DO DESCRIPTIVE AND PRESCRIPTIVE COLORBLIND MESSAGES IMPACT COLORISM AND PERCEPTION OF RACISM?

by

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(Under the Direction of Allison Skinner-Dorkenoo)

ABSTRACT

Many people in the U.S. reject the idea that systemic racial inequalities exist (Neville et al., 2013), and this has been perpetuated through *racial colorblindness,* the idea that a person's racial or ethnic identity does not impact their experiences and that everyone should be treated equally (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). I hypothesized that racial colorblindness could be conceptualized in two distinct forms: descriptive colorblindness (e.g., race *does not* matter) and prescriptive colorblindness (e.g., race *should not* matter). I hypothesized that exposure to descriptive colorblindness could lead to more implicit colorism, more explicit colorism, and lower perception of racism. In contrast, I hypothesized that exposure to prescriptive colorblindness could lead to less implicit colorism, less explicit colorism, and higher perception of racism. These hypotheses were not supported, however exploratory analyses were consistent with theorizing and suggests distinguishing between descriptive colorblindness and prescriptive colorblindness. Possible implications, limitations, and future directions are discussed.

INDEX WORDS: RACIAL COLORBLINDNESS, DESCRIPTIVE COLORBLINDNESS, PRESCRIPTIVE COLORBLINDNESS, COLORISM, PERCEPTION OF RACISM

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Imagine scrolling through social media and coming across a post that states "race does not matter" followed by another post which says "everyone should be treated equally, skin tone should not matter." People are accustomed to hearing these types of racially colorblind messages as it is a widely adopted way to conceptualize race and race-related issues within the contemporary United States. *Racial colorblindness* refers to the idea that a person's racial or ethnic identity does not impact their experiences, and that everyone is treated equally (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). In this paper, I will first provide an overview of the racial colorblindness literature and establish how racial colorblindness can be conceptualized into two novel distinct forms—descriptive colorblindness and prescriptive colorblindness—which research suggests could impact colorism (i.e., preferences for lighter skin tones) and perceptions of racism in different ways. Then, I will report the results of an experimental test of how exposure to descriptive colorblindness and prescriptive colorblindness impact colorism and perceptions of racism. Finally I will discuss possible implications of this work and future directions for research.

Reviewing Racial Colorblindness

The United States is organized around systemic racial inequalities that stem from historical roots of inequality, which are still reflected in modern-day institutions (Ture & Hamilton, 1992; Feagin, 2006). Yet, compared to the blatant racism prevalent during the Jim Crow era, there has been a shift in the United States to a newer subtle form of racism—racial colorblindness. A shift in the cultural context shapes the extent to which racial colorblindness is

promoted. More specifically, in the United States, some people are generally motivated (internally or externally) to appear unprejudiced (Plant & Devine, 1998). Alongside this, people consider racism to be constrained to interpersonal interactions led by a few immoral people, however there is a failure to acknowledge that racial biases extend beyond individual people to systems in the United States (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). These systems are intentionally set up to favor White people across various domains, such as income (Flournoy, 2021) and health care (Feagin & Bennefield, 2013). As racial colorblindness involves denial of racism, it is a popular way for people to discuss race without appearing blatantly racist, as there may be more severe consequences for being blatantly racist. Indeed, framing behaviors as being guided by either blatant or unconscious attitudes has different consequences for personal responsibility. Previous work has found that when actors of discrimination (e.g., ageism) are described as acting biased due to their blatant (i.e., explicit) attitudes, they are perceived by people in the United States as being more responsible for their actions compared to when the actors' behavior is explained by unconscious attitudes (Daumeyer et al., 2019). Motivations to appear unbiased (Plant & Devine, 1998) and social consequences for expressing blatant racist messages (Daumeyer et al., 2019) may explain why people in the United States have shifted to using and endorsing racial colorblindness. Scholars have discussed how racial colorblindness has been utilized as a way to maintain systemic racial inequalities within the United States (Neville et al., 2013; Douglas et al., 2015).

Racial colorblindness maintains inequalities through the denial of systemic racial inequalities (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). For example, Bonilla-Silva (2015) established how racial colorblindness reduces people's awareness of the impact of racism, while also projecting the idea that racism no longer exists. Similarly, Neville and colleagues (2013) described how people deny

both interpersonal and systemic racism by saying things such as “racism is not a major issue in American society” (p. 547). If people in the United States are led to believe that racism is nonexistent, then they may not understand the need to change the current system and as a result, be unable to dismantle systemic racial inequalities.

Alongside ignoring racial biases in the United States, racial colorblindness also promotes the idea of placing blame on individuals for their own outcomes instead of acknowledging racism as a systemic issue. Racial colorblindness reinforces the idea that racism results from decisions and actions made by individual people (Bonilla-Silva 2015). The negative outcomes of systemic racial inequalities are perceived to be natural and unrelated to racism (Bonilla-Silva 2015). Additionally, racial colorblindness emphasizes how everyone is the same (Neville et al., 2013), and that a person’s race or ethnicity does not impact their experiences. Promoting the ideology that everyone is the same or that race and ethnicity do not impact people’s experiences is problematic because it diminishes people’s individual experiences. If people perceive racial inequalities to be the result of individual differences among people, then it helps maintain systemic racial inequalities, as agency would be placed on individual people to be responsible for their own outcomes.

Racial colorblindness also involves promoting egalitarian ideas without actually making actionable changes that would reduce systemic racial inequalities. Bonilla-Silva (2015) explained how racial colorblindness promotes egalitarian ideas. However, some people in the United States may only be comfortable promoting ideas of racial equality in abstract terms. For example, White people will denounce racial segregation, but when it comes to taking action, they fail to support the adoption of racial integration within the school system (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). Compared to the past, there is now more social pressure for people to appear as though they are

unbiased, as racism is perceived to be immoral (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). Therefore, people may endorse racial colorblind attitudes to make themselves feel good about themselves, while still being able to maintain systemic racial inequalities. These motivations help situate why many people in the United States continue to endorse racial colorblindness. Even for people who do not endorse racial colorblindness, they are routinely exposed to racially colorblind messages through popular rhetoric and media (e.g., news articles, social media; Bonilla-Silva, 2020).

Empirical Evidence of Racial Colorblindness

The definition of racial colorblindness is complex and incorporates multiple components which could help explain why researchers varied how they choose to measure racial colorblindness. I have identified two broad themes in how racial colorblindness has previously been measured: (a) refusal to discuss racial issues and (b) denial of racism (see Table 1). Measures of racial colorblindness that emphasize how racial issues should not be addressed (e.g., "society would be better off if we all stopped talking about race" p. 170 Mazzocco et al., 2011) were categorized as refusal to discuss racial issues. Racial colorblindness measures that focused on ignoring outcomes of racism and systemic racial inequalities (e.g., "Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations," p. 62, Neville et al., 2000) were categorized as denial of racism. Some measurements of racial colorblindness encompass both themes. For example, the Colorblind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS; Neville et al., 2000) has three subscales, two of which capture aspects of denial of racism, whereas the other subscale captures refusal to discuss racial issues. Neville and colleagues (2000) have shown that for the CoBRAS, all three subscales are highly correlated which indicates that these various operationalizations of racial colorblindness are related.

Consistent with how racial colorblindness has been theorized, empirical evidence has shown that endorsement of racial colorblindness is correlated with reduced perceptions of racial biases. For instance, endorsement of racial colorblindness (refusal to discuss racial issues and denial of racism) has been associated with lower intergroup empathy and likelihood of taking action to address racial inequalities among college students in the United States (Yi et al., 2020). Similarly, Worthington and colleagues (2008) measured college students' perception of campus racial climate and endorsement of racial colorblindness (refusal to discuss racial issues and denial of racism). They found that higher endorsement of colorblindness was associated with more positive perceptions of their campus racial climate.

