Construction and Initial Validation of the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS)

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The purpose of this investigation was to develop a conceptually grounded scale to assess cognitive aspects of color-blind racial attitudes. Five studies on the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS) with over 1,100 observations provide initial reliability and validity data. Specifically, results from an exploratory factor analysis suggest a 3-factor solution: Unawareness of Racial Privilege, Institutional Discrimination, and Blatant Racial Issues. A confirmatory factor analysis suggests that the 3-factor model is a good fit of the data and is the best of the competing models. The CoBRAS was positively related to other indexes of racial attitudes as well as 2 measures of belief in a just world, indicating that greater endorsement of color-blind racial attitudes was related to greater levels of racial prejudice and a belief that society is just and fair. Self-reported CoBRAS attitudes were sensitive to diversity training.

Over the past 25 years, psychologists have articulated theories and developed corresponding scales to assess modern racial attitudes, many of which have focused on racial prejudice. These new theories and corresponding scales have contributed to how psychologists understand and assess racial attitudes. Three of the most common theories used to describe racial attitudes are the interrelated conceptualizations of symbolic racism (McConahay & Hough, 1976), modern racism (McConahay, 1986), and aversive racism. These theories were developed to understand post–Civil Rights movement expressions of individual racism. They all underscore that racial prejudice is manifested in (a) negative attitudes toward racial and ethnic minority groups, primarily Blacks; (b) “ambivalence between feelings of nonprejudice or egalitarianism and those negative feelings”; and (c) “a tendency for people who aspire to a positive, egalitarian self-image to nevertheless show racial biases when they are unaware of how to appear nonbiased” (Jones, 1997, p. 130).

Of these three theories, modern racism has received the most empirical attention. According to this perspective, Whites who endorse modern racism believe that (a) racism against Blacks is a thing in the past; (b) Blacks are too pushy and demanding of their rights; (c) this pushiness results in the use of unfair tactics; and consequently, (d) the advances and gains Blacks have made are undeserved (McConahay, 1986). The scale designed to assess the theory, the Modern Racism Scale (MRS; McConahay, 1986), “has become a standard for measuring racial prejudice” (Jones, 1997, p. 127), with a number of studies using the MRS to identify levels of racism in experimental studies in social psychology (e.g., Monteith, Deneen, & Tooman, 1996; Reeves & Nagoshi, 1993; Wittenbrink & Henry, 1996).

McConahay (1986) perceptively noted that as society changes, so will race relations and the expressions of individual racism. Consequently, development of new items for the MRS, or even development of new theories and corresponding scales, will be necessary to address what McConahay has termed “ultramodern racism” (p. 123). It appears that the social climate and what are considered “acceptable” expressions of racial attitudes have changed somewhat over the past decade. As society has become increasingly multicultural, it is critical to examine attitudes toward a variety of racial and ethnic minority groups and not solely Blacks. Also, items on the MRS have become more reactive over the years (see, e.g., Fazio, Jackson, Dunton, & Williams, 1995; T. B. Smith, Roberts, & Smith, 1997). For example, T. B. Smith and his colleagues (1997) in a recent large-scale survey of White college students found that the students, on average, self-reported low modern racism attitudes as measured by the MRS. One interpretation is that...
the sample did not hold racially prejudiced views. Alternatively, one could argue that the measure was not sensitive to current expressions of racial attitudes.

The idea of color-blind racial attitudes has emerged in the literature as a promising theoretical concept characterizing new forms of racial attitude expressions. Although the color-blind racial concept is rooted in the law field and has been applied mainly to the Constitution, it has surfaced in the popular and scholarly discourse. For example, several non-Constitutional law books and an American Psychological Association pamphlet were recently published on the topic (American Psychological Association, 1997; Carr, 1997; Cose, 1997; Williams, 1997). Simply, color-blind racial attitudes refer to the belief that race should not and does not matter. The first part of this concept seems admirable; a reasonable person probably would not publicly argue that social and economic resources should be disproportionately available to specific racial groups. However, scholars have argued that the latter half of this perspective is problematic, citing that the continuance of racism makes it impossible to ignore the importance of race in people’s experiences; thus, race does matter (Helms, 1992; Jones, 1997; R. C. Smith, 1995; West, 1992). In addition to the social science research documenting the persistence of racism, a recent special issue of the Journal of Counseling & Development (Robinson & Ginter, 1999) archived the continuance of racism and its ill effects on the personal and professional lives of counselors.

The American Psychological Association (APA, 1997), in a pamphlet on color-blind racial attitudes, concluded that “research conducted for more than two decades strongly supports the view that we cannot be, nor should we be, color-blind” (p. 3). APA further provided a critique of the color-blind perspective arguing that a color-blind approach “ignores research showing that, even among well-intentioned people, skin color . . . figures prominently in everyday attitudes and behavior. Thus, to get beyond racism and other similar forms of prejudice, we must first take the differences between people into account” (p. 2). Plant and Devine (1998) found that although people may try to respond to racial stimuli without prejudice, they still maintain prejudicial beliefs.

Despite the increasing attention devoted to color-blind racial attitudes, there is a dearth of psychology-related empirical studies explicitly examining color-blind racial attitudes. In one of the earliest attempts to examine color-blind racial attitudes, Schofield (1986) used an ethnographic methodology to investigate the racial attitudes and climate of a school that had been desegregated. In this study, Schofield operationalized color-blind racial attitudes as “a point of view which sees racial and ethnic membership as irrelevant to the ways individuals are treated” (p. 232). She further contended that “taking cognizance of such group membership in decision making is perceived as illegitimate and likely to either lead to discrimination against the minority group or reverse-discrimination in its favor” (p. 232). Grounded in her qualitative findings, she identified three interrelated manifestations of a color-blind perspective: (a) viewing race as an invisible characteristic (e.g., refusing to notice racial group membership for fear of appearing prejudiced); (b) viewing race as a taboo topic (e.g., adhering to a perceived norm that talking about or referring to racial designators is impolite); and (c) viewing social life as a nexus of individual relations (e.g., individual circumstances, and not intergroup relations, mostly account for one’s social life).

