2013). What would you do? Strategies for bystander intervention to prevent sexual violence by college students. *Journal of College & Character*, 14(2), 141–152. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jcc-2013-0019>.
- Miyake, E. (2018). *Female Microaggressions Scale (FeMS): A comprehensive sexism scale* [Doctoral dissertation] (Accession No. 2018-52509-128), Arizona State University. APA PsycInfo. https://repository.asu.edu/attachments/207594/content/Miyake_asu_0010E_18232.pdf.
- Myers, M. D. (2020). *Qualitative research in business and management* (3e ed.). SAGE publications.
- Nadal, K. L. (2010). Gender microaggressions: Implications for mental health. In M. A. Paludi (Ed.), *Feminism and women's rights worldwide* (Vol. 2, pp. 155–175). Prager/ABC-CLIO.

- Nadal, K. L., Davidoff, K. C., Davis, L. S., Wong, Y., Marshall, D., & McKenzie, V. (2015). A qualitative approach to intersectional microaggressions: Understanding influences of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and religion. *Qualitative Psychology*, 2(2), 147–163. <https://doi.org/10.1037/qup0000026>.
- Nadal, K. L., Hamit, S., Lyons, O., Weinberg, A., & Corman, L. (2013). Gender microaggressions: Perceptions, process, and coping mechanisms of women. In M. A. Paludi (Ed.), *Psychology for business success* (pp. 193–220). Praeger/ABC- CLIO.
- Pierce, C. (1969). Is bigotry the basis of the medical problem of the ghetto? In J. Norman (Ed.), *Medicine in the Ghetto* (pp. 301–314). Meredith Corporation.
- Pierce, C. M., Carew, J. V., Pierce-Gonzalez, D., & Wills, D. (1977). An experiment in racism: TV commercials. *Education and Urban Society*, 10(1), 61–87. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001312457701000105>.
- Robinson, A., Gutierrez, L., Scroggins, L., Smith, A. M. S., & Whitson, J. A. (2018). Microaggressions at school: Negative consequences for psychological safety. *Social Science Research Network*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3185119>.
- Salin, D. (2021). Workplace bullying and gender: An overview of empirical findings. In P. D’Cruz, E. Noronha, C. Caponecchio, J. Escartin, D. Salin & M. Tucker (Eds.), *Dignity and Inclusion at Work* (pp. 331–361). Springer.
- Schmader, T., & Block, K. (2015). Engendering identity: Toward a clearer conceptualization of gender as a social identity. *Sex Roles*, 73(11–12): 474–480. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-015-0536-3>.
- Steinfeldt, J., Hyman, J., & Steinfeldt, C. M. (2019). Environmental microaggressions: Context, symbols, and mascots. In G. C. Torino, D. P. Rivera, M. Capodilupo, K. L. Nadal & D. W. Sue (Eds.), *Microaggression theory: Influence and Implications* (pp. 213–225). John Wiley & Sons.
- Stockdale, M. S., Gandolfo Berry, C., Schneider, R. W., & Cao, F. (2004). Perceptions of the sexual harassment of men. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 5(2), 158–167. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1524-9220.5.2.158>.
- Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A. M. B., Nadal, K. L., & Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice. *American Psychologist*, 62(4), 271–286. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.62.4.271>.
- Sue, D. W. (2010a). *Microaggressions in everyday life: Race, gender, and sexual orientation*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Sue, D. W. (2010b). *Microaggressions and marginality: Manifestation, dynamics, and impact*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

- Sue, D. W., Alsaidi, S., Awad, M. N., Glaeser, E., Calle, C. Z., & Mendez, N. (2019). Disarming racial microaggressions: Microintervention strategies for targets, white allies, and bystanders. *American Psychologist, 74*(1), 128–142. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000296>.
- Swim, J. K., & Cohen, L. L. (1997). Overt, covert and subtle sexism. A comparison between the attitudes toward women and modern sexism scales. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 21*(1), 103–118. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1997.tb00103>.
- Tajfel, H. (1974). Social identity and intergroup behaviour. *Social Science Information, 13*(2), 65–93. <https://doi.org/10.1177/053901847401300204>.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33–47). Brooks/Cole.
- Wang, X., & Cheng, Z. (2020). Cross-sectional studies. Strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations. *Chest Journal, 158*(1), S65–S71. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chest.2020.03.012>.
- Wood, W., & Eagly, A. H. (2012). Biosocial construction of sex differences and similarities in behavior. In J. M. Olson & M. P. Zanna (Eds.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (Vol. 46, pp. 55–123). Elsevier Inc. <https://doi.org/10.1016.B978-0-12-394281-4.00002-7>.
- Wood, W., & Eagly, A. H. (2015). Two traditions of research on gender identity. *Sex Roles, 73*(11), 461–473. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-015-0480-2>.
- Xie, T. (2019). *Responding to Microaggressions: Evaluation of Bystander Intervention Strategies* [Doctoral Dissertation]. Utah State University.
- Yule, K., & Grych, J. (2017). College students' perceptions of barriers to bystander intervention. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 35*(15–16), 2971–2992. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260517706764>.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Consent Form

Radboud Universiteit



INFORMATION LETTER

for participation in the research on optimal bystander interventions in relation to gender microaggressions against women.

1 Introduction

My name is Lara Derksen, and I am the sole researcher of this thesis research. I am writing this master thesis research to complete my master's degree in Business Administration, specialization Strategic Human Resources Leadership, at Radboud University in Nijmegen. The main objective of this research is to discover the main characteristics of optimal bystander intervention behaviors to address gender microaggressions targeting women in the workplace. With your input, I would like to explore working women's preferences regarding (optimal) bystander behavior.

In this interview, I will ask you several questions about your own experiences with gender microaggressions and about your own preferences regarding bystander responses. To this end, during the interview I will ask you to share personal experiences and respond to scenarios I will sketch.

It is important to note that there are no right or wrong answers, you are free to answer the questions as you wish, and you can refrain from answering a question at any time without justifying that decision.

The interview will last approximately 45 minutes. Should you have any questions about this study before or during the interview, please feel free to ask at any time.

2. Privacy

This study does not require the collection, use and/or storage of personal information. The information you provide for current research purposes will be treated with the utmost care and will only be accessible to the researcher and her supervisor and/or second examiner. Personal information that the researcher collects about you will remain confidential throughout the study. To ensure your privacy, the researcher stores your personal data using a process of pseudonymization. This means that your name and any other data that can directly identify you (such as name of employer(s), position, region of work, etc.) are kept separate from the study data. Only a respondent number, which is kept confidential by the researcher, can be used to identify which research data belongs to which person.

For the present study, it is necessary to make an audio recording. This recording is collected only for the purpose of this study. The audio recording itself cannot be anonymized. The recording of the interview will be transcribed into text afterwards, which text will be anonymized so that it can never be traced back to you directly or indirectly. Parts of this text will be coded and, if relevant, used in the main text of the master thesis.

If you consent to this interview being recorded, the audio recording may be used or monitored for up to 1 year after completion of this study.

The consent form asks you to give explicit permission for the collection, use and storage of the above (specific) personal data and sound recordings. If you do not consent, you cannot participate in this study.

3. Additional information on your rights regarding the processing of your personal data

Radboud University is responsible for complying with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) when processing your personal data. The researcher will ensure that your privacy and related conditions are safeguarded and she will adhere to the Dutch Code of Conduct on Integrity and university policy regarding the storage and management of personal and research data when conducting this research.

The supervisor and second examiner of this master thesis research must, if necessary, have access to your personal and research data. This is necessary to verify that the research was conducted properly and reliably. They are required to view your data in strict confidence. Your consent is requested for this access. If you refuse this permission, you cannot participate in this study.

4. Voluntary participation

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. At your request, you have the right to withdraw from this study and the given consent at any time. Your personal and research data will then be deleted.

5. Contact information

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding this research, please contact the researcher at

6. Conclusion

With kind regards,

Lara Derksen

.....

CONSENT FORM

for participation in the research on optimal bystander interventions in relation to gender microaggressions against women.

I herewith confirm that:

- I have been satisfactorily informed of the research both orally and in writing;
- I have read the written information provided in this information letter and consent form;
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research;
- my questions have been answered satisfactorily;
- I have been given ample opportunity to think carefully about participating in the research;
- I participate in the research entirely on a voluntary basis.

I understand that:

- I have the right to withdraw my consent at any time without having to state reasons and without fear of adverse consequences by contacting Lara Derksen at
- I have the right to have my research data deleted up until one month after the research has been completed (July 2023);
- my personal data are processed in accordance with the privacy statement of Radboud University (<https://www.ru.nl/english/vaste-onderdelen/privacy-statement-radboud-university/>).

I agree that:

- my personal and/or research data within this research will be obtained for research purposes and will be available for verification for 1 year after the completion of this research;
- the signed consent form with my personal data, which is obtained for administrative purposes only, will be kept for a maximum of 1 year after the completion of this research;
- the supervisor and second examiner of this master thesis research may inspect my personal and research data for the purpose of auditing the research.

In addition, I also give explicit permission:

- to make an audio recording of the interview;
- that this recording is shared with the supervisor and second examiner of this master thesis research if needed.

I agree to participate in this research.

Name:

Date:

Signature:

To be completed by the researcher:

I, the undersigned, herewith declare that the above-mentioned person has been informed both in writing and orally about the above-mentioned research.

Name: Lara Derksen

Date:

Signature:

Appendix 2 – Interview guide

Introduction and consent

My name is Lara Derksen, and I am a master student in Strategic Human Resources Leadership, at the Radboud University in Nijmegen. For my master's thesis I want to examine bystander intervention strategies in relation to gender microaggressions against women in the workplace. With your input, I would like to discover preferences of working women with regards to optimal bystander responses.