Previous work suggests that under specific circumstances, endorsement of racial colorblindness may influence people's attitudes. For example, under some circumstances racial colorblindness is associated with reduced support for policies that aim to reduce structural inequities. Mazzocco and colleagues (2011) examined how for White college students in the United States their warmth towards Black people, endorsement of racial colorblindness (refusal to discuss racial issues), and support for affirmative action were related. For White people with high warmth towards Black people, higher endorsement (vs. lower endorsement) of racial colorblindness was associated with lower support for affirmative action. For White people with low warmth towards Black people, there was no relation between endorsement of racial colorblindness and support for affirmative action. This illustrates that perhaps people's perceptions about other racial groups is connected to the impact endorsing racial colorblindness can have on their attitudes. In another line of work, Plaut and colleagues (2008) examined whether White U.S. employees' attitudes were correlated with the experiences of people of color in the same workplace. White employee's endorsement of racial colorblindness (refusal to

discuss racial issues) was associated with lower levels of psychological engagement among people of color (Plaut, Thomas, & Goren, 2008). These findings suggest that endorsement of racial colorblindness among White people could create a climate that is disengaging to people of color.

Other evidence suggests that even just being exposed to racially colorblind statements can reduce perceptions of racism. In an experimental design, Apfelbaum and colleagues (2010) exposed children to messages that were colorblind (e.g., "We want to show everyone that race is not important and that we're all the same," p. 1588) or valued diversity (e.g., "We want to show everyone that race is important because our racial differences make each of us special," p. 1588). Then they examined how likely children were to identify racial discrimination when the cause for bias in the situation was not explicitly mentioned (ambiguous) or clearly due to the race of the individual (blatant). They found that that when children were exposed to colorblind messages, they were less likely to identify instances of both ambiguous and blatant racial discrimination compared to when they were exposed to valued diversity statements. As racially colorblind messages are widely conveyed in the United States (Bonilla-Silva, 2020), it is important to consider how exposure to racial colorblindness impacts people's attitudes.

Racial Colorblindness among People of Color

In the United States, due to the prevalence of colorblind messages, people of color are undoubtedly exposed to, and may even endorse, racial colorblindness. Previous work has found that White people endorse racial colorblindness more than Black, Latinx, and Asian people in the United States (Bonilla-Silva & Embrick, 2001; Gonlin & Campbell, 2017). The individual experiences that people of color have dealing with racism directed to their own group may help explain why they hold lower colorblind attitudes compared to White people (Gonlin &

Campbell, 2017). Yet, this work shows that it is possible for people of color to endorse racial colorblindness because it is a dominant ideology in the United States (Bonilla-Silva & Embrick, 2001). Despite experiences people from racial and ethnic minority groups may have personally had dealing with racism, they may not relate their experiences with other racial and ethnic minority groups. Interestingly, Black, Latinx, and Asian people who had close relationships with White people were more likely to endorse colorblind attitudes about other racial and ethnic groups. For example, Latinx participants who had close relationships with White people were more likely to oppose government reparations for decedents of slaves than Latinx participants who did not have close relationships with White people (Gonlin & Campbell, 2017). This association could be explained by the amount of exposure people of color have to racially colorblind messages, perhaps people of color with closer relationships with White people were exposed to more racial colorblind messages and they could also have fewer conversations where race is discussed, even when race is directly relevant to the conversation. Therefore, exposure to colorblind messages in their environments may also impact colorism and perception of racism for people of color similarly to how racially colorblind messages impact White people.

Theorizing Descriptive Colorblindness and Prescriptive Colorblindness

I propose that colorblindness can be conceptualized in two distinct forms: descriptive colorblindness and prescriptive colorblindness. This kind of terminology has been used to classify behavioral norms, wherein descriptive norms refer to the most common behaviors, prescriptive norms refer to the most appropriate behaviors (Dannals & Miller, 2017). This terminology has been used similarly to classify reasoning, such that descriptive reasoning has been defined as thinking about things in the present whereas prescriptive reasoning does not have to be rooted to the present and can involve thinking about things idealistically (Roberts, 2020).

As such, what I refer to as descriptive colorblindness are notions that race and ethnicity *do not* impact lived experiences or how people are currently treated within the United States. I use prescriptive colorblindness, on the other hand, to refer to notions that race or ethnicity *should not* impact lived experiences or treatment within the United States. Conceptualized this way, prescriptive colorblindness promotes egalitarian ideals without directly negating current prejudices and systems of inequality. Both forms of racial colorblindness still reinforce systemic racial inequalities, but in different ways. Descriptive colorblind statements reinforce systemic racial inequalities by directly denying that racism exists. Prescriptive colorblind statements reinforce systemic racial inequalities by promoting idealistic egalitarian ideas about the world without directly acknowledging racism. However, I propose that exposure to descriptive colorblind statements (relative to prescriptive colorblind statements) may lead to more negative attitudes related to racial or ethnic minority groups because of the direct denial of systemic racial inequalities.

Consideration should be given to how descriptive colorblindness and prescriptive colorblindness relates to the two broad themes I identified previously with how racial colorblindness has been measured in the literature: refusal to discuss racial issues and denial of racism. Broadly, the themes of refusal to discuss racial issues and denial of racism could be communicated through descriptive and prescriptive colorblindness, but the difference lies in how racial colorblindness is framed. For example, “we do not talk about race because it is not important” (descriptive colorblindness) and “people should not keep bringing up, race everyone should be equal” (prescriptive colorblindness) could both be conceptualized as refusal to discuss racial issues. However, the former would qualify as a descriptive colorblind message due to the direct denial of racism. In comparison, the latter statement is a prescriptive colorblind message

because it promotes egalitarian ideas without acknowledging current racial issues. Next, I will review how exposure to these two different forms of colorblindness, prescriptive colorblindness and descriptive colorblindness, may differentially impact colorism and perceptions of racism.

Colorism

Descriptive and prescriptive colorblindness have the power to impact colorism which has been defined as people with lighter skin tones receiving preferential treatment compared to people with darker skin tones and is based on white superiority (strmic-pawl et al., 2021). Colorism is directly tied to white superiority due to the positive emphasis that has been placed on lighter skin tones and Eurocentric facial features as an ideal and promoting the concept that for people who deviate from this ideal (i.e., people with darker skin tones) are deserving of lesser treatment (Monk 2021). Historically, in the United States, differential treatment of people based on skin tone has been documented where enslaved people with lighter skin tones received better treatment compared to enslaved people with darker skin tones (Monk 2021; Reece, 2021). Indeed, people with lighter skin tones have been given more power and privileges in society, linking back to slavery and European colonization all around the world (Dixon & Telles, 2017). Historic colorism has persisted as systemic racial inequalities continue to give White people (i.e., people with lighter skin tones) the most privileges and socialization messages reflect this idea by portraying people with lighter skin tones more positively. Indeed, Whiteness is linked to higher social and economic opportunities in the United States (Dhillon-Jamerson, 2018). Therefore, because people with lighter skin tones are perceived to be closer to Whiteness they are also perceived to be more deserving (compared to people with darker skin tones) of the same privileges as White people (Dhillon-Jamerson, 2018). Colorism has been perpetuated in the media through various means (Dixon & Telles, 2017; Steele, 2016). For instance, a popular

animated children's television show in the United States aimed to increase representation of racial minorities by featuring primarily Black characters, however the show displayed negative biases towards characters with darker skin tones by having the characters with darker skin tones possess more negative characteristics (i.e., rude, loud; Steele, 2016). Thus, colorism is both a reflection of current systemic racial inequalities in the United States, which prioritize White people, and a way in which systemic racial inequalities are maintained.

