

EFFECTS OF EXAMINER'S RACE ON THE  
RESPONSE BIAS OF WHITE SUBJECTS  
TO A RACIAL ATTITUDE  
QUESTIONNAIRE

By

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## PREFACE

This study is concerned with the potential effect of examiner's race on the response bias of white subjects to a racial attitude questionnaire. The purpose of the study is to test if the examiner's race can serve as a "demand characteristic" and/or elicit "evaluation apprehension" which will produce a systematic response bias in white subjects to a racial attitude questionnaire.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Review of Literature

The question addressed in the following literature review and consequently in the study was, "Will the presence of an ethnic minority examiner in a racial attitude study significantly influence the responses made by white subjects?" As an approach to this question the literature of three research areas in the field of experimental artifacts was reviewed. The three topics reviewed in connection with this proposal were: 1) demand characteristics, 2) evaluation apprehension, and 3) race of experimenter effects. The first two areas presented served as theoretical background for the proposed study; the third literature area, race of experimenter effects, was presented for the impact previous research had on the present study.

An early article on the problems of experimental artifacts in psychological research appeared in 1933, written by Saul Rosenzweig. In his article, "The Experimental Situation as a Psychological Problem," Rosenzweig presented potential areas of experimental artifacts which were the subject of elaboration and systematic research.

by later psychologists. Rosenzweig used the model of chemical research to describe the psychological experimental situation. Under this model, the experimenter became the chemist, who manipulated the experimental situation, interpreted, and recorded the resultant reactions. The subject or "experimentee" served a double position as both the chemicals and as the chemist. This double position of the subject, both as "chemical" and "chemist," was a major source of artifact in psychological research, according to Rosenzweig. The author observed that, "The difficulty in psychology . . . is that everyone is a psychologist" (Rosenzweig, pp. 338-339). The author went on to discuss the various "errors" which occur due to subjects' capability of critical observation and behavioral autonomy. Rosenzweig noted that the analogy of psychological research as a chemical experiment broke down. Unlike the chemical, the subject of a psychological experiment often overstepped his (her) "proper" position as a passive receiver of experimental manipulations and became a cognitively active participant in the ongoing study. The subject in his (her) unsolicited and undesired function as an informal psychologist, modified his (her) behavior on the basis of their interpretation on the perceived salient features of the experimental situation. Not only did the subject (or Rosenzweig's Ee) react in response to often extraneous factors, but ". . . the Ee is himself often unaware of the insidious ways in which



these extraneous factors have crept into and influenced the experiment" (Rosenzweig, p. 342).

In discussion of the potential extraneous factors effecting the subject's responses in the experimental setting, Rosenzweig presented such concepts as: 1) pride, which could motivate a subject to respond in ways to enhance self-esteem, 2) "suggestion-error," which referred to the possibility of the experimenter providing unintentional, covert information to the subject as to the response expectancies of the experimenter, and 3) characteristics of the experimenter, as in the case of the subject who served as both the "chemical" and "chemist," the experimenter (or Rosenzweig's Er) could serve as an unintentional determinant in the experimental setting. Quoting Rosenzweig, "Whether the Er is, for instance, a man or woman, white or black, Jewish or Gentile, are factors that may make a difference to the attitude and reactions of the Ee" (pp. 351-352).

Rosenzweig listed three levels of subject sophistication and made several suggestions to offset the possible entry of subject-based artifacts. The author stated that the subject could: 1) be completely ignorant that the experiment is taking place, 2) be aware of the experimental situation, but not of its purpose, and 3) know that an experiment is taking place and what its purpose is (p. 346). Some of the suggestions made by Rosenzweig to alleviate experimental artifacts in psychology were:

1) mislead the subject concerning the purpose of the experiment, 2) conduct a post-experimental interview to ascertain what, if any, informal hypotheses were entertained by the subject during the course of the experiment (the post-experimental interview was also to be used to discover if the subject had any knowledge of the experiment prior to his (her) participation), and c) insist that the subject not discuss his (her) participation in the experiment with others (pp. 346, 348-349). Rosenzweig's article has served as a heuristic guide for much of the later research on artifacts in psychological experiments. The first literature area to be presented here, on demand characteristics, was such an area which found its theoretical background in the Rosenzweig article.

#### Demand Characteristics

Martin Orne's (1962) "On the Social Psychology of the Psychological Experiment: With Particular Reference to Demand Characteristics and Their Implications" will serve as the central discussion of demand characteristics.

Orne stated that a subject who participates in a psychological experiment has tacitly agreed to perform tasks at the request of the experimenter without inquiry as to the nature of their purpose. After discussing the great control the experimental setting has over a subject, Orne stated that the principle motivation for subjects is a belief that the experiment is meaningful and that the

study and their behavior as a subject will serve to advance science and aid mankind. Orne introduced the concept of the "good subject." A "good subject" in the context of demand characteristics was one who sought to validate the experimental hypotheses. In order to "help out" the experimenter, the "good subject" would seek whatever cues were available in and out of the experimental setting which would indicate what the experimental hypotheses might be so that they could adjust their behavior in order to "prove it." Cues obtained out of experimental settings could include rumors and actual dissemination of research information by previous subjects. In the experimental situation, the total perceived available cues were labeled the "demand characteristics" of an experimental situation. According to Orne, the "demand characteristics" are the perceived cues used by a subject to form a subjective hypothesis of what the experimenter "wants" in the way of the subject's behavior. Orne pointed out the possibility that a subject may react to the "demand characteristics" of an experimental setting in two fashions. One, the subject may perform in accordance with his (her) perception of the experimental hypotheses in order to validate it. Secondly, the subject may perform in opposition to their perception to the experimental hypothesis in an attempt to be honest. In this case the subject believes that he (she) has "figured out" what the

experiment is all about, but to be fair they try to respond as if they were naive.

