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In-group implicit prejudice against Mexican Americans in the Rio Grande Valley

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IN-GROUP IMPLICIT PREJUDICE AGAINST MEXICAN AMERICANS
IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY

A Thesis

by

CHRISTELLE FABIOLA GARZA

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Texas-Pan American
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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May 2011

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ABSTRACT

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The existence of in-group implicit prejudice against persons of Mexican origin was examined. Implicit refers to cognitive processes that the individual is unaware. Implicit attitudes are associations between social targets and positive or negative feelings that are passively learned from the environment. The measure we used to assess implicit prejudice was the Implicit Association Test. We also examined acculturation using the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans (Flores-Niemann et al., 1999). Family values, assessed using the Cultural Values Scale (Unger, et al., 2002), and skin tone defined by light or dark complexion using a Photovolt 577 reflectance meter, were also examined as predictors of implicit prejudice. Results support our hypothesis that some Mexican Americans will demonstrate some in-group implicit prejudice. We also found a negative correlation between family values and in-group implicit prejudice as hypothesized. We found no significant relation between in-group implicit prejudice and acculturation levels or skin tone.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to all of you who believed in me and encouraged me every day to continue working toward my dreams, one step at a time. To Alfonso, my best friend and husband, who had always been there for me with the right advice for each situation; you had encouraged me to keep growing professionally and personally. Thank you for all your help and for being there in good and bad moments. To my mom and dad, who see part of them reflected on me and taught me to work hard and never give up; and to Luis Carlos, my brother, who supports me and cares for me. Thank you all for your love.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Prejudice

Over one-third of the United States population consists of minority group members. The largest minority groupings are African and Hispanic Americans, each making up more than 10% of the population. Hispanic Americans are also the fastest growing minority grouping, with continued growth expected in the future due to immigration and high birth rates. Projections indicate that by 2050 one out of every four Americans will be Hispanic (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004).

Race/ethnic prejudice is a problem experienced by all American minority groupings. Prejudice (literally to “pre-judge”) is considered to have two elements: (a) an adverse judgment or opinion; and b) formation without knowledge or examination of the facts (Gasquoine, 2008). Although mostly applied to race/ethnic group members, prejudice can include irrational suspicions or hatred of any social grouping (e.g. the mentally ill, religious groups).

There exists a strong contemporary social norm within the United States against behaving in a prejudicial manner towards minorities (Shelton, Richeson, & Salvatore, 2005). Due to this social norm, modern behavioral manifestations of race/ethnic prejudice are considered to be subtle and are known as racial microaggressions. These are, “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that

communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to a target person or group” (D. W. Sue et al., 2007, p. 273). Microaggressions occur in three forms: (a) microassaults can be verbal or non-verbal derogatory expressions made with the intention to hurt someone else by name-calling or discriminatory actions. These are referred to as “old fashion” racism and are commonly known to the perpetrator (e.g., discouraging interracial interaction); (b) microinsults are subtle forms of communication that convey rudeness and degrade a person’s racial identity. The perpetrator is usually unaware that s/he is causing insult, but there is a hidden offensive message (e.g., a minority employee is asked how did s/he get the job); and (c) microinvalidations that exclude or nullify a minority person’s qualifications, thoughts, or feelings (e.g., complementing a minority member for speaking good English, or being told by a white person that a racist experience was not an important reason to feel offended).

Explicit vs. Implicit prejudice

In the past, measurement of psychological concepts like prejudice was limited to self-report questionnaires, semantic differential scales, and “feeling” thermometers. The use of such explicit measures has several limitations. A person’s tendency to present themselves as non-prejudiced, socially “correct”, good citizens may prevent the open expression of race/ethnic prejudice (Katz & Hass, 1988). Responses may be influenced by personal motivation, social desirability, and variable understanding of the questions by participants (Cunningham, Preacher, & Banaji, 2001). These limitations have prompted the development of new methods that can assess attitudes and beliefs that reside outside conscious awareness and control, known as implicit measures (Cunningham, Preacher, & Banaji, 2001). It is important to differentiate between implicit and explicit measures of attitudes.

Explicit refers to cognitive processes of which an individual is aware. They are intentional, conscious, and require effort. They can be measured by traditional self-report questionnaires (Akrami & Ekehammar, 2005). *Implicit* refers to cognitive processes of which the individual is unaware (Stewart, Von Hippel, & Radvansky, 2009). According to theories of implicit social cognition, implicit attitudes are associations between social targets and positive or negative feelings that are passively learned from the environment (Banaji, 2001; Banaji & Dasgupta, 1998; Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2002; Uhlmann, Dasgupta, Ekgueta, Greenwald, & Swanson, 2002). They are assessed by using indirect measures that help avoid response biases and other problems associated with direct reports (Fazio & Olson, 2003; Gawronski, LeBel, & Peters, 2007), and problems such as social desirability (Aberson, Shoemaker, & Tomolillo, 2004). One indirect measure of prejudice is the Implicit Association Test (IAT; Lane, Banaji, Nosek, & Greenwald, 2007).

