# Racial Microaggressions & Academic Libraries

Jaena Alabi, Auburn University

4) A colleague told me that I was ...

frequency of responses to select survey items

The 10 items below showed the greatest difference in means for Minority Experiences and Non-minority Observations.

Responses to Select Items: Non-minority Observations

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 Number of Responses

3) A colleague assumed that another...

18) A colleague treated another librarian...

# mi· cro· ag· gres· sions

- "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages'
- \*"often unconsciously delivered in the form of subtle snubs or dismissive looks, gestures, and tones"

(Sue, et al, 2007, p.273)

### purpose(s)

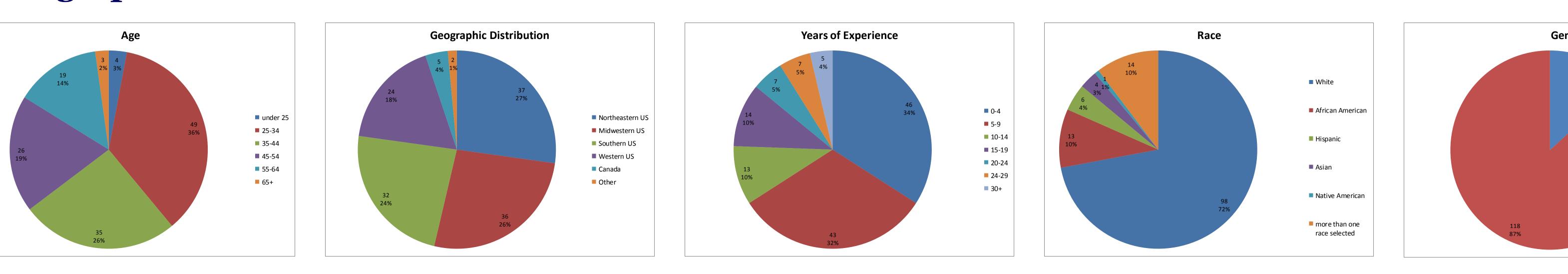
- . Investigate the prevalence of racial microaggressions in academic libraries.
- 2. Determine whether non-minority librarians are conscious of racial microaggressions their minority colleagues may be experiencing.

# methodology

- Online survey distributed via selected ACRL listservs: ILI-L, LES-L, and EBSS-L
- Largely based on Nadal's Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale

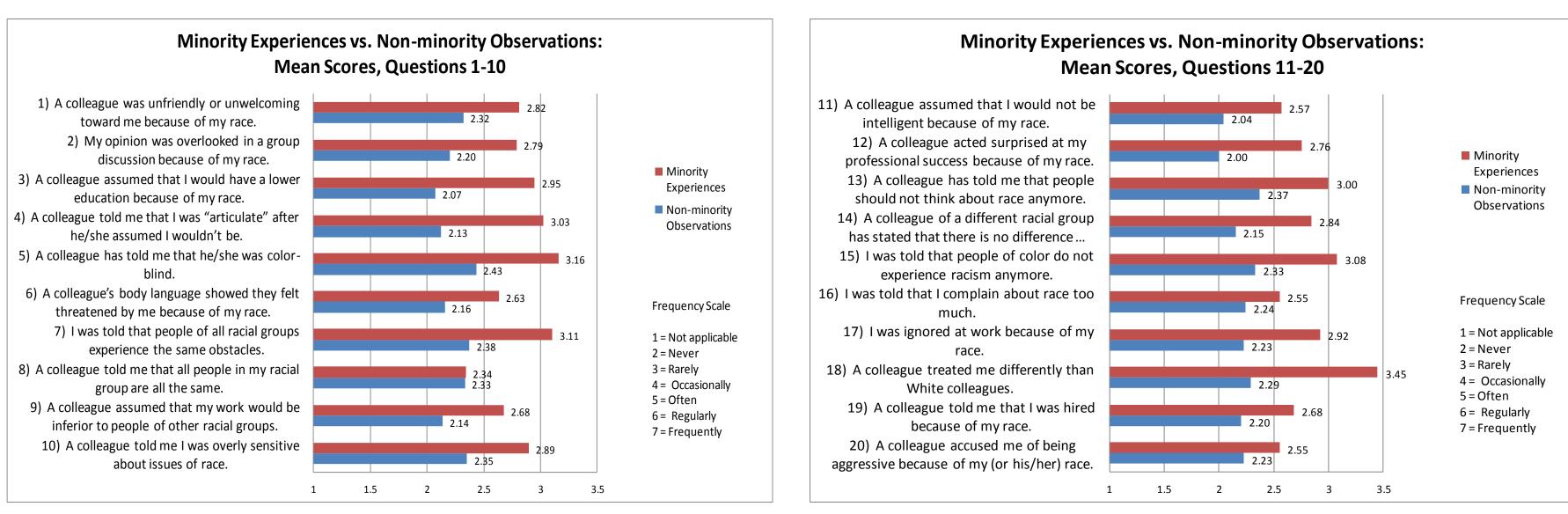
# results & preliminary analysis

#### demographics



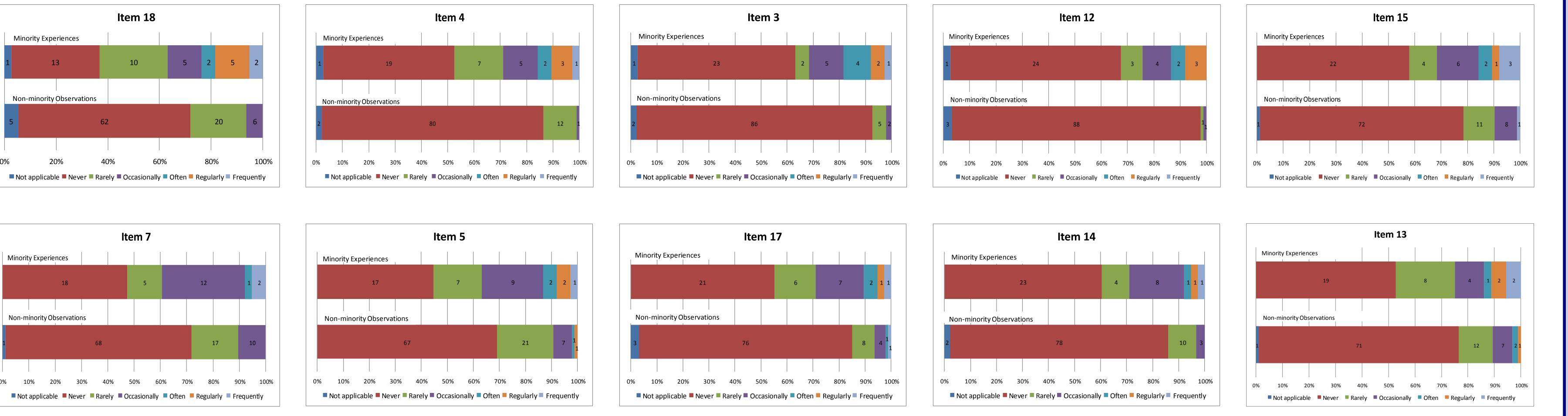
#### mean responses to survey items

Non-minority = selected only White/Caucasian race. Minority = selected any racial category other than or in addition to White/Caucasian.



#### comparison of responses to select survey items

Each chart below shows the responses (in percentages) to a specific survey item from minorities about their experiences and from non-minorities about their observations. The number for each response is noted in each block on the graphs.



### open-ended comments

If these questions had included librarianship as a whole (especially librarians I've met at library confrences) there would have been more "oftens."

Race is a social construct and does not exist.

se statements "frequently" they are too extreme.

It's important to remember "racism by omission", i.e. structuring workplace communication and culture so that entire ethnic groups are ignored and forgotten.