The interview will take around 45 minutes to complete. During this time, I will ask you about some personal background, about possible previous experiences with gender microaggressions and bystander responses and I will sketch some scenarios of gender microaggressions for you to respond to. If there are any questions you do not feel comfortable answering, please tell me so we can skip the specific question.

Give sheet with informed consent.

Before we start the interview, I would like to ask for your approval of recording the audio of this interview? The recording will only be used for transcription purposes, so that I am able to further analyze what you have said during the interview. Your name and any potential identifying information will be removed from the transcript and will not be used in the analysis.

Before I start the recording, do you perhaps have any questions?

If approved and no questions / questions answered, start recording here.

Topic 1: Personal background

- Can you briefly describe your career?
 - a. How long have you worked for your current employer?
 - b. What is your previous work experience?
 - c. What is your position in the firm? (e.g., individual contributor (not part of a specific team), team member, supervisor, manager, etc.)
 - d. What is the nature of your work? (e.g., types of tasks, what industry, etc.)
- What is the composition of the workforce of your current employer?
E.g., male/female, ethnicity, age, etc.

Topic 2: Previous experiences with gender microaggressions and bystander interventions

- Have you ever heard of the term gender microaggressions?
 - a. If so, in your own words, can you please describe what you believe the term 'gender microaggressions' means?

If not or if deviant from definition used in this research; provide explanation of the term gender microaggressions.

This research defines gender microaggressions as: “intentional or unintentional actions or behaviors from male offenders that exclude, demean, insult, oppress, or otherwise express hostility or indifference toward women”. Gender microaggressions should be differentiated from more overt / blatant forms of gender discrimination (e.g., gender bias, violence, harassment). Microaggressions differ from harassment because of their often-ambiguous nature, the ways in which single microaggressions are often dismissed as minor, and the cumulative nature of their negative impact.

For the next part of the interview, I will either ask questions on one's own experience or on one's witnessed experience with a gender microaggression targeting women in the workplace (so either the lefthand or the righthand column of the next table):

Own experience	Witnessed experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have you yourself ever experienced a gender microaggression? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. If so, would you be comfortable sharing this experience in terms of what happened and how it impacted you (and perhaps others)? E.g., when, and where did it happen? Who was the perpetrator (what was your relationship to him)? What microaggression did he express (words, but also body language)? How did it make you feel? (how) did you react (words, but also facial expression, body language)? - Were there other people present? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. If so, how many people were present and what was their role? (e.g., colleague, supervisor, subordinate, client) - Did these other people present react to the microaggression targeting you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. If so, how did they react? E.g., what did they say? What did they do with hands/body language/facial expressions? - Was the way they reacted helpful to you? E.g., in terms of result, timing, offered support, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. If so, in what way? b. If not, why not? What could the person intervening have done differently to be more helpful? - If these other people present did not react to the microaggression targeting you, would you have wanted them to respond? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. If so, how? b. If not, why not? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have you yourself ever witnessed a gender microaggression directed towards a female colleague? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. If so, would you be comfortable sharing this experience in terms of what happened and how it impacted both your colleague and you (and perhaps others)? E.g., when, and where did it happen? Who was the perpetrator? What microaggression did he express (words, but also body language)? (how) did the target react (words, but also facial expression, body language)? - Were there other people present besides you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. If so, how many people were present and what was their role? (e.g., colleague, supervisor, subordinate, client) - Did you as bystander respond to the microaggression you witnessed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. If so, how? b. If not, why not? c. In hindsight, would you have acted differently? - Did other people present respond to the microaggression? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. If so, how? E.g., what did they say? What did they do with hands/body language/facial expressions? - Was the way in which you or other people present reacted helpful to the target? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. If so, in what way? b. If not, why not? What could bystanders have done differently to be more helpful?

Topic 3: Discussion of gender microaggression scenarios

For this part of the interview, I will sketch three different scenarios in which you as a woman are the target of a gender microaggression. I would like you to share your thoughts and preferences on how bystanders in these scenarios could/should respond. For this, it is important to know that there are no correct or wrong answers, it is completely about your preferences.

Scenario 1 – Microinsult

Imagine that during one of your team/department meetings, you and your colleagues discuss possible promotion opportunities. Your male department manager explains that your male colleague, instead of you, will be promoted to go on business trips next year, so that you “can make room for your family life” (benevolent sexism).

- Can you please describe what you think is the microaggression that has occurred in this scenario?
- How would you want your colleagues as bystanders to respond in this scenario?
 - a. If so, how would you want them to respond? What about that response to this scenario makes it seem effective/optimal for you?
 - b. If you wouldn't want them to respond, why not?
- What other effective responses do you think a present bystander could have to this scenario?
- What responses of your colleagues as bystanders do you think are not effective / optimal?
- In this scenario, what factors should your colleagues as bystanders weigh when deciding whether and how to respond to this microaggression?

Scenario 2 – Microinvalidation

Imagine that your firm is trying to acquire new clients to expand its business. Your innovative idea involves targeting start-up influencers via social media, as the number of social media influencers are rapidly growing and earning high incomes of social media. Your fellow colleagues and male supervisor do not respond to your idea, or seemingly do not hear the idea. However, when a male coworker proposes an identical social media strategy, he is recognized and praised by the supervisor and fellow colleagues.

- Can you please describe what you think is the microaggression that has occurred in this scenario?
- How would you want your colleagues as bystanders to respond in this scenario?
 - a. If so, how would you want them to respond? What about that response to this scenario makes it seem effective/optimal for you?
 - b. If you wouldn't want them to respond, why not?
- What other effective responses do you think a present bystander could have to this scenario?
- What responses of your colleagues as bystanders do you think are not effective / optimal?
- In this scenario, what factors should your colleagues as bystanders weigh when deciding whether and how to respond to this microaggression?

Scenario 3 – Microassault

Imagine that one day you arrive at the office with a full face of make-up on as you are going out after work. In the presence of other colleagues, one of your male colleagues notices your make-up and says “Why are you wearing make-up to the office? Do you want to get promoted today?”

- Can you please describe what you think is the microaggression that has occurred in this scenario?
- How would you want your colleagues as bystanders to respond in this scenario?
 - a. If so, how would you want them to respond? What about that response to this scenario makes it seem effective/optimal for you?

- b. If you wouldn't want them to respond, why not?
- What other effective responses do you think a present bystander could have to this scenario?
- What responses of your colleagues as bystanders do you think are not effective / optimal?
- In this scenario, what factors should your colleagues as bystanders weigh when deciding whether and how to respond to this microaggression?

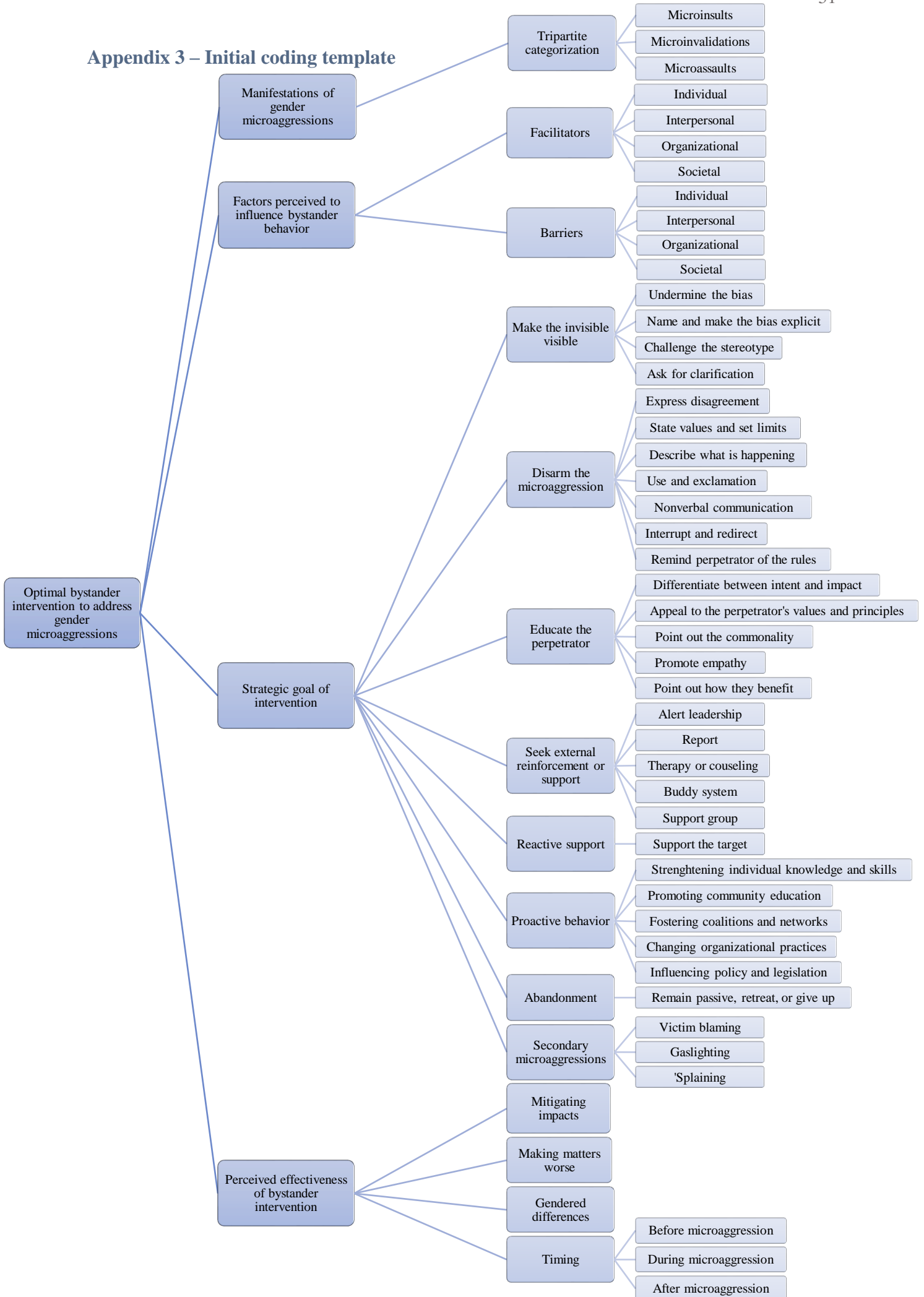
Keeping these different scenarios in mind, I would like to ask you some additional questions to reflect further on these scenarios.