Research by Devine (1989) suggests that stereotypes, unlike personal beliefs, are culturally shared, and automatic and this causes implicit and explicit measures of prejudice to be disassociated. Fazio, Jackson, Dunton, and Williams (1995) found dissociation between measures of implicit and explicit prejudice, but reported a relationship between explicit measures such as the participants' Modern Racism Scale scores (McConahay, 1986) and their motivation to control prejudice reactions. Dovidio, Kawakami, Johnson, Johnson, and Howard (1997) results also found no association between implicit and explicit prejudice.

This research suggests a lack of association between implicit and explicit attitudes, but one would expect a positive correlation due to their common root in people's personal and cultural experiences and socialization history (Dovidio et al., 1997; Hofmann, Gawronski, Gschwendner, Lee, & Schmitt, 2004), or based on the belief that implicit attitudes are

internalized explicit attitudes (Fazio & Olson, 2002). The intent of this research was to explore the existence of in-group implicit prejudice against people of Mexican origin. The issue of implicit in-group prejudice was explored by investigating the contribution of certain variables (acculturation, family values, and skin tone) to the expression of implicit prejudice.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Acculturation

Acculturation is a phenomenon that results when groups of individuals from different cultures come into continuous firsthand contact, resulting in changes to original cultural patterns of either or both groups (Flores-Niemann, Romero, Arredondo, & Rodriguez, 1999).

Acculturation levels in Mexican origin adolescents might be an important cause of conflict with their parents, especially for female adolescents who expect more freedom than their traditional-minded parents will allow. Couples of ethnic interracial marriages combining Anglo and Hispanic cultures may confront problems due to the level of acculturation and the amount of permissibility they expect in their marriage (Romero & Roberts, 1998).

According to the bilinear acculturation by Berry (1979), a person can become highly acculturated and maintain allegiance to his/her traditional culture at the same time. According to this model individuals can be classified into four categories according to their degree of identification with mainstream and minority culture: integration (identification with both mainstream and minority culture), assimilation (identification with mainstream but not with minority culture), separation (identification with minority but not mainstream culture), and marginalization (identification

with neither culture). Based on this acculturation model a person who is classified in the assimilation and marginalization categories will have higher levels of prejudice against his/her own culture since he/she does not identify himself with his/her own minority culture.

The Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans-II it is considered to be one of the better self-report measures of acculturation (Gasquoine, 2008). It was developed to assess acculturation processes via the orthogonal, multidimensional approach by measuring cultural orientation toward Mexican culture and Anglo culture independently (Cuellar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995).

Family Values

Family values differ across race/ethnic groupings on concepts like familism and filial piety. Familism refers to the relationship between parents and their children. Filial piety is defined by respect for parents and ancestors. It means to be good to one's parents, to take care of them, and to engage in good conduct not just towards parents but also outside the home so as to bring a good name to one's parents and ancestors. Previous research shows that Mexican Americans like to keep their children physically and emotionally close to them. In the Mexican culture stability and endurance of marriages are considered to be important values (Flores-Niemann et al., 1999). A person's cultural beliefs about their families may affect the level of prejudice demonstrated against their own culture. If a person believes that his/her family is important and they have a good perception regarding their family while maintaining an elevated level of respect for their ancestors; the possibility of this person to demonstrate an in-group prejudice is lower than someone who does not have such strong feelings about their family and ancestry. As explained by Flores-Niemann (1999) the difference between Mexican Americans

and other cultures is of pride and respect to their ancestors (e.g., a Mexican American might not want to put his/her parents in a nursing home).

Skin Tone

Mexican Americans are informally divided into subgroupings according to skin color. The different subgroupings are defined in Spanish as *Blanco* referring to light complexion and *Moreno* referring to a darker complexion. Blancos and Morenos are differentiated primarily based on the skin color, but there are other characteristics that distinguish these two subgroups (Uhlmann et al., 2002). Morenos have indigenous facial features while Blancos have facial features more similar to Caucasians. Hispanic American social, political, and economical power is maintain mainly by the Blancos. For example, an article (Johnson, 2006) from the Pittsburgh Post explains how historically society has related lighter skin with attractiveness, intelligence, competence, and likeability. This article explains how racism is not only linked to race, but skin color can also play a role in the treatment of a person. Beauty ideals and lower criminality levels are correlated with light skin color and higher social class, demonstrating an in-group preference for light skin (Dominguez, 1994; Simpson, 1993; Wade, 1997). This demonstrates that Hispanic Americans can show in-group prejudice. Uhlmann, Dasgupta, Elgueta, Greenwald, and Swanson (2002), demonstrated that Hispanic Americans expressed strong preference for the lighter complexions subgroup over the darker complexion subgroup.

