

White Students' Attitudes and Behaviors Toward People of Color

Stephanie Bondi, Christopher Heasley, Valerie B. Kolko and Sarah Young

The increase in diversity initiatives on college campuses seems to exclude the needs of White students in learning about multiculturalism. This study addresses White students' attitudes and behaviors toward people of color in a large, public, Doctoral-Extensive university in the Midwest. Results indicate strong differences in both attitude and behavior between men and women as well as between people who have had varying levels of social contact with minorities. Implications for theory and practice are presented.

Introduction

Across the United States, multicultural attitudes are being encouraged in colleges and universities in response to an abundance of negative racial and ethnic incidents. Although educators and researchers hold the general view that prejudicial attitudes are in a state of decline (Federico & Sidanius, 2002; Sniderman & Piazza, 1993; Tuch & Hughes, 1996; Wilkinson, 2000), college campuses continue to experience an increase of negative race-related events (Carter, 1990; Fisher and Hartmann, 1995; Sue & Sue, 1990). American institutions of higher education have been called upon to educate students about racism through workshops and facilitated training activities in order to promote tolerance and acceptance, as well as diminish the effects of prejudice (Patterson, 1995). Education allows people to comprehend complex ideological principles that bear on their racial attitudes (Sniderman & Piazza, 1993).

While campus initiatives related to racism address several issues, they often only reflect minorities' perspectives of unjust attitudes and behaviors toward themselves (Carter, 1990). Coordinators of diversity initiatives should also consider the White experience of racial consciousness and privileged racial status (Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1994). Historically, antiracism training has not allowed Whites to examine the meaning of their Whiteness, nor has it enabled the contextualization of belonging to a majority culture. It is therefore important for educators and counselors to consider "how racist attitudes might be related to variations in White racial identity, a within-group psychological variable" (Carter, 1990, p. 46). As Whites begin to understand how they are indeed part of a racial culture group, administrators can develop proactive strategies targeted to an individual's psychological understanding of racism issues and prejudice.

Few existing studies assess attitudes and behaviors that Whites have towards people of color. Such limited literature finds that White college students continue to hold negative attitudes toward their Black counterparts (Carter, White, & Sedlacek, 1987; Clancy & Parker, 1989; Minatoya &

Sedlacek, 1980; Minatoya & Sedlacek, 1984), and nearly all suggest that counseling, as well as educational and developmental practices, can help in understanding the nature of such attitudes. Dennis (1981) suggested a systematic study be conducted to determine the reasons Whites perpetuate their supremacy by denying Blacks equal opportunity. Dennis advocated that such a study would help provide an understanding of the ways that "myths, legends, and fantasies become embedded in the psyche as 'ideological imperatives'" (p. 84). This leads to the research imperative to discover differences in how Whites acquire, retain, and perpetuate prejudicial attitudes. The current study investigates fixed personal qualities (gender and previous social contact) and their respective differences in White students' attitudes and behaviors toward people of color.

Literature Review

Numerous studies (Carter, 1990; Carter, White, & Sedlacek, 1987; Clancy & Parker, 1989; Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2002; Federico & Sidanius, 2002; Fisher & Hartmann, 1995; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1994; Shirakawa, 1999) have attempted to understand racism in terms of an individual's attitudinal, affective, and situational experiences. Carter (1990) wrote that Whites express ambivalent attitudes and behaviors toward Blacks that vary according to the individual's background, his or her previous contact with Blacks, and other "ideas" about Blacks that stem only from indirect knowledge (Dennis, 1981). In order to understand the differences among Whites as they develop racial attitudes, a brief literature review is necessary to describe previous findings. The White Racial Identity Development Model (Helms, 1990) provides a framework for understanding how Whites acquire and develop racist and nonracist feelings, which can be further understood by examining the differences in which men and women experience racial identity. Whites' prior social contact with people of color can also help to explain present attitudes and behaviors.