Colorism has been linked with significant negative consequences for people of color across various racial and ethnic minority groups. For instance, Black people who are exposed to colorism discrimination from White people were more likely to experience mental health issues (Oh, Jacob, Anglin, & Koyangi, 2020). Beyond this, scholars have noted how colorism has been related to negative consequences for Black people for physical health, dating (Landor & Smith, 2019; Fuentues et al., 2021) and employment (Hunter 2008; Fuentues et al., 2021). Similarly, Latinx people with darker skin tones tend to report lower wages in the United States (Rosenblum, et al., 2016). Moreover, evidence suggests that Black, Latinx, Asian American, and Native American men with darker skin tones are more likely to be arrested than men in these groups with lighter skin tones (Kizer, 2017). Colorism has significant negative consequences that are often not acknowledged, therefore it is crucial to examine mechanisms that may perpetuate and promote colorism.

Descriptive colorblindness and prescriptive colorblindness may be related to colorism because both forms of colorblindness socialize United States residents to maintain White superiority. Descriptive colorblindness (e.g., "skin color doesn't matter") directly rejects the existence of social inequalities that place White people in higher positions of power and privilege, which could increase colorism because colorism places emphasis on Whiteness as an

ideal. On the other hand, although prescriptive colorblindness (e.g., "skin color shouldn't matter") does not directly acknowledge social inequalities, it focuses on idealistic goals of future equality, which could elicit egalitarian attitudes and reduce colorism. In the current study, I examine how exposure to descriptive colorblindness and prescriptive colorblindness each relate to colorism.

Current Study

In this study I aim to identify whether exposing United States residents to descriptive colorblindness and prescriptive colorblindness impact colorism and perceptions of racism in differing ways. Previous work suggests that colorism is perpetuated through socialization messages in the United States (Hunter, 2008), and that it is a reflection of racial inequalities (Dixon & Telles, 2017). As both descriptive colorblindness and prescriptive colorblindness are forms of socialization messages that uphold racial inequalities, exposure to these forms colorblindness may impact colorism. Alongside this, descriptive colorblindness directly rejects the existence of systemic racial inequalities, and previous research indicates that exposure to descriptive racial colorblindness can reduce the ability to detect racism (Apfelbaum et al., 2010). Prescriptive colorblindness does not acknowledge racism and instead focuses on egalitarian attitudes and idealistic goals for the future. This distinction between descriptive and prescriptive colorblindness may result in more negative outcomes stemming from descriptive colorblindness compared to prescriptive colorblindness. I hypothesize that exposure to descriptive colorblind statements will lower awareness of racism and increase (implicit and explicit) colorism. On the other hand, I hypothesized that if participants are exposed to prescriptive colorblind statements (relative to descriptive colorblind statements) then they would report lower (implicit and explicit)

colorism and higher awareness of racism. These hypotheses were preregistered on Open Science Framework prior to the collection of any data.

Exploratory analysis examined participant's response to colorblind messages, self-reported skin-tone, and political ideology. There could be variability in how people perceive descriptive and prescriptive colorblind messages. Perhaps, people who have less knowledge of current racial inequalities would be more likely to agree with these messages. Additionally, because previous work has found that a person's skin tone is associated with their experiences dealing with prejudice(Dixon & Telles, 2017), I also measured participants' own skin tone. Finally, racially colorblind statements have been used strategically in politics by people who may not want to change the system to address racial inequalities. Burke (2017) described how even when discussing topics where race is relevant, people who have more conservative beliefs will often utilize colorblindness to morally justify their political stance. Therefore, I also explored how participant's responses to colorblind messages, self-reported skin tone, and political ideology may be related to colorism biases and perceptions of racism.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Participants

A G*Power Analysis showed that to detect a small to medium effect ($f = .13$) for a main effect, a sample of 576 participants would provide 80% power and 753 participants would provide 90% power. A total of 300 White people and 300 people of color were recruited from the United States to participate in the study online via Amazon Mechanical Turk. I wanted to collect a diverse sample of participants to make the findings more generalizable. However, to supplement the sample up to an additional 200 participants were recruited from the university undergraduate participant pool. For the purposes of the thesis I will only focus on data collected via Amazon Mechanical Turk because I have sufficient power to detect a main effect and recruitment from the undergraduate participant pool is still underway and will not be completed until after the submission of this thesis. A total of 605 participants completed the study on Amazon Mechanical Turk, however 6 participants were excluded for failing to pass two of more of the quality checks (appendix G)[1]. Participants' average age was 38.98 (SD = 12.28). A total of 296 participants identified as women, 298 as men, 1 person identified as transgender (gender identity unspecified), and 3 people identified as non-binary. With regard to race and ethnicity,

[1] There was a mistake made with the exclusion criteria for passing the screening questions. The preregistration stated that "participants who fail to respond correctly for one or more of the screening questions will be excluded from the analysis." However it is a common practice in our lab to exclude participants who fail to pass two or more of the screening questions. Therefore, for this study, I only excluded participants who failed to pass two or more of the screening questions.

356 participants identified as White (1 person self-reported as Scottish American), 128 as Black or African American, 59 as East Asian, 47 as Latinx (1 person self-reported as Guyanese), 30 as South Asian, 12 as Indigenous American, 6 as biracial/multiracial, 1 as Middle Eastern or North African, 1 as Native Hawaiian. A majority of participants indicated that they were born in the United States (94.31%). Participants' median annual income was $50,000 - $59,000.

Procedure

The current study was a between-subjects' experimental design, in which participants were randomly assigned to the descriptive colorblindness condition, the prescriptive colorblindiness condition, or the control condition. Participants in the descriptive colorblindness condition and prescriptive colorblindness condition were told that "We are interested in understanding how people interact on social media. You will be randomly assigned to look at Twitter posts on a particular topic. We are interested in seeing what posts people like the most and would share the most. We have blocked out identifying information from the Twitter posts. Please read each post carefully." Participants were shown statements as Twitter posts to make it seem like the statements were made by real members of the public (instead of statements created by researchers). If participants believed these to be statements made by researchers, they may not respond authentically, and it could elicit socially desirable responses from participants. People may encounter social media in their everyday lives and Twitter was specifically chosen because it is a popular social media platform and is widely used by many people. On Twitter people must limit each post to 280 characters therefore people can only post short comments. Participants in the descriptive colorblind condition were shown a series of 12 Twitter posts containing descriptive colorblind messages about skin tone. Participants in the prescriptive colorblind condition were shown a series of 12 Twitter posts containing prescriptive colorblind messages

about skin tone (Appendix A). Being able to interact with Twitter posts by liking or sharing Twitter posts is a commonly used feature on Twitter and other social media platforms. Therefore, participants were also given the option to interact with each Twitter post they read. Having this addition would make the experience more realistic for participants and provide a way to gain additional insights into participant's attitudes and behaviors.

Following reading Twitter posts, participants completed a measure of agreement with the twitter posts they read. Participants in the control group did not read any Twitter posts and were only asked to complete the dependent measures. The dependent measures consisted of an implicit colorism measure and explicit colorism measure, which were presented in random order. Following these measures, participants completed the perceptions of racism scale, self-identified skin tone measure, and demographic questionnaire (in this order). Participants were presented with four quality check items (two at the beginning of the study and two at the end of the study) and if they failed to correctly answer two or more quality check items they were excluded (appendix G).

Measures

Agreement with Twitter Posts

To assess participants' attitudes toward the colorblind statements they read (Appendix B), they were asked to indicate "how you feel about the responses you just read" on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A higher score would indicate more agreement with messages that they read (M = 3.61 , SD = 1.52). Participants were then asked the following open-ended question "Please share any thoughts or comments you have about the statements that you just read." This open-end question was asked to gain more insights into participants' thoughts about the statements they read.

"Liking" Colorblind Twitter Posts

As participants read the statements, they were given the option of "liking" each statement, by pressing a thumbs up icon until it turned green (like) or red (dislike). Participants could either like, dislike, or do nothing. Responses were coded as -1 for disliking, 0 for doing nothing, and 1 for liking. Responses from all 12 statements were summed such that a higher score indicates more positive attitudes towards the statements (M = 3.56, SD = 7.63).