Also using a qualitative methodology, Frankenberg (1993) found that the majority of White women she interviewed adopted a color-blind racial perspective at some point in their lives. She described this perspective as “a mode of thinking about race organized around an effort not to ‘see,’ or at any rate not to acknowledge, race differences [which is] the ‘polite’ language of race” (p. 142). In describing color-blind racial attitudes, she offered an alternative two-part term: color-evasion, or “emphasizing sameness as a way of rejecting the idea of white racial superiority” (p. 144), and its corollary, power-evasion, or the belief that everyone has the same opportunities to succeed and consequently “any failure not to achieve is therefore the fault of people of color themselves” (p. 144).

In the only quantitative study we were able to locate explicitly measuring color-blind racial attitudes, Carr (1997) examined the relations between color-blind racial attitudes and racism. Findings from his study with college students suggest that color-blind racial attitudes are related to racial prejudice and racist ideology, with self-identified color-blind perspective being related to greater endorsement of racism. The major limitation of this investigation was that color-blind racial attitudes were measured with a one-item scale.

Although it appears that adopting a color-blind racial perspective is conceptually related to racial prejudice or conservative racial attitudes, with notable exception (Carr, 1997), the empirical literature supporting this observation is almost nonexistent. One obstacle to this line of research is that there is no scale explicitly designed to measure the multidimensional aspects of color-blind racial attitudes. A psychometrically sound measure of color-blind racial attitudes would add to the counseling psychology literature in a number of ways. For example, an assessment of color-blind racial attitudes would allow researchers to investigate the relationship between racial attitudes in postaffirmative action and racial prejudice. Such a measure would also provide applied psychologists with a new outcome measure to evaluate the effectiveness of workshops or programming designed to increase racial understanding in university, work, and community settings. This is important considering the outcome of President Clinton’s Initiative on Race. In September 1998, the advisory board on this initiative reported that racism persists in the United States, impeding on personal relations and, moreover, on individuals’ ability to succeed educationally and economically. The board argued that the absence of knowledge about racism (i.e., color-blind racial perspective) plays a role in current racial divisions and inequity. Increasing public education efforts about race was thus offered as one of many ways to move forward in building a more equitable United States (President’s Initiative on Race, 1998). Applied psychologists could play a role in evaluating the effectiveness of such
education efforts, and a measure assessing color-blind racial attitudes seems especially appropriate.

The purpose of this investigation was to add to the growing literature on color-blind racial attitudes, by (a) constructing a scale to assess cognitive dimensions of color-blind racial attitudes and (b) providing initial validation and psychometric data on the scale. It is important to differentiate between color-blind racial attitudes and racism. Briefly, racism refers to the belief in racial superiority and also the structures of society, which create racial inequalities in social and political institutions; thus, racism consists of both ideological (belief) and structural (institutional) components (Thompson & Neville, 1999). On the other hand, color-blind racial attitudes has only an ideological component and refers to the denial of racial dynamics (i.e., the belief that ideological and structural racism does not exist); thus, color-blind racial attitudes does not necessarily reflect a belief in racial superiority, just an unawareness of the existence of racism.

Color-blind racial attitudes are a relatively undeveloped area in the field of psychology, and thus, it is important to outline the main assumptions we hold that serve as the foundation of our work. Specifically, on the basis of theoretical and empirical research the following assumptions guided the development of the scale: (a) racism exists on structural and ideological levels (Thompson & Neville, 1999); (b) racism creates a system of advantages for Whites, mainly White elite, and disadvantages for racial and ethnic minorities (cf. Thompson & Neville, 1999); (c) denial of these realities is the core component of color-blind racial attitudes; (d) people across racial groups can maintain a color-blind perspective; and (e) color-blind racial attitudes are cognitive in nature; they are part of a cognitive schema used to interpret racial stimuli.

General Method

Items were generated on the basis of Schofield’s (1986) and Frankenberg’s (1993) working definitions of color-blind racial attitudes and their corollaries, the interdisciplinary literature on color-blindness, consultation with experts on racial attitudes, and informal individual and group discussions with racially diverse undergraduate and graduate students as well as community people. We specifically included items to assess Frankenberg’s notions of power evasion (i.e., denial of structural racism) and color evasion (i.e., the belief in racial sameness). Initially, 17 items were written and each item was examined by a small research team consisting of one Black counseling psychology professor (a woman), one Chicana communication professor, and two Black doctoral students in counseling psychology (one woman and one man). To assess content validity, the original items were given to five experts in race–ethnic studies or psychological measurement. The experts rated each item on content appropriateness and clarity using a 5-point scale that ranged from 1 (not at all appropriate or clear) to 5 (very appropriate or clear). Items receiving ratings between 1 and 3 were reworded or dropped. On the basis of qualitative feedback from the experts, 2 items were deleted, 7 items reworded, and 11 items added. Three of the original content experts evaluated the revised 26-item scale once more on appropriateness and clarity. To help reduce potential response biases, half of the items were worded in a negative direction. Using a computer software program, we identified the reading level of the scale as slightly above 6th grade comprehension. To assess further the readability and clarity of the items, one primary and one secondary school teacher, a high school student, and a newspaper editor evaluated the scale. On the basis of feedback from the content experts and community persons, four items were reworded for clarification.

Study 1: Factor Structure and Initial Reliability Estimates

The purpose of Study 1 was to examine the initial factor structure of the preliminary 26-item (CoBRAS). We predicted that the CoBRAS would be multidimensional.