Hypotheses

Based on this literature review it is hypothesized that Mexican Americans are prejudiced against their own ethnic group. This prejudice is more likely to be expressed in implicit mental associations. Variables that might affect the level of implicit in-group prejudice include acculturation, family values, and skin tone. Specifically:

1. Implicit association test results will demonstrate in-group prejudice in Mexican Americans (e.g., Weyant, 2005).
2. Mexican American affiliation toward the Mexican culture will be negatively correlated with in-group implicit prejudice (e.g., Romero & Roberts, 1998).
3. Mexican Americans family values will be negatively correlated with implicit prejudice (e.g., Flores-Niemann et al., 1999).
4. The lighter the skin of a Mexican American the more implicit prejudice they will demonstrate against their in-group (e.g., Dominguez, 1994; Simpson, 1993; Wade, 1997 Uhlmann et al., 2002).

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Participants

One hundred Mexican American adults were recruited by word-of-mouth from the University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA) in Edinburg, South Texas Vocational Technical Institute (STVT) in McAllen and the Community Centers of San Juan, Pharr, and Elsa. These are all located in the Rio Grande Valley region of South Texas. UTPA is located approximately 10 miles north of the US/Mexico border. As described in their website (www.utpa.edu), the university has over 18,700 students enrolled and is the institution that grants the most degrees to Mexican-American students in the United States. STVT is a leader in the field of technical and vocational training. Over the past 30 years, it has graduated over 18,000 students. The Community Centers located in the Rio Grande Valley are centers where community members can gather for social and cultural activities. They also provide assistance for community members in need of support by linking families with different community services.

Inclusion criteria for this study were: (a) over 18 years of age; and (b) Mexican heritage. Mexican heritage was defined by self-report. As explained by Gasquoine (1999) this method does not guarantee that the participants are indeed of Mexican heritage. Because of the lack of certainty regarding the effect of cognitive skill level on IAT scores, and to eliminate the possibility of confound we used the Matrix Reasoning subtest of the Wechsler Abbreviated Scale

of Intelligence (WASI: Wechsler, 1999), and eliminated from our sample the 17 participants that scored $\leq 5^{\text{th}}$ percentile on the WASI. The final sample consisted of 22 (27%) males and 61 (73%) females ranging in age from 18 to 58 ($M = 31.61$; $SD = 12.40$) years. Participant education level ranged from 3 to 18 ($M = 13$; $SD = 3.01$) years. Mothers' education level ranged from 0 to 21 ($M = 9.42$; $SD = 5.18$) years, and fathers' from 0 to 21 ($M = 8.87$; $SD = 5.07$) years. Fifty five participants (66%) were born in the United States and the rest (34%) were born in Mexico. Those who were born in Mexico had lived in the United States from 4 to 52 ($M = 18.75$; $SD = 13.07$) years, fifty three (63%) of the participants preferred to be tested in English over Spanish.

Table 1
Summary of Participant's, Participant's Mother, and Participant's Father Birthplace.

| Birthplace | Participant | Participant's mother | Participant's Father |
|------------|-------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| USA | 55 | 37 | 35 |
| Mexico | 28 | 46 | 48 |

Table 2
Summary of Annual Income of Participants

| Income | Participants |
|----------------|--------------|
| LESS THAN 10K | 9 |
| 10K to <20K | 13 |
| 20K to <30K | 23 |
| 30K to <40K | 6 |
| 40K to <50K | 4 |
| 50K to <60K | 6 |
| 60K to <70K | 3 |
| 70K to <80K | 6 |
| 80K to <90K | 5 |
| 90K to <100K | 1 |
| MORE THAN 100K | 7 |

Measures

Four measures were administered:

1. Skin color was measured using a Photovolt 577 reflectance meter. Readings were taken from the medial aspect of the upper arm (a surface not typically exposed to sun). Values indicate the percentage of reflected light and can range from 0 to 100. Low values (low reflectance) indicate darker skin, while high values (high reflectance) indicate lighter skin tones.

2. The 30 item Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans (ARSMA: Cuellar et al., 1995). The ARSMA assesses acculturation through a multidimensional approach by measuring orientation toward the Mexican culture (17 items and a Coefficient Alpha of .88) and the Anglo culture (13 items and a Coefficient alpha of .83) independently. The ARSMA subscale used was the one assessing affiliation with the Mexican culture.