"Re-tweeting" Colorblind Twitter Posts

As participants read the statements, they also had the option of sharing the statements by pressing a retweet icon until it turned green (share) or red (not share). Participants could either share, not share, or do nothing. Responses were coded as -1 for not sharing, 0 for doing nothing, and 1 for sharing. Responses from all 12 statements were summed so that a higher score indicated more sharing of the statements (M = -0.59, SD = 6.57).

Implicit Colorism

The skin-tone implicit association test (Carpenter et al., 2019) was utilized to measure participants' implicit colorism. The implicit association test (IAT; Greenwald et al., 1988; Nosek et al., 2005) was set up so that participants would see words indicating light skin or dark skin and words indicating good or bad in the upper left and right corners. Participants were told to categorize illustrations of faces with light and dark skin tones as well as good (e.g., wonderful) and bad words (e.g., horrible) as fast as they could. In one set of blocks, participants categorized images of light skin and good words using the same keyboard key and images of dark skin and bad words using another keyboard key. In the other set of blocks, participants categorized images of light skin and bad words with one key and images of dark skin and good words with an alternate key. The IAT had two practice blocks that each had 20 trials and two critical blocks that

each had 40 trials. The speed with which participants correctly made these categorizations was recorded. Greater implicit colorism would be indicated by slower responses when light skin was paired with bad words and dark skin was paired with good words, relative to light skin being paired with good words and dark skin being paired with bad words. Participants were excluded from analysis if they responded in less than 300 milliseconds on more than 10% of the trials (Greenwald et al., 2003). Trials completed in fewer than 100 ms or more than 10000 milliseconds were also dropped from analyses. To gain a measure of participant's implicit colorism a D-score was calculated, using IAT gen (Carpenter et al., 2019) which employed standard D-score calculation methods (Greenwald et al., 2003). An average speed for each of the two practice blocks was calculated and an average speed for each of the two critical blocks was calculated. Then, the difference of average speed between the two practice blocks was calculated. A difference of average speed between the two critical blocks was also calculated. The difference scores were then divided by the pooled standard deviation resulting in two "D-scores." Finally, these two "D-scores" were averaged to obtain individual D-scores for each participant, where more positive values indicate higher implicit colorism ($M = 0.46$, $SD = 0.45$).

Explicit Colorism

Explicit colorism was measured utilizing a set of three feeling thermometers (Patel & Skinner-Dorkenoo, 2021; Appendix C). First, participants were asked to rate how they feel about light skin tones on a scale from 0 (cold/unfavorable) to 100 (warm/favorable). Then, participants were asked to rate how they feel about dark skin tones on the same scale from 0 (cold/unfavorable) to 100 (warm/favorable). Finally, participants were asked to indicate how they feel about light skin tones relative to dark skin tones from 0 (prefer light skin tones) to 100 (prefer dark skin tones). To calculate explicit colorism, the difference between the rating of light

skin tones and dark skin tones was calculated and standardized (divided by the standard deviation). Then, the score for the relative skin tone item was also standardized (divided by the standard deviation). An average of the standardized difference score and standardized relative skin tone score were then calculated, such that higher values indicate more explicit colorism (M = 0.20, SD = 1.03).

Perception of Racism Scale

The Perception of Racism Scale adapted by Nelson et al. (2013) from previous work (Adams et al., 2006; Branscombe et al., 1999) measures the extent to which people perceive situations as being racially biased (Appendix D). The scale has two subscales: perceptions of racism in isolated events and perceptions of systemic manifestations of racism. Participants were asked to "Please indicate how much you, personally, think prejudice, discrimination, or racism play a role in each statement" on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (certainly). The perception of racism in isolated events subscale has five items (e.g., "Several people walk into a restaurant at the same time. The server attends to all the White customers first. The last customer served happens to be the only person of color."). The perception of systemic manifestations of racism has nine items (e.g., "The decision of universities like California and Texas to end affirmative action programs"). To calculate a composite score, all 14 items were averaged, such that higher scores indicated higher perceptions of racism (M = 5.03, SD = 1.35).

Skin Tone Measure

I also assessed participant's own self-reported skin tone. Participants were shown an image of skin tones ranging from 0 (lightest skin tone) to 100 (darkest skin tone) and asked to indicate what shade most closely matches their own skin tone (Appendix E). Higher scores on this measure indicate darker skin tones (M = 25.38, SD = 24.08).

Demographic Questions

Demographic questions were asked to measure the following: age, gender, racial/ethnic identity, political ideology, and income (see Appendix F). For political ideology, participants were asked to indicate their political ideology on a scale of to 1 (strongly liberal) to 7 (strongly conservative) based on two items. To assess social conservativism, participants were asked to "Please indicate your political identity on social issues (e.g., abortion, gun rights, gay rights). I am _____ on social issues." To assess economic conservativism, participants were asked to "Please indicate your political identity on economic issues (e.g., taxation, government spending). I am _____ on economic issues". To calculate a composite political ideology measure, scores for two items were averaged such that higher values indicated more conservativism ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 1.75$).

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Implicit Colorism

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of condition (descriptive colorblindness, prescriptive colorblindness, or control group) on implicit colorism (Figure 1). There was a statistically significant effect of condition, F (2, 556) = 3.11, p = .046, η_p^2 =.01. Contrary to my hypothesis, participants who were primed with descriptive colorblindness showed marginally less implicit colorism (M= 0.45, SE = 0.03, 95% CI [0.38, 0.52]) than participants in the control condition (M = 0.53, SE = 0.03, 95% CI [0.46, 0.59]), t(558) = 1.67, p = 0.096, d = -0.14. Also, contrary to my hypothesis, there was no statistically significant difference in implicit colorism between participants in the prescriptive colorblind condition (M = .41, SE = 0.03, 95% CI [0.35, 0.48]) and participants in the descriptive colorblind condition, t(558) = .74, p = 0.459, d = .11. Although not hypothesized, participants in the prescriptive colorblind condition showed lower implicit colorism compared to participants in the control condition, t(558) = 2.44, p = .015, d = .20.

Explicit Colorism

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of condition on explicit colorism (Figure 2). There was no statistically significant effect of condition, F (2, 598) = 0.35, p = .702, η_p^2 =.001.

Perception of Racism

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of condition on mean centered perceptions of racism (Figure 3). There was no statistically significant effect of condition, $F(2, 598) = 0.48$, $p = .620$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$.

Exploratory Analysis Support of Twitter Posts

Next, I report statistics on how liking, sharing, and agreement with the Twitter posts varies across descriptive and prescriptive colorblindness conditions. Because there were only two conditions in which twitter posts could be liked, an independent samples t-test was utilized to examine the effect of experimental conditions on liking of the Twitter posts. Results indicated that people exposed to descriptive colorblind statements liked the Twitter posts less ($M = -0.74$, $SE = 0.47$, 95% CI [6.19, 7.56]) than participants exposed to prescriptive colorblind statements ($M = 7.71$, $SE = 0.41$, 95% CI [5.37, 6.53]), $t(397) = -13.26$, $p < .001$, $d = -1.33$. An independent samples t-test was used to examine the effect of experimental conditions on re-tweeting social media posts. Results indicated that people exposed to descriptive colorblind statements shared the Twitter posts less often ($M = -2.95$, $SE = 0.42$, 95% CI [5.38, 6.56]) than participants exposed to prescriptive colorblind statements ($M = 1.69$, $SE = 0.45$, 95% CI [5.81, 7.06]), $t(397) = -7.53$, $p < .0001$, $d = -0.75$.

An independent samples t-test was used to examine the effect of experimental condition on agreement with statements. Results indicated that people exposed to descriptive colorblind statements reported less agreement with the statements ($M = 2.56$, $SE = 0.10$, 95% CI [1.27, 1.55]) than participants exposed to prescriptive colorblind statements ($M = 4.64$, $SE = .05$, 95% CI [0.64, 0.78]) $t(397) = -18.98$, $p < .001$, $d = -1.41$. A one sample t-test was used to examine agreement with statements compared to the neutral point on the scale in each condition. For

participants in the descriptive colorblind condition, agreement with statements (M = 2.56, SE = .10, 90% CI [1.29, 1.52]) was significantly lower than the neutral point on the scale, $t(196) = -4.55$, $p < .001$. For participants in the prescriptive colorblind condition, agreement with statements (M = 4.64, SE = 0.05 90% CI [0.65, 0.76]) was significantly higher than the neutral point on the scale, $t(203) = 33.28$, $p<.001$.