Method

Participants

Participants were 302 college students and community members (212 women, 86 men, and 4 people who did not include their gender) from the Midwest and West Coast. Participants ranged in age from 17 to 52, with a mean age of 20.57 years (SD = 8.56). The majority (81%) were White (n = 246); 15% were racial or ethnic minorities: African American or Black (n = 24), American Indian (n = 3), Asian American (n = 10), and Latino (n = 9). Four percent did not identify their racial or ethnic background or indicated “other.”

Procedure

The participants were primarily recruited from classes at two Midwestern universities, one private West Coast college, and one West Coast community college; all of the colleges and universities were predominantly White. Participants were also recruited from a West Coast community through various civic organizations. Instructors at the participating universities were asked to assist in data collection by administering the assessment packet (a consent form, the CoBRAS, and a demographic questionnaire) during class period to students interested in participating in the study. Specific civic organizations were identified in one community, and a researcher administered the assessment packet during the organizational meetings. Participants received the chance to enter their name into a drawing for one of three cash awards: $75, $50, and $25. There was an approximate 92% participation rate.

Results

A principal-components analysis was performed on the 26 items of the preliminary CoBRAS. Five factors met the Kaiser retention criterion (1958) of eigenvalues greater than 1.00, accounting for 56% of the variance; also, an examination of the scree plot suggested as many as five components were interpretable. The data were then reanalyzed specifying a five-, four-, three-, two-, and one-factor solution with both oblique and orthogonal rotations. Examination of the data suggested that a three-factor solution using an equimax
rotation yielded the most interpretable solution (see Table 1). This factor structure accounted for 45% of the variance and was preferred over the other solutions for two central reasons: (a) it was the most conceptually sound and (b) it produced the most robust factor structure, that is, items with stronger factor loadings. Twenty items loaded above .40 on only one of the three factors and thus were retained in the CoBRAS. In the two-, four-, and five-factor solutions, there was no clear conceptual difference between the factors, and there were very few and relatively weak item structures in the fourth and fifth factors of the latter two solutions.

The first factor accounted for 31% of the variance and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor loadings</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(16.) White people in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10.) Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(26.) Race plays an important role in who gets sent to prison.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(04.) Race plays a major role in the type of social services (such as type of health care or day care) that people receive in the U.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12.) Racial and ethnic minorities do not have the same opportunities as white people in the U.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01. Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(19.) White people are more to blame for racial discrimination than racial and ethnic minorities.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Social policies, such as affirmative action, discriminate unfairly against white people.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. White people in the U.S. are discriminated against because of the color of their skin.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. English should be the only official language in the U.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(07.) Due to racial discrimination, programs such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06. It is important that people begin to think of themselves as American and not African American, Mexican American or Italian American.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Immigrants should try to fit into the culture and values of the U.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>1.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension.</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(09.) Racism is a major problem in the U.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(21.) It is important for public schools to teach about the history and contributions of racial and ethnic minorities.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(15.) It is important for political leaders to talk about racism to help work through or solve society's problems.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Racism may have been a problem in the past, it is not an important problem today.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Item numbers in parentheses have been reverse scored. Unique factor loadings > .40 are in bold. Analysis is based on 282 observations. CoBRAS items range from 1–6. Total CoBRAS scores range from 20 to 120. Factor 1 and Factor 2 scores range from 7 to 42. Factor 3 scores range from 6 to 36. CoBRAS = Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale.
consisted of seven items (eigenvalue = 6.84). We named this factor Racial Privilege because the items loading highest on the factor referred to blindness of the existence of White privilege (e.g., “White people in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin”). We named the second factor, which accounted for an additional 8% of the variance (eigenvalue = 2.46), Institutional Discrimination because the majority of the seven items appeared to represent a limited awareness of the implications of institutional forms of racial discrimination and exclusion (e.g., “Social policies, such as affirmative action, discriminate unfairly against white people”). The third factor accounted for another 6% of the variance (eigenvalue = 1.84); we named this last factor Blatant Racial Issues because endorsement of the six items appeared to indicate unawareness to general, pervasive racial discrimination (e.g., “Social problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations”). The alpha coefficients for each of the three factors and the total score ranged in age from 14 to 88, with a mean age of 22.78 years (SD = 9.14). A little over two thirds of the participants were White (n = 397; 67%); almost one fifth of the participants were Black (n = 114; 19%); the remaining participants were Latino and.

Study 2: Further Examination of Factor Structure and Initial Validity Estimates

The purpose of Study 2 was to examine whether the factor structure obtained in Study 1 was the best factor structure of the competing models. A secondary purpose was to examine additional validity of the CoBRAS. Specifically, we were interested in determining whether the 20-item CoBRAS (a) was related to an outlook or belief that we live in a just world and (b) was not associated with social desirability. There is a conceptual link between color-blind racial attitudes and a belief in a just world; both concepts constitute a level of unawareness or ignorance of negative forces in society (e.g., racism or unfortunate incidents) and, consequently, embrace a “blame the victim” perspective in which people are blamed for their misfortunes. Thus, we hypothesized that higher CoBRAS scores would be significantly related to higher indexes of a belief-in-a-just-world perspective. In constructing the CoBRAS, we consciously excluded items that appeared obsolete or socially unacceptable; thus, we also hypothesized that the CoBRAS would not be significantly associated with indexes of social desirability. In addition, we were interested in examining potential gender and racial differences in response to the CoBRAS. On the basis of research suggesting that women are less prejudiced across a variety of social dimensions (Hoxter & Lester, 1994; Ponterotto et al., 1995; Qualls, Cox, & Schehr, 1992), we hypothesized that women on average would report less color-blind racial attitudes than men. Similarly, research suggests that racial minorities are more sensitive to racial prejudice (e.g., Ponterotto et al., 1995); thus, we also hypothesized that racial minorities would report significantly less color-blind racial attitudes than Whites.

