PREDICTORS OF PERCEIVING RACISM IN
AMBIGUOUS SITUATIONS

by

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ABSTRACT

The present study used a mixed-experimental analog design to examine 858 undergraduate students' reactions to a scenario depicting a store clerk being mildly rude to a customer. The ethnicity of the clerk and customer were manipulated. Results indicated that participants' beliefs regarding the general prevalence of racism and the degree to which they identify with their respective ethnic group significantly predicted the extent to which they perceived the clerk's behavior as being racially motivated. It also was found that participants' beliefs regarding the general prevalence of racism, levels of cynicism, and attributional style significantly predicted the extent to which they perceived the clerk's behavior as unjust. Moreover, participants' beliefs regarding the general prevalence of racism, levels of cynicism, self-esteem, and symptoms of depression significantly predicted the extent to which they considered the clerk's behavior as a common occurrence. Finally, participants judged the clerk's behavior to be significantly more racially motivated when the clerk was White and the customer was Hispanic or African American than when the clerk was Hispanic or African American and the customer was White. This last finding was robust for White, Latino and African American participants. Implications of the findings are discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

Though society has progressed from the days of formalized racial segregation, racism

still remains an ongoing problem in the United States. Despite a general consensus that overtly

racist acts, such as denial of employment, are unacceptable, there are many ambiguous situations

in everyday life that raise questions of whether racist attitudes and beliefs influenced a situation.

Evaluating situations in which discrimination may have been influenced by racist motives often

requires subjective interpretations in order to arrive at a conclusion (Major, Quinton, & McCoy,

2002). When racism is believed to be the motivation for a specific experience, perceived

discrimination is said to occur (Kessler, Mickelson, & Williams, 1999). The social scientific

literature has identified myriad variables that correlate with or influence perceptions of racism.

The purpose of this study is to examine simultaneously an array of variables thought to influence

perceptions of racial discrimination, in order to isolate and identify the variables that seem most

involved in this phenomenon. In reviewing the literature, a handful of personality variables

appear to influence how people perceive ambiguously interracial encounters. These variables

will be the focus of the current study, and include anxiety, depression, self-esteem, attribution

style, ethnic identity, attitudes about the prevalence of racism in general, and cynicism. In the

following section, the literature that has addressed each of these variables in the context of

perceptions of discrimination is reviewed.

<u>Perceived Racism: An Overview</u>

Kessler et al. (1999) found that approximately one-third of the general population

perceives having experienced some form of major discrimination over the course of their lifetime

(whether it be related to race/ethnicity or not), with 60 percent reporting being the victim of

discrimination on a day-to-day basis. The researchers conducted this four-year national study by

asking questions about ambiguous situations in order to ensure that participants' subjective perceptions were being captured. The types of major racial discrimination reported ranged from being denied employment (16%) to being forced to move from one's neighborhood (2%). Other types of perceived major racial discrimination included denial of a promotion, denial of or receiving inferior service, discouragement by a teacher from seeking higher education, denial of a bank loan, harassment by the police, termination of employment, prevention from buying or renting a home, denial of a scholarship, and denial of or receipt of inferior medical care. Among the ethnically diverse sample, one third of non-Hispanic Whites, 49 percent of African Americans, and 50 percent of those who self-identified as "Other" reported having experienced a major form of discrimination in their lifetime.

The prevalence rates of those who reported having experienced some form of day-to-day racial discrimination ranged from 48 percent for treatment as if one were inferior to 24 percent for being the target of harassment or threats. Other reported experiences of day-to-day discrimination included being treated as unintelligent, a threat, or dishonest, being treated with less courtesy or respect than others, receiving poor service in restaurants or stores, and being the target of name-calling, insults, threats, or harassment. Ninety percent of African American participants reported having experienced this type of discrimination, a rate that was significantly higher than the respective percentage of "Other" (80.5%), which in turn was significantly higher than the respective percentage for non-Hispanic Whites (55.6%). Overall, race/ethnicity was the most common cause indicated by participants for the discrimination they encountered.

Landrine and Klonoff (1996) conducted a narrower version of Kessler et al.'s work by sampling only African Americans and focusing specifically on racial discrimination. One hundred percent of the participants reported having experienced some form of racism in their

lifetime, with 98 percent reporting having experienced it in the past year. The nature and prevalence rates of the discriminatory situations were similar to those found by Kessler et al. (1999). Participants also rated the extent to which they felt the perceived racial events had been stressful. Nearly all participants reported having experienced at least some perceived discriminatory related stress, with anger being the most frequently reported emotional reaction (82.8%). To date, no comparative literature could be found using a Hispanic/Latino population, although scales have been developed to assess the experience of perceived racism among Latinos (Collado-Proctor, 1999).

Recent work by Barden, Maddux, Petty, and Brewer (2004) suggests that the extent to which racial bias occurs is moderated by the surrounding context. In the first of their three studies, 87 White undergraduate students were presented with a photograph of either an African American, White, or Asian male with either a basketball court or a classroom in the background. The results showed that within the student role, Asians were rated significantly more positively than Whites, who were rated significantly more positively than African Americans. This ranking was completely reversed within the context of the athlete role, wherein African Americans were rated significantly more positively than Whites, who were rated significantly more positively than Asians. These findings suggest that racial attitudes can be moderated by implied social roles. In their second study, the authors used similar methods to assess evaluations of either an African American or White male in one of three settings: a factory, a church, or a prison. Results showed that the participants (304 White undergraduates) again evaluated the men differently based on the surrounding context. When presented within a prisoner context, Whites were rated significantly more positively than African Americans. These attributions were reversed within the factory worker context, with African Americans being rated significantly

more positively than their White counterparts. Evaluations of the men as churchgoers did not differ significantly based on race. The authors argued that these results were consistent with their findings from the first study. In the third study, the clothes of the men were manipulated, but the background context was not. Sixty White undergraduates were asked to evaluate a photograph of a man within the context of a prison. The man was either African American or White, wearing either a formal suit or an orange jumpsuit. Before the photographs were shown, instructions appeared on the computer screen stating that the men in the formal suits were lawyers, whereas the men in the orange jumpsuits were prisoners. Again, White prisoners were rated significantly more positively than African American prisoners. These impressions were reversed within the lawyer role, with African Americans being rated significantly more positively than Whites. In accordance with the authors' first two studies, their results suggest that racial biases are not necessarily static; they can be altered depending on the context.

In discussing subjective perceptions of racism, it is important to distinguish subtle prejudice from blatant prejudice. Because an overt display of prejudice rarely lends itself to subjective interpretation regarding the extent to which racism influenced the behavior, the perception of racial discrimination in subtle, ambiguous situations is more likely to be influenced by observers' personality variables. Meertens and Pettigrew (1997) explored the difference between subtle and blatant forms of racial prejudice using Likert-type measures of these attitudes on a variety of in-groups (majority, or otherwise favored, ethnic groups) to assess their attitudes and beliefs about members of an associated minority out-group (disadvantaged ethnic groups believed to experience discrimination by specific in-groups). Specifically, French participants were queried about either Asians or North Africans, Dutch participants were queried about either Turks or Surinamers, British participants were queried about either West Indians or Asians, and

West German participants were queried about Turks. Items included statements such as "West Indians come from less able races and this explains why they are not as well off as most British people" and "It is just a matter of some people not trying hard enough. If West Indians would only try harder they could be as well off as British people" to access levels of blatant and subtle prejudice, respectively. The resulting factor analyses indicated that blatant and subtle prejudice were discrete concepts that loaded on separate theoretical factors. Discerning whether or not subtle prejudice is occurring is referred to as attributional ambiguity, which is defined as "an uncertainty about whether the outcomes one receives are indicative of one's personal deservingness or of social prejudices that others have against one's social group" (Major et al., 2002, p. 258).

Intuitively, one might be tempted to argue that despite high rates of covert racism (Kessler et al., 1999), Americans are less distressed by these experiences than by blatant, overt racism that likely is less common today. Surprisingly, the exact opposite seems to be true. The literature suggests that, when compared with overtly racist situations, "ambiguous interpersonal interactions that are perceived to be racially motivated may confer more profound emotional and physical health consequences" (Bennett, Merritt, Edwards, & Sollers III, 2004, p. 964). Therefore, it may be as important to examine the antecedents and ramifications of covert racism as it is to examine blatant racism. Further, the data imply that, in terms of having an adverse effect on mental health, the objective stimuli matters much less than the individual's personal interpretation of the events (Cose, 1995; Guyll, Matthews, & Bromberger, 2001; Fang & Myers, 2001). Therefore, including attributional style in a study on perceived racial discrimination is important.

Perceptions of Racism and Attributional Style

An attribution is made when a person interprets and assigns a cause for a particular event (Seligman, 1998). Attributional styles are the tendencies people have to rather consistently explain events on three dimensions (Peterson, Semmel, von Baeyer, Abramson, Metalsky, & Seligman, 1982). The first dimension, internal versus external, is analogous to Rotter's (1979) concept of locus of control, only the causal attributions are made to others, not to oneself. Internal attributions occur when a particular person is seen as the catalyst for a particular event or outcome. External attributions, on the other hand, occur when events are seen as being caused by environmental influences. The second dimension on which attributions are made, stable versus unstable, reflects the extent to which the individual views the causal factors as transient (unstable) or permanent (stable). Global versus specific, the last dimension, describes whether the attributed causes are present across a spectrum of situations, or are idiosyncratic to a certain situation (Peterson, et al., 1982).

Hammer (1997) examined the variation between low-prejudiced versus high-prejudiced participants' attributions of an African American's stereotypic behavior. Taking into account previous research demonstrating that low-prejudiced observers make a conscious effort to suppress behaviors or attitudes that could potentially be seen as racist (Devine, 1989), Hammer proposed that low-prejudiced participants who were under a relatively low cognitive load (i.e., not having to focus on other tasks), would use more multifaceted explanations for behavior and subsequent corrections compared to both low-prejudiced participants under a high cognitive load and high-prejudiced participants irrespective of cognitive load. Participants were asked to read about an African American male who overtly displayed characteristics and actions considered to be stereotypical of African American males. Afterwards, participants discussed aloud the

reasons that they suspected caused the African American male's behavior. Hammer's hypothesis was partially supported. Participants with both low-prejudice and low cognitive loads were more likely to make more complex and intricate corrections to their initial characterizations, although these initial characterizations were no more likely to be complex in this particular group of participants.

<div align="center">Perceived Racism and Ethnic Identification</div>

Ethnic identification is another variable that has been frequently cited in the literature as being related to perceptions of racism. Ethnic identity is a complex construct reflecting various aspects of identification with, and membership in, an ethnic group (Cuellar, Nyberg, Maldonado, & Roberts, 1997). More specifically, ethnic identity involves self-identification as a group member, attitudes and evaluations in relation to one's group, attitudes about oneself as a group member, extent of ethnic knowledge and commitment, and ethnic behaviors and practices (Phinney, 1991). Ethnic identity can change over time and vary across individuals. Moreover, it can be conceptualized on a continuum from low to high.

Sanders-Thompson (1991) conducted a study examining various factors that influence ethnic identification. A specific variable of interest was past perceptions of racism. Structured interviews were conducted with 162 African American participants that elicited information concerning instances of perceived housing, educational, or occupational discrimination. Participants also were asked to express the type of impact these experiences had on them, as well as their personal beliefs regarding the importance of race in modern day society. Also assessed was the participants' level of ethnic identification. Results indicated that perceived racial discrimination was associated with an increased identification with the African American racial group.

