

Background

- The microaggression construct has yet to be operationalized with sufficient clarity. It is uncertain the extent to which individuals agree that particular statements are acceptable, aggressive or offensive.
- This study aims to create a reliable measure of microaggressions through the evaluation of perceived acceptability, aggressiveness, and offensiveness of putative microaggressions: the Racial Microaggression Acceptance Scale (RaMAS).

Item Construction

- Racial stereotypes of diverse classes are deeply woven into racial microaggressions' content. To create a comprehensive scale, items generated in this study were conceptually grounded in literature on stereotypes regarding Black Americans (intelligence, aggression, criminality, athleticism; Ghavami and Peplau, 2013) and/or common microaggression themes (invalidation and exclusion; Sue et al., 2007). Additional criteria for item generation include indirectness and varying degrees of severity.
- The role of personality traits has been largely neglected in microaggression research, as identified in Lilienfeld (2017). These traits may be potential confounds to individuals' assessments of microaggressions. Therefore, we included measures of negative emotionality and race-based rejection sensitivity.

RaMAS Survey Items

Our initial item pool, comprised of 65 putative microaggressions, were rated on a 7 point Likert-type scale.

- Acceptability:** How acceptable would you find this in friendly conversation with a black person?
- Aggressiveness:** Would this be perceived by a black person as aggressive (hostile/combative)?
- Offensiveness:** Would this be perceived by a black person as offensive (rude/objectable)?

Study Design

Participants

- 181 participants, 166 after data cleaning
- 103 females, 72 males, 6 unidentified
- Age: 18-23 years, M = 19.13, SD = 1.22
- All St. Olaf undergraduate students
- White: 113 Middle Eastern: 5
- Hispanic: 16 Black: 11 Asian: 20
- Native American: 1

Procedure

Participants took survey on SurveyMonkey

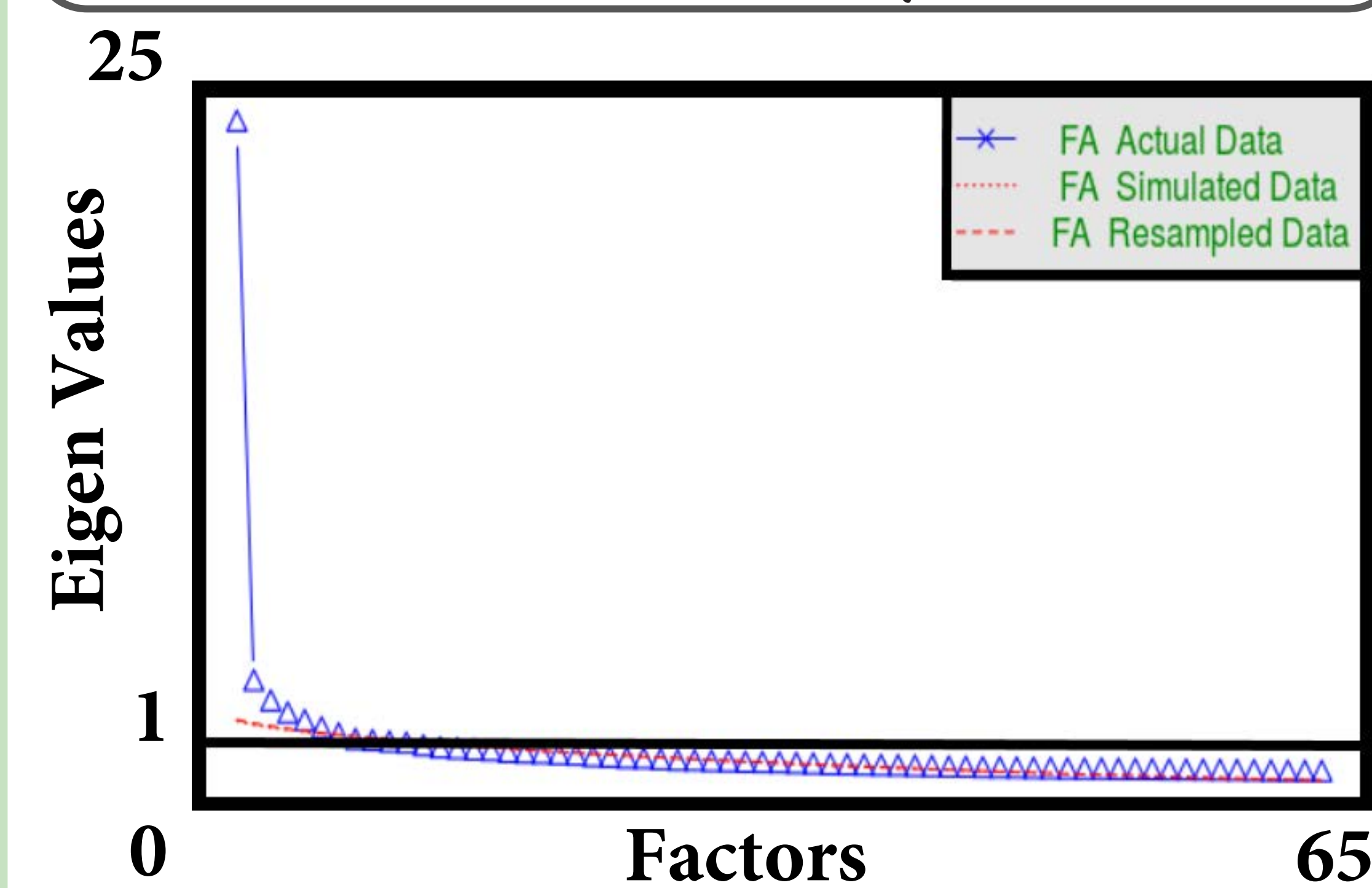
- Demographics
- Racial Microaggression Attitudes Scale (RaMAS)
- Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS)
- Big Five Inventory (BFI)
- Social Dominance scale (SDO)
- Modern Racism Scale (MRS)
- Negative Emotionality scale (NE)
- Race-based Rejection Sensitivity (RS-Race)
- Social Skills Inventory (SSI)