3. The Cultural Values Scale (Unger, et al., 2002) assesses cultural beliefs about families by analyzing two subscales: familism and filial piety. The familism subscale assesses

participants' beliefs with regard to their relatives and how much they consult them before taking important decisions. This subscale consisted of 6 items and Unger et. al reported a Cronbach's alpha of .81. The filial piety assesses participants' beliefs about their parents. In the filial piety subscale it was reported a Cronbach's alpha of .81.

4. A modified version of the Implicit Association Test (IAT: Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998) available for purchase on the Web site (http://faculty.washington.edu/agg/iat_materials.htm) by Millisecond software (www.millisecond.com) was used to measure implicit prejudice. The IAT is a reaction time measure that assesses the differential association of ethnic names (Hispanic v. White Americans names) with an attribute (pleasant/unpleasant words). The ethnic names chosen for this study were selected by Weyant (2005), who did an analysis through WebPages such as babynames.com and behindthenames.com to match Hispanic and White American names that are commonly used in the United States and organized them in the same rank order of frequency. There were three male Hispanic names (Carlos, Jose, and Miguel), three female Hispanic names (Maria, Juanita, and Consuela), three male White American names (Charles, Robert, and Patrick), and three female White American names (Nicole, Jenna, and Catherine). The attribute words (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998) were pleasant (lucky, honor, gift, miracle, happy, peace) or unpleasant (ugly, disaster, evil, grief, accident, poison). Samples of the screen presented to the participants during the IAT are shown in Figure 1a, b, c, and d.

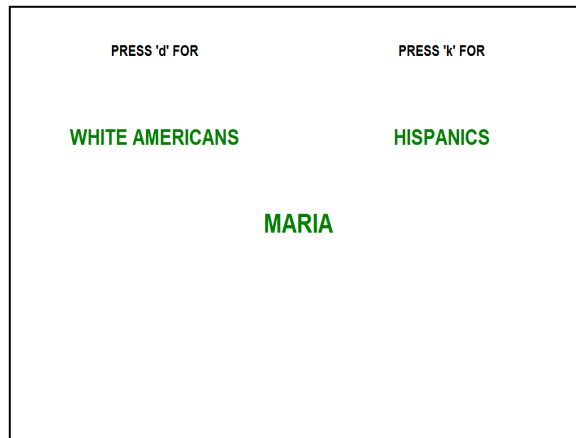


Figure 1a. Screen presented to participants during IAT condition 1 (practice). The participant had to discriminate between the labels presented: “White American” (D key) or “Hispanic” (K key) based on the name stimulus presented. For condition 5 the order is reversed whereby “White Americans” appears on the right and “Hispanics” on the left.

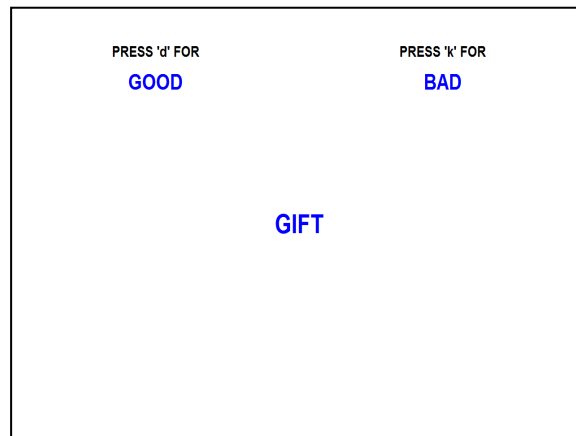


Figure 1b. Screen presented to participants during IAT condition 2 (practice). The participant had to discriminate between the labels presented: “Good” (D key) or “Bad” (K key) based on the pleasant/ unpleasant stimulus presented.

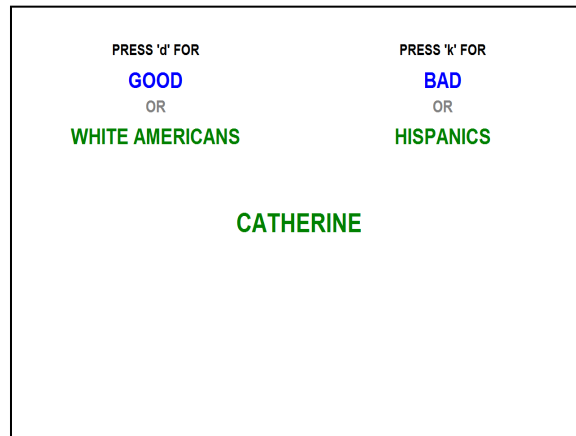


Figure 1c. Screen presented to participants during IAT conditions 3 (practice) and 4 (test). The participant had to discriminate between the labels presented: “Good” or “White Americans” (D key) or “Bad” or “Hispanics” (K key) based on the names or pleasant/ unpleasant stimulus presented randomly.