White Racial Identity Development

The most frequently cited work of its kind, Helms' White identity development model (1990) describes the development of a White racial consciousness in two phases, abandonment of racism and developing a non-racist White identity. McEwen (1996) found racism to be a central theme in White identity development, and as such, various studies have been conducted to understand the prejudicial attitudes and behaviors that are associated with each level of development. As individuals change from being racist to nonracist, they begin to acknowledge racism as a problem and become aware of their own Whiteness as a racial state of being (Helms, 1990). Other psychologists have explored similar models of racial identity development (Hardiman, 1982; Ponterotto, 1988).

Prior to the emergence of Helms' influential model (1990), numerous other studies also explored White identity development. For example, Clancy and Parker (1989) conducted an inquiry to explore levels of White racial consciousness and perceived comfort with Black individuals in different situations. The authors found that Whites who see Blacks from a narrow perspective tend to develop stereotypic ideas and formulate racist thoughts. Clancy and Parker also cited the need for experiential exercises in order to allow individuals to move through the stages of racial consciousness.

Following Clancy and Parker's (1989) study, Carter (1990) became the first researcher to use Helms' model of racial identity (1990) to explore the specific relationship between White racial identity attitudes and racism. Carter found White attitudes to be predictive of racism and supported existing literature that claimed that Whites in general hold prejudiced attitudes (Carter, White, & Sedlacek, 1987). Additionally, the analyses showed gender differences in levels of White racial identity attitudes. Women tended to have less prejudiced attitudes towards people of color than men of the same age. Across both genders, however, Reintegration (characterized by the assertion of White superiority and the expression of Black inferiority) was the most significant predictor of racist attitudes. Pope-Davis and Ottavi (1994) expanded upon Carter's (1990) study by including a larger sample and by using age and gender as exogenous variables. They also confirmed Clancy and Parker's (1989) findings that a relationship exists between Reintegration and racist attitudes. A further look at certain individual characteristics, such as gender and previous interracial contact, and related theories concerning such characteristics' association with racist attitudes and behaviors is warranted to understand the differences in how White individuals perceive and behave toward people of color.

Gender

Gilligan's (1977) theory of women's moral development marked a departure from previous models, which did not identify developmental differences between men and women. The author asserted that women's experiences are qualitatively different from those of men. Gilligan's theory recognizes that women's feelings and emotions influence the ways in which they make decisions, express themselves, and relate to others. Closely connecting an individual's personal experience and thought, Gilligan identified care and responsibility as the central theme behind women's moral decision-making. Women view the self as both relational and interdependent with others. In contrast, Kohlberg (1969) described a "justice orientation" that Gilligan related more to men than to women. In this model, men develop through a hierarchy that values autonomy and justice. As the relationship characterized between the self and society's rules develops from

preconventional to postconventional, individuals are able to base decisions on universally generalizable principles. Gilligan argued, however, that women's growth is in fact grounded in themes of relationships and interconnectedness.

Both Carter (1990) and Pope-Davis and Ottavi (1994) found significant gender differences in the White racial identity development of college men and women. Across all ages, women were found to be at a higher level of identity development and thus less likely to hold racist beliefs. Carter (1990) suggested that these differences may be attributable to White women's involvement with the advocacy and support of human and civil rights, and may be able to connect their experiences of sex discrimination with ideas of racial discrimination. A 1992 study by Qualls, Cox, and Schehr also found that college women were less prejudiced than men. Johnson and Marini's (1998) extensive study found that gender alone accounted for a portion of the variance in racial attitudes among a sample of mixed-gender White and Black high school seniors. Such research reinforces Gilligan's work in that women experience changes in racial attitude toward others earlier and more intensely than do men.

Social Contact

White college students' attitudes and behaviors toward people of color may also be considered in light of their previous contact with this population. Research (Oliver & Mendelberg, 2000) emphasizes the role of social environments as a determinant of Whites' racial attitudes. Allport (1954) was the first sociologist to examine theories of intergroup contact, and found that prolonged exposure to people of different ethnic or racial groups resulted in increased social comfort and fewer acts of prejudice. This researcher described three types of contact that can be used in understanding interpersonal contact and its effect on racism. The first kind, casual contact, does not necessarily reduce prejudice, and is rather likely to enforce existing stereotypic negative beliefs. Next, acquaintance contact brings knowledge to the individual and provides a more accurate, stable understanding of minority groups. The final kind of contact is labeled residential, in which prejudice is lessened for Whites who live with Blacks as a result of increased communication (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1999). However, for some Whites, contact with minorities in residential settings is intimidating, and they may therefore identify this kind of close interaction as a threat. Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, and Allen (1999) used Allport's theory to describe how interracial contact "can serve to lessen or to increase prejudice, depending on the nature and the quality of the contact" (p. 33).