Responding to the growing interest in White racial identity, Castle (1999) examined this construct in relation to general racist attitudes. The sample consisted of 103 White participants who completed surveys assessing their degrees of racial identity and racist beliefs. Results demonstrated that only one stage of White racial identity, the reintegration stage (defined as the stage whereby a person's Whiteness is viewed as being superior to other races) was predictive of racist attitudes. It was also found that racist attitudes were positively correlated with the disintegration stage (defined as a state of confusion due to a presumed moral dilemma that results from consciously acknowledging one's membership in the White race), and negatively correlated with both the pseudo-independence stage (intellectualized acceptance of one's Whiteness and an effort to educate other Whites about racial minorities) and autonomy stage (the final stage, whereby one internalizes a non-racist White identity).

Johnson, Simmons, Trawalter, Ferguson, and Reed (2003) conducted three separate studies investigating variables that influence the ways in which ambiguously racist behavior is perceived. In the first study, 191 White participants were asked to complete a questionnaire designed to assess their beliefs regarding the prevalence of White anti-Black bias. Six weeks later, the participants were then presented with a vignette depicting a White supervisor treating an African American employee in a negative manner under two conditions. Results indicated that when the supervisor claimed he was merely following instructions from his boss, African American participants made significantly more attributions of racism than did Whites. In contrast, when the supervisor did not indicate that he was following direct orders, there was no difference between African Americans and Whites regarding their perceptions of racism. The authors suggested that this was evidence that not only can perceptions of ambiguously racist behavior be influenced by the perceiver's ethnicity, but that African Americans may be less

likely than Whites to be influenced by the notion that the agent was acting under a supervisor's orders. It also was found that beliefs regarding the prevalence of White anti-Black bias mediated the racial differences in attributions in the constrained condition. The authors expanded on these findings by conducting a second study looking at how the degree of constraint the agent is under may influence the perception of racism. The authors manipulated degrees of constraint using 'distancing cues' – actions that suggested the agent was acting out of deferment to authority, and not of his or her own volition. The research design of this second study was similar to the first, only the vignette depicted the supervisor expressing either no distancing cue, a minimal distancing cue (such as a frown or a head shake), or an extreme distancing cue (such as throwing his hands into the air in disbelief). It was found that when the supervisor provided either no distancing cue or a minimal distancing cue, African American participants reported more attributions to racism than White participants. In contrast, when the supervisor was depicted giving an extreme distancing cue, race was not associated with participants' perceptions of racism. In their final related study, the researchers manipulated the races of the supervisor and employee, so that participants were randomly assigned to a scenario depicting either an African American supervisor and a White employee, or vice versa. The results indicated that relative to White respondents, African American respondents were less likely to view a minimal distance cue as indicative of a White supervisor acting under duress. When the supervisor was depicted as African American and the employee was depicted as White, participant race did not influence attributions of the supervisor's actions. The authors suggested that these three studies support the common social-psychological idea that people tend to overestimate dispositional factors (such as attitudes and traits) and underestimate the influence of the situational dynamics (Myers, 2005). Because African Americans had relatively stronger beliefs in the presence of White anti-

Black bias, it would logically follow that the situational factor of constraint would have a minimal effect on their attributions of racism for a White supervisor.

Jefferson and Caldwell (2002) explored racial identity in terms of the asymmetry hypothesis, which suggests that acts of discrimination from a dominant person against a subordinate person will be viewed as more biased than if the acts were to come from a subordinate person aimed at a dominant person. Ninety-two African American students completed measures designed to access their personal level of racial identity, as well as their attitudes regarding asymmetry in the attributions of prejudice. This latter variable was assessed via a questionnaire comprised of ten two-part vignettes, one featuring a White person as the main discriminatory character, and the other with an African American as the main discriminatory character. As hypothesized, a stronger ethnic identity was positively related to the attribution of more prejudice to White main discriminatory characters than to African American ones. Although Jefferson and Caldwell did not directly state this, the fact that the African American participants perceived higher levels of maliciousness on the part of the White discriminatory character than of the African American discriminatory character – despite that the vignette was held constant except for the race of the character – suggests that the African American participants either manifested their own prejudice against Whites, or a positive bias in favor of African Americans.

Perceptions of Racism, Ethnic Identity, and Attributional Style

Recently, there has been much research examining the relations between ethnic identity and perceptions of racism and attributional style. Frailey (1997) examined the tendency to attribute work outcomes to discriminatory factors. Among a sample of 116 Mexican American participants, it was found that those who scored lower on a measure of acculturation (and

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relatively high scores on ethnic identity) were more likely to attribute discrimination as a causal factor for negative outcomes than their more highly acculturated counterparts. For those participants with relatively high scores on the measure of acculturation (and relatively low scores on ethnic identity), it was found that perceived discrimination was negatively related to feelings of responsibility and judgments of fairness. Overall, results suggested that attributing a positive outcome to group membership was not significantly related to ethnic identity, acculturation, or mainstream identification. The sole exception to this generality was that those who reported stronger ethnic identification viewed favorable characteristics of group membership as a more important causal factor in positive outcomes.

Branscombe, Schmitt, and Harvey (1999) also examined the relationship between perceptions of racism and attributional style in the context of ethnic identity. They proposed a rejection-identification model, whereby stable attributions to prejudice characterize discrimination by the dominant group, which in turn results in negative well-being. The authors also argued that identification with a minority group mediates any positive effect on well-being that can be predicted with this model. Therefore, negative consequences to well-being that may result from racial discrimination may be partially alleviated by ethnic identification. To test these hypotheses, African American participants were presented with situations depicting unpleasant interracial interactions and asked to attribute a cause for the outcome. Multiple regression analyses showed that attributions to prejudice were not significantly predictive of well-being, although a statistical trend existed between willingness to make attributions to prejudice and lower levels of overall well being. In contrast, higher levels of ethnic identification with a minority group were positively related to overall well-being. These findings are consistent with those found by Sanders-Thompson (1991). Branscombe et al. asserted that

these results support their proposed rejection-identification model, and argue that attributions to racial discrimination may indirectly influence well-being by encouraging identification with one's ethnic group, while simultaneously directly negatively affecting well-being. The results also showed that believing that racial prejudice is pervasive may have a different effect on well-being than the effects that are produced when unstable attributions of prejudice are made.

Recent work by Sellers and Shelton (2003) examined the role of racial identity in the antecedents and consequences of perceptions of racism. Similar to much of the research on these topics, the sample consisted solely of African Americans (n=267). Participants completed measures of perceived racism, racial identity, and psychological distress at two different points in time. Results indicated that a stronger racial identity was related to higher levels of perceived racism. Incorporating these findings with Branscombe et al.'s (1999) finding that dispositional attributions to racism are predictive of stronger ties to one's ethnic group, the authors proposed a cyclical relationship between racial identification and perceived discrimination. They suggested that strong identification with one's ethnic group influences one to perceive his or her experiences in a particular manner, and these perceptions, in turn, further strengthen one's racial identity.

In conducting a comprehensive review of the relevant literature, Major, Quinton, and McCoy (2002) also found significant interactions among ethnic identity, perceptions of discrimination, and attributions. Results showed that lower levels of personalization (the tendency to assign oneself responsibility for an outcome) correlated with more attributions of discrimination, which in turn were correlated with more perceptions of racism. Additionally, higher levels of racial identity were found to be significantly related to higher levels of racism

perception, which in turn were correlated with the tendency to make attributions of racial discrimination.

<div align="center">Perceptions of Racism and Self-Esteem</div>

Expanding on the consensus in the literature that overall mental health and perceived racial discrimination are inversely related, Fischer and Shaw (1999) examined self-esteem as a potential moderating variable among 119 African American college students. Their rationale was that self-esteem might serve as a protective function to African Americans who either perceive, or actually have, experienced discrimination. Therefore, African Americans with higher levels of self-esteem may suffer less mental health consequences as a result of perceived or actual discrimination compared with African Americans with relatively lower self-esteem. Using a hierarchical moderated regression analysis, it was found that, among participants with relatively high self-esteem, perceptions of racial discrimination were significantly negatively correlated with overall mental health. However, no significant correlation existed between perceived discrimination and mental health was found among African Americans with relatively low self-esteem. This latter finding did not support the authors' hypothesis that self-esteem would serve as a buffer of perceived racism's detrimental effect on mental health. Fisher and Shaw speculated that this last finding could be because persons with low self-esteem have poorer self-concepts that are in line with perceiving themselves as a victim of racial discrimination. Therefore, it may be possible that perceptions of racism do not significantly contribute to lowered mental health among African Americans with lower self-esteem. Another possibility the authors considered involves Belgrave, Johnson, and Carey's (1985) findings that African Americans with lower self-esteem tend to attribute negative events internally (i.e., blame themselves). Because in some contexts persons with an internal locus of control are more likely

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than others to be less affected by stressors (Lakey, 1988), it is plausible that the low self-esteem group in this study attributed perceived racism internally and was therefore less affected by it. Finally, the authors considered the possibility of self-esteem as a mediating variable, but found that it did not mediate the relationship between perceptions of racism and mental health. Interestingly, men reported more experiences with racial discrimination than women. The authors suggested that this may be due to attributional ambiguity; that is, women may attribute some discriminatory behaviors to sexism, as opposed to racism. Because men are much less likely to find themselves the targets of gender discrimination (Fisher & Shaw, 1999), they would be more likely to attribute mistreatment to racial discrimination.

Shorey, Cowan, and Sullivan (2002) examined self-esteem as a potential contributing factor to perceptions of racism, including both perceived personal discrimination and perceived group discrimination. Participants were 153 White undergraduates and 126 Hispanic undergraduates who filled out self-report questionnaire packets that included a measure of self-esteem as well as depictions of ambiguous interracial encounters. Correlational analyses revealed that, among Hispanic participants, self-esteem was significantly negatively related to perceived personal discrimination, but was not related to perceived group discrimination. Among Whites, self-esteem was not found to be significantly associated with perceived personal or group discrimination. When these findings were broken down by ethnicity and gender, it was revealed that self-esteem was significantly correlated with perceived personal discrimination for females and Hispanic males, but not for White males. No significant relationship between self-esteem and group discrimination was found for any of the four gender/ethnic groups. A multiple regression analysis did not show that personal or group self-esteem was a factor in predicting perceived racial discrimination. The authors suggested that the reason why Hispanics and White

women with relatively higher levels of self-esteem are less likely to perceive discrimination is because they are actively attempting to protect their self-image.

It should be noted that several studies (Oh, 2001; Kemp-Blackmon, 2001) have identified perceived discrimination as a predictor of personal self-esteem (the appraisal one has of one's individual self). If it is the case that self-esteem correlates with how one perceives ambiguously racist scenarios, it may be that self-esteem and perceptions of racism may have a relationship that is cyclical in nature.

<u>Perceptions of Racism, Anxiety, Symptoms of Depression, Self-Esteem, and Ethnic Identity</u>

Myriad studies have investigated the correlations between perceptions of discrimination and anxiety, symptoms of depression, self-esteem, and ethnic identity. Some studies have included all four study variables (i.e., anxiety, symptoms of depression, self-esteem, and ethnic identity) as they relate to perceptions of discrimination, whereas other studies have limited the focus to only one or several of those variables. All of these studies are reviewed in this section.

The constructs of anxiety and depression often have been examined simultaneously in their relation to perceptions of discrimination. This likely is because the two disorders have a relatively high comorbidity rate and similar symptom presentations (DSM, 1994). Though there is ample research suggesting there is a significant relation between perceptions of racism and both anxiety and depression, most of that research has focused on the extent to which racial discrimination influences depressive and anxious symptoms, as opposed to how depressive and anxious symptoms may influence the perception of racial discrimination (Mossakowski, 2003; Appel, 2004; Kessler et al, 1999).