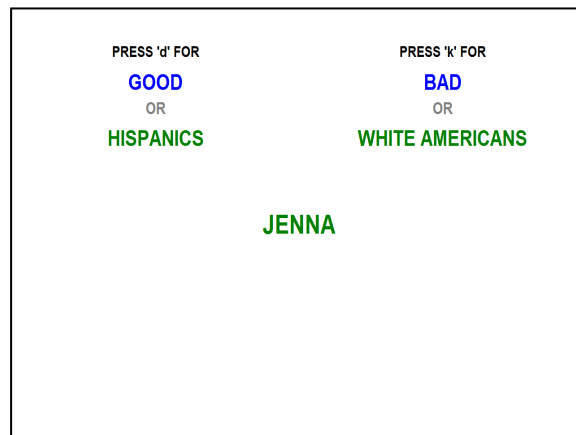


Figure 1d. Screen presented to participants during IAT conditions 6 (practice) and 7 (test). The participant had to discriminate between the labels presented: “Good” or “Hispanics” (D key) or “Bad” or “White Americans” (K key) based on the names or pleasant/ unpleasant stimulus presented randomly.

In the Spanish version of the IAT the ethnic names were unchanged, but the attribute words were translated using the method of “back translation” using two bilingual individuals as raters. The Spanish pleasant words were: suertudo, honor, regalo, milagro, felicidad, paz. The unpleasant words were: feo, desastre, mal, dolor, accidente, veneno. Samples of the screen presented to the participants during the IAT Spanish version are shown in Figure 2a, b, c, and d.

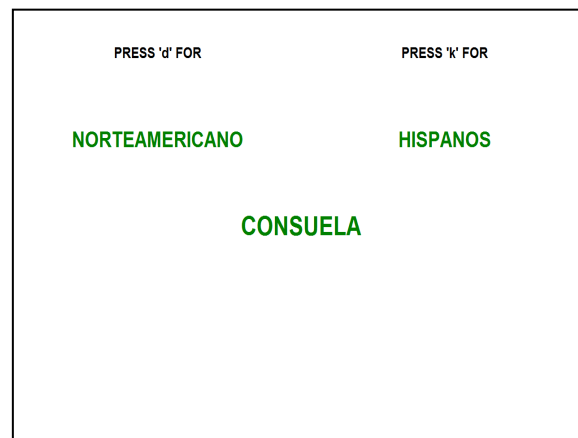


Figure 2a. Screen presented to participants during IAT Spanish version condition 1 (practice). The participant had to discriminate between the labels presented: “Norteamericano” (D key) or “Hispanos” (K key) based on the name stimulus presented. For condition 5 the order is reversed whereby “Norteamericano” appears on the right and “Hispanos” on the left.

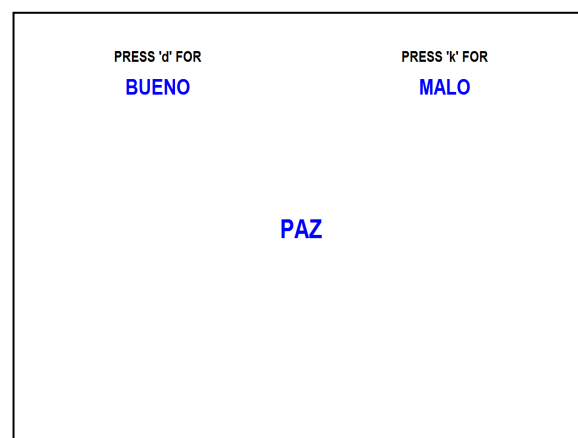


Figure 2b. Screen presented to participants during IAT Spanish version condition 2 (practice). The participant had to discriminate between the labels presented: “Bueno” (D key) or “Malo” (K key) based on the pleasant/ unpleasant stimulus presented.

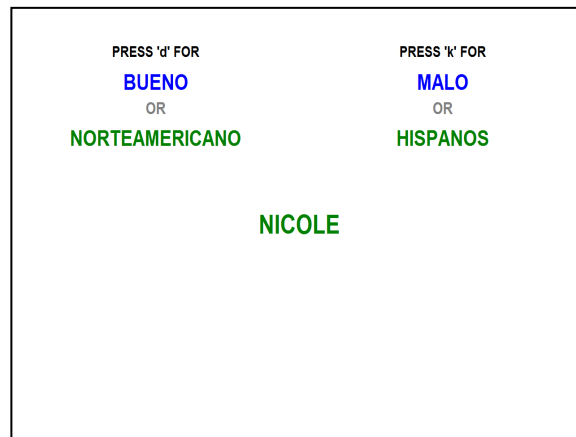


Figure 2c. Screen presented to participants during IAT Spanish version conditions 3 (practice) and 4 (test). The participant had to discriminate between the labels presented: “Bueno” or “Norteamericano” (D key) or “Malo” or “Hispanos” (K key) based on the names or pleasant/unpleasant stimulus presented randomly.