Orne held that "demand characteristics" were of such importance that they should become the subject of systematic investigation in order to understand the nature and magnitude of their effects on subjects' behavior.

There is a body of systematic investigation which seems to support the concepts presented by Orne. Studies which lend support to the "demand characteristics" include those of Cataldo, Silverman, and Brown (1967); Evans (1967); Gustafson and Orne (1965); Kroger (1967); Orne (1959); Orne and Evans (1965); Orne and Scheibe (1964); and Page and Lumia (1968).

A particularly interesting study conducted in the area of "demand characteristics" was the Berkowitz and LePage (1967) experiment.

The study of Berkowitz and LePage holds a peculiar place in the "demand characteristics" literature area. The expressed purpose of the study was to investigate the aggression-eliciting properties of guns as incidental stimulus objects in an experimental setting. Subjects were exposed to one of seven experimental conditions. The design of the study was a 2 x 3 factorial design, with one group serving as a control group. Half of the subjects were angered by the experimental confederate, who gave the subject seven shocks in evaluating the

creative thinking of the subject. The other half of the subjects received friendlier treatment from the confederate, who gave the subject only one shock, under what was labeled the nonangered condition. After having received shocks under either condition, subjects were given the opportunity to shock the confederate in the process of evaluating the creative thinking of the confederate.

One-third of the subjects from both the angered and non-angered conditions were presented with only the shock key in the room holding the shock machine. One-third of the angered and nonangered subjects, upon entering the shock room, were presented with a 12-gauge shotgun and a .38 caliber revolver located near the shock key. Half of these subjects were informed that the guns belonged to the confederate. The other half of the subjects were told that the guns were part of a previous experiment. In both cases, subjects were instructed to ignore the guns. The final one-third of the subjects (angered and nonangered) were presented with two badminton racquets located near the shock key. The dependent variable of the study was the number of shocks given to the confederate by the subject.

Analysis of the data showed a significant difference in the number of shocks delivered to the confederate by angered and nonangered subjects, with angered subjects giving more shocks ( $p < .01$ ). It was also noted that the hypothesis of guns as aggression-eliciting stimulus

objects was supported in the finding that the angered subjects delivered a greater number of shocks to the confederate in the presence of the weapons associated with the confederate ( $p \leq .01$ ). In discussing the implications of the experimental results, the authors held that guns could serve as a situational determinant of aggressive behavior which might override conscious motivations of an individual. After presentation of the guns-as-aggression-eliciting-stimuli explanation, the authors went on to discount the possibility of the "demand characteristics" concept being used to account for their results. According to the authors, none of the subjects showed any suspicion of the guns and denied that the guns had any effect on them when questioned. The "demand characteristics" of the experiment would not have effected only the angered subjects, according to the authors.

In answer to the Berkowitz and LePage (1967) study, a study by Page and Scheidt (1971) attacked the explanation presented by Berkowitz and LePage. The authors stated that the demand cues of the guns in the experimental setting were so blatantly obvious that the verbal instructions to ignore the guns were useless. Page and Scheidt presented three replication attempts of the 1967 Berkowitz and LePage 1967 study. The first two attempts failed, and the third was successful through the use of slightly sophisticated subjects who were aware of the

purpose of the guns' presence in the experimental setting. Through the results of their research, Page and Scheidt concluded that the "weapons effect" of the Berkowitz and LePage (1967) study was an artifact arising from an interaction of "demand characteristics" and "evaluation apprehension" as presented by Silverman and Shulman (1970). Page and Scheidt stated that demand awareness and subject cooperation gave a better accounting of the Berkowitz and LePage (1967) study than their proposed "weapons effect" concept (Page & Scheidt, 1971). Berkowitz wrote a rebuttal to the Page and Scheidt (1971) article which stated that the method of subject recruitment was a crucial element in how the subject responded to the experimental situation, and whatever explicit or implicit demands were made there (Berkowitz, 1971).

It is the conclusion of this investigator that the criticisms of Page and Scheidt (1971) are valid. The articles of Berkowitz and LePage (1967) and Berkowitz (1971) failed to show a clear understanding of the experimental artifact concepts of "demand characteristics" and "evaluation apprehension." Those two articles took an odd, paradoxical stance by stating that the "demand characteristics" concept held that subjects were passive and cooperative in the experimental setting. Yet, subjects responding to the "weapons effect" were supposedly being unconsciously directed by the presence of guns in

the experimental setting to behave in an "aggressive" fashion. According to Berkowitz and LePage (1967) and Berkowitz (1971), the "weapons effect" was completely different from the concept of "demand characteristics." That supposed difference was not clearly or satisfactorily shown to this investigator through experimental research. The investigator aligns with Page and Scheidt (1971) in holding that the findings of Berkowitz and LePage (1967) were the result of an interaction of "demand characteristics" and "evaluation apprehension." Regardless of the theoretical model used to explain the results of the Berkowitz and LePage (1967) study, the finding that a particular, supposedly incidental, stimulus object can produce a systematic response bias has important implications for the present study. The particular importance of this study will be discussed in the implications section at the conclusion of the literature review.