- In your opinion, would the gender of the colleague as responding bystander make a difference in your described optimal bystander responses?
 - a. If so, in what way? What are preferred responses expected to be effective from both men and women? Do these responses differ in terms of at what time and/or place the bystander intervenes? Why do you think that is?
 - b. If not, could you elaborate on your opinion?
- And what about the gender of the perpetrator, would it make a difference if the perpetrator was a woman?
- Do you think the sketched scenarios of gender microaggressions differ?
 - a. If so, in what way?

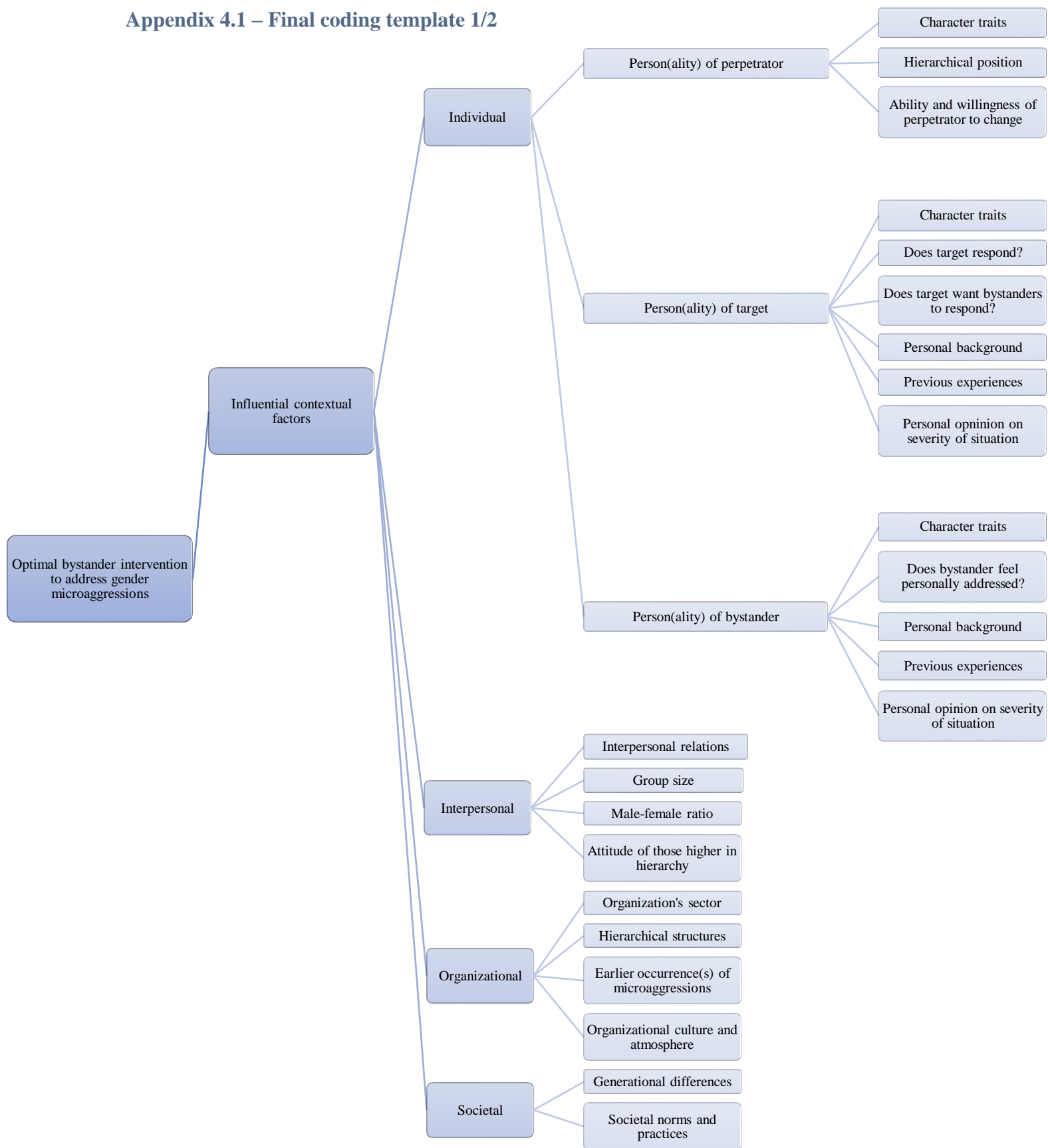
If not or if deviant from the tripartite categorization intended, explain the tripartite categorization in terms of the differences between microinsults, microinvalidations and microassaults.

- Would you say these different microaggression scenarios require different bystander responses for an intervention to be effective/optimal?
 - a. If so, could you please elaborate on how you think the responses should be different? Does the gender of the bystander play a role in this? If so, please elaborate.
 - b. If not, could you elaborate on your opinion?