Method

Participants

Participants were 594 college students or community members (304 women, 289 men, and one participant who did not include his or her gender) from the Midwest and West Coast. Participants ranged in age from 14 to 88, with a mean age of 22.78 years (SD = 9.14). A little over two thirds of the participants were White (n = 397; 67%); almost one fifth of the participants were Black (n = 114; 19%); the remaining participants were Latino and.

Table 2
CoBRAS Factor Means, Standard Deviations, and Alpha Coefficients by Gender and Race for Samples 1-4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample group</th>
<th>RP M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>ID M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>BRI M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>CoBRAS total M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample 1 (n = 282)</td>
<td>25.03</td>
<td>6.66</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>26.14</td>
<td>7.47</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>13.58</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>64.86</td>
<td>15.62</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women (n = 198)</td>
<td>25.24</td>
<td>7.03</td>
<td>25.01</td>
<td>7.80</td>
<td>13.08</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>63.36</td>
<td>15.43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men (n = 80)</td>
<td>24.50</td>
<td>7.41</td>
<td>25.79</td>
<td>8.09</td>
<td>14.72</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>66.00</td>
<td>19.48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (n = 238)</td>
<td>26.45</td>
<td>7.05</td>
<td>26.65</td>
<td>7.36</td>
<td>14.05</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>67.22</td>
<td>15.85</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Min. (n = 43)</td>
<td>19.63</td>
<td>6.98</td>
<td>18.56</td>
<td>6.02</td>
<td>11.09</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>49.28</td>
<td>12.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample 2 (n = 592)</td>
<td>28.85</td>
<td>6.23</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>20.19</td>
<td>6.78</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>18.26</td>
<td>6.03</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>67.30</td>
<td>11.83</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women (n = 300)</td>
<td>27.13</td>
<td>6.19</td>
<td>19.24</td>
<td>6.82</td>
<td>17.16</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>64.12</td>
<td>11.49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men (n = 285)</td>
<td>29.85</td>
<td>7.53</td>
<td>21.06</td>
<td>7.12</td>
<td>19.63</td>
<td>6.39</td>
<td>70.65</td>
<td>12.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (n = 397)</td>
<td>29.11</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>21.18</td>
<td>7.28</td>
<td>18.20</td>
<td>5.99</td>
<td>68.44</td>
<td>11.76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black (n = 114)</td>
<td>28.97</td>
<td>6.72</td>
<td>15.97</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>20.65</td>
<td>5.82</td>
<td>65.52</td>
<td>11.97</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino (n = 32)</td>
<td>25.75</td>
<td>6.39</td>
<td>22.00</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>14.50</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>62.25</td>
<td>11.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample 3 (n = 102)</td>
<td>25.03</td>
<td>7.03</td>
<td>22.86</td>
<td>6.09</td>
<td>13.29</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>61.72</td>
<td>14.97</td>
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<td>22.36</td>
<td>5.45</td>
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<td>23.29</td>
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<td>Men (n = 55)</td>
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Note. RP = Racial Privilege (scores range from 7-42); ID = Institutional Discrimination (scores range from 7-42); BRI = Blatant Racial Issues (scores range 6-36). CoBRAS = Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale.
Chicano (n = 32, 5%), Asian American (n = 12, 2%), American Indian (n = 5, 1%), or an unspecified racial or ethnic classification (n = 34, 6%).

Procedure

Almost half (48%, n = 283) of the participants were recruited at the same time and using the same procedures as in Study 1. The remaining (52%; n = 311) were recruited from a historically Black college (which is now predominantly White) and received course credit for participation. These students also completed the assessment packet (i.e., a consent form, the CoBRAS, demographic questionnaire, two belief-in-a-just-world measures, and a social desirability measure) during a class period; the participation rate was 98%.

Measures

Global Belief in a Just World Scale (GBJWS). The GBJWS (Lipkus, 1991) measures the extent to which individuals believe that the world is a just place. Items on this seven-item measure are rated on a 6-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree; e.g., "I feel that people get what they deserve"). Scores are summed and range from 7 to 42, with higher scores indicating a stronger belief in a just world. The GBJWS has been found to have acceptable internal consistency, .83 (Lipkus, 1991); the alpha coefficient for this study was comparable, .85. The GBJWS also has been found to significantly positively correlate with personal, interpersonal, and political justice; trust in institutions; and perceived sincerity in others, thus establishing criterion validity (Lipkus, 1991).

Multidimensional Belief in a Just World Scale (MBJWS). For the purposes of this study, we used only the sociopolitical subscale (5 items) of the MBJWS (Furnham & Procter, 1988). We were interested specifically in this subscale because we already had a measure of a global belief in a just world, and we wanted to assess belief in a just world attitudes specifically related to sociopolitical beliefs, as these attitudes are more closely conceptually linked to racial injustices (e.g., "In a free market economy, the only excuse for poverty can be laziness and lack of enterprise"). Responses to MBJWS items are rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree); thus, total summed scores range from 5 to 35, with higher scores indicating greater belief in the view that sociopolitical structure is just and fair. Cronbach’s alpha for this subscale was reported as .43 (Lipkus, 1991); the alpha coefficient was higher for this study (.66). Concurrent validity of this subscale is supported by a significant correlation with the GBJWS (.56) in this study.

Marlowe–Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MCSDS). Social desirability was assessed using a short version of the MCSDS (Reynolds, 1982). The MCSDS Form C was used and consists of 13 true–false items (e.g., “I sometimes feel resentful when I don’t get my way”). Total scores are summed, with higher scores reflecting greater social desirability. The reported reliability of this form has been acceptable (.76); the KR-20 for this sample was .63. The MCSDS has been found to be significantly related to the Edwards Social Desirability Scale (Reynolds, 1982) and to be inversely correlated with such constructs as appearance consciousness, and self-reflectiveness, social anxiety, and loneliness (Watson, Milliron, & Morris, 1995).