#### Evaluation Apprehension

The second literature area presented is that of "evaluation apprehension." Rosenberg introduced the concept of evaluation apprehension in an attempt to explain counter-intuitive findings in cognitive dissonance research (Rosenberg, 1965). As used by Rosenberg, "evaluation apprehension" was a state which could be experienced by the subject(s) of a psychological study. The process



and results of "evaluation apprehension" are as follows: The subject involved in a psychological study is concerned as to whether or not the researcher intends to evaluate various facets of the subject's personality: i.e., morality, intelligence, social acceptability, etc. The subject searches for, and interprets cues in the experimental situation to confirm or disconfirm their belief that evaluation is taking place. Should the subject perceive cues which imply evaluation is taking place, then "evaluation apprehension" is likely to occur. Rosenberg stated that for the subject, "evaluation apprehension" is ". . . an active, anxiety-toned concern that he win a positive evaluation from the experimenter, or at least that he provide no grounds for a negative one" (p. 281). The subject experiencing "evaluation apprehension" forms and acts upon implicit hypotheses as to what type of behavior will provide a positive, or at least neutral evaluation from the researcher. It should be noted that both the "demand characteristics" of Orne (1962) and the "evaluation apprehension" of Rosenberg (1969) viewed the subject as a cognitively active individual who forms and acts on implicit hypotheses supported by perceived cues in the experimental situation. A critical difference in the two concepts is the proposed underlying motivation of the subjects. According to the "demand characteristics" concept, the individual involved in psychological research seeks to be a "good

subject." Being a "good subject" means that the individual attempts to cooperate with, and "help out" the researcher in confirming the experimental hypothesis. There was also the possibility of a subject seeking to be a "good subject" by responding in a fashion which would disconfirm their idea of the experimental hypothesis in an attempt to be fair. While the "demand characteristics" concept views subjects as being basically cooperative in nature, the "evaluation apprehension" concept holds that the view of subjects in the experimental situation is self-serving. The subject seeks to look "good" or not "look bad" to the experimenter. Confirming or disconfirming the experimental hypothesis would be of secondary importance to the subject experiencing "evaluation apprehension." Whether the subject acts in accordance with or in opposition to their idea of what the experimental hypothesis is, depends primarily on their expectation of what type of evaluation will be made in relation to their behavior. Some studies which support the concept of "evaluation apprehension" are: Rosenberg (1965); Silverman (1968); and Silverman and Regula (1975).

An article which attempted to consolidate the concepts of "demand characteristics" and "evaluation apprehension" into a single model was that of Silverman and Shulman, "A Conceptual Model of Artifact in Attitude Change Studies," published in 1970.

This article presented the analogy of the subject in a psychological experiment as a contaminated test tube, where products resulting from experimental inputs are colored by the traits of the human subject under observation. In order to better understand human behavior through experimental research, the authors contended that it would be essential to understand the nature of the "contaminants" or traits of the experimental subject. Silverman and Shulman held that attitude change research was a prototypic method for the study of experimental artifact. They gave two reasons for this assertion; one, the experimenter's interests are fairly clear and straightforward; two, there is often the subject's perception of a clear choice of self-enhancing versus self-demeaning responses to be made. The authors presented five propositions on experimental artifact and reviewed supportive literature in behalf of each stated proposition.

The authors concluded that several implications could be made for the future of attitude change research. Silverman and Shulman stated that the laboratory method of research need not be discarded and replaced by descriptive field research. They believed there could be a trend toward more indirect and unobtrusive laboratory studies of attitudes. They held that there should be a mode of using experimental methodology in more "realistic" or "natural" settings.

## Race of Experimenter Effects

At the writing of this thesis there was no major conceptual work on the effect of experimenter's race on the attitude responses of subjects. Several studies have been conducted which confirm the hypothesis of a systematic effect of the experimenter's race in the experimental setting; Cantril and Research Associates (1944); Williams and Cantril (1945); Hyman et al. (1954); Rankin and Campbell (1955); Katz et al. (1964); Williams (1964); and Bernstein (1965). Only eight studies have been conducted which, in any experimental sense, strongly relate to the present proposal. After presentation of the relevant available research literature, implications of the literature for the proposed study will be made.

Two studies showed clear evidence of a significant race of experimenter effect. Athey et al. (1960), in part one of their study, found the difference between subject groups interviewed by the oriental and white researchers significant at the .00003 probability level. For the white interviewer, scores ranged from zero to five with the subject group mean equaling 1.20, with 19 prejudice-free respondents. For the oriental interviewer, scores ranged from zero to two, with a subject group mean of .60 and 20 prejudice-free respondents. In part two of the study, there was no significant difference in the effect of interviewer's race (black or white)

on the responses of freshmen subjects. Race of interviewer effect was significant for senior respondents at the .00003 level. Homeowner respondents showed a difference in response to the race of the experimenters significant at the .05 level. The difference between the three subject groups was statistically significant at the .0005 level.

Summers and Hammonds (1966) reported that the level of prejudice expressed by the subjects tested under the black-white investigator team was significantly lower than that expressed under the all-white investigator team at the .001 level. The two experimenter teams had administered questionnaires to intact subject groups.

The Scott, Johnson, and Bailey (1974) study reported a significant ( $p < .05$ ) sex-of-subject by appearance-of-black experimenter dressed to emphasize "blackness" interaction. Under that condition, white female subjects gave higher prointegration ratings than did white male subjects. For subjects tested under the black experimenter as the "conventionally dressed negro," the relationship was reversed. Under that condition, white males gave higher prointegration ratings than did white female subjects.

Houston (1976) reported a race of experimenter effect significant at the .10 level. Under the black experimenter, white subjects predicted more success for hypothetical college students. The race-of-experimenter

and occupation aspiration of the hypothetical student interaction was significant at the .05 level. Subjects under the black experimenter predicted greater success for hypothetical students aspiring to become athletic directors than those tested under the white experimenter. The race-of-hypothetical student and occupation aspiration interaction was found to be significant at the .06 level. Hypothetical white students aspiring to become lawyers had more success predicted for them than did hypothetical black students.

The remaining four studies completely failed to reject the null hypothesis of no race-of-experimenter effects. The data analysis of Bryant, Gardner, and Goldman (1966) addressed itself to three questions: 1) which racial subject group showed the less acceptance of the other race? 2) was there a shift to a more accepting response on the part of the subjects when they were interviewed by an individual of the same race as dealt with in the questionnaire? and 3) was there any difference in the amount of response-shift noted between the two subject groups? Analysis of the results showed that white subjects were less accepting of blacks than black subjects were of whites ( $p < .05$ ). There was no statistically significant difference in response-shift as effected by interviewer's race, nor in the amount of response-shifting between the two groups. The study by Beard (1970) reported that there had been no significant reductions in

the anti-Negro attitudes held by white college students, regardless of the teacher's racial identity. The teachers, either black or white, had administered questionnaires at two separate times in a pretest-posttest fashion.