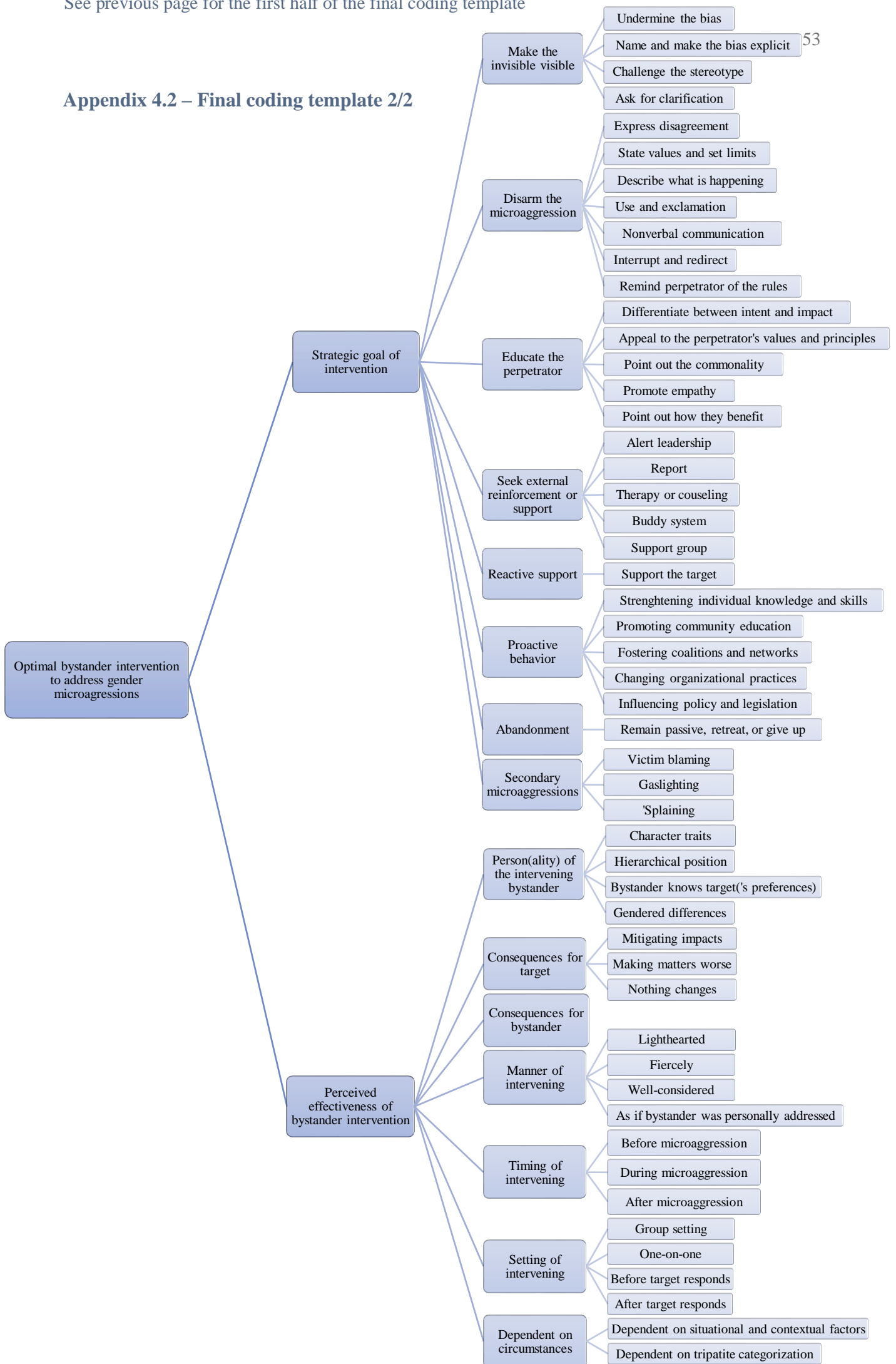
Appendix 3 – Initial coding template



Appendix 4.1 – Final coding template 1/2



Appendix 4.2 – Final coding template 2/2



Appendix 5 – Extract from research diary

Date	Chapter	Progress and adjustments
<i>..... From November 25, 2022, to June 12, 2023</i>		
June 13, 2023	Introduction	After receiving the feedback on my concept version, I have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Altered the first and second paragraph of my introduction by incorporating the quotes the literature that define (gender) microaggressions from the literature review in the introduction. - Rewritten the old first two paragraphs into one paragraph. - Deleted the subheadings. - Changed / deleted some words upon feedback (grammar “‘women’ are”, deleted the word ‘practical’ as this is an academic research).
June 13, 2023	Literature Review	After receiving the feedback on my concept version, I have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changed the name ‘theoretical framework’ into ‘literature review’. - Deleted the definitions of microaggressions and gender microaggressions from the literature review, as this was considered repetition from the introduction, and I have now incorporated an overarching definition in my introduction.
June 13, 2023	Methodology	A suggestion by Tina was made to add an overview in the methodology section of the interviews conducted, so I made table 2 in my methodology section (sector, profession, working experience in years, duration of interview and whether interview was conducted online / in person).
June 13, 2023	Research Results	I have changed the word ‘branch’ to ‘sector’.
June 16, 2023	Appendix – Consent Form	Upon Tina’s feedback, I have added the English Consent Form (without signature) to the appendices. The Consent Form is appendix 1, meaning that the numbers of the following appendices had to be altered, both in the appendices and in the main text.
June 16, 2023	Appendix – Extract from research diary	After receiving Tina’s feedback on providing an example from the research diary, I have added this table to the appendices the show some extracts of my research diary. I chose to provide an extract from the point of receiving Tina’s feedback on the concept version of my master’s thesis, as any progress and adjustments made afterwards were and will be more specific and reflected in the final version of my master thesis.
June 16, 2023	Introduction	After receiving Tina’s feedback on my introduction, I have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deleted the consequences of gender microaggressions for the perpetrator and bystander from my introduction, as they are not the focus of my study (targeted women are) (from “Negative consequences have health and work outcomes”). - Deleted the sentence on the difference between gender microaggressions and blatant forms of gender bias (from “Microaggressions differ from their negative impact”). - Rewritten the part on the consequences of gender microaggressions for targets and marginalized groups to make this section more concise and relevant (from “Being the targetgroups within the workplace”). - Removed the general discussion of the GIT and its implications for gender microaggressions and bystander interventions from the introduction, and incorporated this in the literature review (from “The Gender Identity Theory microaggressions can be understood”). - Rewritten the full introduction to be more concise and to be a maximum of 3 pages.

June 16, 2023	Overall thesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I have changed the phrase ‘gender microaggressions against women’ to ‘gender microaggressions targeting women’. - I have adjusted my lay-out to be consistent with the APA 7 format, such as moving the page number to the top right corner, changed the lay-out of my main chapter headings (centered) and subheadings (left-aligned, bold (and italic)).
June 16, 2023	Literature Review	<p>After receiving Tina’s feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I have added the sentence on the difference between gender microaggressions and gender harassment from the introduction to the first paragraph under ‘gender microaggressions’. - I have incorporated the final paragraph under ‘gender microaggressions’ into the foregoing paragraphs so that it is immediately clearer what my focus will be (from “This research will Microinvalidations and microassaults”). - I have incorporated my focus on interpersonal manifestations of gender microaggressions into the paragraph on the different manifestations of gender microaggressions under ‘gender microaggressions’ and added a short reasoning for this decision. - I have searched for previous research incorporating the tripartite categorization of gender microaggressions into their studies and how this might be beneficial for creating a comprehensive understanding of gender microaggressions. I have added this information to the final paragraph under ‘gender microaggressions’.
June 16, 2023	Methodology	<p>After receiving Tina’s feedback on my methodology, I:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wrote more in depth on my choice of using cross-sectional study as a research design and its implications, including some advantages and disadvantages. - I changed the subheading ‘Interview’ into ‘Data collection’ and ‘Coding procedure’ into ‘Data analysis’ - I have moved the parts on the interview from the ‘research design’ to ‘data collection’ (from “Semi-structured interviews will be deleted”) - I have added the initial and final aggregate dimensions and second-order themes as figures in my data analysis section.
June 16, 2023	Abstract	I have added an abstract to my master thesis, including a short summary of my thesis and some keywords.
June 18, 2023	Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I have changed ‘first-order codes’ into ‘first-order categories’. - I have added more examples of how I drafted my initial and final coding template, including examples of first-order categories and in-vivo codes. - I have altered Figure 2 and Figure 3 to the changes made in my initial and final coding template (see below). - I have explained why the aggregate dimension ‘Manifestations of gender microaggressions’ was removed from my coding template to place the tripartite microaggression categorization under ‘Perceived effectiveness of bystander intervention’.
June 18, 2023	Appendix 3	I have removed ‘impact of gender microaggressions’ from my coding template as I have also removed this information from my introduction and as this is not relevant for my thesis. Also, I have changed ‘Examples of gender microaggressions’ to ‘Manifestations of gender microaggressions’
June 18, 2023	Appendix 4.1	I have deleted the second-order theme ‘Manifestations of gender microaggression’ as the tripartite categorization is included in the

		second-order theme ‘Perceived effectiveness of bystander intervention’ under the first-order category ‘Dependent on tripartite organization’.
June 18, 2023	Literature review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I have created and inserted a conceptual framework at the end of my literature review to depict the relationships between influential factors found in research literature and optimal bystander interventions to address gender microaggressions. I have also added a brief explanation on how this conceptual framework was created. - I found a source (Xie, 2019) on one’s gender identity (in- and out-group comparisons) and incorporated this in the discussion of GIT in relation to bystander interventions. This included that perpetrators are more likely to accept comments on their behavior from someone belonging to the in-group and might perceive bystanders from the out-group as overreacting.
June 18, 2023	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I have shortly introduced the Gender Identity Theory in my introduction before my research question, as I propose to make a theoretical contribution to GIT (so then I should have explained briefly what GIT holds for my research). - I have moved a definition of ‘bystander’ from my literature review to my introduction to avoid repetition (From “Bystanders are those to a victim”).
June 19, 2023	References	I checked whether my references were in line with the APA-7 format and altered those references that were not. I have for example deleted the ‘:’ before page numbers of articles and deleted ‘DOI:’ in front of every DOI hyperlink. Also I have added hyperlinks to those references that still lacked one.
June 20, 2023	References	After consideration, I again checked and changed my references for a final time so that they adhere to the APA-7 format. This included putting spaces in-between the initials of the authors and a ‘,’ before the ‘&’ listing all the authors.
June 20, 2023	Overall thesis	After careful consideration and research, I have made sure to start every alinea with an indent.
June 21, 2023	Literature review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the paragraph ‘Gender microaggressions’, I have added the focus of my study in terms of purely gender microaggressions, thereby controlling for possible intersecting identities, after the section on intersectional identities within marginalized groups (I have added from “To make delineated possible intersecting identities”). - I have altered the structure of the paragraph ‘GIT to explore gender microaggressions’, by including the in- and out-group comparison in the first paragraph and dedicating the second paragraph to implications of the GIT for gender microaggressions. - In the paragraph ‘Optimal bystander intervention’, I have added some more explanation on what constitutes ‘optimal’ and that literature to date lacks women’s perceptions of optimal bystander interventions to address gender microaggressions. - I have altered the structure of the paragraph ‘GIT to explore (optimal) bystander interventions’, by focusing more on the link between bystander intervention – GIT In relation to gender microaggressions as opposed to sexual assault. - I have checked and changed the introductory sentences to my literature review, to write more concise and to incorporate the conceptual framework.
<i>..... From June 21, 2023, to June 23, 2023</i>		

Appendix 6 – Interview analysis per respondent

		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6
<i>Person-specific</i>	Age	25 -35 years	<25 years	56 - 65 years	46 - 55 years	56 - 65 years	<25 years
	Branch	Tourism	Healthcare	Education	Construction	Education	Education
	Previous experiences	Microinvalidations; Microassaults	Microinsults	Microinsult; microassaults	Microinsults	Microinsults; microinvalidations	Unaware; intersectional microinsults (age)
	Did bystanders intervene?	Abandonment; secondary microaggressions	Abandonment; secondary microaggressions	Afterwards; disarm the microaggression (women); abandonment (men)	Abandonment	Abandonment	-
<i>Microinsult</i>	Want bystander intervention?	Make the invisible visible	Make the invisible visible	Disarm the microaggression	Make the invisible visible	Make the invisible visible	Reactive support; educate the perpetrator
	Person(ality) of bystander	-	Should know target('s preferences); age	Should know target('s preferences)	Should know target('s preferences)	-	-
	Manner of intervening	Well-considered	-	Fiercely	Fiercely	Well-considered; serious	Fiercely
	Timing and setting	During; in group setting (team)	During; in group setting; after target responds; male-female ratio	During	During; group setting	During; group setting	After; one-on-one
<i>Microinvalidation</i>	Want bystander intervention?	Disarm the microaggression	Make the invisible visible; educate perpetrator	Make the invisible visible	Make the invisible visible	Make the invisible visible	Make the invisible visible; educate perpetrator
	Person(ality) of bystander	-	Hierarchical position	-	Should know target('s preferences)	Character traits	-
	Manner of intervening	Well-considered	-	Lighthearted	Lighthearted	Well-considered; serious	Lighthearted
	Timing and setting	During; group setting	During, but after target responds; group setting	During; group setting	During; group setting	During; group setting	During; group setting
<i>Microassault</i>	Want bystander intervention?	No, only if target struggles/doesn't respond	No, target should respond	Support target afterwards; don't pay attention to perpetrator	Disarm the microaggression; educate perpetrator	Make the invisible visible	Disarm the microaggression; educate the perpetrator
	Person(ality) of bystander	-	-	-	Should know target('s preferences)	Should know target('s preferences)	Should know or guess target('s preferences)
	Manner of intervening	Fierce but well-considered	Lighthearted	Lighthearted	Lighthearted; well-considered	Well-considered; serious	Fiercely
	Timing and setting	During, but target should respond first; group setting	During; group setting	Afterwards; one-on-one	During; group setting; after target responds	During, but after target responds	During; group setting; both before and after target responds
<i>Sum up</i>	Gender differences?	Yes, men will be taken more seriously	Ideally, men and women respond the same	Yes, men will be taken more seriously	Women would respond quicker, but no difference in effectiveness	Shouldn't be a difference; women respond more emotional and from place of recognition	Yes, more effective when men speak out; men responds more factually and neutrally
	Contextual factors	Male-female ratio; group size; organizational culture and atmosphere; interpersonal relations; personal opinion on severity	Male-female ratio; earlier occurrence(s); personal background target and bystander; personal opinion on severity	Earlier occurrence(s); person(ality) perpetrator; generational differences; societal norms and practices; hierarchical structures; organizational culture and atmosphere; male-female ratio; interpersonal relations; personal opinion on severity	Branch; male-female ratio; group size; organizational culture and atmosphere; interpersonal relations; personal opinion on severity	Societal norms and practices; branch; organizational culture and atmosphere; group size; personal background target and bystander; hierarchical structures; interpersonal relations; personal opinion on severity	Male-female ratio; organizational culture and atmosphere; hierarchical structures; personal background bystander; person(ality) target; interpersonal relations; personal opinion on severity
	One optimal intervention?	No, dependent on context	No, dependent on context	No, dependent on context	No, dependent on context	No, dependent on context	No, dependent on context
	Other effective interventions?	Proactive education on awareness; one-on-one is less effective	Do nothing if intervening isn't useful	Educate the perpetrator if useful; proactive behavior to raise awareness	Afterwards if needed; proactive behavior to raise awareness	As if bystander was personally addressed; can also be lighthearted	Proactive behavior to raise awareness; as if bystander was personally addressed
	Ineffective intervention	Secondary microaggressions; abandonment	Secondary microaggressions; abandonment; intervening afterwards	Secondary microaggressions	Secondary microaggressions; abandonment	Secondary microaggressions; abandonment; intervening afterwards	Secondary microaggressions; abandonment; sometimes intervening in group setting; afterwards when harm is already done