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The means for the factors indicate that the participants reported moderate levels of color-blind racial attitudes (see Table 2). All intercorrelations among the CoBRAS factors were significant and ranged from .42 to .54.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with robust maximum likelihood estimation was conducted on the 20 items of the CoBRAS, using the LISREL 8.20 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1998). Comparisons between the three-factor oblique model identified in Study 1, a global factor model, and a two-factor conceptual model were made using a variety of statistics, including a chi-square statistic, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), Akaike information criterion (AIC), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), and adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI). Difference between chi-square statistics were also computed to test for an improvement in fit from the two-factor model over the global factor model and from the three-factor model over the two-factor model using the likelihood ratio or chi-square difference test (Bollen, 1989). Across several indexes, it appears the three-factor oblique model was the best fit compared with the competing models, primarily because it had the following lowest statistics: $c^2$, $c^2/df$, AIC, and RMSEA (see Table 3). Results also suggest

| Table 3: Intercorrelations Among CoBRAS Factors and GBJW, MBJWS-SS, QDI, and MRS in Studies 2 and 4 |
| Study 2 | Study 4 |
| CoBRAS | GBJW | MBJWS-SS | MCSDS | QDI-1 | QDI-2 | QDI-3 | QDI-T | MRS |
| Factor 1 | .49** | .61** | .12 | .64** | .25** | .25** | .56** | .36** |
| Factor 2 | .39** | .34** | .03 | .73** | .37** | .08 | .57** | .39** |
| Factor 3 | .46** | .46** | .20** | .64** | .29** | .34** | .60** | .55** |
| Total | .53** | .61** | .13 | .83** | .39** | .25** | .71** | .52** |

Note. GBJW = Global Belief in a Just World; MBJWS-SS = Multidimensional Belief in a Just World—Sociopolitical subscale; MCSDS = Marlowe–Crowne Social Desirability Scale; QDI-1 = Quick Discrimination Index: Cognitive/Behavioral Attitudes Toward Racial Diversity, Personal/Affective Involvement With Racial Diversity, Gender-Based Attitudes, Total; MRS = Modern Racism Scale. CoBRAS = Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale.

**p < .005.
that the three-factor model was a good fit of the data as indicated by the GFI (.90) and the AGFI (.87), which were above .85 (as suggested by Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). In addition, results of the differences in the chi-square statistic test indicated that the model was the best fit of the data, \( p < .001 \). Using the likelihood ratio difference test, the \( \chi^2 \) difference statistics for 2 versus 1 factor and 3 versus 2 factor indicated that the model was the best fit of the data, \( p < .05 \). In addition, results of the differences in the chi-square statistic above .85 (as suggested by Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). In Table 4, the GFI (.90) and the AGFI (.87), which were also significant, Wilks’s \( \Lambda = .87 \), \( F(1, 1034) = 12.43, p < .001 \). Follow-up univariate tests and mean examinations revealed that Latino participants reported statistically lower Racial Privilege (\( M = 25.75, SD = 6.39 \)) and Blatant Racial Issues (\( M = 14.50, SD = 4.52 \)) scores than both Black (\( M = 28.97, SD = 6.72 \); \( M = 20.65, SD = 5.82 \)) and White participants (\( M = 29.11, SD = 6.06 \); \( M = 18.20, SD = 5.90 \)). White participants also reported significantly lower Blatant Racial Issues scores than Black participants. Conversely, Black participants reported significantly lower Institutional Discrimination scores (\( M = 15.97, SD = 2.97 \)) than both Latino (\( M = 22.01, SD = 5.08 \)) and White participants (\( M = 21.18, SD = 7.28 \)).

Study 3: Examination of Test–Re-test Reliability

The purpose of this Study 3 was to provide additional reliability estimates, specifically test–retest reliability. We predicted that the CoBRAS would be stable over time.

**Method**

**Participants**

Participants were 102 college students (74 women and 28 men) attending a large, land grant, predominantly White university in the Midwest. The overwhelming majority of the participants were White (90%) and were undergraduate students (83%). The remaining students were racial minorities (i.e., 3% biracial; 2% from each of the following groups: Black, Native American, and Latino; and 1% Asian American) and were post-B.A. graduate or professional students (17%).

**Procedure**

Participants were recruited from a large section of an undergraduate teacher development program (\( n = 91 \)) and a small graduate-level counseling psychology class (\( n = 11 \)). All of the students (100%) attending class on the first day of administration signed a consent form and completed the CoBRAS and a brief demographic

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Model*</th>
<th>( df )</th>
<th>( \chi^2 )</th>
<th>( \chi^2/df )</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
<th>AIC</th>
<th>Hoelter N</th>
<th>GFI</th>
<th>AGFI</th>
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<td>6.20</td>
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<td>167</td>
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<td>3.10</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.88</td>
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</table>

*Note.* RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; AIC = Akaike information criterion; GFI = goodness-of-fit index; AGFI = adjusted goodness-of-fit index. CoBRAS = Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale.

*For the independence model, \( \chi^2(190) = 2,639 \).
questionnaire in the beginning of class period. Participants' names were entered into a drawing to win a $20 cash award. Approximately 80% of these students were present in class to complete the retest administration 2 weeks after the first administration of the CoBRAS.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The means for the CoBRAS subscales indicate that the participants, on average, reported moderate levels of color-blind racial attitudes (see Table 2).

Reliability Statistic

The 2-week test–retest reliability estimate for the Racial Privilege and Institutional Discrimination subscales was an acceptable .80 for both. The reliability estimate for the Blatant Racial Issues subscale was .34, and the CoBRAS total was .68.

