

# An Examination of Implicit Teacher Biases

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## Background

- Girls with ASD are continually go undiagnosed due to ignorance in the context of asd research (Barbaro et al., 2018; Duvekot et al., 2016; Evans et al., 2018; Leedham et al., 2019; Matheis et al., 2019; Young et al., 2018), ASD Diagnostic tests (Milner et al., 2019; Moran et al., 2019; Øien et al., 2018; Sedgewick et al., 2015), and due to social pressures to blend in (Dean et al., 2016; Gaffney, 2017; Ormond et al., 2017; Sedgewick et al., 2015; Young et al., 2018).
- Teachers lack a complete understanding the full behavioral spectrum of ASD, including the female phenotype, and social contexts – often attending towards more disruptive behaviors in the classroom context (Barbaro et al., 2018; Baron-Cohen, 2002; Duvekot et al., 2016; Evans et al., 2018; Leedham et al., 2019; Matheis et al., 2019; Young et al., 2018).

- The diagnosis of asd is reliant upon teachers', parents', and healthcare workers' expectations of what asd will look like- so when based in a male epitomized perception of symptoms girls will systematically be ignored (Young et al., 2018).

## Objectives

- Hypothesis 1: By manipulating the severity of the autism-related behaviors of a target child will affect teachers' levels of concern, methods of follow-up, and perceptions of the cause of the behavior. More externally salient and disruptive will equate to perceived disability, higher levels of concerns and follow-ups pursued.
- Hypothesis 2: Gender will also serve as a moderator in the relationship between severity of autism symptomology and teacher response. Specifically girls will be less likely to be referred even with the exact same symptoms
- Hypothesis 3: More disruption perceived when the asd symptoms are associated with a girl due to incongruence with gendered behaviors.

## Participants

- The target populations we hope to access with this research study is that of kindergarten to twelfth grade teachers, who are either currently teachers or have been teachers at some point in their career.
- Using a g\*power analysis for a complete between subjects design with an effect size of .20, with 134 being the ideal number of participants needed for this study.
- In order to obtain these participants, we utilize the teachers' listservs that can be accessed through the College of Education and Psychology, in addition to snowball sampling to identify more teachers from our original outreach

## Methods

- Each survey will contain demographic items, one of three counterbalanced vignettes (varying from severity levels and gender), rating scale of behavior association, rating scale of levels of concern about behaviors indicated in the vignettes, rating scales of likelihood of follow up on behaviors, modern sexism scale items. Participants will be informed that they will answer several questions about the behaviors exhibited in the vignette and their perceptions of those behaviors
- Importantly, the content of the vignette was manipulated to vary in:
  - Gender of the target child (male or female name)
  - Level of ASD symptomology (mild, moderate, severe)

		Symptom Presentation		
Gender	Female;	Mild	Moderate	Severe
	Male;	Mild	Moderate	Severe

## Measures

Level of Concern (item)

- "How concerned are you about the child's behavior" (Scale of 1-5, not at all to extremely concerned)

Follow up (1 Item)

- "How likely do you see yourself seeking out the following procedures?(scale of extremely likely to extremely unlikely) Each method of follow up will be rated on a scale of 1-5, contacting guardians, disciplinary measures through administration, school counseling referral, special education department referral, diagnostic referral

Behavior Assessment and Conceptualization(1 Item)

- "How likely do you think it is that the behaviors are caused by..." Each explanation of behavior is rated as being extremely likely to extremely unlikely, Parental influence/parenting, child's personality, peer provocation, Anger issues, a defiant disorder, a learning disability

Modern Sexism Scale (Swim, Akin, Hall, & Hunter, 1995).

- 13 items rated from strongly agree to strongly disagree-The survey measures three domains of attitudes:
  - Denial of continuing discrimination ("Society has reached the point where women and men have equal opportunities for achievement.")
  - Antagonism towards women's demands ("It is easy to understand the anger of women's groups in America" [reverse scored])
  - Resentment about special favors for women ("Over the past few years, the government and news media have been showing more concern about the treatment of women than is warranted by women's actual experiences.")

## Proposed Analysis

A series 2 (gender) by 3(level of severity) ANCOVAs will be conducted, with participants' scores on the Modern Sexism Scale included as a covariate.

## Summary

Overall, this project is made to examine how much the diagnosis of girls with ASD is impacted by teacher's implicit gender and severity of symptom biases.

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