		R7	R8	R9	R10	R11	R12	R13
<i>Person-specific</i>	Age	36 - 45 years	36 - 45 years	25 - 35 years	<25 years	25 - 35 years	56 - 65 years	46 - 55 years
	Branch	HR-Consultancy	HR-Consultancy	Education	Security	Construction	Financial services	Consultancy
	Previous experiences	Mentions own luxury position in this regard; some microinsults	Microinsults; microinvalidations	Microassaults	Microinsults; microassaults	Microinsults; microinvalidations; intersectional (age)	Microinsults; microinvalidations; microassaults	Microinsults; microinvalidations
	Did bystanders intervene?	-	Abandonment	Abandonment	Abandonment; secondary microaggressions	Abandonment	Make the invisible visible; abandonment	Abandonment
<i>Microinsult</i>	Want bystander intervention?	Disarm the microaggression	Disarm the microaggression; educate the perpetrator	Disarm the microaggression; make the invisible visible	Disarm the microaggression; make the invisible visible; educate perpetrator	Make the invisible visible; reactive support; educate perpetrator	Disarm the microaggression; make the invisible visible	Make the invisible visible; educate perpetrator
	Person(ality) of bystander	If bystander knows target('s preferences)	-	If bystander knows target('s preferences)	-	Should know target('s preferences)	Character traits; bystanders knows target('s preferences)	Should know or guess target('s preferences)
	Manner of intervening	Lighthearted	Fiercely; ad rem	Fiercely; well-considered	Fiercely (or lighthearted depending on perpetrator); well-considered	Lighthearted	Fiercely; well-considered	Lighthearted
	Timing and setting	During; group setting; after target responds	During; before target responds; group setting	During; after target responds	During; group setting	During; afterwards; after target responds	During; group setting	During
<i>Microinvalidation</i>	Want bystander intervention?	Make the invisible visible	Make the invisible visible	Make the invisible visible	Disarm the microaggression; make the invisible visible; educate perpetrator	Make the invisible visible; educate perpetrator	Disarm the microaggression	Make the invisible visible; educate perpetrator
	Person(ality) of bystander	If bystander knows target('s preferences)	Hierarchical position; character traits	-	-	Should know target('s preferences)	Hierarchical position; character traits; bystanders knows target('s preferences)	Should know or guess target('s preferences)
	Manner of intervening	Lighthearted	-	Fiercely	Lighthearted	Fiercely	Well-considered	Lighthearted
	Timing and setting	During; group setting	During; after target responds; group setting	During; group setting; after target responds	During; group setting; before target responds	During; group setting	During (unless creating hostile atmosphere, then afterwards)	During
<i>Microassault</i>	Want bystander intervention?	Best to ignore	Disarm the microaggression; seek external support of confidant	Disarm the microaggression; women are often too emotional / bitchy	Disarm the microaggression; educate perpetrator	Disarm the microaggression; reactive support	Not necessarily	Make the invisible visible; educate perpetrator
	Person(ality) of bystander	-	-	-	Should know or guess target('s preferences)	Should know target('s preferences)	Character traits; bystanders knows target('s preferences)	Should know or guess target('s preferences)
	Manner of intervening	-	Fiercely	Fiercely	Both fiercely and lighthearted; ad rem	Lighthearted	Lighthearted	Lighthearted
	Timing and setting	-	During; before target responds; group setting	During	During; group setting	After; after target responds	During	During
<i>Sum up</i>	Gender differences?	Yes, more effective when men speak out; try not to form a women's front	Yes, more effective when men speak out; emotional women's front	Yes, men will be taken more seriously	Yes, men will be taken more seriously	Women might respond from place of recognition; men might be taken more seriously	No	Yes, men will be taken more seriously
	Contextual factors	Branch; male-female ratio; generational differences; societal norms and practices; group size; interpersonal relations; organizational culture and atmosphere; earlier occurrence(s); personal opinion on severity	Personal background target and bystander; social norms and practices; organizational culture and atmosphere; hierarchical structures; earlier occurrence(s); person(ality) perpetrator; personal opinion on severity	Generational differences; organizational culture and atmosphere; societal norms and practices; hierarchical structures; interpersonal relations; branch; earlier occurrence(s); person(ality) perpetrator; personal opinion on severity	Organizational culture and atmosphere; generational differences; interpersonal relations; hierarchical structures; societal norms and practices; personal background target and bystander; person(ality) perpetrator; personal opinion on severity	Branch; male-female ratio; organizational culture and atmosphere; interpersonal relations; earlier occurrence(s); personal background target and bystander; person(ality) perpetrator; personal opinion on severity	Organizational culture and atmosphere; interpersonal relations; branch; personal background of target and bystander; person(ality) of target; societal norms and practices; generational differences; personal opinion on severity	Societal norms and practices; male-female ratio; person(ality) of perpetrator; interpersonal relations; organizational culture and atmosphere; earlier occurrence(s); personal opinion on severity
	One optimal intervention?	No, dependent on context	No, dependent on context	No, dependent on context	No, dependent on context	No, dependent on context	No, dependent on context	No, dependent on context
	Other effective interventions?	In some circumstances intervening afterwards; proactive behavior to raise awareness; as if bystander was personally addressed	If nothing is said in the moment, then afterwards; proactive behavior to raise awareness and set formal rules; reactive support	As if bystander was personally addressed; seek external support from confidant; proactive behavior to set ground rules	Intervening afterwards; reactive support; possible seek external support of confidant (if deemed severe enough); proactive behavior to raise awareness and create good atmosphere; as if bystander was personally addressed	Proactive behavior to raise awareness and create good atmosphere (is however branch dependent); seek external support of leader or confidant (but rather solve issue in team); as if bystander was personally addressed	Proactive behavior to raise awareness, create good atmosphere and interpersonal relations; respond afterwards; reactive support; as if bystander was personally addressed	Proactive behavior to raise awareness; set ground rules; create good atmosphere; reactive support afterwards
<i>Ineffective intervention</i>		Abandonment; intervening too fierce; seeking external support from confidant	Secondary microaggressions; abandonment	Intervening afterwards; secondary microaggressions; abandonment	Abandonment	Secondary microaggressions; abandonment; proactive setting ground rules; sometimes afterwards is too late	Some responses can create hostile atmosphere; abandonment	Secondary microaggressions; abandonment

Appendix 7 – Codebook

Aggregate dimension	Second-order theme	First-order category	In-vivo code	Description	Exemplary quotes
Contextual factors	Individual	Person(ality) of perpetrator	Character traits	Character traits of the perpetrator were seen as influencing optimal bystander behaviors, both regarding women's preferences and in terms of facilitators and barriers to bystander intervention. Examples of character traits are conservative or progressive views, ability to reflect on oneself, narcissistic traits.	Yes, I think anyway the person who says it. If you know that the person sometimes makes comments that come out too quickly, that the person hasn't thought it through very well, but really doesn't mean it, then I don't think it makes sense to go into it with a very straight leg, then you can also just say, "Hey Peter, what you just said, you know that's not quite yucky, right?" and then Peter will probably say, "Oh, this is indeed really super stupid, I'll just go over to her again" or something like that. But if it's someone who's really convinced of that point of view, then I think you have to take a little more deliberate approach to that, because then it's going to be very counterproductive if you deal with that too quickly I think (R10).
			Hierarchical position	The perpetrator's hierarchical position in the organization was acknowledged to be a barrier to bystander intervention. Other respondents, however, mentioned that no matter the hierarchical position of the perpetrator, bystanders should intervene to gender microaggressions.	Yes, it is of course more nerve-wracking if this is a director, then it is made a bit more complicated (R8). I also really don't care in this one who the person is who says it, because it just really can't be done. Whether someone is an executive or someone in a lower position, it just can't be done in all situations. So in this I think you should always be able to say something (R10).
			Ability and willingness to change	The perpetrator's ability and willingness to change was mentioned to be a factor influencing whether bystanders should respond, but also how they should respond (e.g., more lighthearted when perpetrator means no harm).	Yeah with some people you can think you're not going to change that anyway. So then I'm like, no, that's a waste of energy (R3).
		Person(ality) of target	Character traits	Character traits of the target can influence both whether the target herself would respond, but also whether and how she wants bystanders to respond. Examples of character traits are being articulate, opinionated and confident enough to speak out, but also one's own awareness of a gender microaggression.	Yes, I'm quite conflict-avoiding in certain respects so then I find it easier to put your head in the sand and pretend there's nothing there instead of making it very heavy and difficult (R8).
			Does target respond?	Respondents differed greatly in their thoughts on whether the target can or should respond. Whereas some mentioned that it is most useful if the target herself responds, others mentioned to not be articulate or aware enough to respond, or to fear the possible consequences.	My opinion is always, you have to go and react to it yourself. But as we had also just discussed, sometimes you can be a little bit in shock when somebody says something to you, then you really have to process it for a while (R1). Well, I think I wouldn't be able to do that, I that I wouldn't have that awareness at that time and certainly wouldn't have the words to then respond to that adequately (R6). I have become better in terms of empowerment, but still things do happen to me. That, of course, is the annoying thing about microaggressions. You drive home and you think, that was actually quite unusual? Did I even hear that interjection? And also that happens doesn't it? (R13).