Next, I examine how liking, sharing, and agreement with the Twitter posts in each condition relate to the dependent measures. For participants in the descriptive colorblind condition, higher agreement with Twitter posts was associated with higher explicit colorism (Table 2). Additionally, for participants in the descriptive colorblind condition, higher agreement, liking, and sharing of Twitter posts was associated with lower perceptions of racism (Table 2). In contrast, for participants in the prescriptive colorblind condition, higher agreement, liking, and sharing of the Twitter posts was associated with lower explicit colorism and higher perceptions of racism (Table 2).

Exploratory Analysis Including Participants' Self-Reported Skin Tone

Overall participants rated themselves as having relatively light skin (M = 23.78, SD = 23.68) on the scale from 0 (lightest skin tone) to 100 (darkest skin tone). Previous models were reproduced with participants' (mean centered) self-reported skin tone as an interacting covariate, to examine the effect of experimental condition and participants' self-reported skin tone on implicit colorism. There was not a statistically significant interaction between condition and participant's self-reported skin tone, F (2, 558) = 1.10, p = 0.332, η_p^2 =.004. However, there was a statistically significant main effect of self-reported skin tone, F (1, 558) = 40.45, $p < .001$, η_p^2 =.068. Participants who self-reported lighter skin tones showed higher implicit colorism compared to participants who self-reported darker skin tones, β = -0.01, $t(558) = -3.38$, $p < .001$.

The statistical conclusions of the main effect of condition remained the same, F (2, 558) = 3.57, p = 0.029, η_p^2 =.012.

In the model predicting explicit colorism, there was a statistically significant interaction between condition and participants' self-reported skin tone, F (2, 598) = 4.18, p = 0.016, η_p^2 = .014. For follow-up tests, I compared people with relatively light skin tones (one standard deviation below the mean) and relatively dark skin tones (one standard deviation above the mean) for this sample. For people with relatively light skin tones, there was no statistically significant difference between those in the descriptive colorblindness condition (M = .26, SE = 0.09 90% CI [0.08, 0.44]) and those in the control condition (M = .45, SE = 0.09 90% CI [0.27, 0.63]), β = -0.19, t(558) = -1.49, p = .137. However, they reported marginally less explicit colorism in the descriptive colorblindness condition compared to prescriptive colorblindness condition (M = .50, SE = 0.09 90% CI [0.32, 0.70]), β = -0.24, t(558) = 1.23, p = .067. For people with relatively dark skin tones, they reported higher explicit colorism in the descriptive colorblindness condition (M = .07, SE = 0.09 90% CI [-0.11, 0.24]) compared to the control condition (M = -.24, SE = 0.09 90% CI [-0.42, -0.05]), β = 0.30, t(558) = 2.35, p = .019. There was no statically significant difference between those in the descriptive colorblindness condition those in the prescriptive colorblindness condition (M = -0.11, SE = 0.09 90% CI [-0.29, 0.07]), β = 1.17, t(558) = 1.39, p = .165. There was a statistically significant main effect of self-reported skin tone, F (1, 598) = 48.83, p < .0001, η_p^2 =.068. As skin tones became darker, explicit colorism decreased, β = -0.01, t(598) = -5.16, p < .001. The statistical conclusions for the main effect of condition remained the same, F (2, 598) = 0.46, p = 0.63, η_p^2 =.002.

With regard to perceptions of racism, there was not a statistically significant interaction between condition and participant's self-reported skin tone, F (2, 598) = 0.50, p = 0.607, η_p^2

=.002. There was a statistically significant main effect of self-reported skin tone, F (1, 598) = 24.69, $p < .001$, η_p^2 =.040. As skin tones became darker, perceptions of racism increased, β = 0.015, t(598) = 3.36, $p < .001$. The statistical conclusions of the main effect remained the same, F (2, 598) = 0.51, p = 0.60, η_p^2 =.001.

Exploratory Analysis Including Participants' Political Attitudes

Previous models were reproduced with participants' (mean centered) political attitudes as an interacting covariate to examine the effects of experimental condition and participants' political attitudes on implicit colorism. There was not a statistically significant interaction between condition and participants' political attitudes, F (2,558) = 0.63, p = 0.53, η_p^2 =.002. There was not a statistically significant main effect of political attitudes, F (1, 558) = 0.74, p = 0.390, η_p^2 =.001. The statistical conclusion of the main effect of the condition was not significant F (2,558) = 2.90, p = 0.056, η_p^2 =.011.

With regard to explicit colorism, there was not a statistically significant interaction between condition and participants' political attitudes, F (2,598) = 1.09, p = 0.34, η_p^2 =.004. However, there was a statistically significant main effect of political attitudes, F (1, 598) = 39.30, $p < .0001$, η_p^2 =.063. Participants with more conservative attitudes showed greater explicit colorism, β = 0.150, t(598) = 4.30, p <.001. The statistical conclusions of the main effect of the condition remained the same F (2,598) = .64, p = 0.526, η_p^2 =.001.

With regard to perceptions of racism, there was not a statistically significant interaction between condition and participants' political attitudes, F (2, 598) = 1.09, p = 0.406, η_p^2 = .004. There was a statistically significant main effect of political attitudes, F (1, 598) = 305.37, $p <$ .001, η_p^2 = .337. Participants with more conservative attitudes perceived there to be less racism,

β = -0.432, $t(598) = -9.35$, $p < .001$. The statistical conclusions of the main effect of the condition remained the same $F\ (2, 598) = .20$, $p = .822$, $\eta_p^2 = .002$.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

This study was designed to examine how exposure to descriptive colorblind messages and prescriptive colorblind messages impact the attitudes of people in the United States. Prescriptive colorblindness promotes egalitarian idealistic ideas, which could lead to fewer biases compared to descriptive colorblindness, which involves directly denying the existence of racism. Yet, the hypothesis that exposure to prescriptive colorblind messages would lead to lower colorism compared to exposure to descriptive colorblind messages was not supported. I also hypothesized that exposure to descriptive colorblindness would lead to more colorism. Contrary to my hypothesis, results provided suggestive evidence that exposure to descriptive colorblind messages may in some cases reduce implicit colorism, relative to participants who were not exposed to any messages.

Although we cannot know for sure, the current evidence suggests that the descriptive messages may have elicited reactivity making participants more likely to think about the existence of racism—resulting in reduced implicit colorism. This sentiment was reflected in participants' open-ended responses about the colorblind statements. For instance, one participant in the descriptive colorblind condition indicated that "In an ideal world, skin color should not matter but in this one, on systems based on whiteness as ideal, unfortunately they matter very much." The participant's response shows that the descriptive colorblind condition may have led participants to think more about current systemic racial inequalities. In other words, reading that racial inequalities do not exist may have prompted people to think about how the statement is not

accurate, and recall evidence of racism. Prescriptive colorblind statements, on the other hand, do not directly deny systemic racial inequalities, therefore they may not be triggering thoughts about racial disparities. For example, participants who read Twitter posts with prescriptive colorblind statements tended to support the statements, writing things like "I love posts about equality! People should not be judged about their skin but the content of their character!" The dichotomy between how people responded to descriptive and prescriptive colorblind statements illustrates the importance of providing more specificity to how racial colorblindness is defined and differentiating between descriptive and prescriptive colorblindness. This supposition is further supported by the fact that participants reported low agreement with descriptive colorblind messages, whereas they reported high agreement with prescriptive colorblind messages. Participants who read descriptive colorblind Twitter posts were also less likely to like or share the Twitter posts compared to participants who read prescriptive colorblind Twitter posts.