Work by Landrine and Klonoff (1996) supports the hypothesized link between perceptions of racial discrimination and anxiety and depression. In their study, 153 African

American participants rated their experiences with discrimination, both in the past year and over the course of their lifetime. Participants also gave appraisals of how stressful certain racial perceptions were to them. The results indicated that perceptions of racism correlated significantly with symptoms of depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and anxiety. It was also found that African Americans who identified more strongly with their ethnic identity reported having experienced a significantly higher amount of racial discrimination than those with weaker ethnic identity, with the former group appraising their experiences as being more stressful. These findings suggest that both the experience and severity of perceiving to be discriminated against are related to negative mental health symptoms and stronger ethnic ties.

Recent work by Cassidy, Howe, and Warden (2004) examined self-esteem, anxiety, and depressive symptoms as they relate to perceptions of discrimination among 154 culturally diverse participants here in the United States. They found that higher levels of anxiety significantly correlated with perceived discrimination, and higher levels of depressive symptoms significantly correlated with perceived discrimination for males, but not for females. The authors then examined two types of self-esteem as potential moderating variables: personal self-esteem and ethnic self-esteem (the appraisal of oneself as a member of a particular ethnic group). Though the results did not support the idea that self-esteem played a moderating role, it was found that among male participants, both personal and ethnic self-esteem partially mediated the relationships between perceived discrimination and both anxiety and symptoms of depression. Specifically, males who reported higher levels of perceived discrimination scored lower on both personal and ethnic self-esteem, both of which were predictive of higher anxiety and symptoms of depression. Among females, perceptions of discrimination were positively correlated with levels of anxiety, and were not mediated by either type of self-esteem. According to the authors,

these findings may suggest that, when evaluating and relating to their ethnic group, women are less likely then men to consider their personal evaluations of themselves as individuals. This gender difference is consistent with that found by Fisher and Shaw (1999).

Finally, Phinney, Madden, and Santos (1998) examined the relationships among depression/anxiety, ethnic identity, self-esteem, and perceptions of racism among 164 adolescents who self-identified as Armenian, Mexican American, or Vietnamese. Symptoms of depression and anxiety were grouped together as a single construct, termed "depression/anxiety," and measured by a thirty-item scale that assessed depressive, anxious, and somatic symptoms. They found that ethnic identity, self-esteem, and depression/anxiety all significantly correlated with perceptions of racism. To determine which variables were predictive of perceptions of racism, a multiple-regression analysis was conducted. The results showed that only depression/anxiety was predictive of more perceived racism. This finding is inconsistent with the theory of Seller and Shelton (2003), that identification with one's minority group influences perceptions of racism. Consequently, a second regression analysis was conducted to determine the particular variables that may account for scores on the depression/anxiety measure. Results indicated that self-esteem played a significant role in predicting levels of depression/anxiety. Therefore, it was inferred that self-esteem may indirectly influence perceptions of racism, insofar that it predicts depression/anxiety, but it is not a significant direct predictor. Results also indicated that the demographic variables of gender, birthplace, SES, and ethnicity were unrelated to perceptions of racism.

The Current Study

Most of the research on perceived racism has focused exclusively on interracial encounters between African Americans and Whites. In addition to focusing on these two ethnic

groups, the current study will include Hispanics for two reasons. One, as alluded to earlier, Hispanics have been overlooked in most of the research on perceived racism. Yet, both anecdotal and empirical evidence supports the notion that Hispanics in various degrees—just like all ethnic groups—are both the victims and the perpetrators of discrimination (Delgado-Romero & Rojas-Vilches, 2004). Two, Hispanics are the fastest growing, and currently, the second largest ethnic group in the United States. Researchers would be remiss not to include such a visible minority group in studies related to ethnic discrimination.

Also, in this study, an attempt was made to include most of the relevant variables that have been identified thus far as being involved in perceived discrimination. Most studies in this area have only examined a handful of such variables. By including a broader range of variables believed to be involved in the perception of ethnic discrimination, it becomes possible to perform data-reduction statistical techniques to determine which set of variables, after controlling for shared variance among the variables, appear most related to perceived discrimination. This procedure also facilitates examining the role of mediating, moderating, and possibly confounding variables (Hakstian, Osborne, & Skakun, 1974).

The variables specific to the current study include the participants' ethnicity, gender, symptoms of depression, anxiety, attributional style, self-esteem, ethnic identity, and overall perception of the prevalence of racism. A measure of the participants' cynicism also was attained because it follows logically that having a cynical outlook may predispose one to perceive maliciousness (i.e, racist intentions) in a situation in which interpersonal conflict is present. As a social-scientific construct, cynicism can be defined as a "negative view of human nature, a biased view against some groups of people, mistrust of social institutions, and a disregard of ethical means for achieving an end" (Leung, et al., 2002, p.292).

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Experimental variables included the ethnicity of the clerk and the customer in the experimental vignette. Finally, questions assessing the degree to which participants perceived "ethnic discrimination" to have occurred in the experimental vignette served as the criterion variables. To summarize, the independent variables (IVs) will include: (a) ethnicity of the participant, (b) gender of the participant, (c) ethnicity of the clerk in the vignette, (d) ethnicity of the customer in the vignette, (e) symptoms of depression, (f) anxiety, (g) attributional style, (h) self-esteem, (i) perception of prevalence of racism, (j) ethnic identity, and (k) cynicism. The dependent variables (DVs) were three components from a 12-item scale assessing the extent to which: (a) the clerk's behavior in the vignette was perceived as unjust; (b) the clerk's behavior was motivated by racism; and (c) the interaction portrayed between the clerk and the customer in the vignette is common in general. The process by which these three components were extracted from the 12-item scale is discussed below.

Hypotheses

The overall purpose of this study was to examine the degree to which anxiety symptoms, depression symptoms, attributional style, self-esteem, attitudes about the prevalence of racism in general, ethnic identity, and cynicism predict participants' perceptions of racism in an ambiguous vignette depicting mild mistreatment (e.g., rudeness) by a store clerk towards an ethnically dissimilar customer. In order to define perceived racism as a construct, the present author developed a 12-item instrument aimed at soliciting particpants' perceptions of the vignette. This instrument was subjected to a factor analysis (see below), which extracted three discrete components. These components were the extent to which the participant believed the clerk's behavior towards the customer was motivated by racism (from this point on referred to as "perceived racism"), the extent to which the participant believed that the clerk's behavior was

unfair (from this point on referred to as "perceived injustice", and the extent to which the participant believed that situations such as the one that occurred in the vignette are commonplace (from this point on referred to as "perceived frequency"). In light of the literature reviewed, and in light of the perception of racism scale consisting of three components, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H1.   Symptoms of anxiety, symptoms of depression, ethnic identity, attitudes regarding the prevalence of racism in general, a negative attribution style to negative events, and cynicism will conjointly positively correlate with perceived racism, perceived injustice, and perceived frequency, and self-esteem will be negatively correlated with perceived racism, perceived injustice, and perceived frequency. The predictions involving symptoms of anxiety, symptoms of depression, ethnic identity, and self-esteem are based on what has been demonstrated in the literature. The prediction involving attitudes of prevalence of racism in general is based on the logical assumption that the more prevalent a person believes racism is in modern society, the more readily they will perceive racism in a negative, ambiguous interracial interaction. The prediction involving attributional style is based on the theory that attributions to negative events that are global, stable, and internal are less healthy than attributions to negative events that are specific, transient, and external, and have been associated with factors such as anxiety and depression that have been associated with perceptions of racism. The prediction involving cynicism is based on the assumption that a predisposition to be cynical would increase the propensity for one to think the worst of a situation.

H2.   African American participants will have higher levels of perceived racism, perceived injustice, and perceived frequency than Hispanic participants, who will have higher levels

of perceived racism, perceived injustice, and perceived frequency than White participants. This hypothesis is based on work by Branscome et al. (1999) and Sellers and Shelton (2003) that suggests a positive correlation between ethnic identity and attributions to racism. This hypothesis also is based on the assumption that historically, African Americans have been more ostracized and openly and formally discriminated against in the United States more so than Hispanics, who have been discriminated against more so than Whites.

H3.   Consistent with the aforementioned asymmetry hypothesis, perceptions of racism, injustice, and frequency will be stronger when the vignette depicts a White clerk and an African American or Hispanic customer than when the clerk is African American or Hispanic and the customer is White. This is based on the notion that many residents in the United States seem to be 'primed' to detect racism more readily towards minority groups than towards Whites.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study sample was composed of 1,000 (357 male, 642 female, and one non respondent) undergraduate college students enrolled in Psychology courses at a large public university in the southeastern region of the United States. Regarding ethnicity, 687 (687%) of the students self-identified as European American, 151 (15.1%) as Latino, 92 (9.2%) as African American, 29 (2.9%) as Asian American, and 40 (4%) as "other." Questionnaire packets were distributed to willing participants during Psychology classes, and participants were compensated with extra credit toward their respective courses.

A questionnaire designed to access perceptions of racial prejudice was developed by the present authors and was followed by a vignette depicting a mildly unpleasant interaction between a store clerk and a customer, whereby the customer is treated somewhat rudely, and 12 Lykert-scale types of questions regarding the participants' reactions to the vignette (see Appendix A). The details in the vignette were held constant except for the race (White, Hispanic, or African American) of the clerk and the customer.

A principle components analysis, with the use of the Kaiser criterion, was used to extract and truncate components from the 12 items assessing responses to the vignette. Three components, which together accounted for 68.424 percent of the variance in the original correlation matrix, were retained. Use of the scree plot criterion as a truncation method also suggested the retention of three components. After extraction, the original solution was rotated using Varimax rotation. This rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Component loadings were determined after suppressing all values below .33 in the rotated component matrix. Inspection of the components revealed that Component 1, which

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accounted for 24.295 percent of the variance in the original correlation matrix, was comprised of items 2,3,5,6,7, and 12. Component 2, which accounted for 23.44 percent of the variance in the original correlation matrix, was comprised of items 1, 8, and 10.   Component 3, which accounted for 20.688 percent of the variance in the original correlation matrix, was comprised of items 4, 9, and 11. Inspection of the individual item loadings suggest that the three components load on the following constructs:

1. Perceived racism (i.e., to what extent was the clerk's behavior motivated by racism?);

2. Perceived injustice of the interaction;

3. Perceived frequency of the interaction (i.e., to what extent was the interaction a common occurrence in general?).

Demographic questionnaire. A demographics questionnaire will be included in the questionnaire packet, and will contain questions regarding the participant's gender, age, ethnicity, current educational status, parents' educational attainment, generation classification, and employment status (see Appendix B).

'Trait' subscale of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI). The trait subscale of the STAI is a twenty-item measure (Spielberger, Gorsuch, Lushene, Vagg, & Jacobs, 1983) designed to screen for symptoms of long-standing, chronic anxiety in non-clinical populations. Participants respond to each item by rating how characteristic each item is of them on a Likert-type scale. Research has indicated acceptable test-retest reliability coefficients for the trait subscale of the STAI, ranging from .73 to .86. Median trait anxiety coefficients are quite high, ranging between .92 to .94. After reversing nine items, individual item scores are summed to obtain an overall composite score, with higher scores suggesting more elevated levels of anxiety.

Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI). The BDI-II (Beck, Rush, Shaw, & Emery, 1979) is a 21-item scale designed to measure symptoms of depression. The BDI-II has been widely used with non-clinical populations, and yields high internal consistency (.89 to .94) and high to moderate concurrent validity (Beck, Steer, & Brown, 1996). Participants rate how true the items are for them in reference to the previous two weeks using a Likert-type scale. Individual item scores are summed to obtain an overall composite score, with higher scores suggesting more symptoms of depression present.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). The RSES (Rosenberg, 1989) consists of ten items to which participants respond using a Likert-type system. The RSES generally has high reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha ranging from .77 to .88 and test-retest correlations ranging from .82 to .88. The scale measures two dimensions of self-esteem: self-confidence and self-deprecation. A composite score is generated by reversing five of the items and then summing across items. Higher scores on the RSES are indicative of higher levels of self-esteem.

Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ). The ASQ (Peterson, Semmel, von Baeyer, Abramson, Metalsky, & Seligman, 1982) consists of twelve hypothetical situations, half of which depict positive events and half of which depict negative events. Following each situation is one open-ended prompt asking respondents to indicate one major cause of the event, and three questions that assess attributions for this cause. Each question taps into one of the three dimensions of attributional style (internal-external, stable-unstable, and global-specific), and is rated using a seven-point Likert-type scale. The individual item responses are summed to yield two composite scales: a "positive events" composite scale and a "negative events" composite scale. The ASQ has been shown to have a moderate level of internal consistency, with a

Cronbach's alpha ranging from .44 to .69, and and acceptable validity (Peterson et al., 1982; Tennen & Herzberger, 1986).

Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R). The MEIM-R (Roberts, Phinney, Masse, Chen, Roberts, & Romero, 1999) was designed for use with all ethnic groups and contains 15 items, 12 to which participants respond using a Likert-type scale. The total score is obtained by summing across items, and then deriving the mean. In addition to the composite score, two subscales can be derived: the Affirmation, Belonging, and Commitment (ABC) subscale, which measures an affective component of ethnicity identity, and the Ethnic Identity Search (EIC) subscale, which measures a developmental and cognitive component of ethnic identity. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the MEIM-R is typically above .80. A factor analyses has also been conducted, and supported the MEIM-R as a construct-valid instrument.

Beliefs regarding the General Prevalence of Racism scale (BGPR). This 1-item scale, created by the present authors, was developed to assess the degree to which one believes that racism exists in the contemporary United States (see Appendix C). Participants respond to the question "How prevalent is racism in the United States today (to what extent do you think racism exists today in the United States)?" using a seven-point Likert-type scale, with 0 representing "Not at all" and 6 representing "Highly prevalent."

'Cynicism' subscale of the Social Axioms Survey (SAS). The cynicism subscale of the SAS (Leung et al., 2002) consists of 18 items designed to access a person's degree of cynicism (see Appendix D). Participants indicate the extent to which they agree with each item using a five-point Likert-type scale. Individual item scores are summed to obtain an overall composite score, with higher scores suggesting more elevated levels of cynicism. This scale has been found

to have a reliability coefficient of .70 based on a previous sample of college students (Roberts, Negy, & Shirkey, 2005).

Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR). The BIDR (Paulhus, 1988; 1991) was included in the questionnaire battery to assess social desirability responding (see Appendix E). The BIDR contains 40 items to which respondents rate their agreement using a seven-point Likert scale. The BIDR measures two constructs. One construct, self-deceptive enhancement (SDE), assesses the tendency to respond honestly to items, but in a positively biased manner. The other construct, impression management (IM), assesses a deliberate self-presentation and can be viewed as a measure of defensiveness. Scores on both constructs were combined and treated continuously; higher scores reflected higher levels of responding to the items in a socially desirable manner. Reliabilities for the BIDR range from .67 (test-retest; five week interval) to .83 (Cronbach alpha). Further, the BIDR has been found to correlate .71 with the Marlowe-Crowne scale and .80 with the Multidimensional Social Desirability Inventory of Jacobson, Kellogg, Cauce, and Slavin (1977).

The present design is a 3 (participant ethnicity) x 2 (participant gender) x 3 (clerk ethnicity) x 3 (customer ethnicity) between-subjects design. Participants were randomly assigned to one of nine conditions (i.e., White clerk/White customer, White clerk/Hispanic customer, White clerk/African American customer, Hispanic clerk/White customer, Hispanic clerk/Hispanic customer, Hispanic clerk/African American customer, African American clerk/White customer, African American clerk/Hispanic customer, African American clerk/African American customer), representing a mixed experimental design via an analog format. Though reactions to a written analog scenario may differ from reactions to an actual, real-life scenario and therefore lower a study's external validity, analog studies have been shown

to be an excellent way of maximizing a study's internal validity (Lopez, Smith, Wolkenstein, & Charlin, 1993). Thus, for the purpose of concentrating particularly on the effects of personality variables on perceptions of racism, the analog design was decided to be the most appropriate for this study.

Data collection sessions occurred in multiple Psychology classes, and lasted approximately a half an hour in length. Each participant was provided with a consent form at the beginning of the session, and was asked to review the form with the experimenter and sign it before continuing (see Appendix F). Next, participants were given a packet of questionnaires comprised of the measures discussed above. During the session, the experimenter was available to answer questions regarding the questionnaires or study. After the data collection session had ended, participants were given a debriefing sheet explaining the purpose of the study (see Appendix G). At this point, participants were permitted to ask any questions they may have had regarding the specific nature of the study.

Each packet consisted of eight self-report questionnaires: a demographic questionnaire, a vignette with accompanying questions that access the extent to which the participant believes racism was a factor in the scenario illustrated in the vignette, the 'trait' subscale of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), the Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), the Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ), the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), Beliefs Regarding the General Prevalence of Racism Scale (BGPR), and the 'cynicism subscale' of the Social Axioms Scale (SAS).

RESULTS

<u>Manipulation Check</u>

To ensure that participants were cognizant of the ethnicities of both the customer and the clerk depicted in the experimental scenario, after participants completed and turned in the questionnaire packets, they were given a two-item manipulation check requesting them to identify the ethnicities of the clerk and the customer in the scenario (see Appendix H). Out of a total of 1,000 original participants, 142 (14%) failed the manipulation check and thus their data were excluded from further analysis.

<u>Hypothesis 1</u>

The first hypothesis predicted that symptoms of anxiety (STAI), symptoms of depression (BDI), ethnic identity (MEIM), attitudes regarding the prevalence of racism in general (BGPR), a negative attribution style (ASQ) to negative events, and cynicism (of the SAS) will conjointly positively correlate with perceived racism, perceived injustice, and perceived frequency, and self-esteem (RSES) will be negatively correlated with perceived racism, perceived injustice, and perceived frequency. To test this, three sets of regression analyses were performed to predict separately the three components (perceived racism, perceived injustice, and perceived frequency) extracted from the 12-item questionnaire developed by the present author. The predictor variables included the scores on the STAI, BDI, BGPR, the cynicism subscale of the SAS, the RSES, the negative events component of the ASQ, and the MEIM.

The results indicated that the predictor variables significantly predicted perceived racism (Multiple R^2 = .04; F [7, 760] =4.77, p < .001). BGPR (β = .16, p < .001) and the MEIM (β = .09, p < .05) significantly contributed to the prediction of perceived racism. To clarify and confirm the predictive ability of these variables, a stepwise multiple regression was then

performed predicting perceived racism from the study variables (STAI, BDI, BGPR, the cynicism subscale of the SAS, the RSES, the negative events component of the ASQ, and the MEIM). For the prediction of perceived racism, after Step one, with BGPR in the equation, $R^2 = .03$, $F(1, 766) = 21.84$, $p < .001$. After step two, with the MEIM added to the prediction of perceived racism by BGPR $R^2 = .04$, $F(2, 765) = 13.88$, $p < .001$. Thus, adding the MEIM to the equation resulted in a slight but significant increase in R^2. After Step two, adding the remaining predictor variables did not result in a significant increase in R^2.

The predictor variables also significantly predicted perceived injustice (Multiple $R^2 = .03$; $F[7, 755] = 3.34$, $p < .01$). The cynicism subscale of the SAS ($\beta = -13$, $p < .001$) and the negative events component of the ASQ ($\beta = .08$, $p < .05$) significantly contributed to the prediction of perceived injustice. To clarify and confirm the predictive ability of these variables, a stepwise multiple regression was then performed predicting perceived injustice from the study variables (STAI, BDI, BGPR, the cynicism subscale of the SAS, the RSES, the negative events component of the ASQ, and the MEIM). For the prediction of perceived injustice, after Step one, with the cynicism subscale of the SAS in the equation, $R^2 = .02$, $F(1, 761) = 12.81$, $p < .001$. After Step two, with BGPR added to the prediction of perceived injustice by the cynicism subscale of the SAS, $R^2 = .02$, $F(2, 760) = 8.41$, $p < .001$. Thus, adding BGPR to the equation resulted in a slight but significant increase in R^2. After Step two, adding the remaining predictor variables did not result in a significant increase in R^2. Apparently, when the predictor variables were assessed for their independent contribution to the prediction of perceived injustice (in the standard multiple regression analysis), cynicism and attributions for negative events significantly predicted perceived injustice. However, when each predictor variable was assessed for its predictive ability above what the other variables contributed to the prediction of perceived

injustice (in the stepwise multiple regression analysis), cynicism and beliefs about the general prevalence of racism (BGPR) significantly predicted perceptions of injustice. Attributions for negative events no longer contributed to the prediction of perceived injustice. It also bears noting that cynicism correlated negatively with perceived injustice.

Finally, the results indicated that the predictor variables significantly predicted perceived frequency (Multiple $R^2 = .12$; $F[7, 762] = 14.42$, $p < .001$). BDI ($\beta = .18$, $p < .01$), the BGPR ($\beta = .26$, $p < .001$), the cynicism subscale of the SAS ($\beta = .08$, $p < .05$), and the RSES ($\beta = .13$, $p < .05$) significantly contributed to the prediction of perceived frequency. To clarify and confirm the predictive ability of these variables, a stepwise multiple regression was then performed predicting perceived frequency from the study variables (STAI, BDI, BGPR, the cynicism subscale of the SAS, the RSES, the negative events component of the ASQ, and the MEIM). For the prediction of perceived frequency, after Step one, with BGPR in the equation, $R^2 = .09$, $F(1, 768) = 71.04$, $p < .001$. After step two, with the cynicism subscale of the SAS added to the prediction of perceived frequency by BGPR, $R^2 = .09$, $F(2, 767) = 38.50$, $p < .001$. Thus, adding the cynicism subscale of the SAS to the equation resulted in a slight but significant increase in R^2. After Step three, with RSES added to the prediction of perceived frequency by BGPR and the cynicism subscale of the SAS, $R^2 = .10$, $F(3,766) = 27.30$, $p < .001$. Thus, adding RSES to the equation resulted in a slight but significant increase in R^2. After Step four, with BDI added to the prediction of perceived frequency by BGPR, the cynicism subscale of the SAS, and RSES, $R^2 = .11$, $F(4,765) = 23.73$, $p < .001$. Thus, adding BDI to the equation resulted in a slight but significant increase in R^2. Adding the remaining predictor variables did not result in a significant increase in R^2.

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis predicted that African American participants would perceive racism, injustice, and the frequency of the clerk—customer encounter portrayed in the scenario at a higher level than Hispanic participants, who in turn would perceive racism, injustice, and the frequency of the clerk—customer encounter at a higher level than White participants. Because the gender of the participants, the ethnicity of the clerk, and the ethnicity of the customer may all interact with or influence the effect of participant ethnicity on the dependent variables (DVs), a decision was made to include them as independent variables (IVs) in the analysis. Therefore, to test the second hypothesis, a multiple analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was conducted, using participant ethnicity, participant gender, clerk ethnicity, and customer ethnicity as IVs, and perceived racism, perceived injustice, and perceived frequency as DVs. BIDR was entered as a covariate in order to control for socially desirable response sets.