	Does target bystander to respond?	Most respondents mentioned that they desire bystanders to intervene when a gender microaggression occurs. There are, however, situations in which targets don't want bystanders to respond, for instance when they argue that responding is of little use given the person of the perpetrator, or that they personally don't want bystanders to intervene (due to own personality, previous experiences, etc.), or that they don't want to make a big deal out of the situation.	<p>But if someone else notices it and also says something about it, then you actually already have two more people who didn't think it was funny and then it's taken more seriously again (R1).</p> <p>No, I don't think that's necessary then. You just draw the conclusion yourself to withdraw from the situation (R3).</p> <p>Then the question is whether the person in the moment actually dares to take that support, right? Because make no mistake, you stick your neck out as a bystander, then you say 'oh, you don't know okay, I have the idea that, but maybe I'm wrong'. And then the person says that they're not bothered by anything. But you don't always know if that's really the case (R13).</p>
	Personal background	Respondents mentioned their personal backgrounds (e.g., upbringing, family situation, etc.) to influence how they would like gender microaggressive situations to be dealt with.	Maybe your home situation or your childhood. I do notice in our team that people who had a difficult childhood are now very much standing up for themselves (R12).
	Previous experiences	Previous experiences with microaggressive situations as a target influence whether the target herself will/can respond and whether she wants bystanders to intervene (and how).	I think maybe that also comes from a kind of luxury position, that I haven't experienced very unpleasant situations myself. I think that if you have had more negative experiences of that kind, you will be more rigorous. And maybe stand up for yourself and others more. That you might be more willing to make a point of it (R7).
	Personal opinion on severity of situation	Whether targets want bystanders to intervene also depends on the target's opinion on the severity of the gender microaggressive situations. Some targets find certain microaggressions too small, whereas others find the same microaggressions highly offensive.	<p>I think these are very big incidents (R1).</p> <p>Yeah I don't really think that matters much to me. I can deal with that, let's just say (R11).</p> <p>Of course, we have come to see a lot as normal too haven't we? So be it, or that we've learned to deal with it. That you just chuckle and think 'yeah, I guess so'. Or just not hearing it or getting over it (R13).</p>
Person(ality) of bystander	Character traits	Character traits of the bystander are considered to be influential in terms of whether and how bystanders (should) intervene. Examples of character traits are own awareness of gender bias, introvert/extrovert, self-confidence, and positive/negative worldview.	<p>That is actually also a bit of a personal attitude of here we are going to pay attention or not (R3).</p> <p>I think it's up to them, up to their own standards, up to their own values whether you respond or not then, of the bystander, so to speak (R5).</p>
	Does bystander feel personally addressed?	Even when bystanders might feel that targets wouldn't want them to respond, respondents believe that bystanders would still intervene when they feel personally addressed by the gender microaggression.	No, because I do feel addressed as a woman. I wouldn't do it then say on that person, but I would take it to myself and more in the sense of, 'I see this happening, or I would if you did that to me, I really wouldn't like that,' a little bit that way. So not putting it on the person, because I don't want the problem to get bigger, but bringing it to me (R5).
	Personal background	A bystander's personal background is argued to influence bystander intervention (e.g., family situation, education level).	Yes, but I do think that makes a real difference, where you grew up and what culture you have (R2).
	Previous experiences	According to respondents, previous experiences of microaggressive situations influence both whether and how bystanders will intervene.	Yes, I do think that if you don't concern yourself with the issue at all or have never experienced such situations or don't really realize that that is bad, then you are less likely to react. If you're often concerned with equality or maybe you've experienced yourself being disadvantaged as a woman because you're a woman, you're more willing to do something with that (R6).

Contextual factors	Interpersonal	Interpersonal relations	Personal opinion on severity of situation	Similar to the opinion on the severity of targets, respondents indicate that bystanders differ in their opinion on the severity of the situation, which influences whether and how they respond.	Yes, I really do hit on that, so in such a case I would really take it up for that colleague as well (R9).
			Interpersonal relations between teams and/or amongst colleagues were described as creating either a facilitator or barrier to bystander interventions. Moreover, interpersonal relations influenced women's preferences on whether and how bystanders should intervene.	It was really just favoritism with men (R1). It's just a colleague you just work closely with for a number of years. We often just make these jokes to each other. Are also sometimes quite blunt to each other, the politeness is gone, so to speak (R4). Well, I think it stands and falls with also just the team dynamics and also how you deal with each other and whether you just have a lot with each other for example team sessions and also with your supervisor, that you also just have continuous conversations with each other, so that you really create a bond also with each other. If that basis is good, then it's much easier, of course that's always the case. If you don't really know someone, you feel more at a distance and it's more difficult to express your opinions. And if you just have a good and safe base, then I think you would be more likely to indicate these things and it will also be easier for bystanders to bring that up (R7).	
			Group size	Most respondents indicated that the larger the group, the more difficult it would be for both the target and the bystander to respond to the perpetrator, but perhaps the more important.	Yeah, again, I think also the size of the group. I think it always does make a very large part of what and when you can say something (R1). The bigger the group is the more important it is to respond (R4).
			Male-female ratio	The male-female ratio in an organization was thought to influence bystander intervention. Many respondents pointed to the fact that they assumed female bystanders to be deterred from intervening if the group consists of mostly men. The same could also be said for male bystanders if they are afraid to go against the group.	Yeah, I definitely think so too. I think when you're the only woman sitting there and there are all these men sitting around you, it's a different atmosphere anyway than when you can still look at another woman and raise your eyebrows of what is he saying? Then there's kind of a bearing on your feelings. Whereas if there are only men sitting there, then the atmosphere for your feeling is different (R10).
			Attitude of those higher in hierarchy	Respondents mentioned that the attitude of superiors in the organization can have both positive and negative influences on both the occurrences of gender microaggressions and (the preferences regarding) bystander interventions.	I think so, because it's just often when someone sets the wrong example and you look up to people in authority or people in a higher position and they don't do well, then again there's no motivation for you to do well (R10).
Contextual factors	Organizational	Organization's sector	Respondents mentioned that sector not only partially influences an organization's culture and atmosphere, it also influences women's preferences on (the lack of) bystander interventions.	In the world of rehabilitation, healthcare, generally a lot of women work and that's the same with me. Also in education a lot of women work. Well my location is also within an elementary school, so it is predominantly women, managers are also women, but also some men. Actually, men are the exception in both organizations. And, that has been different in other places as well, because, for example, I also worked at a construction company. Yes, that was really a man's world. Construction workers, I would sit with the director, but yes, only the support staff were women, very role-affirming. Not quite my thing. And actually in those other places, still a lot of women supporting (R5).	