I also hypothesized that descriptive colorblindness and prescriptive colorblindness would impact perceptions of racism. Given that descriptive colorblindness directly denies systemic racial inequalities, I anticipated that exposure to descriptive colorblind statements may make people less cognizant of racism in their everyday environment. Prescriptive colorblindness emphasizes equality which could make people more cognizant of racism. As such, I hypothesized that exposure to descriptive colorblind messages would reduce perceptions of racism. In contrast, I hypothesized that exposure to prescriptive colorblind messages would lead to higher perceptions of racism (compared to descriptive colorblind messages) however these hypotheses were not supported.

Examining participants agreement, liking, or sharing of descriptive colorblind messages and prescriptive colorblind messages provide additional insights about people's colorism

attitudes and perceptions of racism. For people who were exposed to descriptive colorblind statements, higher agreement with Twitter posts was associated with higher explicit colorism. Higher agreement, liking, and sharing of Twitter posts was also associated with lower perceptions of racism. As described previously, people who disagree with the descriptive colorblindness could have shown a reactance effect thus increasing how likely people are to display colorism and perceive racism. In contrast, for people who read Twitter posts with prescriptive colorblind statements, higher agreement, liking, and sharing of Twitter posts was associated with lower explicit colorism and higher perceptions of racism. Perhaps, people who read prescriptive colorblind Twitter posts may be thinking about racial equality and so they were able to better recognize instances of racism as being unequal.

Political orientation did not moderate the extent to which exposure to Twitter posts impacted colorism or perceptions of racism. However participants who held more liberal attitudes had lower explicit colorism and higher perceptions of racism compared to participants with more conservative attitudes. The results are consistent with previous work that has found that White people who support conservative political attitudes were less likely to perceive racism compared to White people who support liberal political attitudes (Zell & Lesick, 2021). Due to the frequent use of racially colorblind messages in politics (Burke, 2017) examining how exposure to descriptive and prescriptive colorblindness impacts attitudes differentially for people based on political orientation broadens understanding of the impact that these messages have.

Limitations and Future Directions

A limitation of the current study is that despite attempts to recruit a racially diverse sample of participants, the average self-reported skin tone was fairly light (well below the midpoint on the scale from light to dark). Yet, it is possible that this may be due, in part, to social

desirability. Internalized biases in favor of light skin tones may lead people to report their skin tone as being lighter or darker than it is (Campbell et al., 2020). Across various racial and ethnic minority groups, what people perceive to be "light" or "dark" skin tones could vary greatly. Perhaps perception of one's own skin tone could also vary relative to other people based on the social context of where a person is (e.g., geographically) or the group of people that the person is around (e.g., classroom).

The current study only requested participants to self-report their own skin tone. Results suggested that as self-reported skin tone became lighter people showed higher implicit and explicit colorism. The impacts of exposure to descriptive and prescriptive colorblind messages varied for people based on their self-reported skin tone. Such that, for people with relatively lighter skin tones they showed marginally less explicit colorism when exposed to descriptive colorblind messages compared to prescriptive colorblind messages. In contrast, for people with relatively darker skin tones they reported higher explicit colorism when exposed to descriptive colorblind messages compared to no messages. The current work suggest that it is important to consider people's self-reported skin tone because it relates to their colorism attitudes. Future work should examine why self-reported skin tone may be associated with colorism attidues. One possibility is that colorism attitudes could relate to how people feel about their own skin tone. Future studies should examine how perception of one's skin tone (how positively or negatively they feel about their own skin tone) alongside participant's self-reported skin tone relates to colorism.

Additionally, there was variability in results for implicit and explicit colorism attitudes. Exposure to descriptive and prescriptive colorblind messages reduced implicit colorism (compared to no messages). Yet, there was no significant finding for exposure to descriptive and

prescriptive colorblind messages on explicit colorism. Previous work has shown that there are differences in implicit and explicit measures for attitudes where explicit measures are more prone to social desirability (Gawronski & De Houwer, 2014). Perhaps, participants in the current study were more prone to respond in a socially desirable way which is why there was an association found between agreement with descriptive and prescriptive colorblind messages and explicit colorism. Future work should examine this discrepancy between implicit and explicit measurement further.

One such consideration is that in the present study, participants in the descriptive condition were more likely to disagree with the statements that they read compared to participants in the prescriptive condition. This could have been because participants had prior knowledge of current racial inequalities, which were brought to their attention when they were exposed to descriptive colorblind statements that directly denied the existence of current racial inequalities. Perhaps, future studies should measure the extent to which participants were thinking about both current interpersonal racial inequalities and systemic racial inequalities. This would provide additional insights into why there was a difference in agreement between participants in the descriptive and prescriptive condition.

Both prescriptive colorblindness and descriptive colorblindness fail to directly acknowledge social inequalities and could perpetuate systemic racial inequalities. Therefore, neither should be considered better alternatives to other forms of racial communication where social inequalities are directly acknowledged. For example, multiculturalism is associated with fewer negative outcomes (e.g., racial biases) compared to colorblindness (Rattan & Ambady, 2013). Future work should examine how prescriptive colorblindness and descriptive colorblindness compare to other types of racial socialization messages, such as multiculturalism.

I defined two new conceptualizations of racial colorblindness—descriptive colorblindness and prescriptive colorblindness—and experimentally examined how exposure to these two forms of colorblindness impacted (implicit and explicit) colorism and perceptions of racism. Exploratory analyses indicated that people perceived descriptive colorblind messages more negatively than prescriptive colorblind messages. Moreover, support for descriptive colorblind messages was associated with higher explicit colorism and reduced perception of racism, whereas support for prescriptive colorblind messages was associated with lower explicit colorism and higher perception of racism. Findings from the current study suggest that there is a difference between descriptive colorblindness and prescriptive colorblindness. Haeny (2021) notes how having more precise definitions can aid in understanding the implications and application of research. Perhaps for the current work, the implication could be tied to individual attitudes (e.g., colorism) and perception of biases but could also extend to support for policy and political reform. Further defining racial colorblindness by distinguishing between descriptive colorblindness and prescriptive colorblindness has important implications for future work due to the wide use of racial colorblindness.

TABLES

Table 1

Operalization of Racial Colorblindness

Broad Concept	***Study***	***Items***	***Sample Item***
Refusal to discuss racial issues	Neville et al., 2000 (Colorblind Racial Attitudes Scale subscale Unawareness to Blatant Racial Issues)	6	*Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension.*
	Plaut et al., 2008 (adapted from interethnic identity scale; Wolsko et al., 2006)	2	*"Employees should downplay their racial and ethnic differences"*
	Yogeeswaran et al., 2016 (Endorsement of colorblindness adapted from Knowles et al., 2009; Milojev et al., 2014)	3	*"I wish people in this society would stop obsessing so much about race"*
	Mazzocco et al., 2011	4	*"Society would be better off if we all stopped talking about race."*
	Neville et al., 2000 (Colorblind Racial Attitudes Scale subscale Unawareness of Racial Privilege)	7	*Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich*

Denial of racism	Neville et al., 2000 (Colorblind Racial Attitudes Scale subscale Unawareness of Institutional Discrimination)	7	*Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations.*
	Gonlin & Campbell, 2017	7	*"Immigrants coming into the United States are taking too many jobs from other American citizens"*

Table 2

Correlation table for descriptive colorblind and prescriptive colorblind conditions

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Agreement with Posts	-	0.398***	0.232***	-0.335***	-0.037	0.312***
2. "Liking" Twitter Posts	0.676***	-	0.389***	-0.228*	-0.0879	0.178*
3. "Re-tweeting" Twitter Posts	0.472***	0.676***	-	-0.199**	-0.049	0.060
4. Explicit colorism	0.122*	0.081	0.008	-	0.364***	-0.389***
5. Implicit Colorism	0.015	0.018	-0.008	0.240**	-	-0.074
6. Perception of racism	-0.369***	-0.304***	-0.148*	-0.321***	-0.125*	-