Using a critical value of 9 of 100 items being significant at the .05 level, Sedlacek and Brooks (1972) reported that the main effect of questionnaire form (presenting racial information or failing to do so) was significant with 38 of 100 items being found significant at the .05 level. The main effect of experimenter's race and the interaction of experimenter and questionnaire form were found to be insignificant, with 4 of 100 items and 3 of 100 items being found significant, respectively. Sattler, Skenderian, and Passen (1972) reported that the results of their statistical analysis were nonsignificant without giving further detail.

Of the eight studies reviewed, only two showed clear evidence of race-of-experimenter effects. One study reported a significant race-of-experimenter effect using a nontraditional alpha level, in addition to a significant race-of-experimenter by occupation aspiration and race-of-hypothetical student by occupation aspiration interaction. Another study noted a significant subjects' sex by dress-of-black-experimenter interaction. The remaining four studies failed to reject the null hypothesis of no race-of-experimenter effects.

Implications of Literature Review  
for Present Study

In discussing implications the literature review has for the study, each of the experimental hypotheses is presented. As each hypothesis is presented, available supporting research will be given. The following discussions deal with the implications of the previous research for development of the experimental hypotheses.

For the main effect of experimenter's race, it is proposed that white subjects will predict greater success for hypothetical students presented under black experimenters than for those presented under white experimenters. This hypothesis receives experimental support from the Houston (1976) study. That study found that white subjects predicted greater success for hypothetical students presented by a black experimenter over those presented by a white experimenter, significant at the .10 level. While this finding does not meet the traditional alpha level of .05, it does show a trend towards significance which, in this area of experimental artifact research, may justify further investigation. The Houston (1976) study also indicated a direction of response bias, namely a prediction of greater success for hypothetical students presented under the black experimenter. This finding is reflected in the plan for two-way analysis of variance in the present study.



The second hypothesis dealt with the main effect of hypothetical student's racial identity. The hypothesis stated that significantly greater success will be predicted for the white hypothetical student. Tentative support for this main effect hypothesis was also found in the Houston (1976) study. The interaction of race-of-hypothetical student and occupation aspiration was found to be significant at the .06 level. Hypothetical white students aspiring to become lawyers were predicted to be more successful than the other hypothetical student-race and occupation aspiration combinations. The testable implication drawn from this finding was that white subjects presented with hypothetical students entering a rigorous academic area, such as law school (or, in this study, graduate training in psychology) will predict greater success for hypothetical white students over hypothetical black students.

The third hypothesis is critical to the question of race-of-experimenter effects as they relate to the processes of experimental artifact previously reviewed. The hypothesis predicts the following interaction effect: white subjects will predict greater success for hypothetical black students presented under a black experimenter than for hypothetical black students presented under a white experimenter. The study of Athey et al. (1960) lends strong support to this interaction hypothesis. The

studies of Summers and Hammonds (1966) and Scott, Bailey, and Johnson (1974) give indirect support of the interaction hypothesis. The three studies indicated that racial characteristics of the experimenter were related to the increased frequency of socially desirable racial attitude responses on the part of white subjects. Socially desirable responses in this case were responses which indicated freedom from prejudice and a prointegrational social orientation.

Theoretical support of the interaction hypothesis can be found in each of the experimental artifact literature areas: 1) "demand characteristics"; Orne (1962), 2) "evaluation apprehension"; Rosenberg (1965), and 3) the "combined processes" concept of Silverman and Shulman (1970). All three theories would state that the subjects under the black experimenter-black hypothetical student would perceive that their racial attitudes were being measured in some fashion. In this situation the white subjects would search for cues as to what would be an optimum response set. The racial identity of the experimenter thus becomes a critical feature of the experimental situation, according to each of the experimental artifact theories. While each theory would consider the experimenter's race to be a potent stimulus in the experimental situation, their explanations of the white subjects' cognitive processing of the experimental situation and resultant behavior are markedly different.

The "demand characteristics" theory would state that white subjects under the black experimenter/black hypothetical student condition would interpret the experimental hypothesis as one which sought high prediction of success for the hypothetical black student as a desirable outcome. To "cooperate" with the experimenter and help verify their perceived idea of the experimental hypothesis, the white subjects would then predict high success for the hypothetical black student. The "demand characteristics" research of Berkowitz and LePage (1967) supports this theoretical explanation. Berkowitz and LePage (1967) showed that a seemingly incidental stimulus object could produce a systematic response set in subjects through its cultural significance. In their study, the "incidental" stimulus object was a gun and the response set found was that subjects in the presence of the gun delivered greater electrical shocks to other subjects in a learning experiment (actually an experimental confederate). While the Berkowitz and LePage (1967) study dealt with aggression-eliciting cue properties of guns, the present study hypothesizes that the presence of a black experimenter in the experimental situation will serve as a prointegrational, anti-prejudicial attitude response-eliciting cue.

"Evaluation apprehension" theory would hold that the white subjects involved in the black experimenter/black

hypothetical student condition will search the experimental situation for cues as to how they should respond in order to possibly obtain a good evaluation from the experimenter and avoid receiving a poor one. Here, the experimenter's race would be considered a strong indication of what type of responses would be approved by the experimenter. This study's interaction hypothesis could thus be explained in terms of the white subjects assuming that black experimenters will approve of responses which indicate high success for black students, hypothetical or real.