ⁿp > .05 *p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < .001

Steps in EFA and Item Reduction

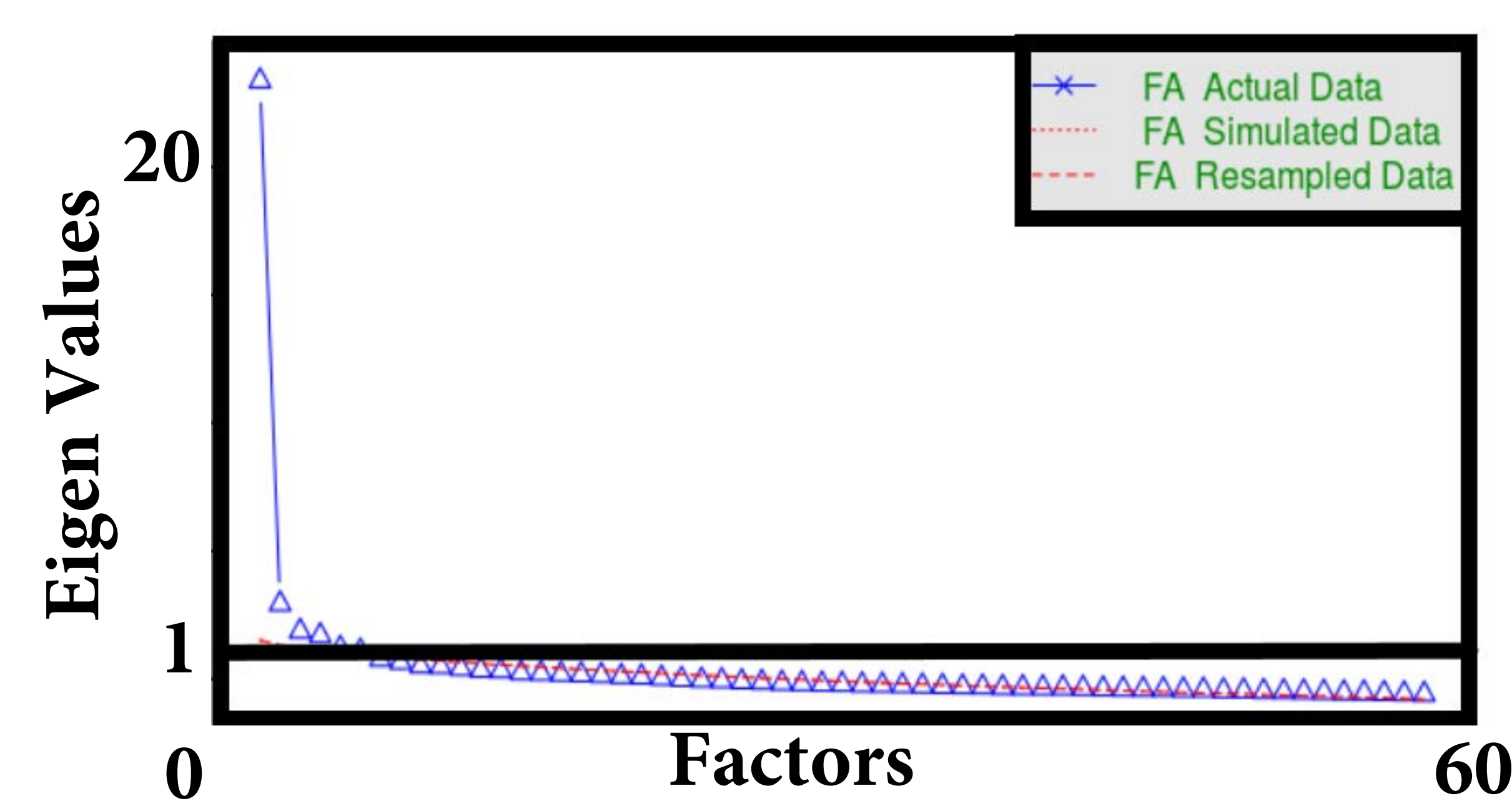
- Factor loadings assuming 1 factor. Items that did not load were removed.
- Perform a follow up EFA imposing 2 factors.
- Re-analyze factor loadings for final scale