The results did not support the hypothesis. Participant ethnicity was not significantly associated with an effect on perceived racism, perceived injustice, or perceived frequency (Fs [2, 722] = 1.64, .13, and 1.32, all ps > .05, respectively). Given the difficulty inherent to interpreting interaction effects involving more than two variables in a multiple factorial design (Cozby, 2001), the examination of interaction effects was limited to those with two variables, with one of those variables being participant ethnicity. There was no significant interaction effect between participant ethnicity and participant gender on perceived racism, perceived injustice, or perceived frequency (Fs [2, 722] = .06, 1.91, and .03, all ps > .05, respectively). Additionally, there was no significant interaction effect between participant ethnicity and clerk ethnicity on perceived injustice or perceived frequency (Fs [4, 722] = .16, and .61, ps > .05, respectively). The interaction between participant ethnicity and clerk ethnicity on perceived

racism approached statistical significance (F [4, 722] = 2.19, $p < .07$; $\eta^2 = .01$). The results of

this interaction are depicted in Figure 1.
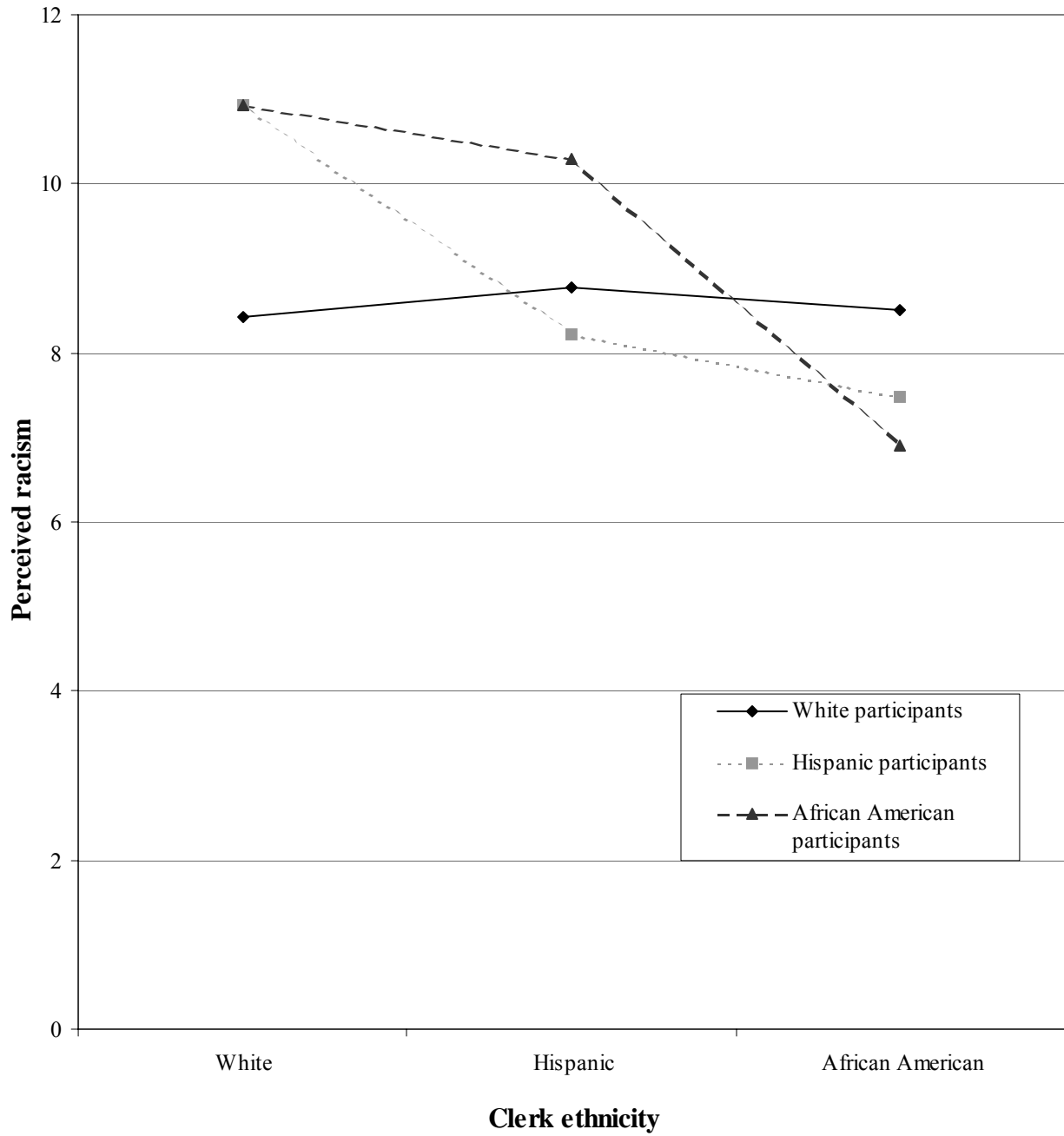
Figure 1: Interaction Between Participant Ethnicity and Clerk Ethnicity on Perceived Racism

Visual inspection of the graph shows that, on average, White participants' levels of perceived racism were relatively stable across all three ethnic conditions of the clerk. Hispanic participants, on average, perceived a White clerk as being more racist ($M = 10.93$, $SD = 5.75$) than a Hispanic clerk ($M = 8.22$, $SD = 5.19$), who they perceived as being more racist than an African American clerk ($M = 7.47$, $SD = 4.91$). African American participants, on average, also tended to perceive a White clerk ($M = 10.94$, $SD = 6.46$) as being more racist than a Hispanic clerk ($M = 10.29$, $SD = 4.77$), who they perceived as being more racist than an African American clerk ($M = 6.90$, $SD = 4.10$). There was no significant interaction effect between participant ethnicity and customer ethnicity on perceived racism, perceived injustice, or perceived frequency (Fs [4, 722] = 1.91, 1.43, and 1.01, all ps > .05, respectively). The means and standard deviations for scores on perceived racism, perceived injustice, and perceived frequency by participant ethnicity and gender can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of Component Scores by Ethnicity and Gender

| | Whites | | | | Hispanics | | | | African Americans | | | |
| | Males | | Females | | Males | | Females | | Males | | Females | |
Component	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Perceived Racism	7.78	4.83	8.95	5.18	7.38	5.18	9.84	5.56	7.46	4.96	10.53	5.89
Perceived Injustice	35.35	5.05	37.05	4.83	35.43	5.40	36.51	5.05	37.54	4.08	37.91	5.31
Perceived Frequency	13.76	3.62	14.13	3.51	14.31	3.67	13.93	3.34	13.88	4.08	14.79	3.37

Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis predicted that perceptions of racism, injustice, and frequency would be stronger (as manifested by higher scores on these measures) when the scenario depicts a White clerk and a non-White customer (i.e., African American or Hispanic than when the clerk is African American or Hispanic and the customer is White. The specific test for this hypothesis entailed examining the two-way interaction between clerk ethnicity and customer ethnicity. However, because of the difficulties noted earlier interpreting interaction effects in multiple factorial designs, to test this hypothesis, three MANCOVAs were performed for White, Hispanic, and African American participants separately. The IVs were clerk ethnicity and customer ethnicity, and the DVs were perceived racism, perceived injustice, and perceived frequency. Scores on the BIDR, again, served as a covariate in order to control for socially desirable response sets.

The data supported the hypothesis for all three of the participant ethnic groups. Among White participants, there was a significant interaction effect between customer ethnicity and clerk ethnicity on perceived racism (F [4, 566] = 59.30, $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .30$). The results of the interaction are depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Interaction Between Customer Ethnicity and Clerk Ethnicity on Perceived Racism for White

Participants

Visual inspection of the graph shows that, among White participants, perceptions of racism were stronger when the clerk was White and the customer was Hispanic ($M = 11.06$; $SD = 4.84$) or African American ($M = 11.28$; $SD = 4.74$) than they were when the clerk was Hispanic and the customer was White ($M = 10.34$; $SD = 4.25$) and when the clerk was African American and the customer was White ($M = 9.46$; $SD = 4.69$).

Among Hispanic participants, there also was a significant interaction between customer ethnicity and clerk ethnicity on perceived racism (F [4, 115] = 9.23, $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .24$). The results of the interaction are depicted in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Interaction Between Customer Ethnicity and Clerk Ethnicity on Perceived Racism for Hispanic Participants

Visual inspection of the graph shows that, for Hispanic participants, perceptions of racism were stronger when the clerk was White and the customer was Hispanic ($M = 12.69$; $SD = 4.55$) or African American ($M = 13.67$; $SD = 5.09$) than they were when the clerk was Hispanic and the customer was White ($M = 7.60$; $SD = 5.22$) and when the clerk was African American and the customer was White ($M = 9.00$; $SD = 4.91$).