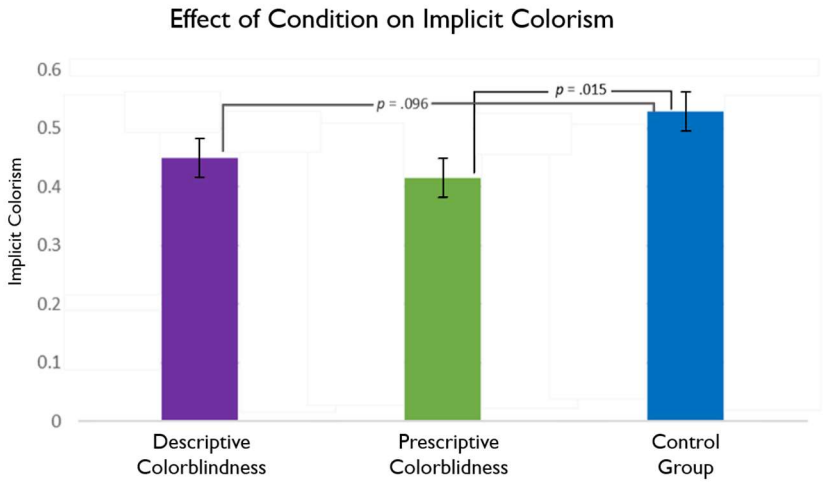
p<.1, **p<.01, *** p<.001

Note. Coefficients below the diagonal represent correlations for participants in the descriptive colorblind condition while coefficients above the diagonal represent correlations for participants in the prescriptive colorblind condition.

FIGURES

Figure 1.

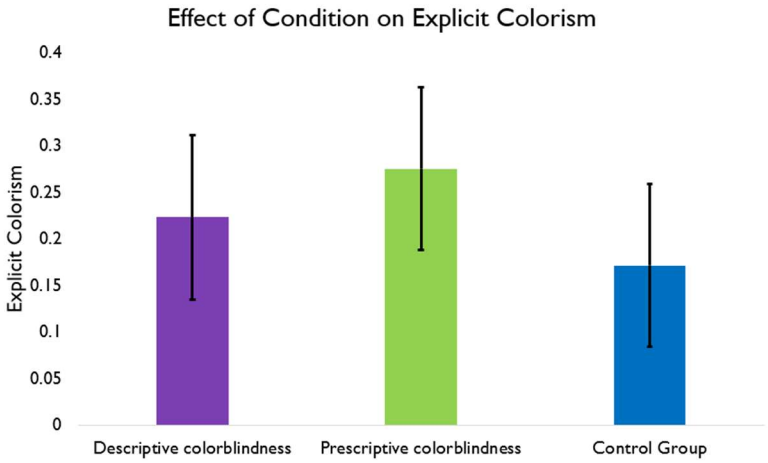
Effect of Condition on Implicit Colorism



Note. This graph displays means for implicit colorism for participants based on condition.

Figure 2

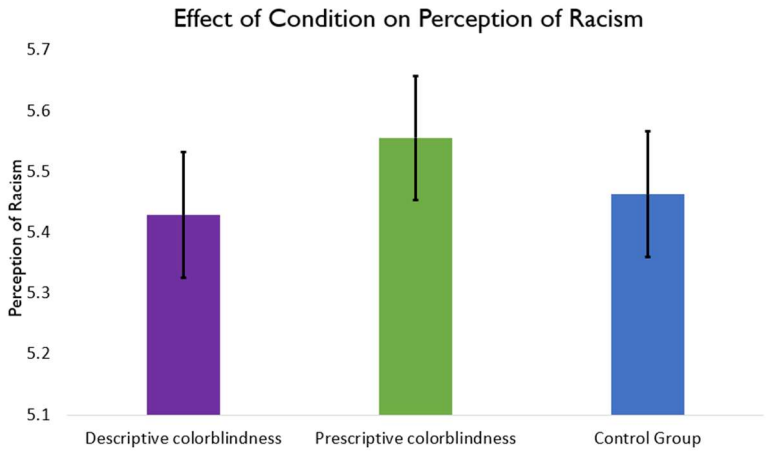
Effect of Condition on Explicit Colorism



Note. There was no significant difference between participants in the descriptive colorblind condition (M = .22 , SE = 0.09, 95% CI [0.05, 0.40]), prescriptive colorblind condition (M = .27 , SE = 0.09, 95% CI [0.10, 0.45]), or control condition (M = .17 , SE = 0.09, 95% CI [0.00, 0.34]), (F (2, 598) = .35 , p=.70).

Figure 3

Effect of Condition on Perception of Racism



Note. There was no significant difference between participants in the descriptive colorblind condition (M = 5.43, SE = 0.10, 95% CI [5.22, 5.63]), prescriptive colorblind condition (M = 5.56 , SE = 0.10, 95% CI [5.35, 5.76]), or control condition (M = 5.46 , SE = 0.10, 95% CI [5.26, 5.67]), (F (2, 598) = .40 , p=.67).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Colorblindness Manipulation

Participants will were told the following:

“We are interested in understanding how people interact on social media. You will be randomly assigned to look at twitter posts on a particular topic. We are interested in seeing what posts people like the most and would share the most.”

“You will have the option to interact with the post if you would like to. To indicate that you would share/re-tweet the post click the re-tweet button until it is green. To indicate that you would not share/not retweet the post click the re-tweet button until it is red. To indicate that you would like the post click the like button until it is green. To indicate that you would dislike the post click the like button until it is red”

Then participants were shown the following statements as twitter posts one at a time:

Descriptive Colorblind Condition

1. People of different skin colors are not treated any differently because of the way they look.
2. Everyone is treated equally regardless of the color of their skin. All people are equal.
3. Everyone is treated equally no matter their skin color
4. People do not judge people by their skin color
5. People have the same opportunities skin tone does not matter
6. Skin color doesn't matter.

7. Everyone does what they want to skin color does not make any difference in opportunities that people have
8. Everyone is treated equally skin tone does not matter
9. We're all the same on the inside and have the same rights and treatment in society. No one is treated differently based on the color of someone's skin.
10. We all look different, but we're all still people. No one treats people differently based on their skin color.
11. It doesn't matter the skin color of a person, we are all the same
12. Everyone is treated equally, and no one is looked at differently based on their skin color.

Prescriptive Colorblind Condition

1. People of different skin colors should not be treated any differently because of the way they look.
1. Everyone should be treated equally regardless of the color of their skin. All people should be equal.
2. Everyone should be treated equally no matter their skin color
3. People should not judge people by their skin color
4. People should have the same opportunities skin tone should not matter
5. Skin color shouldn't matter.
6. Everyone should do what they want to, skin color should not make any difference in opportunities that people have
7. Everyone should be treated equally, skin tone should not matter
8. We're all the same on the inside and should have the same rights and treatment in society. No one should be treated differently based on the color of someone's skin.

9. We all look different, but we're all still people. No one should treat people differently based on their skin color.
10. It shouldn’t matter the skin color of a person, we all should all be treated the same.
11. Everyone should be equal, and no one should be looked at differently based on their skin color.