Wittig and Grant-Thompson (1998) examined Allport's contact theory (1954) as it relates to the reduction of racism and prejudicial attitudes and behaviors by Whites. The researchers sought to examine the ways in which

different levels of social contact enhanced comfort in talking about racial issues, strengthened the belief in the equal worth of all groups, and increased openness to making friends across racial boundaries. They found that under experimental settings that replicated Allport's ideal conditions, authoritative support (in this case, by teachers), individualized contact, equal status of participants, and cooperative interdependence in working toward a common goal all served to help reduce attitudes and behaviors of prejudice. They also suggested that school and neighborhood levels of interracial climate be examined to assess their affect on classroom programs designed to target racism.

Most studies report positive effects of increased contact between groups (Pettigrew, 1998). A longitudinal study by Smith (1994) found that meeting Allport's conditions (1954) lessened prejudice by both Black and White neighbors. Oliver and Mendelberg (2000) also found that racist predisposition decreased with increased exposure in a social context to people of other races (in this study, the context was an individual's zip code). In a similar study, Ihlanfeldt and Scafidi (2002), found that neighborhood contact affects the attitudes of Whites toward Blacks, but only if those Blacks are of the same or higher social status. This investigation supported Allport's (1954) research, which concluded that for prejudice to be reduced, individuals must have equal social standing.

Gaps in existing literature lead to both the need and purpose for the current study. The lack of research on majority groups in educational environments, specifically White students in college, implies the need to examine individual differences as they manifest in Whites' racial attitudes and behaviors.

Method

Participants

Data for this study were collected from a convenience sample of 421 students enrolled in introductory psychology and sociology lecture classes at a residential Doctoral/Research—Extensive institution located in the Midwest. Thirty-four of the original 421 students (8.1%) respondents reported their racial or ethnic identification as other than White. The low number of these individuals in the original sample caused the removal of their responses from the study. The remaining respondents, who reported their race or ethnicity as White, constituted a sample size of 387 (91.9%). The mean age group of the respondents was 18-20 (84.0%). Nearly two-thirds of the participants identified as female (65.4%). Seventy-seven percent of participants reported having a mostly White group of friends in high school. The percentage of those who reported attending a mostly White high school was 65%. Eighty-seven percent reported living in a mostly White neighborhood.

Instrumentation and Procedure

A questionnaire was administered to students at the end of the class period. The instrument included 13 demographic questions in addition to questions derived from five published instruments. The instruments that served as guides for the questionnaire used in this study include the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ; Pace & Kuh, 1998), Cultural Attitudes and Climate Questionnaire (CACQ; Helm, Sedlacek, & Prieto, 1998), Situational Attitude Scale (SAS; Sedlacek & Brooks, 1972), Multicultural Awareness-Knowledge-Skills Survey (MAKSS; D'Andrea, Daniels, & Heck, 1991), and Whites/Blacks Attitude Towards Blacks/Whites Scale (ATB/W; Helms, 1990).

The instrument used in this study consisted of 13 demographic questions, 50 closed-ended questions, and two open-ended questions. Of the demographic questions, gender and previous contact with people of other races were identified as the exogenous variables for the current study. The participant responses to the racial composition of their environments (high school, high school neighborhood, and group of friends) were collected on a five-point Likert-like scale: (1) mostly White, (2) many Whites, (3) equal number of Whites and people of color, (4) many people of color, and (5) mostly people of color. During data analysis, these categories were then collapsed into two groups: those reporting a mostly White environment ($P=65$), and those reporting any other racial composition ($P=35$).