				Yes, I think so, and that it's also kind of expected or so in certain places. You end up working on the construction site, so it's kind of expected, some jokes are part of the job. Yes, on the one hand you can have your own opinion about that, but on the other hand you are allowed to make a joke once in a while that stays within the limits, and I think it's nice if it creates a good atmosphere. So yes, I think it's part of the industry (R11).
	Hierarchical structures		(Rigid) Hierarchical structures were mentioned to influence both target and bystander behavior. Some respondents suggested that it would be harder for bystanders to intervene in an organization dominated by male superiors, than it's in an organization with both male and female superiors.	But I think it makes a difference whether you work in an organization like I do, a large organization or in a somewhat smaller company where you have more rank and file, and where indeed you depend, if you want to get promoted, on sometimes the benevolence of a team leader (R12).
	Earlier occurrence(s) of microaggressions		Earlier occurrence(s) of gender microaggressions may influence women's preferences in that they are (now) more likely to respond or to desire bystander intervention.	Yes, but then you come to comment two. When I see a first comment, I am like, this is still possible. Or well, actually it isn't but I don't tend to say anything about it right away (R3). But maybe yes, of course, if this person would constantly make those kinds of jokes that at some point you would be done with it and then you would want to go into it a little more seriously (R7).
	Organizational culture and atmosphere		Of the organizational factors that emerged from the interviews, the organizational culture and atmosphere was the most prevalent factor in terms of its influence as either a facilitator or a barrier to bystander intervention. Whereas atmospheres of cockiness, male favoritism and traditional gender biases prevents bystander intervention, atmospheres of mutual respect, safety and trust facilitate bystander intervention.	But then I think, it's also very much culture sensitive, where you work and in what context (R3). What do you choose, do you go into battle every time? Yes, does that make sense, do you have to want to work in a culture like that? Are you really going to be able to change it? Yeah, I don't think so, while that's actually really too ridiculous for words as well. Ideally you would want to change the culture. You just want to make sure the culture is healthy. What you could really do in that, I think that's difficult, but the culture just needs to be there that you can speak out and you can give each other feedback. I think that's very much a culture thing (R6).
Contextual factors	Societal	Generational differences	In terms of generational differences, women acknowledged that it's hard and often of little use to try and convince those of older, more conservative, generations that their standpoints on gender roles have become outdated, whereas those of younger generations are often more progressive.	She was from a different generation, I think that plays a role as well. Then it might make no sense to go into that anymore (R7). One of my colleagues that I don't work with, but I'm often in the office with, he's 62 and he's so conservative with a lot of things (R9).
		Societal norms and practices	Regarding societal norms and practices, respondents mentioned that, despite still living in a 'men's world', things are changing for the better in terms of women's equality in the workplace and more awareness of gender bias.	Back then you didn't have any awareness of that or something, that that's how it works. That's maybe the naivete you had back then or something, and the different time context I guess. Now it's often sometimes towards the exaggerated. Then you really have to be careful what you say that it's not taken the wrong way, even though they don't mean anything wrong really. So that's really the opposite now. But of course this was in the context of that time when it was almost common, that comments were made toward women (R3). I find it so difficult, because these are really things that are just society wide. It's very difficult, I think to really change something within a company (R10).
Strategic goal of intervention	Make the invisible visible	Ask for clarification	Allows bystanders to verbally describe what is happening in a nonthreatening manner, by for instance asking if they heard a certain comment correctly.	I think another colleague, who would say, for example, 'but then has she indicated that she wants to focus on her family or not? Or does this come from yourself?' (R1).

Strategic goal of intervention	Challenge the stereotype	Mention that the expressed gender bias is not (necessarily) true.	Not mentioned	
	Name and make the bias explicit	Indicate to the perpetrator that they have behaved or said something offensive (Sue et al., 2019).	By also just mentioning very concretely "Gee, that's what she's said three times already, now it's perceived as a new idea, but I don't think that's quite how it should go, so why isn't she being heard now?". So that it does get named (R8).	
	Undermine the bias	Force the perpetrator to consider the impact and meaning of what was said or done (Sue et al., 2019).	Well of 'hey, gee, maybe it's an idea for that woman to just come along too, because it's not immediately said that she has a family, and even if she does she may still get that chance' (R2).	
	Disarm the microaggression	Describe what is happening	Force the perpetrator to immediately consider what they have just said or done (Sue et al., 2019).	Then I would say that I do take it seriously, because it does affect someone's career path and then you are providing unequal opportunities for men and women, depending on a bias that you have, which I also think is kind of bad (R6).
		Express disagreement	Communicate disagreement or disapproval towards the perpetrator in the moment (Sue et al., 2019).	You can literally have a conversation with someone about it and say 'what you are doing is not right'. But that can also be done very briefly with 'hey, why are you saying this? Don't say this' (R9). Yes, to immediately quash the comment, because such skewed ideas just can't exist (R12).
		Interrupt and redirect	Instantly stop or deflect the microaggression (Sue et al., 2019).	'Gee, I think you're kind of ambushing someone right now, or maybe it would be nice to talk about this some more, or the communication isn't that great right now, let's stop for now, but let's come back to this at a later time' (R8).
		Nonverbal communication	Communicate disagreement or disapproval towards the perpetrator in the moment (Sue et al., 2019).	Not mentioned
		Remind perpetrator of the rules	Allows perpetrator to think before they speak or behave in future encounters with similar individuals (Sue et al., 2019).	Not mentioned
		State values and set limits	Allows perpetrator to think before they speak or behave in future encounters with similar individuals (Sue et al., 2019).	Until at some point we said of up to here and no further, shut up, we just really don't like it. And then he did accept that (R3).
		Use an exclamation	Communicate disagreement or disapproval towards the perpetrator in the moment (Sue et al., 2019).	Not mentioned
Strategic goal of intervention		Educate the perpetrator	Appeal to the perpetrator's values and principles	Facilitate a possibly more enlightening conversation and exploration of the perpetrator's biases by lowering the defense of the perpetrator and helping them recognize the harmful impact (Sue et al., 2019).
	Differentiate between intent and impact	Engage in a one-on-one dialogue with the perpetrator to indicate how and why what they have said is offensive (Sue et al., 2019).	Yeah, I would also kind of instill in him of 'gosh, it's just a bias what you have' (R2).	

	Point out how they benefit	Encourage the perpetrator to explore the origins of their beliefs and attitudes towards targets (Sue et al., 2019).	Not mentioned		
	Point out the commonality	Encourage the perpetrator to explore the origins of their beliefs and attitudes towards targets (Sue et al., 2019).	Not mentioned		
	Promote empathy	Encourage the perpetrator to explore the origins of their beliefs and attitudes towards targets (Sue et al., 2019).	I hope understanding and holding up the mirror, right? 'How would you like it if I said something like that to you?' (R5).		
Strategic goal of intervention	Seek external reinforcement or support	Alert leadership	Speak to a manager or someone who is in authority about the microaggression (Sue et al., 2019).	I think I did discuss it with that boss lady. But yeah, that doesn't change what other people say about it afterwards (R2). If I can't work it out with the person, I think I would go to my team leader first, maybe even my old team leader, because he is a woman. A male team leader is different (R12).	
		Buddy system	Chose a friend with whom you can always check in and process discriminatory experiences (Sue et al., 2019).	It started very gently with do you notice it too? And then to say, "Yes, I notice it too," and to start talking to each other very carefully. And then it dawned on all of us what was actually really going on and we interacted a little bit more and then it all actually became very clear, because then you heard everyone's experiences in that (R1).	
	Report	Report the incident to a confidant in person or use anonymous online portals (Sue et al., 2019).	Yes, going to the confidant I do think does make it harder. I think I would only go to a counsellor if in the example you gave of having brought up the matter several times and nothing happens and it really bothers you, then I would go to a counsellor. But in my opinion a confidant also makes it more difficult, whereas it might be easier to solve the problem with the person yourself, depending on how serious the situation is. If it is really very serious, then maybe there are other better channels. But yes, I would always go to the person in question first (R7). Yes, I think this is already at the point of also reporting transgressive behavior almost, because it just really can't go through. And that is sometimes difficult, because where is the line? Because if you walk in and your colleague touches you in front of others, a whole group of people will say, "That's not acceptable," whereas it's always more difficult to say whether or not a comment is transgressive. But I do think that if something emotional affects you so much and it also affects you in that way, then that is more in the reporting sphere (R8).		
	Support group	Join a support group that meets weekly/monthly to process issues concerning minorities (Sue et al., 2019).	Not mentioned		
	Therapy or counseling	Seek out individual counseling with competent providers for self-care and well-being (Sue et al., 2019).	Not mentioned		
	Strategic goal of intervention	Reactive support	Support the target	Check in on the target and provide emotional support after the gender microaggression has occurred.	My first impression would be to still move toward the person to whom comment was posted to support them and not reprimand the other person (R4).

Strategic goal of intervention

			Yes, actually giving the victim the insight of you are not alone, so also a form of togetherness (R8).
Proactive behavior	Changing organizational practices	Changing certain organizational routines and/or practices in order to prevent gender microaggressions.	The moment you agree on certain ground rules with each other: we try not to interrupt each other in a meeting, we try to give everyone the floor and listen to everyone's ideas. You have agreed something with each other, then it is very nice, because you can also point that out to each other (R8).
	Fostering coalitions and networks	Some respondents mentioned forming networks amongst women could help in mitigating impacts of gender microaggressions and to form a front against male perpetrators. Other respondents mentioned that more people should be involved in a network than merely those of the marginalized group.	But if you as women start discussing that among yourselves then you're not going to change anything, I think. I think then you do have to share it more widely in the organization (R6). In fact, I am not at all in favor of unions, unless they are constructive unions. Then form a women's union especially (R13).
	Influencing policy and legislation	Set organizational rules and guidelines to prevent gender microaggressions from occurring, for example by setting rules of conduct on how we treat each other.	Of course it helps to have procedural agreements of do we do it or don't we do it? That also creates frameworks, what do we consider normal? What do we not consider normal? That can be helpful (R13).
	Promoting community education	Educate other colleagues in your team and/or organization on gender bias, by for example talking to each other about societal occurrences of gender bias.	Yes, I think just creating awareness. So making sure that those who do it, can also be women by the way, but making those who do it then aware of what effect it can have. Because I think, as long as that's not clear, these people won't stop either, because the moment they think people find it funny, then you also have no motivation to stop doing it (R10). Also well through conversations, also well really about these kinds of issues. Really did have many conversations about transgressive behavior. For example, when it was in the media, but also examples were cited of what had happened to other colleagues in other teams. And how would you react? How do you feel about this, would you say what? It has really been a topic of conversation, at team meetings, that it was really an agenda item (R12).
	Strengthening individual knowledge and skills	Raising one's own awareness of gender bias and one's own boundaries in terms of gender microaggressions.	When you start looking in terms of training or practice or skills, becoming aware of your own limits is very valuable. So that in that you can say of and stop now. And that, of course, is the next level when you start looking at teams. That people also become aware of the boundaries of others. And how do you make the unmentionable negotiable? Does it make sense in your team that you indeed review those issues with each other on a regular basis? (R13).
Abandonment	Remain passive, retreat or give up	A bystander's failure to act on behalf of a target of microaggressions despite having noticed the incident (Johnson et al., 2021).	Yes, then that's unfortunate, but I don't think you can blame that person either, because it is difficult to speak out as a welfare recipient. But it is unfortunate, and I do think that we as women should support each other. But I also think a lot of people don't realize it either. See, that's just unfortunate, then you quickly feel like the perpetrator is supported, when that's not necessarily the case, but that does something to you I think (R6).
			Yes, then I would think, is anyone here listening to me at all? Maybe I shouldn't work here anymore, because I am not being heard and seen (R8).