Criterion-Related Validity

The group difference method was used again to further establish criterion validity. Contrary to findings in Study 2, results of the MANOVA with sex as the independent variable and the three CoBRAS factors as the dependent variable were not significant. An analysis to explore potential race differences was not performed because of the very small number of racial and ethnic minority participants ($n = 10$ across all groups).

Study 4: Further Examination of Concurrent Validity

The purpose of this Study 4 was to provide additional estimates of concurrent validity. We were particularly interested in examining the relationship between the CoBRAS and other indexes of racial attitudes, especially racial prejudice and discrimination. There is a dearth of literature on the conceptual or empirical relationship between racial prejudice and color-blind racial attitudes. We are suggesting that they are related but distinct concepts. We hypothesized that the CoBRAS is related to indexes of racial prejudice and discrimination, such that higher CoBRAS scores will be related to greater levels of racial intolerance. We were also interested in exploring the association between color-blind racial attitudes and other types of discrimination, specifically gender discrimination.

Method

Participants

Participants were 145 individuals (89 women, 55 men, and 1 individual who did not indicate his or her gender), primarily college students and community members, from the Midwest and West Coast. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 85, with a mean age of 31.37 years ($SD = 16.88$). The majority of the participants were White ($n = 102$; 70%); 30% were racial or ethnic minorities: Black ($n = 3$), American Indian ($n = 3$), Asian American ($n = 4$), and Latino ($n = 28$); and the remaining 3% ($n = 4$) indicated an unspecified racial or ethnic classification.

Procedure

Participants were recruited at the same time and using the same procedures as in Study 1, and consequently, the participation rate was also 92%. However, in addition to a consent form, the CoBRAS, and a demographic questionnaire, participants completed two measures of social discrimination.

Measures

Quick Discrimination Index (QDI). Attitudes toward racial diversity and women's equality were measured using the QDI (Ponterotto et al., 1995). The QDI consists of 30 Likert-type items rated on a 5-point scale that ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The QDI consists of three subscales: (a) general cognitive attitudes about racial diversity and multiculturalism (9 items; e.g., "In the past few years there has been too much attention directed toward multicultural or minority issues in education"); (b) affective attitudes regarding racial diversity related to one's personal life (7 items; e.g., "I feel I could develop an intimate relationship with someone from a different race"); and (c) general attitudes regarding women's equity issues (7 items; e.g., "Generally speaking, men work harder than women"). Total scores are summed and range from 30 to 150 for the total measure, with higher scores indicating more positive attitudes toward multicultural issues and women's equality.

The QDI has been found to have acceptable reliability, with coefficient alphas ranging from .88 (total scale, General/Cognitive) to .65 (Women's Equality; Ponterotto et al., 1995). The QDI has been shown to significantly correlate with the NeS Racism Scale and with two factors of the Multicultural Counseling Awareness Scale. In establishing criterion validity for this scale, significant gender and race effects were also found, with (a) women generally scoring higher than men and (b) Blacks and Hispanics scoring higher than Whites (Ponterotto et al., 1995). Coefficient alphas for this study ranged from .47 (Women's Equality) to .85 (General/Cognitive).

Criterion-Related Validity

The Modern Racism Scale (MRS). The MRS (McConahay, 1986) was developed to measure the extent to which an individual holds negative attitudes toward Blacks. This seven-item measure is rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale that ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), for example, "Blacks are getting too demanding in their push of equal rights." Scores range from 7 to 35, with higher scores indicating greater levels of racial prejudice toward Blacks. Coefficient alphas for this scale ranged from .76 to .79, and measures of test–retest reliability have ranged from .72 to .93 (McConahay, 1986). Among college samples, coefficient alphas have ranged from .81 to .86 (McConahay, 1983). The coefficient alpha for this study was within the range of previously reported internal consistency values (.83). Convergent validity of the MRS has been demonstrated through its positive correlation with the Old-Fashioned Racism Scale (McConahay, 1986).

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The means for the CoBRAS subscales indicate that the participants, on average, reported moderate levels of color-blind racial attitudes (see Table 2). All intercorrelations...
among the CoBRAS factors were significant and ranged from .39 to .50. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from .70 (BRI) to .86 (CoBRAS total).

Concurrent Validity

The intercorrelations among the CoBRAS factors, QDI, and MRS were examined to provide additional estimates of concurrent validity. Results indicate significant correlations among the scales (see Table 2). The correlations between the CoBRAS and the QDI ranged from -.25 (between the CoBRAS total score and the QDI-2/Women's Equality) to -.83 (between the CoBRAS total score and QDI-1/General/Cognitive). The correlations between the CoBRAS and the MRS ranged from .36 to .55.

Criterion-Related Validity

The group difference method was used again to further establish criterion validity. Results of the MANOVA with race (White vs. racial and ethnic minority) as the independent variable and the three CoBRAS factors as the dependent variable was significant, Wilks's $\Lambda = .72, F(3, 117) = 14.91, p < .001$. Follow-up univariate tests and mean examinations revealed that compared with racial and ethnic minorities, Whites scored significantly higher only on Institutional Discrimination, $F(1, 119) = 30.79, p < .001$. The MANOVA with sex as the independent variable was also significant, Wilks's $\Lambda = .89, F(3, 132) = 5.23, p < .005$. Similar to Study 2, follow-up univariate tests and mean examinations indicated that men scored significantly higher than women on Institutional Discrimination, $F(1, 134) = 5.99, p < .05$, and Blatant Racial Issues, $F(1, 134) = 12.60, p < .001$.