The 50 closed-ended questions were identified as either attitude-related (13 of the 50 questions) or behavior-related. Several behavioral questions addressed a single type of cross-racial interaction with one of the four following groups: Asian American, African American, Latino/a, and White. These were repeated four times throughout the survey, each time considering an interaction with each group. Few participants chose to respond to the two open-ended survey questions; these answers were therefore not analyzed for use in this report.

An independent T-test was used to identify differences in responses by gender and racial composition of environments (high school, high school neighborhood, and group of friends). Answers to the closed-ended questions were recorded on the following five-point Likert-like scale: (1) strongly disagree or rarely/never, (2) disagree or once in a while, (3) neither agree/disagree or sometimes, (4) agree or fairly often, and (5) strongly agree or frequently. For the purpose of analysis, these categories were collapsed into three categories, which were (1) disagree, (2) neither agree nor disagree, and (3) agree.

Limitations

Difficulties with the initial sample size caused the authors to reconsider

the research question itself. In visiting introductory psychology and sociology classes, the researchers did not foresee the high percentage of women and first-year students. The current sample is skewed toward these populations. Existing studies have used both imbalanced samples by gender (Shirakawa, 1999), as well as approximately even samples (Carter, 1990; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1994). Using gender as a study variable, this should not have greatly affected the data. Research does acknowledge that younger people generally score lower on racial identity scales (Carter, 1990; Helms, 1990; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1994), which should be considered when evaluating this study.

It should also be noted that all of the researchers who administered the questionnaires were White. Past experiments have investigated the impact of researcher race on respondents' answers (Fazio, Jackson, Dunton, and Williams, 1995; Ferguson, Rhodes, Lee, & Sriram, 2001) and concluded that the race of the researcher indeed affects responses. Claney and Parker's (1989) study hypothesized that responses would appear less negative if one of the researchers had been Black; Fazio et al.'s (1995) study found that subjects with a Black experimenter present responded with fewer prejudicial responses to a racial prejudice questionnaire. However, because White students completed all the surveys used for this study, the authors expect that race was not a significant factor.

Results

Gender

Table 1 contains significant findings regarding gender differences in racial attitudes and behaviors. These results are represented on a scale from one to three (1 = strongly disagree/disagree, 2 = neutral, and 3 = agree/strongly agree for the attitude questions and 1 = rarely/once in a while, 2 = sometimes, and 3 = fairly often/almost always for the behavioral questions). All results mentioned are at the $p < .01$ or $p < .05$ significance level.

Differences by gender emerged as themes of racial hostility, discrimination, and policy effects were addressed. The male and female respondents differed on a number of attitudes related to racial discrimination. Females were more likely than males to agree that ignorance is the cause of racial discrimination ($t = 2.88$). They were also more likely to affirm that racial discrimination is a learned behavior ($t = 2.95$). There is a significant difference ($t = 2.25$) between male and female responses to the statement that people do not racially discriminate when choosing friends. Similarly, males ($M = 1.78$) were significantly more likely to agree than females ($M = 1.46$) that people who feel they are discriminated against are just being oversensitive.

