

Presenting Information About White Privilege and Systemic Racism: Message vs. Messenger

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Abstract

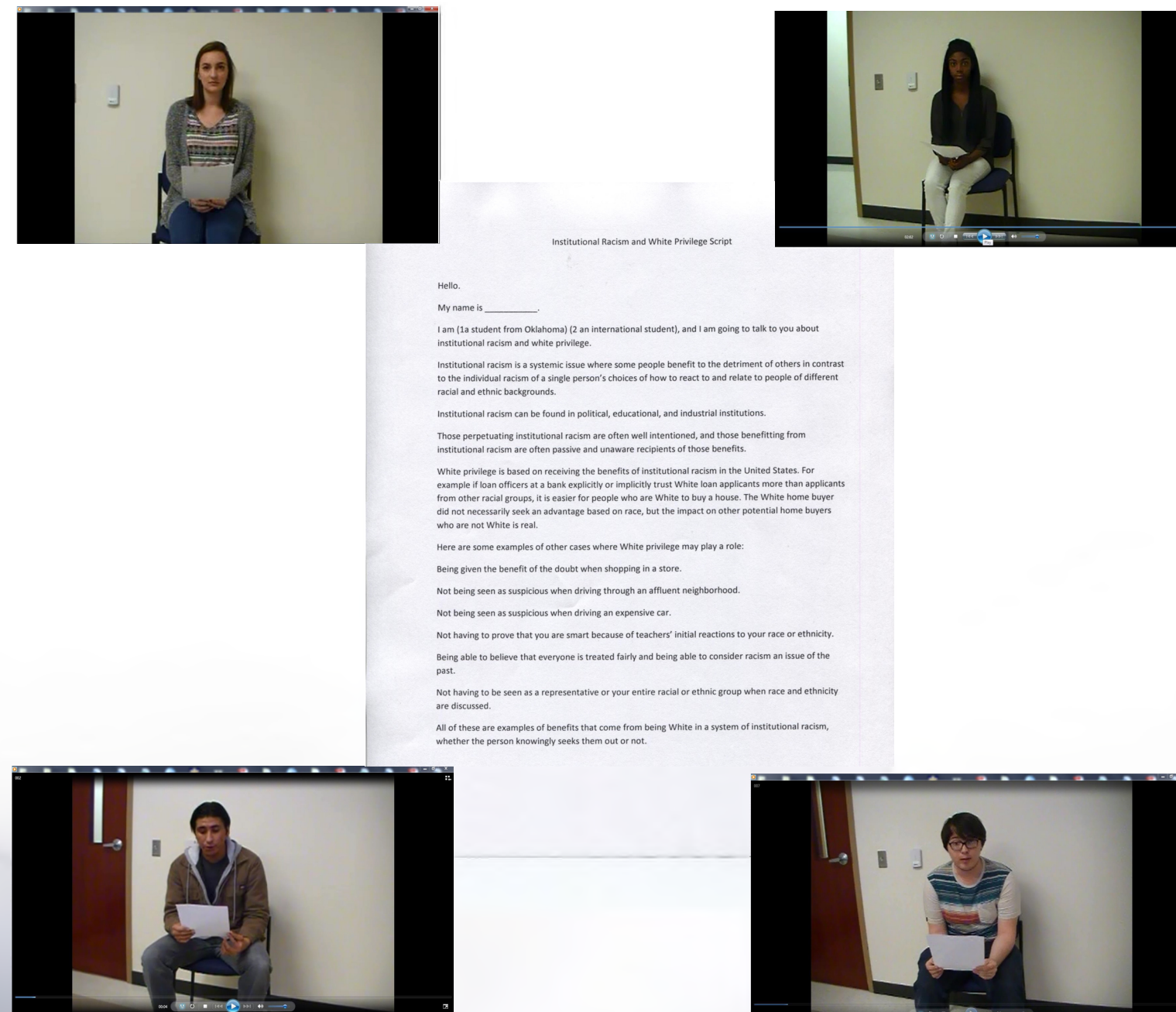
In our study, we found evidence for some effect on how students perceive information about systemic racism and White privilege based on the perceived identity of the presenter.

- Introduction
 - American audiences are continually presented with information regarding racially and gender driven discrimination.
 - With inspiration drawn from the Battle, Hill, and Zorwick (SWPA 2015) research, and contemporary cross-racial violence capturing the nation's attention, we were driven to examine the ideas young people had about White privilege and systematic racism as defined by Sue and Sue (2012).
 - We wanted to know if our collective perception regarding this information is changed when the presenter's race, gender, or nationality changes.

- Methods
 - Participants
 - 146 General Psychology students
 - 69% female
 - 66.4% European American
 - Mean Age of 19; Modal Age of 18

- Materials
 - Materials for this study consisted of 8 short videos of students presenting information on White privilege and systemic racism, a demographic questionnaire, and a survey about the information.

- Procedures
 - Four students- two students of European decent (one male and one female) and two students of non-European descent (again one male and one female) were filmed presenting scripted information.
 - Each student filmed the script twice, once identifying themselves as American and once identifying themselves as an international student.
 - First, the participants were given a demographics questionnaire, then shown a video condition, and finally given a survey concerning how they felt about the film's content and how it affected the world around them



Results

- Outcomes were explored based on presenters' racial identity, gender, and nationality.
- There were no main effects or interactions for the presenters' concerns/issues; however, there were significant results for the other three outcome variables.
- For the question of whether the presentation was informative, there was a significant main effect of the presenters' gender ($F(1, 7)=8.88, p=.003$).
- For the question of whether the presenter changed the participant's view of race in society, there was a significant interaction between the presenter's race and gender ($F(1, 7)=5.50, p=.02$).
- For the question of whether the presenter did a good job explaining the concept, there was a main effect of the presenter's race ($F(1, 7)=5.21, p=.02$).

Discussion

- The results suggest that there is a significant relationship between the gender of the person providing information and how informative the presentation is perceived to be.
- The perceived race of the presenter predicted how well the participants felt the information was explained
- Finally the combination of the presenter's gender and race predicted the experienced impact on view of race in society.
- These results suggest that there is an underlying racial and gender-based privilege that translates to students' willingness to accept information about privilege.