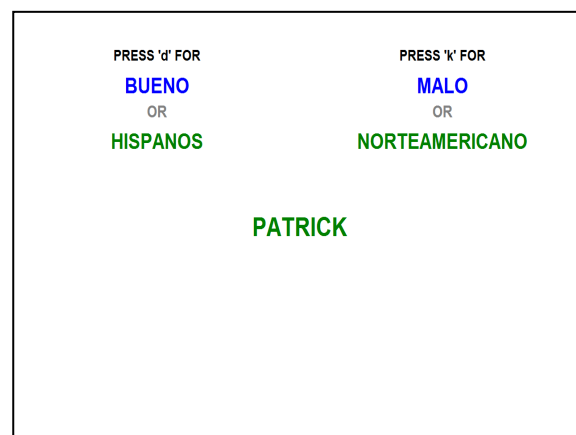


Figure 2d. Screen presented to participants during IAT Spanish version conditions 6 (practice) and section 7 (test). The participant had to discriminate between the labels presented: “Bueno” or “Hispanos” (D key) or “Malo” or “Norteamericano” (K key) based on the names or pleasant/unpleasant stimulus presented randomly.

On each trial participants pressed one key with the left hand or another key with the right hand as fast as possible to relate the stimulus to its correspondent classification listed at the top of the screen on either the left or the right (see Figure 1). For example, in one condition the participants pressed the *D* key if the word that appeared on the computer screen was either an unpleasant word (e.g., disaster) or a Hispanic name (e.g., Carlos) and to press the *K* key if the

word that appears on the computer screen was a pleasant word (e.g., lucky) or a White American name (e.g., Jenna). There were a total of five practice conditions and two test conditions organized as showed on Table 3. In the short IAT format that was used to assess the relative effect of practice trials in the measurement of implicit prejudice, the practice conditions had fewer trials per conditions (see Table 3).

Table 3
The Seven Conditions of the Implicit Association (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998), adapted for Hispanic Americans.

| Condition | Trials: Long format | Trials: Short format | Practice/Test | <i>D</i> key | Labels | <i>K</i> key | Stimulus Presented |
|-----------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|--------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | 20 | 5 | Practice | White American | | Hispanic | Names |
| 2 | 20 | 5 | Practice | Good | | Bad | Pleasant/unpleasant |
| 3 | 20 | 5 | Practice | Good and White American | | Bad and Hispanic | Names and pleasant/unpleasant words |
| 4 | 40 | 40 | Test | Good and White American | | Bad and Hispanic | Names and pleasant/unpleasant words |
| 5 | 30 | 5 | Practice | Hispanic | | White American | Names |
| 6 | 20 | 5 | Practice | Good and Hispanic | | Bad and White American | Names and pleasant/unpleasant words |
| 7 | 40 | 40 | Test | Good and Hispanic | | Bad and White American | Names and pleasant/unpleasant words |

Procedures

In each session the examiner and participant spoke only English or Spanish depending upon participant's preference. The sessions lasted approximately 30 minutes. Measures were administered in the following order: (a) IAT long format; (b) demographic questionnaire; (c) Matrix Reasoning subtest from the WASI; (d) IAT short format; (e) Cultural Values Scale; (f) ARSMA; and (g) the Photovolt 577 reflectance meter was used to obtain three readings that were averaged to give the final score. The participants were then given a \$10 gift card. All participants completed all measures.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The IAT produces D-scores that can be positive or negative (Cai et al., 2002; Greenwald, Banaji, & Nosek, 2003). They ranged from -1.50 to +1.50. Within this range five equal divisions of 0.6 points each were made in Table 4 (Aron, Coups, & Aron, 2011). The correlation between the Long and Short formats was $r = .56, p < .05$. As they were so highly correlated only IAT scores from the Long Format were further analyzed.

Table 4. Distribution of D-scores from Implicit Association Test for the Long and Short Formats.

| D-score | Tendencies | Long Format | Short Format |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| -1.50 to -.91 | Strong Hispanic/Good & American/Bad | 1 | 3 |
| -.90 to -.31 | Moderate Hispanic/Good & American/Bad | 21 | 8 |
| -.30 to .30 | Neutral | 25 | 33 |
| .31 to .90 | Moderate Hispanic/Bad & American/Good | 27 | 34 |
| .91 to 1.50 | Strong Hispanic/Bad & American/Good | 9 | 5 |

Negative D-scores indicate an association of Hispanics with Good and Americans with Bad or out-group prejudice (Millisecond Online Community, October 5, 2009). In this sample 22/83 (26%) showed out-group prejudice. Positive D-scores indicate an association of Hispanics with Bad and Americans with Good or in-group prejudice. In this sample 36/83 (43%) demonstrated in-group prejudice. This is represented on Figure 3.