Both males and females agreed that racial hostility is still felt by many

Table 1

Responses by Gender	Female			Male			<i>t</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	
Disagree or Agree							
Enough efforts are being made to promote racial diversity.	1.91	.841	250	2.30	.769	132	4.36**
People who feel they are racially discriminated against are just being oversensitive.	1.46	.666	249	1.78	.745	132	4.26**
Because of affirmative action, people of color often receive preferential treatment when it comes to getting into college.	2.21	.732	248	2.49	.637	131	3.74**
Minority students encounter racial discrimination from non-minority students.	2.51	.707	250	2.25	.758	131	3.28**
Racial discrimination is learned behavior.	2.78	.467	250	2.61	.650	132	2.95**
Ignorance is the cause of racial discrimination.	2.69	.638	250	2.48	.726	132	2.88**
People are not likely to express their racial hostility.	1.73	.682	247	1.93	.809	130	2.51*
People do not racially discriminate when choosing friends.	1.62	.763	250	1.81	.814	131	2.25*
Racial hostility is still felt by many people.	2.78	.518	248	2.65	.619	131	2.23*
How often do I:							
Confront others who use racist language or tell racist jokes in my presence	1.78	.854	249	1.55	.775	132	2.62**
Minimize various characteristics of my racial/ethnic culture to fit in with the group I am with at the time	1.18	.452	247	1.41	.655	131	4.08**
Use racist language or tell racist jokes	1.11	.348	250	1.57	.764	132	8.08**
Feel self-conscious slow dancing with someone who is African American in a public place	1.16	.486	250	1.38	.671	132	3.72**
Become uncomfortable around people who are Latino/a	1.10	.355	250	1.28	.612	129	3.52**
Become uncomfortable around people who are Asian American	1.06	.263	249	1.17	.437	132	3.29**
Feel uncomfortable when walking through a neighborhood that is mostly White	1.08	.354	250	1.20	.532	131	2.50*
Feel self-conscious slow dancing with someone who is White in a public place	1.07	.316	249	1.17	.486	131	2.47*

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. Responses to the agree/disagree questions are reported on a 3-point scale where 1 = disagree, 2 = neither agree nor disagree, and 3 = agree. Remaining questions were reported on a 3-point scale where 1 = rarely/once in a while, 2 = sometimes, and 3 = often/frequently.

people, although females were more likely to agree with this statement ($t = 2.23$). Another difference was that females were more likely to agree that minority students encounter racism ($t = 3.28$). Significant differences were also noted on attitudes toward policy. Specifically, males were more likely to agree that because of affirmative action, minority students often receive preferential treatment ($t = 3.74$). Similarly, men were more likely to believe that enough efforts are being made to promote racial diversity ($t = 4.36$).

There were also significant differences by gender regarding behaviors. Males were more likely than females to minimize their racial characteristics to fit in ($t = 4.09$). Furthermore, males also reported that they were more likely to use racist language or tell racist jokes than female respondents ($t = 8.08$). Women were more likely to confront others who use racist language or tell racist jokes ($t = 2.62$). Overall, female participants reported feeling more comfortable than male respondents when interacting with all three racially different groups listed within the study.

Previous Contact with People of Color

The researchers assumed that various racial compositions offered different kinds of social contact with people of other races for the participant. Significant results for responses of students who reported mostly White environments versus all other environments can be found in Table 2. There were no significant differences found between students who had mostly White peer groups in high school and students who had multiracial peer groups in the responses to the attitudinal questions.

Analysis of the behavioral questions based on racial composition of the participant's group of friends in high school found that participants who reported that they had mostly White peer groups in high school were less likely to be uncomfortable being the only White person in a crowd ($t = -5.20$), and less likely to minimize their racial characteristics to fit in ($t = -1.99$). They are less likely to interact on a social level ($t = -6.18$), to hang out with ($t = -7.60$), or to have serious discussions with someone of another race or ethnicity ($t = -6.51$). Additionally, they are less likely to compare their cultural perspective with that of someone from another culture ($t = -2.54$), less likely to attend racial or ethnic programs ($t = -3.46$), and less likely to seek information regarding racial or ethnic issues ($t = -3.52$). They are less

likely to confront others about using racist language or telling racial jokes ($t = -2.57$) and less likely to be comfortable with an African American roommate ($t = -4.49$).

Those who attended a mostly White high school reported that they were more likely to believe that people do not discriminate when choosing friends ($t = 2.73$). When asked about their behaviors, those who attended a mostly White high school reported that they were less likely to attend a racial/ethnic program ($t = -2.85$), less likely to interact on a social level ($t = -2.13$), and were less likely to hang out with someone who is racially or ethnically different ($t = -4.19$). Students whose neighborhood composition was mostly White were less likely to engage in educating themselves about or immersing themselves in multicultural situations.

Discussion

The findings, divided into the categories of gender and previous contact with people of color, provide knowledge about the attitudes and behaviors of White students towards people of color. Student affairs professionals can derive theoretical and practical implications from the findings.