The "combined processes" theory of Silverman and Shulman (1974) viewed "demand characteristics" as being subordinate to the process of "evaluation apprehension." As their theory relates to the present study, "evaluation apprehension" and "demand characteristics" are viewed as working together. The experimental situation works to create "evaluation apprehension" in the sense that white subjects are aware that their racial attitudes are being measured in the black experimenter/black hypothetical student condition. They are also aware that their responses to the questionnaire are to be evaluated, quite possibly by the black experimenter present. The subjects are thus motivated to search for indications as to how they should respond to the questionnaire. As they look to the experimental situation for cues, the experimenter's race becomes a focal cue. The white subjects may deduce

that the experimenter's hypothesis is that subjects will predict high success for black students due to their experiences in college. It is also possible that the subjects will infer that the black experimenter expects a low prediction of success for black students due to the prejudicial attitudes held by whites. According to "combined processes" theory, a positive prediction response set is very likely in either case. In the first instance, "evaluation apprehension" and the "demand characteristics" of the experimental setting work together in a straightforward fashion to produce a positive response bias. In the second case, "demand characteristics" enable the subjects to "deduce" the experimental hypothesis being tested; however, the process of "evaluation apprehension" would override the "dictates" of the experimental situation (verifying the supposed hypothesis of low success prediction for the hypothetical black student) and motivate the white subjects to obtain a good evaluation by responding in a positive fashion.

It is important to note that each of the experimental artifact theories explain the same behavioral result; that of positive response bias on the part of white subjects when tested under the black experimenter/black hypothetical student condition. The difference becomes evident in the proposed motivation of the subject. For "demand characteristics," the subject was viewed as being

cooperative, seeking to verify the experimental hypothesis as they perceived it. "Evaluation apprehension" viewed the subject as self-serving, seeking to obtain a good evaluation and avoid a bad one. The "combined processes" theory saw the subject as expedient, that is, if it did not cost feelings of self-esteem, then the subject tended to comply with the perceived "demand characteristics" of the experiment. If there was a perceived potential loss of self-esteem, then the subject sought to present a socially approvable picture of themselves.

In conclusion, the experimental artifact literature provides a good skeleton on which a body of related research can be (and has been) produced. The present study attempts to address some of the points presented by the literature area of experimenter's-race effect combined with experimental artifact notions.

## CHAPTER II

### THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

#### Statement of Problem

The question which is the focus of this study is as follows: "In an experimental setting can the racial attitude responses of white subjects be systematically affected by the experimental manipulation of the racial identity of the experimenter and the racial identity of the attitude object (hypothetical student)?"

#### Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the effects which experimenter's race and attitude object's race have on the racial attitude responses of white subjects.

#### Background and Value of Study

This research project is to be a partial replication of an earlier study conducted by the experimenter (Houston, 1976). That study focused on the effects of experimenter's race (black or white), race of hypothetical student (black or white), and career-aspiration of the hypothetical student (lawyer or athletic director), and on the

attribution of failure given by white freshmen to the hypothetical student. In general, the study showed that white subjects predicted greater success to hypothetical students presented under the black experimenter, regardless of the racial identity of the hypothetical student. The interaction of race-of-experimenter and occupational aspiration was found to be significant, with subjects under the black experimenter attributing greater success to hypothetical students aspiring to become athletic directors than to those aspiring to become lawyers. The race-of-hypothetical student and occupational aspiration was also found to be significant. White subjects attributed greater success to hypothetical white students aspiring to become lawyers.

This study will thus serve a three-fold purpose. First, it is a partial replication of the investigator's previous study. Second, it is a potential contribution to the body of research literature on the effects of experimenter's race. This area of psychological research has been found to be limited in amount and scope. Third, it addresses a question which may become more and more prevalent with the possible increased entry of minority college students into the psychological and social sciences. One of the expressed purposes of training minority students in the psychological and social sciences is to encourage research on minority and cross-cultural



issues which would be relatively free of majority culture bias. If such "unbiased" research is to be conducted by minority researchers, than a crucial question which arises is: "How will the presence of a minority researcher in an experimental setting effect the responses of white subjects?"

Research findings in the area of experimenter's race effects could have serious implications for the interpretation of racial research conducted by minority researchers. If a body of research is compiled which disconfirms the hypothesis of systematic race-of-experimenter effects, then race-related research conducted by minority researchers could be interpreted with only the cautions which apply to any psychological research. However, should research be produced which confirms the existence of systematic experimenter's race effects, then the interpretation of race-related research conducted by minority researchers would have to be tempered, not only by the usual cautions, but by the degree and direction that the presence of a minority experimenter could bias the responses of majority subjects.

#### General Research Problem

Is there a systematic "race of experimenter" effect on the racial attitude responses of white college subjects? The independent variables include the racial

identity of the examiner and hypothetical student (either white or black). The dependent variable consisted of the total scores obtained from a 48-item questionnaire (see Appendix A).

The questionnaire contains balanced positive and negative statements concerning the hypothetical student's potential success in Academic, Social, and Post-college activities. The questionnaire (called the A.S.P.) uses a six-point Likert-type response scale. The response scale ranged from plus three (+3), indicating strong agreement; to minus three (-3), indicating strong disagreement. There is no option for indicating "no opinion."

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Subjects

Subjects were 64 white college students enrolled in psychology courses at Oklahoma State University in the Fall semester of 1978. They volunteered to participate in the study.

#### Study Design and Method of Subject Assignment

The subject sample was randomly assigned to the four experimental conditions (race-of-experimenter by race-of-hypothetical student). The data was analyzed using a two-way analysis of variance (2 x 2). A posteriori comparison will be made should significance levels indicate that such comparisons would be worthwhile.

#### Equipment

Data were obtained through use of a 48-item questionnaire. Subjects stated their agreement or disagreement with positive and negative statements concerning the success of a hypothetical college student in Academic,

Social, and Post-college activities. The response scale was a six-point Likert-type scale which ranged from minus three (-3), indicating strong disagreement, to plus three (+3), indicating strong agreement. There was no zero point to indicate neutrality of opinion.