Figure 3. Graph illustrating the D-scores Distributions from Implicit Association Test for the Long and Short Formats.

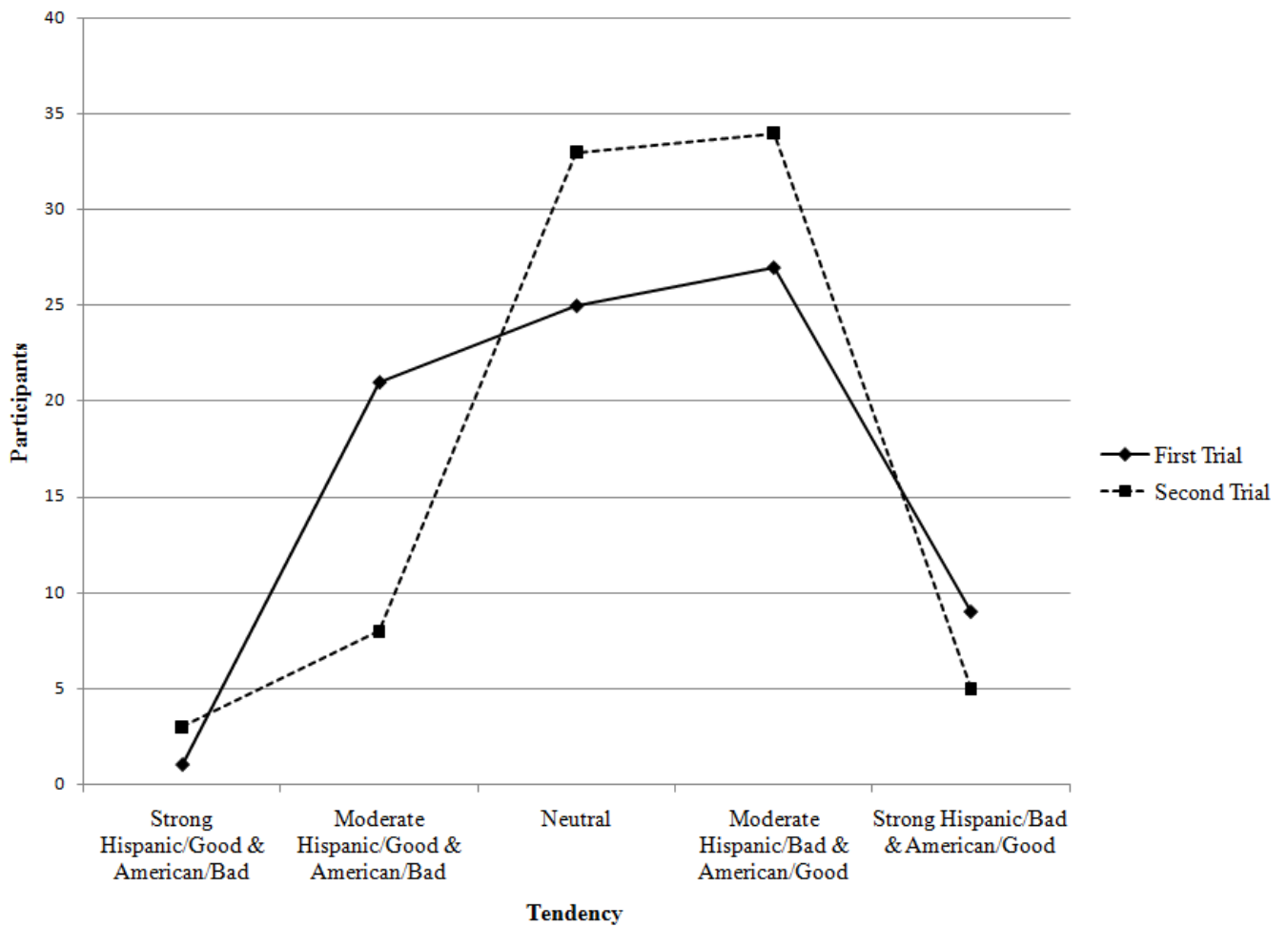


Table 5 presents correlations between the different measures used. There was a significant negative correlation between the IAT scores and the Cultural Values score, $r(n) = -.23, p < .05$.