Control Condition (DID NOT READ ANY TWITTER POSTS)

Example Twitter Post

Appendix B Perception of Statements

Please rate how you feel about the responses you just read (scale *1* “strongly disagree” to *5* “strongly agree”)

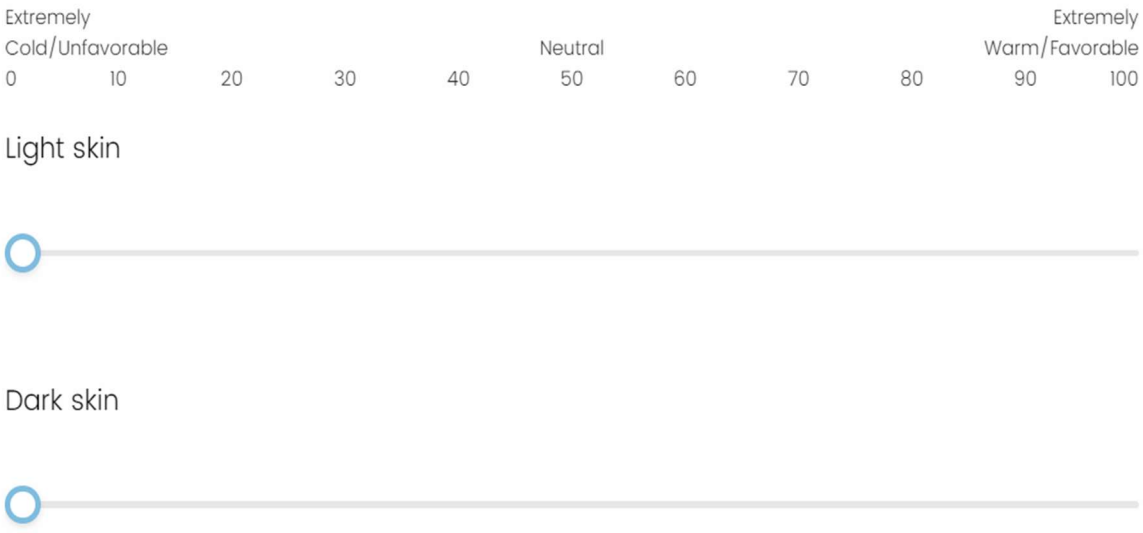
Please share any thoughts or comments you have about the statements that you just read

Appendix C

Explicit Colorism Scale

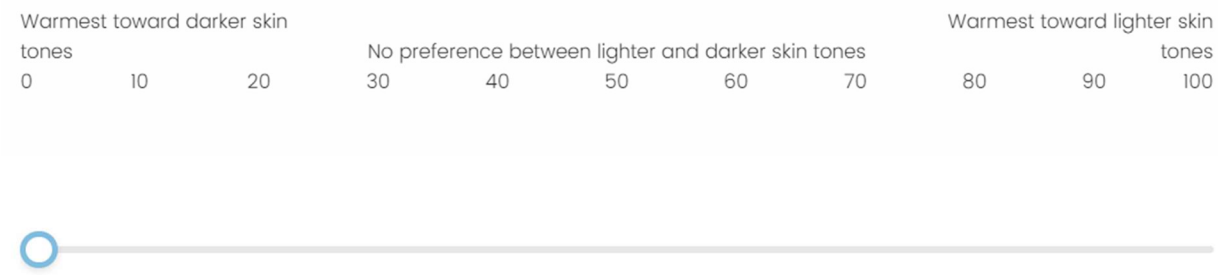
"Next, we'd like to get your feelings toward different skin tones. Using the scale below, we'd like you to rate how warm or cold you feel toward different skin tones.

Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you feel cold and unfavorable toward that skin tone. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel warm and favorable toward that skin tone. You would rate the group at the 50-degree mark if you feel neutral toward that skin tone."



"Next, we'd like to get your feelings toward darker skin tones relative to lighter skin tones. Please read the following instructions carefully:

Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you feel warmer toward darker skin tones. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel warmer toward lighter skin tones. Ratings at the 50-degree mark mean that you feel equally warm towards lighter skin tones and darker skin tones."



Appendix D Perception of Racism Scale

(Nelson, J. C., Adams, G., & Salter, P. S. (2013)

"Please indicate how much you, personally, think prejudice, discrimination, or racism play a role in each statement"

Scale 1 (not at all) - 7 (certainly)

Perception of Racism in Isolated Events

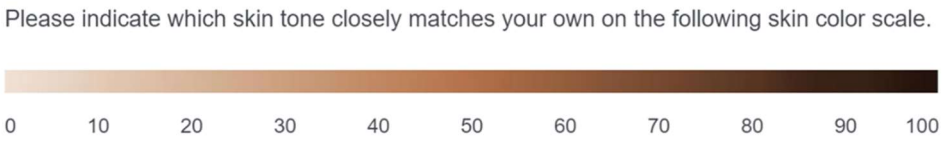
1. *Several people walk into a restaurant at the same time. The server attends to all the White customers first. The last customer served happens to be the only person of color.*
2. *An African American man goes to a real estate company to look for a house. The agent takes him to look only at homes in low-income neighborhoods.*
3. *An African American man was pulled over for speeding by a White highway patrol officer. Unknown to the man, his registration had expired earlier that month. Rather than give him a ticket and let him continue, the officer impounded the vehicle at the man's expense.*
4. *An African American woman made reservations for a rental car over the phone, but when she arrived in person to collect the car, the agent informed her that no cars were available.*
5. *Lashandra Jenkins and Amy Conner applied for the same job. The have nearly identical qualifications. Amy gets called for an interview and Lashandra does not.*

Perception of Racism in Systemic Manifestations

1. *The decision of universities like California and Texas to end affirmative action programs.*
2. *The decision of the US Government to invade Iraq.*
3. *High rates of poverty among African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans.*
4. *The practice of racial profiling—using only information about race in the decision to make traffic stops, police searches, etc.*
5. *The relatively small number of African Americans in professional sports coaching positions (NBA, NFL) relative to the number of African American athletes.*
6. *The decision of the USA to withdraw from the United Nations conference on racism*
7. *The policy of denying Mexican trucks access to US highways, even though (a) Canadian trucks have unimpeded access and (b) access for Mexican trucks is mandated by the NAFTA accord.*
8. *The portrayal of African Americans in US entertainment media.*
9. *Sentencing practices whereby possession of any quantity of cocaine is punishable by a maximum sentence of one year, whereas possession of 5 grams of crack (made from cocaine and baking soda) carries a mandatory 5-year minimum sentence*

Appendix E Skin Tone Measure

"Please indicate which skin tone closely matches your own on the following skin color scale."



Appendix F Demographic Questions

Age

"How old are you?" (open-ended question)

Gender

Select all that apply question

"What is your gender?"

- *Woman*
- *Man*
- *Transgender*
- *Non-Binary*
- *Another gender identity,* please specify (open-ended)

Income

Select response question

"What is your annual household income?"

- *$0.00 - $9,999*
- *$10,000 - $19,999*
- *$20,000 - $29,999*
- *$30,000 - $39,999*
- *$40,000 - $49,999*
- *$50,000 - $59,999*
- *$60,000 - $69,999*
- *$70,000 - $79,999*

- *$80,000 - $89,999*
- *$90,000 - $99,999*
- *$100,000 - $109,999*
- *$120,000 - $129,999*
- *$130,000 - $139,999*
- *$140,000 - $149,999*
- *$150,000 - $159,999*
- *$160,000 - $169,999*
- *$170,000 - $179,999*
- *$180,000 - $189,999*
- *$190,000 and more*

Participants were only able to select one response

Race/Ethnicity

"What is your race/ethnicity?"

- *Indigenous American*
- *East Asian*
- *Black or African American*
- *White*
- *Latino/a/x or Hispanic*
- *South Asian/Southeast Asian*
- *Middle Eastern/North African*
- *Another ethnic identity, please specify (open-ended question)*

Participants were able to select more than one response

Born in the US

Select response question

"Were you born in the United States?"

- *Yes*
- *No*

Participants were only able to select one response

Political Identity

Select response questions

"Please indicate your political identity on social issues (e.g., abortion, gun rights, gay rights). I am _____ on social issues."

- *Strongly Liberal*
- *Moderately liberal*
- *Slightly liberal*
- *In the middle*
- *Slightly conservative*
- *Moderately conservative*
- *Strongly conservative*

"Please indicate your political identity on economic issues (e.g., taxation, government spending). I am _____ on economic issues"

- *Strongly liberal*
- *Moderately liberal*
- *Slightly liberal*
- *In the middle*

- *Slightly conservative*
- *Moderately conservative*
- *Strongly conservative*

Participants were only able to select one response