The first page of the questionnaire presented the scenario of the hypothetical college student, including their racial identity, and the response scale. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: Academic, Social, and Post-college. The Academic section consisted of 22 items divided into 11 positive and 11 negative statements. The statements in this section refer to the hypothetical student's self-determination, comprehension, and academic performance. The Social section contains 16 evenly divided positive and negative statements. Items in the Social section discuss the hypothetical student's interpersonal skills and activities. The Post-college section contains 10 balanced positive and negative statements on the potential professional activities of the hypothetical student after graduate school.

#### Procedure

Subjects were from introductory psychology courses taught at Oklahoma State University. Instructors of the courses were given subject volunteer forms to pass out to recruit subjects for the study. One-half of each form

consisted of blanks for the subject's name, race, and sex. The other half of the form was detachable and was kept by the volunteer. That section of the form gave the study title and the time and location of the study.

The subject volunteer forms were numbered and subjects were randomly assigned to experimental conditions by use of a random numbers table. As subjects arrived at their assigned testing site, they were seated in a fashion to minimize the possibility of subjects viewing the questionnaires of others. After the subjects were seated, the experimenters passed out the questionnaires and pencils with the instructions that the subjects should not start until told. When the questionnaires had been passed out, the experimenters gave the subjects a description of their experimental task. The experimenters then asked if there were any questions about what they had been asked to do. After the experimenters dealt with any questions which might arise, they instructed the subjects to remain silent during the testing period and to begin the questionnaire. While the subjects were filling out the questionnaire, the experimenters sat quietly at the front of the room.

#### Control of Secondary and Error Variance

To control for subject-based errors the following steps were taken: 1) subjects were randomly assigned to

experimental conditions; 2) subjects were seated to discourage looking at the forms of other subjects; 3) subjects were silent during the testing period; 4) in an attempt to offset response sets, the positive and negative items in each section were randomly ordered; 5) non-white students were systematically eliminated.

In order to reduce the possibility of confounding the personality characteristics of the experimenters with the potential race-of-experimenter effect the following action was taken: Four experimenters under each racial condition presented the questionnaires to a total of 64 subjects. Four questionnaires under each race of hypothetical college student condition were randomly selected from each experimenter to fill out the experimental data cells. The experimenters dressed in a standard fashion: light dress shirt, dark slacks, socks, and shoes. The experimenters gave a standard set of instructions (see Appendix B). The experimenters were ignorant of the experimental hypotheses and the true purpose of the study. Thus, they were involved in a double-blind experimental situation and thereby less likely to provide subjects with clear and deliberate cues.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

Two-way fixed effect analysis of variance was used to evaluate the main and interaction effects of examiner's and hypothetical student's race. The alpha level used to test the null hypotheses was set at .05. The critical F value (1,63) required to reject the null hypotheses ( $\alpha=.05$ ) was an F value equal to four (4.0).

Analysis of the total combined questionnaire sections scores produced nonsignificant results (see Table I). An F score of 1.1473 was found for the test of whether subjects would predict greater success for the hypothetical white student compared to the hypothetical black student. A test of the hypothesis which proposed subjects would predict greater success for hypothetical students presented by a black examiner in contrast to hypothetical students presented by a white examiner reported an F score of .016999. Evaluation of the interaction hypothesis reported an F score of .313. The tester interaction hypothesis stated that subjects would predict the greatest success for the hypothetical black student presented by the black examiner in comparison to the other experimental conditions. Inspection of the means and

and standard deviations for the main effects and experimental cells noted a trend toward greater variance where the black examiner or hypothetical student was involved (see Tables II and III). Given the nonsignificant findings of the data analysis, such variance is considered to represent chance variation in responses.

TABLE I  
SUMMARY OF TWO-WAY ANOVA

Source	SS	d. f.	M.S.	F
Total	27124	63	--	--
(HYS)	506.2	1	506.2	1.1473
(ER)	7.5	1		.016999
Interaction	138.1	1		.313
Error	26472.2	60		

C.V. = 4.00 (1,63)  $\alpha=.05$

HYS = Hypothetical Student's Race

ER = Examiner's Race



TABLE II  
PRESENTATION OF CELL MEANS AND  
STANDARD DEVIATION

<u>Responses to A.S.P. Questionnaire</u>		
White ER		Black ER
	$\underline{M} = 136.75$	$\underline{M} = 133.12$
White HYS	sd = 11.789	sd = 20.523
	$\underline{M} = 139.44$	$\underline{M} = 141.69$
Black HYS	sd = 19.117	sd = 28.968

ER = Examiner

HYS = Hypothetical Student

TABLE III  
PRESENTATION OF ROW AND COLUMN MEANS  
AND STANDARD DEVIATION

<u>Responses to A.S.P. Questionnaire</u>		
White ER	Col $\underline{M} = 138.09$	SD = 15.683
Black ER	Col $\underline{M} = 137.41$	SD = 25.075
White HYS	Row $\underline{M} = 134.94$	SD = 16.566
Black HYS	Row $\underline{M} = 140.56$	SD = 24.170

ER = Examiner

HYS = Hypothetical Student

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The present study investigated the influence an examiner's racial identity had on the responses of white college subjects to a race-related questionnaire. Important factors involved in the study were the examiner's race, the experimental questionnaire, and the experimental artifact processes of evaluation apprehension and demand characteristics.

The interpretation of nonsignificant results always presents difficulties in psychological research. The following possible explanations of the results were based on past research and the author's speculation.