Gender

In addressing the differences of participant responses by gender, a number of themes surface including racial hostility, discrimination, and feelings of comfort with people of color. These variables show significant inconsistency between female and male responses.

Several conclusions can be made based on the differences of responses by gender. Men harbor more negative racial attitudes than women, and are more likely to desensitize the effects and causes of discrimination. They favored opinions that sought to discredit reports of discriminatory behaviors towards people of color. Conversely, females are more likely to recognize prejudices. They affirm the realization that racial prejudices are still prevalent and practiced by most people. This finding appears to support both Carter's (1990) and Pope-Davis and Ottavi's (1994) research in which women across all cultural backgrounds and ages were found to have fewer negative racial attitudes.

Another gender difference can be noted in males' responses regarding their level of social ease with people of color. Men report being more uncomfortable than women in social interactions with people of color. These feelings support research (Wilkinson, 2000) that finds men more likely to use and display behaviors of racism than females. Their negative attitudes toward people of color manifest in behaviors that may include using racially insensitive language, stereotyping, and giving demeaning stares. Considering these results, men may be at lower levels and progress slower through

Table 2

Responses by Racial Composition of Group of Friends	Mostly White			All Others			t
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	
I am comfortable being in a situation where I am the only person of my racial/ethnic group	2.23	0.830	295	2.72	0.564	89	-5.20**
It would not bother me if my roommate were African American	2.65	0.683	295	2.91	0.391	88	-4.49**
Interact on a social level with students who are racially or ethnically different from my own background	2.24	0.805	295	2.79	0.410	90	-6.18**
Have serious discussions with students who are of a different race or ethnic background from my own	1.88	0.835	295	2.51	0.691	90	-6.51**
Hang out with someone who is of a different race or ethnic background from my own	2.09	0.827	294	2.79	0.439	89	-7.60**
Compare my own cultural perspective with that of a person from another culture	1.78	0.819	294	2.02	0.783	89	-2.54*
Confront others who use racist language or tell racist jokes in my presence	1.64	0.816	295	1.90	0.862	90	-2.57*
Attend programs that are about issues facing a race or ethnicity that is different from my own	1.19	0.474	295	1.44	0.638	90	-3.46**
Seek out information about issues facing a race or ethnicity that is different from my own	1.22	0.484	294	1.51	0.727	88	-3.52**
Minimize various characteristics of my racial/ethnic culture to fit in with the group I am with at the time	1.23	0.527	295	1.37	0.593	87	-1.99**

Note. ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$. N approximated 295 for Mostly White, N approximated 90 for All Others.

statuses of White racial identity development.

Findings from other researchers suggest that men are, at all ages, lower than women of comparable age on Helms' (1990) White racial identity development scale (Carter, 1990; Pope-Davis & Ottavi, 1994; Wilkinson, 2000). Females have less tolerance for racist and discriminatory attitudes and behavior and are therefore more likely to confront these inappropriate actions. Pope-Davis and Ottavi (1994) use a historical perspective to analyze the attitudes of women regarding racial integration. Specifically, they state that because women have actively worked toward civil rights, they are more compassionate about eliminating all kinds of discrimination. Women's sense of interconnectedness (Gilligan, 1977) also seems to influence their racial attitudes and behaviors. Within this activist framework it can be assumed that women would be more in favor of policies, such as affirmative action, that seek to end government and *de facto* practices that discriminate. The current research suggests that White women in college have a higher level of identity development than men and therefore communicate less prejudice through attitudinal and behavioral expressions.

Previous Contact with People of Color

More statistical differences were found between the responses of participants from mostly White environments and participants from mixed-race environments. Increased acquaintance contact (described as "high school friends" on the instrument) and residential contact ("neighborhood you lived in during high school") resulted in lower levels of prejudice. These results align with the conclusions of Allport (1954) and Pettigrew (1998), who found that greater exposure of Whites to multicultural environments resulted in fewer negative attitudes and behaviors toward people of color.