Among African American participants, there was a significant interaction effect between customer ethnicity and clerk ethnicity on perceived racism (F [4, 64] $= 4.08$, $p < .01$; $\eta^2 = .20$). The results of the interaction are depicted in Figure 4.
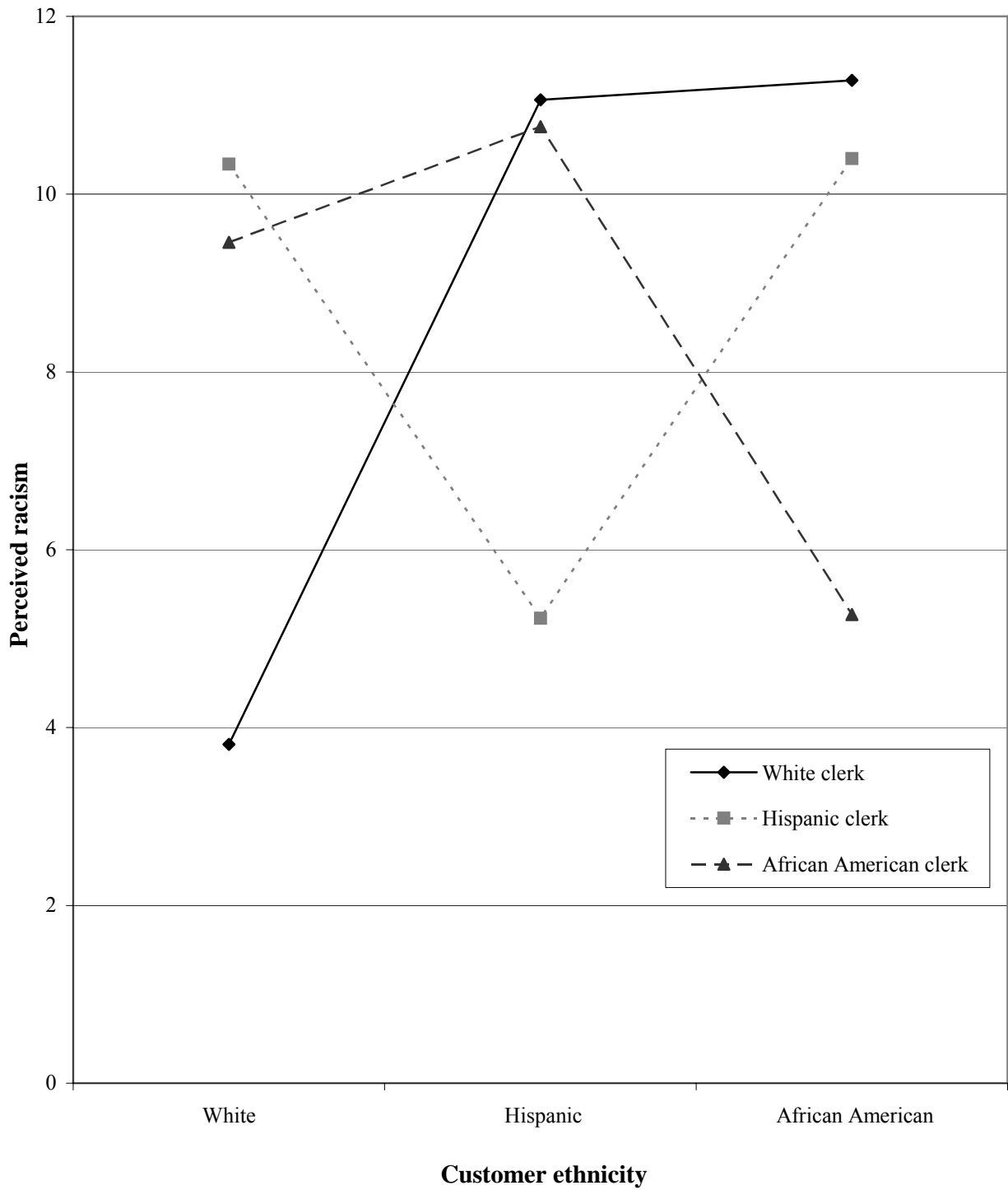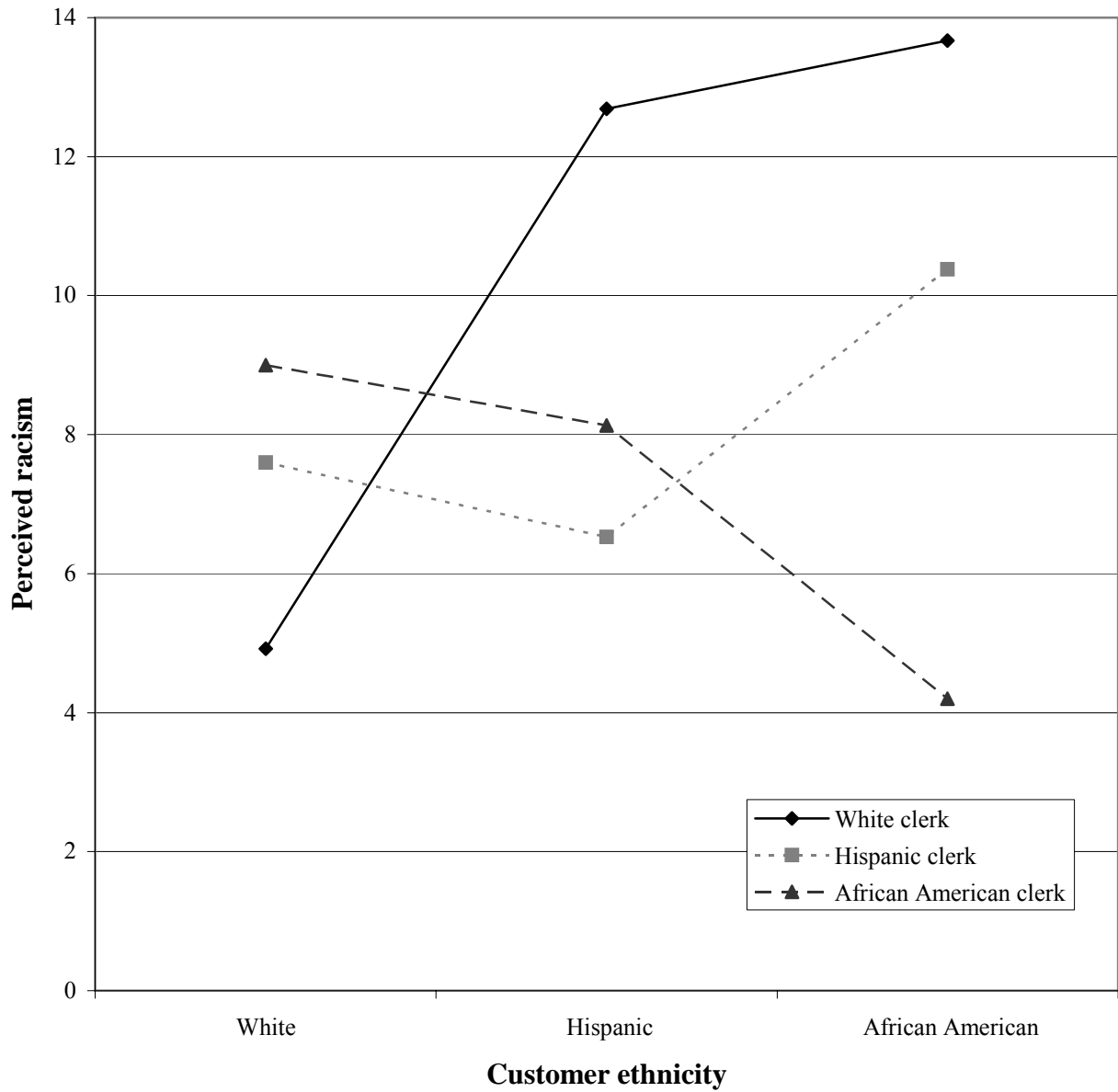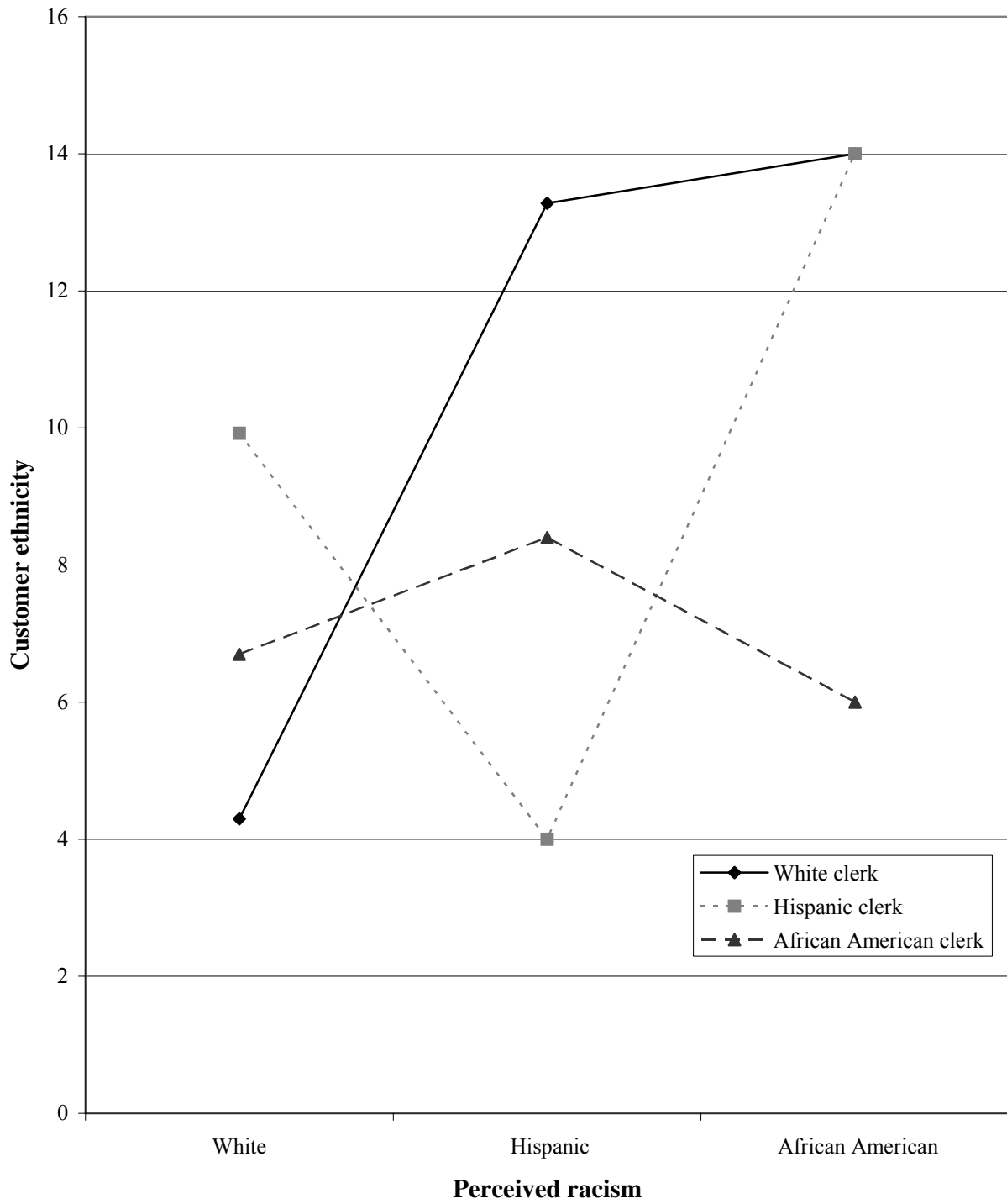
Figure 4: Interaction Between Customer Ethnicity and Clerk Ethnicity on Perceived Racism for African American Participants

Visual inspection of the graph shows that, among African American participants, perceptions of racism were stronger when the clerk was White and the customer was Hispanic ($M = 13.28$; $SD = 5.96$) or African American ($M = 14.00$; $SD = 5.04$) than they were when the clerk was Hispanic and the customer was White ($M = 9.92$; $SD = 4.79$) and when the clerk was African American and the customer was White ($M = 6.70$; $SD = 4.03$).

There was no significant interaction effect between customer ethnicity and clerk ethnicity on perceived injustice or perceived frequency for White participants (Fs [4, 566] = 1.66 and .46, both ps > .05, respectively), for Hispanic participants (Fs [4, 115] = 1.44 and 1.45, both ps > .05, respectively), or for African American participants (Fs [4, 64] = .48 and .66, both ps > .05, respectively).

Additional Analyses

To determine if participants' beliefs about the general prevalence of racism varied as a function of ethnicity, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed with ethnicity serving as the IV and scores on the BGPR scale serving as the DV. Ethnicity was significantly associated with an effect on BGPR (F [2, 764] = 5.69, p < .01). Post hoc tests indicated that African Americans believed racism in society to be significantly more pervasive ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 1.06$) than both Whites ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 1.04$) and Hispanics ($M = 3.94$, $SD = 1.05$), ps < .01 and .05, respectively. Also in order to determine if participants' beliefs about the general prevalence of racism correlated with each of the DVs (perceived racism, perceived injustice, and perceived frequency), zero-order correlational analyses were conducted between BGPR and the DVs. Because the BGPR, perceived racism, perceived injustice, and perceived frequency scales did not follow a normal distribution (Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z = 5.81, 4.41, 4.26, and 2.76,

respectively; all ps < .001), the non-parametric Spearman's rho statistic was used to calculate r

values.

For White participants, BGPR was significantly related to both perceived racism ($r = .17$,

$p < .001$) and perceived frequency ($r = .28$, $p < .001$). Among Hispanic participants, BGPR was

significantly related to both perceived racism ($r = .19$, $p < .05$) and perceived frequency ($r = .24$,

$p < .01$). For African American participants, the BPGR was significantly related to perceived

frequency only ($r = .34$, $p < .01$).

DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis predicted that symptoms of anxiety (STAI), symptoms of depression (BDI), ethnic identity (MEIM), attitudes regarding the prevalence of racism in general (BGPR), a negative attribution style (ASQ) to negative events, and cynicism (of the SAS) will conjointly positively correlate with perceived racism, perceived injustice, and perceived frequency, and self-esteem (RSES) will be negatively correlated with perceived racism, perceived injustice, and perceived frequency. This hypothesis was only partially supported. The results indicated that beliefs about the extent to which racism exists in the United States significantly influenced the extent to which they viewed the clerk's behavior in the scenario as having been racially motivated. This finding suggests that individuals' perception of an ambiguously unpleasant interracial interaction may be affected by their preexisting attitudes about the general prevalence of racism in society.

Ethnic identity also was found to significantly predict participants' perceptions of racism in the vignette. Stated differently, the more participants embrace their ethnic heritage, the more they perceived the clerk's behavior as racist. This finding is consistent with previous research (e.g., Sanders-Thompson, 1991; Sellers & Shelton, 2003) that found increased identification with one's ethnic group to be associated with a heightened sensitivity and perception of racial discrimination. It bears noting, however, that although previous research have found that a strong ethnic identity is related to an increased propensity toward perceiving racism when directed against one's own ethnic group, in the present study, participants with a strong sense of ethnic identity were more likely to perceive racism irrespective of the ethnicity of the clerk and customer in the scenarios. Perhaps this particular sample of college students may have, as a

group, achieved what various ethnic identity theorists have referred to as *internalization* (e.g., Cross, 1971; Phinney, 1996). Individuals achieving this level of ethnic identity formation typically manifest a sensitivity toward racial injustice and a concern for racial equity for all members of society.

In contrast to previous findings (e.g., Fisher & Shaw, 1999; Cassidy et al., 2004; Mossakowski, 2003; Appel, 2004; Kessler et al., 1999; Landrine & Klonoff, 1996; Phinney et al., 1998; Sellers & Shelton, 2003; Oh, 2001; Kemp-Blackmon, 2001; Shorey et al., 2002), perception of racism was not found to correlate with anxiety, self-esteem, or symptoms of depression; their level of cynicism also failed to predict their perception of racism. Also in contrast to earlier research (e.g., Branscombe et al. [1999] and Sellers & Shelton [2003]), attributions to negative situations that are relatively global, stable, and internal (as opposed to being specific, transient, and external) were not found to significantly correlate with perceptions of racism. The manner in which participants tended to interpret negative events in general appeared to have no influence on how they perceived the clerk's behavior. These findings suggest that the participants may not have personalized the situation depicted in the vignette. That is, they did not appear to necessarily identify with the customer; rather, they made interpretations from the viewpoint of an objective observer contemplating an interpersonal encounter that did not involve them.

Cynicism was found to significantly predict the extent to which participants' viewed the clerk's behavior as unjust. Somewhat paradoxically, the more cynical they were, the less likely they were to judge the clerk's behavior toward the customer as unfair. Perhaps a cynical outlook predisposes individuals to expect the worse in situations, thereby causing cynical participants to be impacted minimally by the impolite behavior by the clerk. The degree to which participants

believed racism was prevalent in the United States also significantly predicted their perception of the clerk's behavior as being unjust; the more they viewed racism as ubiquitous, the more unjust they perceived the situation in the scenario. Initially, attributions to negative events also had significantly predicted perceived injustice, suggesting that participants with a tendency to interpret negative life events in an unhealthy manner (i.e, stable, global, and internal) were more likely to view the clerk's behavior in an unfair light. However, attributions to negative events no longer significantly contributed to the prediction of perceived injustice when it was assessed for its predictive ability above and beyond the contributions of cynicism and beliefs in the prevalence of racism.

Regarding the prediction of participants' beliefs in the commonality or frequency of the clerk's behavior in the scenario, beliefs regarding the general prevalence of racism, cynicism, self-esteem, and symptoms of depression conjointly and independently contributed to the prediction of perceived frequency. As expected, the more participants believed that racism is prevalent in the United States, the more they considered the clerk's behavior to be common or to occur frequently. Both cynicism and symptoms of depression positively correlated with perceived frequency of the clerk's behavior. This is a fairly intuitive finding, given that both depression and cynicism are traits characterized in part by feelings of pessimism (e.g., thinking the worst about a situation, including having a general expectation for negative events to occur). Curiously, self-esteem also was positively related to perceived frequency. The better participants felt about themselves, the more they considered the clerk's behavior to have been a common occurrence. One possible interpretation of this finding—an interpretation that assumes that the clerk's behavior reflected personal rudeness rather than racism—is that those with high self-esteem have a keener sensitivity to socially awkward or unpleasant interpersonal encounters, and

therefore, are more aware of how common they are in general. This interpretation may be more easily appreciated if the converse of this finding is considered: the worse participants felt about themselves (i.e., low self-esteem), the less frequent they believed the clerk's behavior was in the larger society. Possibly, those who do not feel good about themselves do not register negative encounters in their own lives such as the clerk's behavior. Similar to cynical individuals, those with low self-esteem may expect mild levels of mistreatment or rudeness to occur, and therefore, underestimate its occurrence.

The second hypothesis predicted that African American participants would perceive racism, injustice, and the frequency of the clerk - customer encounter portrayed in the scenario at a higher level than Hispanic participants, who in turn would perceive racism, injustice, and the frequency of the clerk – customer encounter at a higher level than White participants. That hypothesis was based on the social reality in which many African Americans and arguably to a lesser degree, many Hispanics, have experienced racially motivated mistreatment and therefore, would be more sensitive to the clerk's behavior than Whites. This hypothesis was not supported. The participants' ethnicity was not significantly associated with an effect on the extent to which they viewed the clerk's behavior racist, unjust, or common. However, there was a trend that approached statistical significance. On average, White participants' perceptions of racism did not vary as a function of the ethnicity of the clerk. In contrast, both Hispanic and African American participants tended to view the White clerk's behavior as more racially motivated than that of the Hispanic clerk, whose behavior was viewed as more racially motivated than that of the African American clerk. This trend warrants some comments. The fact that Hispanic and African American participants tended to judge the White clerk's behavior as being more racially motivated than the behavior of the Hispanic and African American clerk is striking given that in

this experiment, the clerk's behavior was held constant across ethnic conditions. In light of the fact that the Hispanic and African American clerks' behavior was *identical* to the White clerk's behavior in the scenarios, the judgments rendered by Hispanic and African Americans either reflects their positive bias toward non-Whites, or a negative bias toward Whites. Naturally, such biases likely are related to Hispanics and African Americans' personal experiences with real or perceived racism as ethnic minorities.

The third hypothesis—which was related conceptually to the second hypothesis—predicted that perceptions of racism, injustice, and frequency would be stronger when the scenario depicted a White clerk and an Hispanic or African American customer than when the clerk was African American or Hispanic and the customer was White. This hypothesis was supported for all three ethnic groups regarding perception of racism. Specifically, each ethnic group, on average, perceived the clerk's behavior as being racially motivated significantly more when the clerk was White and the customer was non-White than when the clerk was non-White and the customer was White. These results—similar to those from the second hypothesis—likely reflects participants' perceptions that have been shaped by the unique sociopolitical history of the United States in which, by and large, African Americans and Hispanics have been historical targets of racial discrimination. These results also support the asymmetry hypothesis proposed by Jefferson and Caldwell (2002). Their hypothesis posits that acts of discrimination by an ethnic "in-group" member toward an historically oppressed ethnic "out-group" member would be perceived as more biased than if the roles were reversed. This was the case in the present study. Despite that in this experimental design the clerk's behavior was held constant across ethnic conditions, the behavior was judged to have racist intentions when committed by a White

clerk (and the customer was non-White) significantly more than when the same behavior was committed by a non-White (and the customer was White).

Additional analyses were conducted to determine if participants' beliefs about the prevalence of racism varied as a function of their ethnicity and to determine if their beliefs about the prevalence of racism in society correlated with the degree to which they perceived the clerk's behavior in the experimental scenario as racist, unjust, or a common occurrence. It was found that African American participants believed racism exists in society significantly more than both Whites and Hispanics, who did not significantly differ from each other in this regard. These differential perceptions about the prevalence of racism in the United States likely reflect the different realities African Americans experience relative to Whites and Hispanics. Arguably, African Americans encounter more racial discrimination across contexts and over the course of their lives than both Whites and Hispanics. The data revealed that, among all participants, the more they believed racism was prevalent in society, the more likely they interpreted the clerk's behavior as a common occurrence. Also, for White and Hispanic participants, the more they believed in the prevalence of societal racism, the more they judged the clerk's behavior to have racist intentions, suggesting that appraisals of ambiguously unpleasant interracial interactions may be influenced by pre-existing beliefs regarding the prevalence of racism for these two groups. Curiously, African Americans' beliefs about the prevalence of racism was not found to correlate with their perceptions that the clerk's behavior was racially motivated. Perhaps African Americans relatively strong views about the prevalence of racism in society is independent of how they judge isolated situations, particularly situations based on a hypothetical scenario.

CONCLUSION

<u>Limitations of the Current Study</u>

Because a large portion of this study was based on the experimental analog method which included randomly assigning participants to various conditions, we were able to maximize our ability to attribute some of the outcomes to the variables that were experimentally manipulated (Lopez et al., 1993). Nonetheless, analog studies do have limitations. Perhaps the fact that some of the personality variables (e.g., anxiety, negative attributional style) did not predict perceptions of racism—despite having been previously linked to perceiving racism in other studies—was due in part to the experimental nature of this study. Most studies looking at predictors of perceived racism have assessed perceptions of racism based on personal experiences. In the current study, perceptions of racism were assessed via a hypothetical scenario. This method may have minimized participants' ability to connect what they read in the vignette to their own experiences and psychoemotional state. Another limitation of this study relates to the question of external validity. Despite the incorporation of a manipulation check into the study design and taking into consideration socially desirable response patterns, the extent to which the beliefs that are expressed in analog scenarios translate into real-world situations remains uncertain. Likewise, findings based on university students may not generalize to the population at large. Finally, the lack of reliability and validity for some of the factor scales, including the one-item question assessing beliefs about the general prevalence of racism, necessitates that these results be interpreted with caution.

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE VIGNETTE QUESTIONNAIRE

An African American individual enters a local convenience store and proceeds to purchase a soft drink. The cashier, a Hispanic individual, conducts the transaction silently and hands the customer the change. A few moments later, the customer realizes that the clerk neglected to provide a receipt. After pointing this out to the clerk, the clerk appears annoyed and glances around the counter for the receipt. After locating it, the customer is handed the receipt and the clerk mutters, "Here" without looking the customer in the eyes. As the customer exits the store, the customer looks back and notices the clerk laughing and chatting with coworkers.