A chronological survey of the results of experimenter's race effect research suggests that the race of experimenter effect has diminished through the passage of time. The question of experimenter's race effects has been studied from 1944 to 1979. Studies which reported significant experimenter's race effects span the time period of 1944 to 1966. From 1966 to the present study extremely tenuous or nonsignificant results have been reported in studies investigating the relationship of experimenter's race to the response bias of white

subjects to racial attitude measures. A possible explanation for this trend is the "normalization" of minority individuals as psychological experimenters. Through the passage of time and concurrent sociopolitical change, minority groups, blacks in particular, have made advances which increased their "visibility" to members of the majority culture. One area in which the presence of minority individuals has become highly visible and to some extent "normal" is that of higher education. Through "equal opportunity" efforts and minority recruitment practices of colleges and universities, the presence of blacks on the campuses of higher education institutions is far more commonplace and perhaps more socially accepted by white college students presently than during the period of 1944-1966. The "normalization" of blacks in an academic setting may have served to diminish the white college subject's perception of a black experimenter as a unique feature of an experimental setting. Thus, the experimenter's race could have failed to serve as an implicit response cue for the subjects in the present study. On the basis of the author's survey of the literature, "normalization" appears to have received scarce research interest.

Related to the "normalization" of black experimenter concept is the possible explanation that the experimental questionnaire failed to address currently

relevant areas of racial concern. The questionnaire in the present study required the white subjects to predict the ability of black or white hypothetical students to perform at a postbaccalaureate level. As part of the affirmative action educational integration movement in this country much effort has been made to present minorities as able to perform competently in the academic realm. To the extent such minority-student enhancing efforts have been successful, contemporary white college students may perceive black college students to be as capable as white college students. One study has reported that white college students report significantly more positive attitudes toward black college students than toward blacks in general (Redisch & Weissbach, 1974). That research finding relates to the present study by suggesting that the white college subjects perceived the hypothetical black college student in a positive fashion. This perception was enhanced by the information that the black college student had already received an undergraduate degree, indicating that the black student had performed competently at the undergraduate level. The subjects may have assumed that success at the undergraduate level served as evidence for success at the graduate level, regardless of the racial identity of the hypothetical student. In addressing issues of performance in an academically-oriented environment, the

questionnaire could have failed to measure attitudes influenced by social beliefs of white college subjects.

A final consideration was that of subject-originated artifact. The artifact areas which served as a theoretical explanation for the experimenter's race effect were evaluation apprehension and demand characteristics. A common characteristic in both evaluation apprehension and demand characteristic literature is the presumption of a complex cognitive process of which the subject may not be (consciously) aware. It was believed that the subject could be aware of the biasing processes taking place and fail to report the influence of extraneous artifact variable(s) for reasons of self-enhancement and/or "scientific cooperation." A key problem in the evaluation apprehension/demand characteristic research has been verifying the existence of such processes in subjects. Due to the subjective nature of the artifact processes, all verification checks have methodological weaknesses which present researchers with severe difficulties. The influence of evaluation apprehension/demand characteristics in the present study was to be indirectly verified by a response bias in the white subjects' answers to the study questionnaire. In the case of evaluation apprehension, research has been conducted which questions if subjects experience "evaluation apprehension" in an experimental setting.

In an attempt to test the validity of the evaluation apprehension concept, Christensen (1978) conducted a set of experiments designed to test the assumption of subjects' expectancy of evaluation. The idea that subjects involved in psychological research expect to be evaluated has been a critical component of evaluation apprehension theory and research. Christensen's research (1978) sought to investigate the validity of evaluation apprehension from three approaches. One study addressed subjects' attitudes toward psychological experiments in general. Subjects' responses were analyzed to identify answers which indicated that subjects anticipated personal evaluation rising from the experimental setting. The second study was designed to determine whether experimental conditions considered to arouse evaluation apprehension would produce a response in the autonomic nervous system. The particular autonomic system response measured in that study was heart rate. Christensen's third study in the series was an attempt to replicate Rosenberg's (1969) experiment.

Christensen reported that the results from the series of studies failed to give support to the concept of evaluation apprehension. According to Christensen, the studies showed that subjects did not expect personal evaluation from psychological research. The study investigating the relationship of evaluation apprehension conditions and

autonomic response found nonsignificant correlations between experimental condition and heart rate increase.

The third study's replication attempt failed to produce results comparable to the original (Rosenberg, 1969) experiment. On the basis of results found in the series of experiments, Christensen concluded that evaluation apprehension was not a sufficient concept to describe subject-originated artifact. Christensen proposed that subjects involved in psychological experiments were not expecting an evaluation of their personal characteristics. The author believed subjects would look for cues which would enable them to make a positive self-presentation by performing the most desirable response indicated (Christensen, 1978).

It is therefore possible that the artifact concepts used to explain the race of experimenter effect were so inappropriate as to provide no sound basis for the present study.

While the present study failed to report significant hypothetical student's or experimenter's race effects it has suggested several research questions for future consideration. From the tentative explanation of experimenter's race effect being nullified through the assimilation and "normalization" of the black student on college campuses, three questions readily arise. First, is the concept of "normalization" a valid one? Research addressing this question could seek to measure the white students'

awareness of black students on the college campus and the nature of that awareness. Secondly, should the concept of black college student "normalization" receive experimental support, then does this normalization process apply to other minority groups? In light of this question research may be designed to test the experimenter's race effect using a multi-ethnic group of experimenters. The hypothesis tested in such research would be, "If the normalization of minority college students has accrued equally for all ethnic groups, then no significant response shifts will be noted for groups tested under non-black minority experimenters on their attitudes toward members of that ethnic group." Third, given the assumption that "normalization" is a time-bound process, does the affirmative action history of individual colleges and universities effect the "normalization" process as reflected in the racial attitude responses of white college subjects? Any study wishing to investigate this third question should also consider the geographic location of a particular higher education institution.

The types of questions uncovered in the "normalization" explanation are all applicable to some extent to the the "shifting areas of racial sensitivity" concept. There are issues uniquely related to the discussion of shifting areas of racial sensitivity. One point of inquiry could be whether there is a distinguishable difference in the



attitudes white college students report concerning their perceptions of black college students as opposed to blacks in general. An essential consideration for future research in this area deals with the investigation of whether there exist highly sensitive racial issues and the nature of such issues. Proposed issues for study could involve interracial housing, social activities, dating, and marriage. Both the "normalization" and "shifting racial issues" explanations depend on the influence of social change produced by equal opportunity programs. Recently, charges of "reverse discrimination" have been leveled at some educational institutions (Cohen, 1976; and Lawrence, 1977). Should the belief that competent minority individuals receive positions and opportunities solely on a racial basis become widespread and socially accepted by the majority culture, future trends of experimenter's race effect research could significantly shift.