All other correlations were non-significant.

Table 5
Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Acculturation, Values, Skin Tone, and IAT First Trial (N = 81).

| Measure | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|--------------------|---|------|-------|--------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Acculturation | - | 0.06 | 0.07 | -0.09 | -0.18 | 1.26 |
| 2. Values | - | - | -0.05 | -0.23* | 2.86 | 0.45 |
| 3. Skin Tone | - | - | - | -0.01 | 5.97 | 1.35 |
| 4. IAT First Trial | - | - | - | - | 0.35 | 0.48 |

* $p < .05$

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The intent of my research was to explore the existence of in-group implicit prejudice against people of Mexican origin. The nature of implicit in-group prejudice was further explored by investigating the contribution of certain variables (acculturation, family values, and skin tone) that have previously been associated with implicit prejudice. Specifically, we hypothesized that higher levels of affiliation toward the Mexican culture, higher family values defined by familism and filial piety, and darker skin tone would be related to lower levels of implicit prejudice against their own culture.

The first hypothesis stated that the results of the IAT would demonstrate that some Mexican-Americans exhibit in-group prejudice. Previous findings where the IAT was adapted to measure prejudice against Hispanics (Weyant, 2005) showed that there was a negative implicit stereotype against Hispanics relating to their lack of intelligence. Based on these results the purpose of this hypothesis was to expand the topic into a purely Mexican-American sample and analyze their in-group implicit prejudice. This hypothesis was supported as 43% of this sample was found to have either a moderate or a strong tendency towards relating Hispanic American with bad and White American with good, demonstrating in-group prejudice. Regarding out-group prejudice, 26% showed a moderate/strong tendency towards relating White American with bad and Hispanics with good (See Figure 3). These results show that in the Rio Grande Valley

almost 1 in every 2 Mexican Americans demonstrate a negative prejudgment, or make a negative assumption about other people in their own culture.

The second hypothesis stated that the level of affiliation toward the Mexican culture would be predicted by a negative correlation with in-group implicit prejudice. Romero and Roberts (1998) have explored the topic of negative attitudes toward out-groups and its relation with high ethnic exploration and affirmation their hypothesis was not supported. With the purpose of expanding the previous findings to an in-group perspective rather than out-group, this study explored the in-group aspects of prejudice as it relates to levels of affiliation toward Mexican culture, no association was found. A sample that includes Mexican Americans from different areas of the country might show the hypothesized relation.

The third hypothesis stated that Mexican Americans family values will be negatively correlated with implicit prejudice. This hypothesis expanded the previous findings by Flores-Niemann et al. (1999) where a relation was found between acculturation, familism, and cultural values. This hypothesis was supported by our data as higher levels of cultural values were related to lower levels of in-group implicit prejudice, as shown on Table 6. These results lead to the conclusion that when a Mexican American has a good perception of his or her family and maintains respect for his/her ancestors, the possibility of demonstrating an unconscious prejudgment of his or her own culture are less.

Regarding the relationship between skin tone and in-group prejudice, previous findings (e.g., Uhlmann, 2002) found that Hispanics had a strong preference toward those with lighter skin tones (blancos) than darker tones (morenos). Based on these findings we expected that Mexican-American participants with lighter skin tones would demonstrate more in-group implicit prejudice than others with darker skin tone. This hypothesis was not supported.

In conclusion, the non-significant negative relation between skin tone, affiliation with Mexican culture and implicit prejudice is a good thing about the Rio Grande Valley population. There is less prejudice than hypothesized. Future directions for this research could include measure facial expressions and microaggression and their relation to implicit prejudice, since this may influence the results.

A limitation of this study was its restriction the very unique population in the Rio Grande Valley. For future research purposes, including a larger sample recruited from areas outside the Rio Grande Valley could influence the results. The uniqueness of this research was that it uncovered a positive aspect of the Rio Grande Valley Mexican American population by demonstrating that there were no increased in-group prejudice among individuals with various skin tones and levels of acculturation.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Christelle Fabiola Garza is a native of Nuevo Leon, Mexico, who obtained most of her schooling in Cd. Victoria capital of the state of Tamaulipas in Mexico. She graduated valedictorian of her high school class from Colegio Ateneo Victoria in Tamaulipas, Mexico. In 2009, she obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with a double minor in Spanish and Human Resources from The University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA). Christelle continued her graduate education at UTPA and earned a Master of Arts degree in Experimental Psychology (Board Certified Behavior Analyst “BCBA” concentration) in May 2011, she will seek BCBA certification after obtaining the required practicum experience. Mrs. Garza worked as an early childhood interventionist (EIS) for Easter Seals throughout her graduate career, and she hopes to continue educating herself and specializing in children’s development and mental health.