Strategic goal of intervention

Strategic goal of intervention	Secondary microaggressions	'Splaining	A bystander of the dominant group (white men) provides rationale to people of the marginalized group (white women) about topics related to inequity (Johnson et al., 2021).	That they start laughing along. Or really says of 'how nice that you have time for your kids then,' really goes along with it. Or knocks it flat when you would say something about it that someone then says, 'yeah, but you have kids anyway and you always want Wednesdays off for your kids, so why would you want the promotion?' That someone really goes along with that and also nullifies your comment (R6).
		Gaslighting	Behavior that upholds stereotypes and tries to manipulate targets to doubt themselves or question their sanity or memory (Johnson et al., 2021).	Yes catch up on that, laugh along with it, or continue in it. That just makes it worse (R4). Of course, that's also what you hear very often as a woman; 'I didn't know you were so sensitive'. That is also really a microaggression of course. Then you get another microaggression on you (R13).
		Victim blaming	Placing the responsibility of an objectively negative outcome onto the target (Johnson et al., 2021).	'You also have to come to understand for a moment that we don't mean it all that way, but that you yourself are making it all up in your head' (R1).
Perceived effectiveness of bystander intervention	Person(ality) of bystander	Bystander knows target('s) preferences	The familiarity of the bystander to the target determines whether respondents want the bystander to respond. Some respondents only want familiar bystanders to respond, and other respondents think bystanders should respond regardless of interpersonal relations with the target. Moreover, the familiarity of the bystander is thought to influence the manner of intervening (e.g., more on the content or a more general response).	Maybe a woman doesn't want that at all. So I think, but if she wouldn't want it, why should I make a problem of it? I would then ask, of what would you have wanted? (R2). Yes, I think that also depends on how well the bystanders know you or not. I would rather have bystanders who know me react than people who don't know me that well, I also think that reaction can be very different (R11).
		Character traits intervening bystander	Character traits of the intervening bystander were mentioned as important factors determining the effectiveness of bystander intervention (e.g., whether someone blurts things out or whether someone is more likely to wait and see).	I do think that's a condition, that you do that properly, and not that you start raving and blah blah blah. I don't think that is useful (R5). Yes, of course, that also very much depends on the relationships and personalities, like extravert/introvert (R7).
		Hierarchical position intervening bystander	Some respondents mentioned that bystander intervention is sometimes more optimal if it comes from colleagues with a higher hierarchical position in the organization.	I think I would have liked it, especially if that was a more senior person who really put him in his place (R1).
		Gendered differences	When it comes to optimal bystander intervention, the gender of the bystander was mentioned by all respondents to be very influential in terms of the manner and effectiveness of intervening. Most respondents believed women would be more likely to intervene fiercely and emotionally, whereas men would be more likely to intervene factually and neutrally. Overall, most respondents argued male bystanders would be more effective in their intervention.	I think myself, but I think that's a very interesting one what comes out of that. I personally think that if a straight white man makes a remark to a woman, that a straight white man can best correct that man. And if it's a woman then you might also get that reaction of 'oh you are just sticking up for each other'. So then you have that again, you know. Then you get a whole different setting, so I really believe that the person can make an enormous impact. And that there is a shortcoming, because I think women are more inclined to stick their necks out than straight white men. I think they feel they have much more to lose than a woman. But I don't know that though, that's my guess (R13).
Perceived effectiveness of	Consequences for target	Making matters worse	Respondents acknowledged that bystanders can make the situation worse, both by responding (in a certain manner) and by remaining silent.	If people don't name it, then it still comes off more as just passive behavior, which yes, anyone could come across, whereas if you start really actively responding then yes, I think that does hurt more (R10).

bystander intervention

Mitigating impacts

Respondents argued that mitigating the impacts of the gender microaggression is the most important outcome of bystander intervention. This could be achieved by various (combinations of the) strategic goals and is very person- and situation-specific.

Yes, you do have to think carefully of is it worth me saying something? Because of course you can create a very nasty atmosphere within the team (R12).

Giving the victim the insight that they are not alone, like a form of solidarity, but also giving the perpetrator the insight that what he is saying is not normal, so urge him to start reflecting on himself (R8).

Both, because a reaction, no matter what reaction, already supports me, but a reaction that points out to him that it really can't be done is also important, so that it doesn't happen again (R10).

Nothing changes

Some bystander behaviors or lack thereof were mentioned by respondents to ensure that nothing changes (either for the better or for the worse).

Yes, because the colleagues who went to me afterwards, I also asked them, because they really all had quite clear opinions, of yes, 'why are you going to inquire about something with me now, couldn't you say it at the time?' It's no use to me now. That did often feel a little behind the elbows to me (R9).

Anyway, you know if you don't do anything, nothing will change, right? (R13).

Perceived effectiveness of bystander intervention

Consequences for bystander

Respondents acknowledged certain potential consequences of bystander intervention for bystanders, which could inhibit bystanders from intervening.

So that's of course yes, you know the risk to yourself, soon they' might think I'm stupid, stupid, emotional, a bonnet, when you're also a woman, soon it's going to be about me, now they're talking to her and soon they'll start at me (R13).

Perceived effectiveness of bystander intervention

Manner of intervening

Lighthearted

Some respondents mentioned a desire for bystanders to intervene in a somewhat subtly and lighthearted manner.

No, I think in this case I would want to do so that the bystanders kind of so in a light way kind of show that they are behind you in that regard (R7).

That may also be what makes it better to do it with a wink and a little bit of feminine charm. That maybe then you can make your point better. Just putting it on with the wink and then then there is something serious in it, of "what is going on here now?" (R13).

Fiercely

Some respondents mentioned a desire for bystanders to intervene in a harsh or fierce manner.

No, I think you do have to go hard into this to also make it clear that it really can't be done (R8).

Well-considered

Respondents agreed that the manner of responding by bystanders should be well-considered and respectful.

I'm more likely to say of I want to have a reaction where the person who uttered it is going to think about it. You can say, 'hey, what did you do, fuck off.' But then if you start making a tactical comment in some way, then maybe the person is also going to think of what did I actually say? (R4).

Yes, you should always be neat. You always have to respect another person, regardless of gender or whatever, or rank in your team (R12).

As if bystander was personally addressed

Respondents mentioned that sometimes it could be best for bystanders to respond as if personally addressed by the microaggression.

Or it must be that the other person has also experienced the same thing and now sees this happening to you and reacts from my own experience: 'I found that an unpleasant experience myself and now I also see you doing this to that one'. So that you then keep it very much to yourself (R7).

Perceived effectiveness of bystander intervention	Timing of intervening	Before microaggression	Bystander intervention before the gender microaggression has been expressed.	I do think it definitely helps, when prejudices and microaggressions are discussed in advance And when certain guiding rules are set (R8). Just create an atmosphere in which you just create trust in each other and that you just create an open atmosphere, so that you don't cut each other off immediately when something is said to you. I think that would help, certainly just having a day of team building conversations or just setting up a working group that really talks about this (R10).
		During microaggression	Bystander intervention just after the gender microaggression has been expressed.	I don't think you can do much more with it than point it out right at the same time that another colleague said it (R1).
		After microaggression	Bystander intervention a longer time after the gender microaggression has been expressed.	There are also situations where I think, let it settle for a while, and maybe come back to it later of what you said it was kind of blunt and not very pleasant (R12).
Perceived effectiveness of bystander intervention	Setting of intervening	After target responds	Some respondents argued that bystanders should wait with intervening until after the target herself has responded and adjust their interventions to what the target has said.	Yeah, I think there's also a strength here that you say something yourself first and then others can acknowledge that or support you in that of 'gee, I did indeed hear it at the time' (R8).
		Before target responds	Some respondents argued that bystanders should intervene before the target responds, to ensure that the target feels supported and more able to speak up.	Yes, because you feel more strengthened when the bystander starts, so I think that always helps and that you also dare to speak up a little more (R6).
		Group setting	Most respondents argued that intervening in the group setting with other parties involved is most effective to put the perpetrator on the block and pressure him/her into self-reflection and the make others aware of the microaggressive situation.	Yes, I think for example you could do it if it's just within the team, so your manager and his team members, that it would be okay to do it that way (R1). But I do think it is good to put a stop to this immediately, also because then you are all together. And it works differently in the group dynamics if everyone says, 'this is really not acceptable' (R8).
		One-on-one	Some respondents mentioned that it might be better to intervene in a one-on-one setting with either the target or the perpetrator.	Maybe I would find it most optimal and neat if you as a person who gets through that go to the speaker afterwards and explain to them why it's actually not okay. I think you achieve the most with that because you're not making fun of someone like that but really explaining to someone of 'hey, do you understand why it's not okay'. And also because I would imagine in the moment you might not quite have that realization (R6).
Perceived effectiveness of bystander intervention	Dependent on circumstances	Dependent on situational and contextual factors	All respondents mentioned that the optimal bystander intervention is very dependent on situational and contextual factors of the specific gender microaggression.	Yes, exactly, so it's a very complicated thing of how you react to that and what is pleasant there for yourself and for the other person, because I think that's also very person and situation dependent (R7).
		Dependent on tripartite categorization	Some comments were made on the difference in the tripartite categorization of gender microaggressions that could impact the optimal bystander intervention.	It's just, look that assault is really just a comment that you're really actively so offending someone or at least yes, maybe not offending someone on purpose but just actively saying something. That invalidation is just yeah, you're just not saying anything. It makes sense that there would be different reactions because it was just a different behavior (R10).