Study 5: Sensitivity to an Intervention

In Study 5 we examined whether color-blind racial attitudes as measured by the CoBRAS were sensitive to a multicultural training intervention. We hypothesized that undergraduate students would report a statistically significant decrease in color-blind racial attitudes (CoBRAS scores) after completing multicultural training instruction.

Method

Participants

Forty-five students, initially enrolled in a year-long multicultural training course, completed the CoBRAS at the beginning of fall quarter. Twenty-eight of these 45 students enrolled in the second portion of the course offered in winter quarter and completed the CoBRAS at the end of the quarter. The majority of the final sample of participants were women ($n = 21$), with considerably fewer men ($n = 7$); the mean age of participants was 19.57 years ($SD = 1.50$). Participants represented a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds, including Black ($n = 7$), Asian American ($n = 7$), Chicano or Hispanic ($n = 5$), White ($n = 3$), Native American ($n = 1$), and multiracial ($n = 5$). Participants also were enrolled in college at varying levels, including first year ($n = 7$), second year ($n = 7$), third year ($n = 6$), fourth year ($n = 5$), and fifth year ($n = 2$).

Program

Participants were part of a year-long diversity training course designed for undergraduate students who are or aspire to be peer leaders on campus at a major West Coast university. Students were recruited by student affairs staff, academic faculty, peer academic advisers, friends, and by distribution of flyers. Undergraduate students enrolled in three successive courses that included lectures on multicultural issues, weekly 2-hr discussion groups, community internships with culturally diverse populations, and program development and implementation. The course material for each quarter was designed to build on the previous quarter. For example, fall quarter began with interdisciplinary lectures on topical discussion groups on multicultural issues, and winter quarter proceeded with an emphasis on cultural self-awareness through racially mixed experiential groups and community internships. As part of a large assessment packet, students completed a consent form, the CoBRAS, and a demographic questionnaire.

Results

The means at the pretest administration were markedly lower than those reported in the previous three studies: Racial Privilege ($M = 22.82, SD = 5.29$), Institutional Discrimination ($M = 17.79, SD = 5.67$), Blatant Racial Issues ($M = 9.61, SD = 3.42$), total ($M = 50.21, SD = 10.76$). A repeated measures analysis of variances (ANOVAs) was performed to test for significant differences in the total CoBRAS score. Results suggest a statistically significant decrease in CoBRAS total scores, $M = 50.21$ versus 45.71; $F(1, 27) = 5.27, p = .03$. To examine further whether the training had an impact on one or more of the factors, three repeated measures ANOVAs on the three CoBRAS factors were performed; the only significant effect was found for Racial Privilege, $M = 22.82$ versus 20.04; $F(1, 27) = 7.33, p < .01$.

General Discussion

In the present series of studies, we provided evidence for the development and validity of the CoBRAS. It appears that the CoBRAS is reliable and has initial construct, concurrent, discriminant, and criterion-related validity. The instrument evidenced acceptable internal consistency across the studies and yielded an acceptable split-half reliability estimate and for the most part acceptable 2-week test–retest reliability. Construct validity was supported by results from exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses suggesting an interpretable three-factor solution. The first two factors of the CoBRAS, Racial Privilege and Institutional Discrimination, are consistent with Frankenberg's (1993) notion of power evasion (i.e., denial of racism) described earlier. The findings from the studies suggest that the construct of power evasion is multidimensional. Specifically, we found two separate dimensions of power evasion, including denial (or evasion) of (a) White privileges in society and (b) the existence of racism and rejection of the belief that social policies are needed to eradicate the negative consequences of institutional forms of racism.

Although we included items on the preliminary 26-item CoBRAS to assess aspects of Frankenberg's (1993) color-

COLOR-BLIND RACIAL ATTITUDES SCALE (CoBRAS) 67
evasion (i.e., belief in racial sameness), for example, “The U.S. is a melting pot in which many cultures have blended into one American culture,” a factor consistent with this component was not uncovered. Additionally, almost all of these items were deleted from the final version of the CoBRAS because of low factor loadings. We did, however, uncover a third factor related to denial of blatant racial discrimination. The items in this factor are more conspicuous and assess more overt denial of the pervasiveness of racism (e.g., “Racism may have been a problem in the past, it is not an important problem today”). The lower relative mean scores on the Blatant Racial Issues subscale, compared with the other two subscales, support this observation.

The CoBRAS showed good concurrent validity with two measures of racial prejudice (MRS and QDI), suggesting, as hypothesized, higher levels of color-blind racial attitudes are significantly associated with greater racial prejudice. Thus, there appears to be a conceptual and empirical link between color-blind racial attitudes and individual racism or racial prejudice as articulated by theorists such as McConahay (1986) and as exemplified by the significant positive relationship between the CoBRAS and the MRS. However, the concept of color-blind racial attitudes appears to differ from racism in several important ways. Most notably, to adopt a color-blind racial perspective in and of itself may not indicate embracing negative attitudes toward racial and ethnic minorities; rather, color-blind racial attitudes imply embracing an inaccurate or distorted view of not only racial and ethnic minorities but also race relations. Similar to individual racism, the corollaries and consequences of color-blind racial attitudes, however, may unwittingly promote racial discrimination (Jones, 1997). Similar to Ponterotto et al. (1995), we also found that racial attitudes, and in this case CoBRAS scores, were significantly associated with greater gender intolerance. Taken together, these findings provide some initial support suggesting that color-blind racial attitudes are related to a conceptual framework in which people interpret social stimuli. In this case, we found that denial of the existence of racism and racial privilege (an interpretive framework) was related not only to racial prejudice but also to gender prejudice. Clearly, more research is needed to further explicate the relations between the denial of various social group dominance and actual prejudicial beliefs.