Most differences between those who reported experiencing a mostly White environment while growing up and those from mixed environments arose in behavioral, rather than in attitudinal, questions. Results indicate that participants with mostly White high school friends were less likely to hang out with and have social contact or discussions about race with students of color. This finding is significant given the number of studies which report that cross-racial contact has meaningful positive effects for Whites (Hampton, 1996; Minatoya & Sedlacek, 1980; Patterson, 1995; Pettigrew, 1998; Wittig & Grant-Thompson, 1998). Without such social interactions, students whose environment was mostly White in high school would gain only a limited awareness of their White racial identity. They may not understand the extent of differences among people of different races, nor recognize the need for learning diverse and multicultural perspectives by attending programs, seeking out information, or comparing cultures.

The results of this study support existing literature outlining the differ-

ences related to gender and previous interracial contact as they manifest in White students' attitudes and behaviors toward people of color. Women have fewer racist attitudes towards people of color and do not behave negatively toward them. Finally, White students who have experienced greater contact with people of color due to the racial makeup of their previous environments are more likely to behave desirably toward those of another race by not conveying negative attitudes or behaviors toward people of color.

Implications

The current study has practical implications for student affairs professionals, university administrators, and college faculty. Individual characteristics, specifically gender and previous interracial contact should be considered when developing diversity initiatives. Theoretical frameworks such as those described here would support campus programs to promote tolerance. For example, findings suggest that men harbor more negative racial attitudes than women and tend to practice more prejudiced behaviors toward people of color. Educators should thus be proactive in creating learning environments that acknowledge gender differences in attitude and behavior toward people of color.

Certain academic disciplines (e.g., sciences, law, and business) and various student organizations (e.g., fraternities, conservative political organizations) that are reflective of male predominance can create environments ripe for discrimination and racism. Care should be taken to assess environmental characteristics that may foster prejudicial relations and create an atmosphere in which both genders can thrive. The contributions of multicultural and diverse individuals in work or academic settings can enhance the identity development of Whites who have had little previous contact with people of color and therefore reduce expressions of prejudice.

Sufficient training should be implemented for all university personnel who interact with students within their learning environments. The results from this study illustrate that individuals with mostly White high school friends and neighbors tend to hold more racial prejudices. Therefore, student affairs practitioners should understand the diversity needs of White individuals whose backgrounds and previous environments offered limited interactions with people of color. Personnel can use identity development inventories (e.g., Helms, 1990) to assess students' current stage of development and design programs that challenge and support them to consider their White racial consciousness as a factor in their interactions with people of color.

Changing White students' racist attitudes and behaviors can begin with positive collaboration among and across race and gender. This can promote both cognitive and psychosocial growth, as well as enhance identity development. When considering the development of future diversity and multicultural

awareness programs, educators must reflect on and consider the ways in which White students perceive their environmental conditions and the ways in which they interact with students of color. Student affairs practitioners should consider using multicultural perspectives in creating well-rounded curricula that address the interactions of people of color and Whites.

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Stephanie Bondi completed the Higher Education and Student Affairs program in 2003 at Indiana University Bloomington and received an M.S. in Student Affairs Administration. She obtained her B.S. in Accounting from Butler University in 1997. While studying at Indiana University, she served as a Program Advisor for the Indiana Memorial Union Board and as a Judicial Officer for the Office of Student Ethics.

Chris Heasley graduated from Indiana University Bloomington in 2003 with a M.S. in Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration. He received a B. F.A. in Graphic Design from the University of Texas at Arlington in 1999. During his graduate career at IU, Chris worked as a House Director with Delta Chi Fraternity and as a Graduate Supervisor in Ashton Residence Center.

Valerie Kolko graduated from the Higher Education and Student Affairs program at Indiana University Bloomington in 2003 with an M.S. in Student Affairs Administration. She received a B.A. in American Studies from Brandeis University in 2001. During her graduate study at IU Valerie worked as a Graduate Supervisor in McNutt Residence Center.

Sarah Young will receive an M.S. in Student Affairs Administration from Indiana University in 2004. She received a B.A. in Political Science from Indiana University and a B.A. in Psychology from Purdue University in 2001. While attending IU Sarah worked as a Research Assistant at the Indiana Center for Evaluation and as the Assistant Director in the Office of Summer Freshman Programs.

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