The results of this thesis provide very limited suggestions for study of the evaluation apprehension/demand characteristics topics. Due to the absence of direct verification of the presence of evaluation apprehension/demand characteristic processes, it is suggested that any future replications of the present research should incorporate checks of the existence of evaluation apprehension/demand characteristic artifact processes.

A natural consequence of psychological research is that it often produces more questions than answers. Many questions which have arisen from this study are feasible for future research activities.

A critical question presented by studies reporting nonsignificant results is, "should further research be conducted in this area?" As that question applies to this study, it is the opinion of this investigator that further investigation into the topic of experimenter's race effect is unlikely to yield significant information on factors which could influence reported racial attitudes.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE OF A.S.P. QUESTIONNAIRE



## INSTRUCTIONS

Richard, a black college graduate, has enrolled in a graduate program of Psychology. As a new student, Richard is confronted with numerous concerns. He is faced with questions such as: "How well will he be able to meet the academic demands of graduate school?" "What directions will his social life take during his graduate years?" "What do the future years, after graduate school, hold for him?"

Your task is to describe how Richard's graduate career might progress. This is done by stating your agreement or disagreement with statements presented in the following questionnaire. You are to use your own judgment in answering the questionnaire. Use the following scale to make your responses:

-3  
Strongly  
disagree

-2  
Moderately  
disagree

-1  
Slightly  
disagree

+3  
Strongly  
agree

+2  
Moderately  
agree

+1  
Slightly  
disagree

Be sure to write down the sign of your response as well as the number. Your assistance in this study is greatly appreciated.

## Academic Section

- \_\_\_ 1. Richard will complete many of his assignments early.
- \_\_\_ 2. Richard will find it necessary to purchase special study guides to understand the concepts found in Psychology.
- \_\_\_ 3. He will often have to take extra credit assignments to keep his grades up.
- \_\_\_ 4. Compared to other graduate students in Psychology, Richard's grades will be above average.
- \_\_\_ 5. He will find it necessary to "cram" for his examinations.
- \_\_\_ 6. He will be a major contributor in classroom discussions.
- \_\_\_ 7. He will be on the Dean's Honor Roll often.
- \_\_\_ 8. He will have to repeat at least one of his courses.
- \_\_\_ 9. Richard will be faced with many assignments he will find difficult to complete.
- \_\_\_ 10. He will often ask teachers for extra time in order to complete assignments.
- \_\_\_ 11. In a competitive testing situation, he will often "set the curve."
- \_\_\_ 12. He will find it easy understanding the concepts found in Psychology.
- \_\_\_ 13. Other students in Psychology will come to Richard for help in understanding material presented in class.
- \_\_\_ 14. In a choice between studying for an upcoming test or going out to enjoy himself, Ricahrd will go out.
- \_\_\_ 15. He will be eligible for membership in a honor society for students of Psychology.
- \_\_\_ 16. He will spend an excessive amount of time studying compared to other students in Psychology.
- \_\_\_ 17. Richard will be well known by the professors in the Psychology Department due to his excellent wo

## Social/Extracurricular Section

1. He will be one of the more popular students in the department.
2. His social skill may suffer due to an overemphasis on academic activities.
3. Richard will seek and obtain positions of leadership and responsibility.
4. Richard will find it easy to relate to other students.
5. Richard may get "carried away" with socializing to the detriment of his academic work.
6. Richard will be under excessive emotional stress during his graduate school years.
7. Richard will be uncomfortable at social gatherings.
8. His participation in social activities will enhance his personal development.
9. Richard will form few, if any, friendships during graduate school.
10. Richard will enjoy attending social gatherings.
11. He will be greatly involved in general student activities.
12. He will find himself isolated from other students.
13. Richard will have no trouble getting dates.
14. He will withdraw from all social life while in graduate school.
15. Richard will be considered an enjoyable person to be around.
16. Richard will find getting dates difficult.

## Post-College Section

1. Richard will graduate with honors.
2. Richard will be in great demand by various institutions shortly after his graduation.
3. Richard will leave no lasting impression on the field of Psychology.
4. He will be held in high esteem by his professional peers.
5. Due to his past academic performance, Richard will find it difficult to get employment in the field of Psychology.
6. As a professional, Richard will make important contributions to the field of Psychology.
7. He will find it difficult to adjust to the lifestyle of his professional peers.
8. As he begins to view his life in retrospect, Richard will be pleased that he chose Psychology as his career.
9. Richard will regret his choice of profession as time passes.
10. There is a possibility that Richard will fail to obtain a Ph.D.

APPENDIX B

COPY OF EXAMINERS' INSTRUCTIONS

## Instructions for Examiners

1. Wait until all subjects have entered (roughly 16).
2. If there are any non-white subjects (black, Indians, international, etc.) have them fill out a credit coupon and excuse them from the test session.
3. Have subjects sit in every other seat, starting from the front row.
4. Pass out credit coupons to subjects and have them fill out the coupons. After everyone has finished, collect the coupons.
5. Inform the subjects that they are about to receive the survey and should not touch them until told to do so. (Pass out the surveys face down, along with pencils.)
6. Read the following statement to the subjects:

"This survey concerns your opinion on the nature of graduate school life and its demands. Use your own judgment and please answer every item to the best of your ability. If you have any question as you fill out the survey, raise your hand and I will come to your seat and try to answer your question. Be sure to carefully read the instructions on page one. Remain silent while filling out the survey. After you have finished the form, turn it in to the examiner and you may leave."

VITA<sup>2</sup>

Archeater Houston

Candidate for the Degree of  
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