1. To what extent was the clerk's treatment of the customer motivated by racism?

      1   2   3   4   5   6   7
 Not at all   Somewhat   Extremely

2. How acceptable was the clerk's behavior?

      1   2   3   4   5   6   7
 Not at all   Somewhat   Extremely

3. To what extent did the customer's own behavior contribute to the way the customer was treated?

      1   2   3   4   5   6   7
 Not at all   Somewhat   Extremely

4. How common are these types of interactions?

      1   2   3   4   5   6   7
 Not at all   Somewhat   Extremely

5. How justified was the behavior of the clerk towards the customer?

      1   2   3   4   5   6   7
 Not at all   Somewhat   Extremely

6. To what extent was the clerk's behavior provoked by the customer?

      1   2   3   4   5   6   7
 Not at all   Somewhat   Extremely

7. How understandable was the clerk's treatment of the customer?

      1   2   3   4   5   6   7
 Not at all   Somewhat   Extremely

8. Was the customer a victim of racial discrimination?

        1   2   3   4   5   6   7
    Not at all   Somewhat   Extremely

9. To what extent is this interaction an 'everyday' occurrence?

        1   2   3   4   5   6   7
    Not at all   Somewhat   Extremely

10. To what extent did racism play a factor in the way the clerk treated the customer?

        1   2   3   4   5   6   7
    Not at all   Somewhat   Extremely

11. How frequently do interactions like these occur?

        1   2   3   4   5   6   7
    Not at all   Somewhat   Extremely

12. Based on the customer's actions, to what extent did the customer deserve the treatment by the clerk?

        1   2   3   4   5   6   7
    Not at all   Somewhat   Extremely

APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your Gender (circle one):   M   F

2. Your age: _____

3. Your ethnicity (circle one):   White American (non-Hispanic)
                                                African American/Black
                                                Asian
                                                Hispanic (see below)
                                            Other

4. If Hispanic, please indicate subgroup (circle one):   Cuban
                                                Puerto Rican
                                                Mexican
                                                Central American
                                                South American
                                                Dominican
                                                Other (please indicate): _____

5. Class standing (circle one):

   Freshman (0-30 hrs)   Sophomore (31-60 hrs)   Junior (61-90 hrs)   Senior (91+ hrs)

6. Highest level of education attained by your father (circle one only):
                                    Elementary 1 2 3 4 5 6
                                    Secondary (Junior High) 7 8
                                    High School 9 10 11 12
                                    Vocational School/Community College 1 2
                                    College/University 1 2 3 4
                                    Graduate School/Professional School 1 2 3 4 5

7. Highest level of education attained by your mother (circle one only):
                                    Elementary 1 2 3 4 5 6
                                    Secondary (Junior High) 7 8
                                    High School 9 10 11 12
                                    Vocational School/Community College 1 2
                                    College/University 1 2 3 4
                                    Graduate School/Professional School 1 2 3 4 5

8. Circle the generation the best applies to you (circle only one):
       1st generation=You were born in a country outside of the USA.
       2nd generation=You were born in the USA; either parent born outside the USA.
       3rd generation=You were born in the USA, both parents were born in the USA,
                     and all grandparents born in a country outside the USA.
       4th generation=You and your parents were born in the USA and at least one
                     grandparent born in a country outside of the USA.
       5th generation=You, your parents, and all grandparents born in the USA.

9. Are you currently employed (circle one)?   YES   NO
          Hours per week? _____   How long have you been at your present job? _____

APPENDIX C: BELIEFS REGARDING THE GENERAL PREVALENCE OF RACISM
SCALE

How prevalent is racism in the United States today (to what extent do you think racism exists today in the United States)?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Not at all			Moderately			Highly prevalent

APPENDIX D: 'CYNICISM' SUBSCALE OF THE SOCIAL AXIOMS SURVEY

Please read the following items and circle the rating that best represents how much you believe or do not believe them.

1. Powerful people tend to exploit others.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disbelieve	Disbelieve	Neither believe nor disbelieve	Believe	Strongly believe

2. Power and status make people arrogant.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disbelieve	Disbelieve	Neither believe nor disbelieve	Believe	Strongly believe

3. Kind-hearted people are easily bullied.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disbelieve	Disbelieve	Neither believe nor disbelieve	Believe	Strongly believe

4. Significant achievement requires one to show no concern for the means needed for that   achievement.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disbelieve	Disbelieve	Neither believe nor disbelieve	Believe	Strongly believe

5. Kind-hearted people usually suffer losses.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disbelieve	Disbelieve	Neither believe nor disbelieve	Believe	Strongly believe

6. Old people are usually stubborn and biased.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disbelieve	Disbelieve	Neither believe nor disbelieve	Believe	Strongly believe

7. Young people are impulsive and unreliable.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disbelieve	Disbelieve	Neither believe nor disbelieve	Believe	Strongly believe

8. It is easier to succeed if one knows how to take shortcuts.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disbelieve	Disbelieve	Neither believe nor disbelieve	Believe	Strongly believe

9. Females need a better appearance than males.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disbelieve	Disbelieve	Neither believe nor disbelieve	Believe	Strongly believe

10. It is rare to see a happy ending in real life.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disbelieve	Disbelieve	Neither believe nor disbelieve	Believe	Strongly believe

11. People will stop working hard after they secure a comfortable life.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disbelieve	Disbelieve	Neither believe nor disbelieve	Believe	Strongly believe

12. People deeply in love are usually blind.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disbelieve	Disbelieve	Neither believe nor disbelieve	Believe	Strongly believe

13. To care about societal affairs only brings trouble for yourself.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disbelieve	Disbelieve	Neither believe nor disbelieve	Believe	Strongly believe

14. Most people hope to be repaid after they help others.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disbelieve	Disbelieve	Neither believe nor disbelieve	Believe	Strongly believe

15. Harsh laws can make people obey.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disbelieve	Disbelieve	Neither believe nor disbelieve	Believe	Strongly believe

16. Old people are a heavy burden on society.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disbelieve	Disbelieve	Neither believe nor disbelieve	Believe	Strongly believe

17. The various social institutions in society are biased towards the rich.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disbelieve	Disbelieve	Neither believe nor disbelieve	Believe	Strongly believe

18. Humility is dishonesty.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disbelieve	Disbelieve	Neither believe nor disbelieve	Believe	Strongly believe

APPENDIX E: BALANCED INVENTORY OF DESIRABLE RESPONDING

Using the scale below as a guide, write a number beside each statement to indicate how much you agree with it.

1--------------2--------------3--------------4--------------5--------------6--------------7
Not   Somewhat   Very
True   True   True

_____ 1. My first impressions of people usually turn out to be right.

_____ 2. It would be hard for me to break any of my bad habits.

_____ 3. I don't care to know what other people really think of me.

_____ 4. I have not always been honest with myself.

_____ 5. I always know why I like things.

_____ 6. When my emotions are aroused, it biases my thinking.

_____ 7. Once I've made up my mind, other people can seldom change my opinion.

_____ 8. I am not a safe driver when I exceed the speed limit.

_____ 9. I am fully in control of my own fate.

_____ 10. It's hard for me to shut off a disturbing thought.

_____ 11. I never regret my decisions.

_____ 12. I sometimes lose out on things because I can't make up my mind soon enough.

_____ 13. The reason I vote is because my vote can make a difference.

_____ 14. My parents were not always fair when they punished me.

_____ 15. I am a completely rational person.

_____ 16. I rarely appreciate criticism.

_____ 17. I am very confident of my judgments.

_____ 18. I have sometimes doubted my ability as a lover.

_____ 19. It's all right with me if some people happen to dislike me.

```
1--------------2--------------3--------------4--------------5--------------6--------------7
 Not                            Somewhat                        Very
 True                             True                           True
```

____ 20. I don't always know the reasons why I do the things I do.

____ 21. I sometimes tell lies if I have to.

____ 22. I never cover up my mistakes.

____ 23. There have been occasions when I have taken advantage of someone.

____ 24. I never swear.

____ 25. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.

____ 26. I always obey laws, even if I'm unlikely to get caught.

____ 27. I have said something bad about a friend behind his or her back.

____ 28. When I hear people talking privately, I avoid listening.

____ 29. I have received too much change from a salesperson without telling him or her.

____ 30. I always declare everything at customs.

____ 31. When I was young I sometimes stole things.

____ 32. I have never dropped litter on the street.

____ 33. I sometimes drive faster than the speed limit.

____ 34. I never read sexy books or magazines.

____ 35. I have done things that I don't tell other people about.

____ 36. I never take things that don't belong to me.

____ 37. I have taken sick-leave from work or school even though I wasn't really sick.

____ 38. I have never damaged a library book or store merchandise without reporting it.

____ 39. I have some pretty awful habits.

____ 40. I don't gossip about other people's business.

APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear Student:

My name is Teri Marino and I am a graduate student here at the University of Central Florida working under the supervision of a faculty member, Dr. Charles Negy. You are being asked to participate in a study to gather information on the way in which various personality traits are related. The study involves the filling out of a questionnaire packet. This research project was designed solely for research purposes and no one except the research team will have access to any of your responses. All responses will be kept confidential. Your identity will be kept confidential using a numerical coding system.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You do not have to answer any question(s) that you do not wish to answer. Please be advised that you may choose not to participate in this research, and you may withdraw from the experiment at any time without consequence. Non-participation will not affect your grade. You will receive extra credit points, as determined by your professor, in the class in which you are currently in for participating. There are no other direct benefits or compensation for participation. All participants in this study must be 18 years of age or older. If you are not 18 years of age or older, or do not wish to participate in this study for any reason, an alternative activity of equal effort for extra credit will be available from your professor. Your professor can give you detailed information regarding this alternative activity. This experiment will take approximately 45 minutes to complete. There are no anticipated risks associated with participation.

If you have any questions or comments about this research, or wish to have a copy of the final results, please contact me, Teri Marino, at (407) 823-5238, or my faculty supervisor, Dr. Charles Negy, Department of Psychology, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL 32826; (407) 823-5861. Questions or concerns about research participants' rights may be directed to the UCFIRB office, University of Central Florida Office of Research, Orlando Tech Center, 12443 Research Parkway, Suite 302, Orlando, FL 32826. The phone number is (407) 823-2901.

Sincerely,

Teri Marino

I have read the procedure described above and voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure.

_____ / _____

Participant Signature   Date

APPENDIX G: DEBRIEFING FORM

Dear Student:

Thank you for your participation in this experiment. As you may have gathered from the questionnaires, we are interested in the ways in which people interpret ambiguously unpleasant interracial interactions, and how various personality traits may be related to those interpretations. The vignette you were asked to read and answer questions about was one of nine possible vignettes that were randomly assigned to the participants of this study. The vignettes were identical except for the ethnicities of the clerk and customer, which varied with each different version of the vignette. We will be analyzing how responses to the vignettes may vary with different customer and clerk ethnicities, and with participants' personality traits as assessed by the other questionnaire included in the packet. If you do not wish for your results to be part of this study, please inform the experimenter at this time. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, or would like a copy of the final results, contact me, Teri Marino, at (407) 823-5238, or my faculty supervisor, Dr. Charles Negy, Department of Psychology, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL 32826; (407) 823-5861.

APPENDIX H: MANIPULATION CHECK

Please answer the following two questions about the scenario you read earlier describing an interaction between a customer and a clerk at a convenience store:

Of what race/ethnicity was the customer? _____

Of what race/ethnicity was the clerk? _____

APPENDIX I: IRB PERMISSION LETTER

University of
Central Florida

August 26, 2005

Teresa Marino
12912 Waterford Wood Circle #202
Orlando, Fl 32828

Dear Ms. Marino:

With reference to your protocol #05-2788 entitled, **"Predictors of Perceiving Racism in Ambiguous Situations"** I am enclosing for your records the approved, expedited document of the UCFIRB Form you had submitted to our office. **This study was approved by the Chairman on 8/23/05. The expiration date for this study will be 8/22/06.** Should there be a need to extend this study, a Continuing Review form must be submitted to the IRB Office for review by the Chairman or full IRB at least one month prior to the expiration date. This is the responsibility of the investigator. **Please notify the IRB when you have completed this study.**

Please be advised that this approval is given for one year. Should there be any addendums or administrative changes to the already approved protocol, they must also be submitted to the Board through use of the Addendum/Modification Request form. Changes should not be initiated until written IRB approval is received. Adverse events should be reported to the IRB as they occur.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 407-823-2901.

Please accept our best wishes for the success of your endeavors.

Cordially,

Barbara Ward

Barbara Ward, CIM
IRB Coordinator

Copy: IRB file

BW:cc

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