Initial EFA: Parallel Analysis Scree Plot



- Plot suggests that 1 factor is dominant, which implies that items tap into the same construct
 - 6 items that did not load on the single factor above .40 were removed
- Based on original 65 item scale.

Follow-Up EFA



Total variance explained by number of imposed factors:

Number of Factors	1	2	3	4
Variance Explained (%)	39%	45%	48%	51%

- Imposing 2 factors with a varimax rotation suggests that items are grouped into two distinct microaggression categories: exclusion and invalidation (Sue's hypothesis)
- Items were further reduced based on low factor loadings and degree of theoretical strength. This yielded a 16 item microaggression scale with equal numbers of exclusion and invalidation items.

Loadings From Final EFA: 16 Item Scale

Summary of Exploratory Factor Analysis Results for 16 Item Scale ($\alpha = .91$)

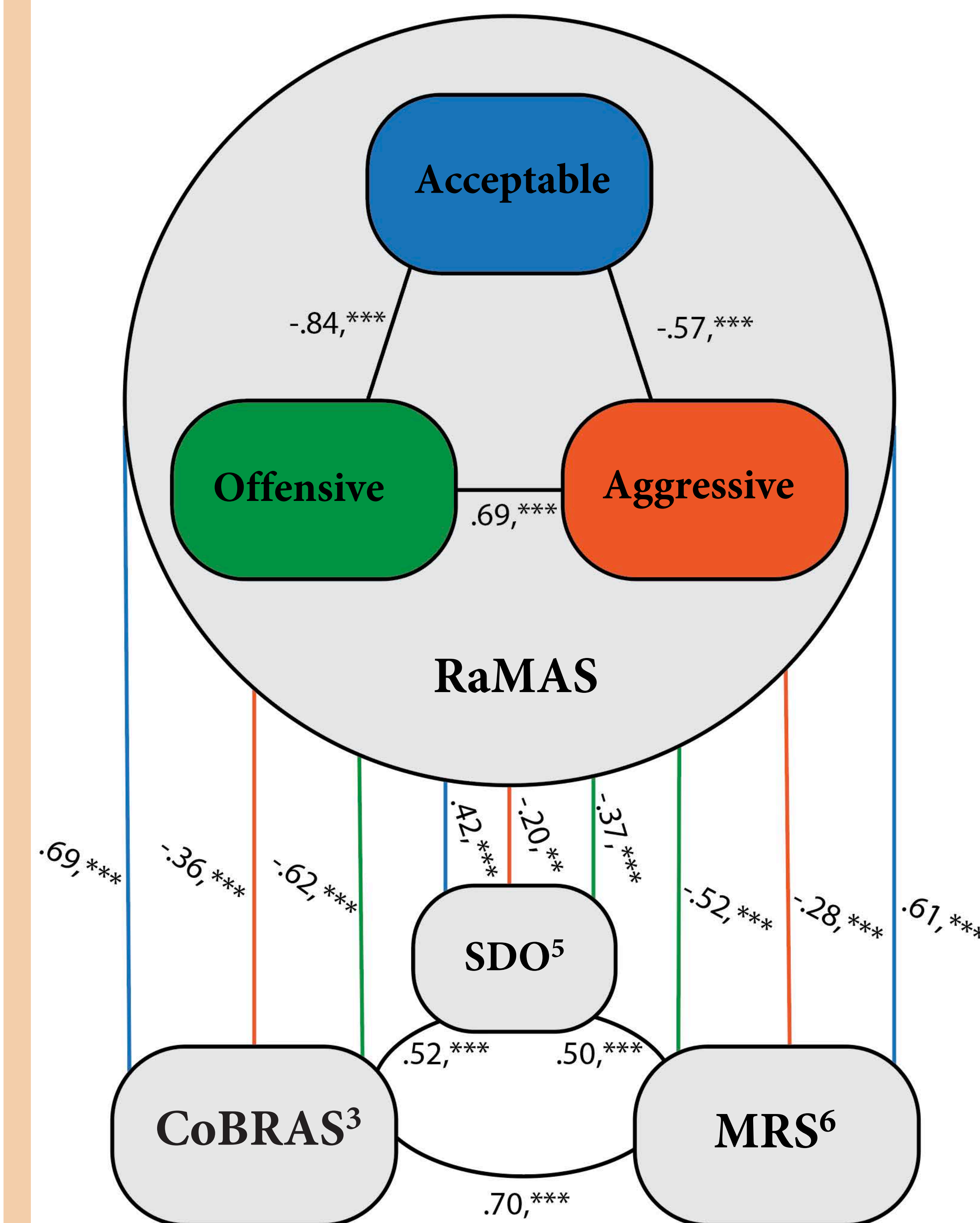
Item	Factor Loadings	
	Invalidation ($\alpha = .88$)	Exclusion ($\alpha = .86$)
I've worked hard my whole life so I find it unfair when I'm asked to pay taxes to support those who don't work.	.60	.04
Affirmative action gives black people an advantage when applying to schools.	.64	.22
I'm not racist, I have several black friends.	.56	.28
People are often too sensitive about jokes with racial undertones.	.50	.29
The criminal justice system isn't biased.	.78	.31
White supremacy doesn't exist anymore.	.79	.07
Police treat everybody the same regardless of race.	.78	.28
It's not your fault you look more intense, just try to lighten up!	.45	.29
Is that your real hair?	.29	.61
Are you naturally that strong or do you work out?	.28	.65
Did you have parents to help you with your schoolwork?	.07	.76
You should smile more often.	.22	.62
Does any of your frustration come from family issues?	.28	.60
You look angry a lot.	.27	.65
Was school hard for you?	.32	.65
You don't look like a typical black person.	.30	.40
Eigenvalues	6.40	1.25
% of variance	24.60	24.10

Note: Factor loadings above .40 appear in bold.

- Strong Overall Internal Reliability ($\alpha = .91$)

Note: Loadings from EFA of the 16 item scale. Factor analysis was performed with a varimax rotation. Little difference was found using a promax rotation.