I've been told how lucky I am to be a minority because I get my degree paid for (assuming the scholarships I earned were not competative. I've also been told "WOW! You're Hispanic? You speak great English..."

As a White person, I probably didn't notice if these things were happening.

Although a colleague has rarely accused me of being aggressive because of my race--because I sometimes express my annoyance or anger about an issue-it is perceived as "angry" rather than passionate about issues of inequality and/or blatant double & triple

I can't imaging anyone of any ethnicity encountering the

Sometimes it is unclear if these scenarios are due to race, gender, or generational status.

due to my age, but not race.

I have experienced some of these things hallenged on these issues. Most of the time people of color come librarians play like they accept you in order to not appear as being overtly racist, however they don't ask you participate in things that

As a white Jew, I sometimes feel like a minority and sometimes not. [ I am occasionally hurt when people assume that because I am from an group that is often well educated and successful that there is nothing special they need to learn about being inclusive of my culture.

I think class and upbringing have more impact at this point. [...] Still a problem, since race/ethnicity in this country are still an economic barrier.

I suspect that my colleagues simply don't think about things in terms of race very much. [...] While I am happy to help my colleagues become more aware of diversity issues, as I continue to do myself, I am wary of diversity being seen as something white people don't need to address. This is a big hurdle to overcome, to help all of our colleagues see the value of diversity, not just those who are racial minorities. The topic of race is pretty much avoided altogether at my place of employment, which I think is too bad. I mean, I'm certainly glad no one is overtly racist, but I wish that more could be done to make things better. I don't think avoiding the topic completely is enough.

Academic Libraries are very poor examples of pushing forth Diversity candidates for positions at the administrative level for Minorities. They want a homogenous version of themselves within the administration. They want a "Barak Obama-esque" candidate as AL, UAL, Director of their academic libraries.

We have very few people of color in libraries, from when I was in library school to the libraries where I've worked to the conferences I've attended. Racism is a major issue in libraries. We've closed it off as a viable career path because it relies on shared cultural values and access to cultural and material capital.

The reason that many African Americans and Latino Librarians

leave this profession is because of the constant lack of emotional

intelligence that is needed in the work place today.

I don't care to work collaboratively with my colleagues as they don't care to work collaboratively with me. I hate them as much as they hate me

Most of the n/a's could not be answered because they ask for knowledge of one else's state of mind.

I'm a middle-aged white woman - I've never experience racial bias. Gender? You bet!! And this profession is female dominated.

I have not personally experienced or heard any of the categories/statements on the previous survey pages. But that doesn't mean it doesn't happen.

I have experienced some of the most overt mistreatment of my life within my academic library. I've had people standing in front of me telling me I don't belong in higher education, mocking my economic background, telling me I was only hired because of Affirmative Action. [...]I think the most painful part is having people I respect minimize these painful (and possibly illegail) comments as the norm, something I must learn to deal with

Many of the negative experiences that I have witnessed around race were in graduate school (at a major institution in the Midwest) There were some direct and explicit forms of discriminatory language used as mentioned above, but much of the micro-aggression ap Racism-although sometimes covert---has been a topic of discussion amount pears in what is not said when an issue with many of my colleagues as "librarians of color". I did not expect some of clear racial dimension is raised. the blatantly disrespectful behavior from educated people and especial from adminstrators that I report to, in a so-called learning environment

Just taking this survey as a white person highlig my own privilege because I am sure that some of these comments and micro-aggressions are directed towards people of color in academic libra ies. Most of the questions I have to say never, but have heard comments that reflect an ideology of colorblindness in the workplace. It is not always explicit, but sometimes it is about what people d not say in public forums and what librarians do not openly recognize.

**References & Acknowledgements** 

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in the 21st century. - Because of this I am almost sorry that I entered the

profession in academe-- however, I know that I do make a difference in

terms of student learning outcomes- and that is what has kept me going.

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contact information: jma0019@auburn.edu