Concurrent validity was also supported with the significant relations among CoBRAS and the belief in a just world measures. As hypothesized, higher color-blind racial attitudes were related to greater belief in a just world. That is, we found that stronger beliefs in color-blind racial attitudes were associated with stronger beliefs that we live in a just world that is fair and, consequently, individuals get their just desserts; people are rewarded on merit alone and the circumstances of one’s predicament have nothing to do with social structures or circumstances. This relationship was found for general belief in a just world and also belief in a just world as related to social relations. Also, the CoBRAS does not seem to be strongly associated with social desirability (the maximum amount of variance accounted for was 4% on one of the factors).

The consistent gender and racial group differences obtained in Studies 2 and 4 provide support for criterion-related validity. First, findings were consistent with a body of literature suggesting that women on average are more sensitive to social injustices than their male counterparts (e.g., Ponterotto et al., 1995; Sidanius, Pratto, & Brief, 1995). It may be that women on average are sensitized to institutional discrimination on the basis of sex and, thus, may be more aware of the existence of other types of discrimination, such as racism. It is important to note that there were no significant gender differences in Study 3. The nature of the sample may help to explain this finding, as the overwhelming majority of participants were preparing to be school teachers. Perhaps school teachers across genders are similar in their racial outlook. Second, the results suggest that Blacks and Latinos, on average, evidenced less color-blind racial attitudes than Whites on most CoBRAS subscales; this was especially true for Latinos. However, in Studies 1 and 2, Whites did not score significantly lower on the Blatant Racial Issues subscale.

Results from Study 5 provide preliminary data suggesting that CoBRAS scores are sensitive to real world multicultural interventions and provide further validity of the CoBRAS. Specifically, it appears that total CoBRAS scores are sensitive to the intervention, with Racial Privilege scores accounting for the unique difference. The Institutional Discrimination and Blatant Racial Issues scores were not sensitive to the educational experience. This could be explained in part by the below average scores on both Factors 2 (Institutional Discrimination) and 3 (Blatant Racial Issues); thus, a floor effect could have been operating. These scores may have been lower than for participants in the other three studies because these participants volunteered to participate in a program designed to train students to be peer leaders on a racially diverse campus. Thus, these students were explicitly interested in and committed to diversity. Also, unlike in the other samples, the overwhelming majority of these participants were racial and ethnic minorities. Additional studies investigating the sensitivity of the CoBRAS to other multicultural training opportunities would help to provide further documentation in this area.

The development and initial validation of the CoBRAS is an important beginning step in assessing the relatively understudied construct of color-blind racial attitudes. However, there are limitations of the current investigation, in addition to those listed above, that restrict the conclusions regarding the CoBRAS. Although two of the three CoBRAS subscales appeared to be stable across a 2-week period, the test–retest reliability for the Blatant Racial Issues subscale was not optimal. This finding could be explained in part by the fact that unbeknownst to the researchers, the large undergraduate class from which the majority of participants were sampled had a 1-hr prejudice reduction seminar between the assessment periods. It may be that increased awareness about general and blatant forms of racial discrimination resulted from this brief intervention and, consequently, helps explain the lower reliability coefficient for this subscale.

In designing the study, we were primarily interested in
establishing initial validity. As part of our efforts, we wanted to examine potential racial and gender group differences on the CoBRAS; we found such differences. However, with our current data set we are unable to determine whether these group mean differences reflect structural differences; that is, we are uncertain if there is factorial invariance across these groups. The fact that we recruited from only two general areas in the United States may also limit the generalizability of our results.

Although it is critical for future researchers to explore whether the CoBRAS factor structure is similar for various populations (e.g., specific racial groups, community people, and working class and poor people), initial insights about racial group differences can be gleaned from the current investigation. For example, findings consistently suggested that racial and ethnic minorities, on average, reported lower overall color-blind racial attitudes. The function and consequences of adopting higher color-blind racial attitudes may be conceptually (not necessarily structurally) different for racial and ethnic minorities and Whites. For Whites, adopting a color-blind perspective may help to protect against recognizing racial inequalities in society and thus help to alleviate any conflict or dissonance that may arise from (a) believing that the United States is a country built on the principles of liberty and egalitarianism and (b) acknowledging that racism and racial inequality are present in the United States. This denial or obviousness may foster inaction, which in turn helps to preserve the privileges many Whites, especially White elite, gain from the current system (Frankenberg, 1993).

On the other hand, adoption of a color-blind perspective by racial and ethnic minorities may suggest that instead of preserving one’s privileges, one may be contributing to one’s own oppression. Drawing on the Marxist intellectual tradition, Jost and Banaji (1994) have described this phenomenon as false consciousness or “holding false beliefs that are contrary to one’s personal or social interest and which thereby contribute to the maintenance of the disadvantaged position of the self or the group” (p. 3). Limited awareness of racial discrimination may prevent people from developing proper defenses to deal with a potentially hostile environment (Jones, 1997) and, moreover, may prevent people from actively working to change and transform the structures (Steiner, 1975). Clearly, more empirical research is needed to identify the meaning and consequences of color-blind racial attitudes for various populations. In addition to quantitatively examining factorial invariance across specific groups, it is also important to qualitatively explore potential differences. Of particular interest would be to conduct interviews with individuals who score both high and low on the CoBRAS within specific racial groups, providing an opportunity to further explore internal constructions of race and racial dynamics.

Counseling psychologists can also begin to explore the concept of color-blind racial attitudes in applied work. For example, the CoBRAS could be used as a self-assessment tool in multicultural counseling courses. Although we did not examine the relationship between the CoBRAS and multicultural counseling competencies (MCC) per se, the notion of color-blind racial attitudes is theoretically consistent with MCC in that it assesses a specific component of MCC (i.e., one’s knowledge about the existence of racism). The CoBRAS could also be used as an outcome measure to help evaluate the effectiveness of multicultural training and intervention efforts in schools and community settings.

References


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