Convergent Validity

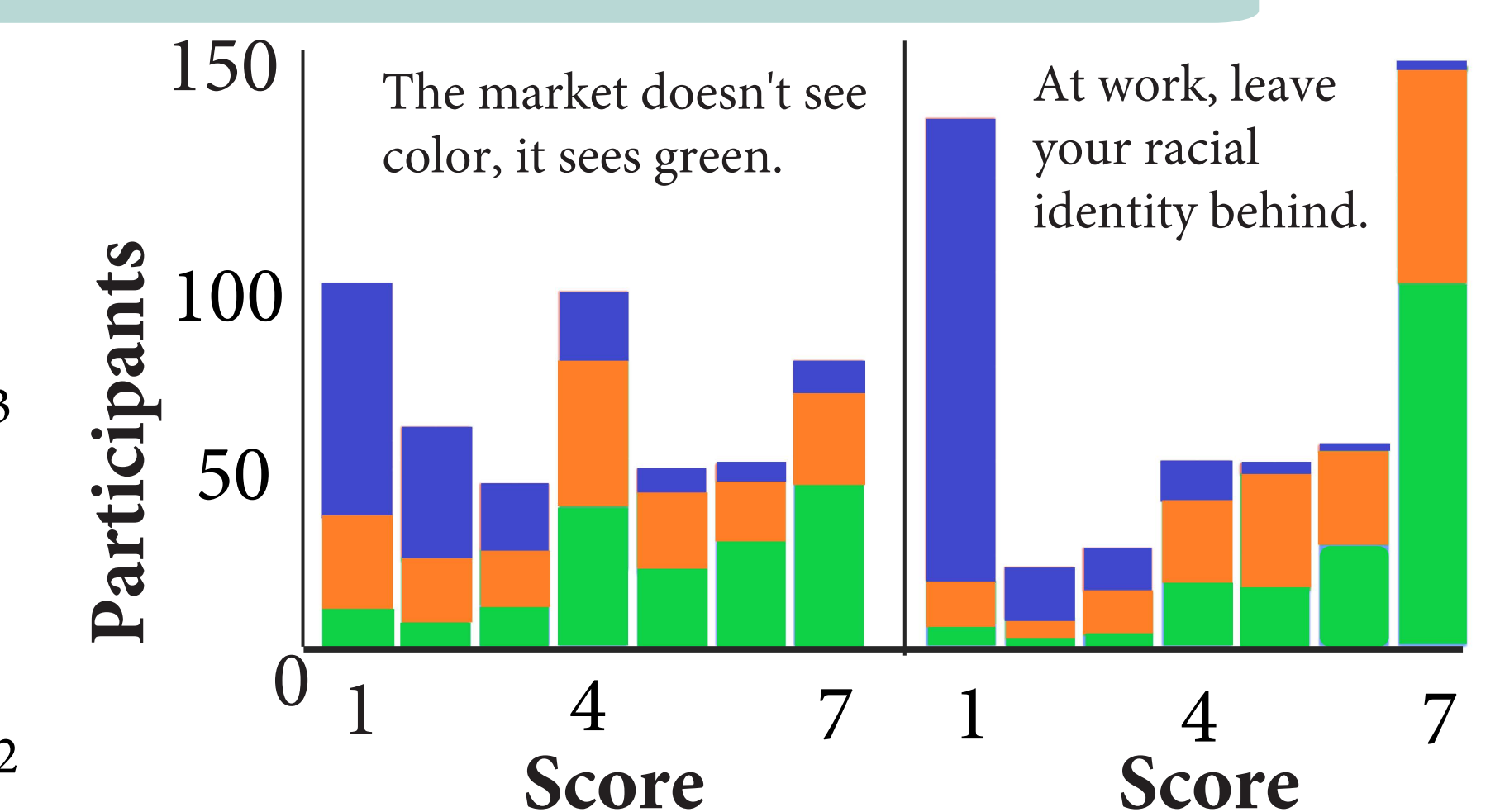


- Acceptability & Offensiveness strongly predict scores on CoBRAS, MRS, and SDO.
- Aggressiveness moderately predicts scores on CoBRAS, MRS, SDO.

Correlations based on reduced 16 item scale.

Score: Examples and Summary

Summary Statistics:
Acceptable: M = 1.34 SD = 1.03
Aggressive: M = 3.24 SD = 1.47
Offensive: M = 4.35 SD = 1.22



Lilienfeld Hypotheses

Do persistent personality traits or attributes predict one's assessment of microaggression content?

- All correlations $p > .04$ BFI⁴, NE⁷, RS-Race⁸, SSI⁹

Discussion

Validation

- 16 Item scale has strong overall internal reliability ($\alpha = .91$).
- Groupings reveal 2 factors based on Sue's hypothesis: exclusion and invalidation.
- Participants scores are highly correlated with other racial content scales, thereby providing evidence of convergent validity.
- Weakness of aggressiveness measure implies the "aggressive" component of common microaggressions may be less relevant, at least to this mostly white sample

Additional Implications

- Scores on tests related to Lilienfeld imply that negative emotionality and race-based rejection sensitivity do not predict assessment of racial microaggression

Future Directions

Test Retest Reliability

- Survey 100 undergrads within subjects
- Two weeks between each test

Expert Validation

- Expert defined as 3 related papers cited > 5 times
- Survey 60 Experts and compares means
- Request comments for improvement, revision

Target Populations Survey

- 300 black Americans through MTurk
- Predict significant differences in mean score
- Predict similar Construct Validity, Lilienfeld Hypotheses, Scree Plot

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