

## Racial awareness: effects on justice perceptions and trust in management in the USA

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### **Abstract:**

#### Purpose

– The purpose of this paper is to investigate the effects of the socio-demographic diversity characteristic, racioethnicity, vs the deeper-level socially constructed attribute, awareness of racial privilege (which the authors termed “racial awareness”), on perceptions of organizational justice and on trust in management (TM) (trust) in a US context. The authors predicted that racial awareness would have a greater effect on perceptions of interactional and procedural justice and on trust than would participant racioethnicity. Second, the authors predicted that justice perceptions would influence trust. Finally the authors predicted that justice perceptions would mediate between racial awareness and TM.

#### Design/methodology/approach

– The authors surveyed Black, Hispanic and Native American professionals in one industry in the USA. The authors employed regression and bootstrap analyses to test the hypotheses.

#### Findings

– Racial awareness influenced justice ratings and TM. Justice perceptions influenced employee trust. Interactional and procedural justice had indirect effects on the relationship between racial awareness and trust, supporting the hypotheses.

### Research limitations/implications

– Respondents were primarily African-American, so additional research to assess attitudes of other groups is needed. Respondents belonged to a minority networking group which provided the sample. It is possible that their membership sensitized the respondents to racial issues.

### Practical implications

– The finding suggest that managers can positively influence US minority employees' trust regardless of the employees' racial awareness by treating them with dignity and respect and by ensuring fairness in the application of organizational policies and procedures.

### Originality/value

– This study examined the impact of US minority employee racial awareness on justice perceptions and TM, important variables in the employer-employee relationship. Findings indicated that racial awareness was a better predictor of employee attitudes than was racioethnicity.

**Keywords:** Diversity | Organizational justice | Trust in management | Procedural justice | Employees of color | Interactional justice

### Article:

#### Introduction

The global marketplace is becoming increasingly interconnected. This complexity is reflected in workforce diversity at the local as well as global level. The US, where 42 percent of the population will be minority Americans (people of color) by 2025 and 47 percent by 2050 (US Census Bureau, 2012), is becoming increasingly ethnically diverse. Global business is generating a highly competitive marketplace for skilled employees including those from historically underrepresented groups. Accordingly, understanding professional employees' of color perceptions of the organizational climate and its effects on employee outcomes is increasingly important. Research examining the relative effects of an individual's socio-demographic characteristic, racioethnicity, vs the influence of socially constructed and individually developed racial awareness, has been limited to date. In addition, the influence of racial awareness on employee of color perceptions of organizational justice has not been reported in the literature. These relationships are important because justice perceptions have been shown to affect employee trust, a foundation to effective management-employee relationships. Thus, they are the focus of this study. We now turn to the research on diversity.

The diversity literature has evolved along several themes. In the past two decades, researchers often have employed racioethnicity as a proxy for racial awareness. Racioethnicity has traditionally been defined in organizational diversity studies based on physical features such a

skin color, hair texture and facial features which are visible indicators of an individual's racial identity. In this conceptualization, racioethnicity is seen as a clear, stable and consistent variable with which to identify people. This essentialist focus assumes that members of a socio-demographic group share attitudes and perspectives as a function of their common heritage and culture and has been the subject of critique (Zanoni *et al.*, 2010). The essentialist interpretation leaves little room for individual thought and action independent of common cultural history and experiences among members of a socio-cultural group. Additionally, this approach toward race and ethnicity ignores the social and historical contexts within which views about race and ethnicity have evolved over time. Recent sociologists have amplified the conceptualization of racioethnicity. For example, Moya and Markus (2010) define race and ethnicity as socially constructed; race and ethnicity are "social, historical and philosophical processes" (p. 21) with which individuals engage and which inform the development and evolution of one's identity. Racioethnicity is defined for an individual by that person's social circle and past experience and is informed by the intersection of self-concept and experience through engagement with family, friends, coworkers, the media, and social institutions with which the individual interacts on a daily basis. So race is "a dynamic set of historically derived and institutionalized concepts and practices" that sort people into groups and associate differential power and status to those groups as a function of group membership (Moya and Markus, 2010, p. 21).

Personally developed definitions of one's racioethnic identity can vary across individuals within a socially defined racial group. Further, as society changes, conceptions of the meaning associated with race and ethnicity change for individuals, as well as for society at large. Thus, as Zanoni *et al.* (2010) point out, diversity research needs to shift its focus and methodology to identify the ways that people within organizations attend and respond to organizational opportunities, limitations and constraints as a function of their racial awareness.

We now turn to clarifying the terms, racioethnicity and racial awareness, to which we will refer for the remainder of the paper. According to self-categorization theory (Turner, 1982), individuals classify themselves into social categories as a function of various identifiable aspects including sex, age and race. Building on self-categorization theory, social identity theory suggests that individuals have a predisposition to classify themselves and others into various social categories (Ashforth and Mael, 1989), such as racioethnicity. Further, an individual's identity is derived from membership in groups comprised from various social categories (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). For our work racioethnicity refers to the self-defined, surface-level, cultural group with which an individual affiliates.

We define racial awareness as sensitivity to the role that race and racial privilege play in social relations and in institutions in the US today (Neville *et al.*, 2000). Thus, consistent with Zanoni *et al.*'s (2010) conceptualization of racial awareness and identity as individually developed and refined attributes, we define racial awareness as a deep-level, socially constructed attitude, based on an awareness of racial privilege that exists in US culture.

One purpose of this paper is to investigate whether an individual's socio-demographic attribute, racioethnicity or the deeper-level, socially constructed racial awareness is more strongly associated with perceptions of organizational justice and with trust in management (TM). Additionally, we examine the dimensions of organizational justice: interactional justice and procedural justice, as mediators of the relationship between racial awareness and TM.

Our focus in this research is on the employee's psychological climate, defined as an individual's perception of the work environment (Schulte *et al.*, 2006). Additionally, because research on employees of color in the US, especially professionals, has been limited to date, we utilize a professional of color sample in our research.

This research makes several contributions to the literature on diversity. First, this paper provides information about the relative roles of surface-level socio-demographic racioethnicity and deeper-level, socially constructed racial awareness in affecting professionals of color's interactional justice and procedural justice perceptions and their TM. Second, the results shed insight into the relationship between racial awareness and trust. Third, the findings enhance our understanding about the mediating roles of interactional and procedural justice on the relationship between racial awareness and TM. Finally past research has focussed on diversity from the perspective of organizational benefits of a diverse workforce and how the management of diversity can enhance organizational performance. Zanoni *et al.* (2010) call for research examining the experiences of members of historically disadvantaged groups and how organizational policies and procedures affect these employees' attitudes and behaviors. Our study addresses that call.

### **Studies using racioethnicity as a proxy for racial awareness**

A number of studies have treated surface-level demographic characteristics, including racioethnicity as static, unchanging indicators of perceptions and attitudes in diversity-related contexts (Jeanquart-Barone, 1996; Kossek and Zonia, 1993; McKay *et al.*, 2007; Mor Barak *et al.*, 1998; Perry and Mankin, 2004; Simons *et al.*, 2007). There appears to be substantial evidence that employees' perceptions regarding aspects of psychological climate, particularly with respect to diversity, differ as a function of the racio-demographic diversity dimension, racioethnicity. However, when we view the development and refinement of one's racioethnicity as an ongoing process of self-identification and interaction with one's environment, the static view of racioethnicity as an attitudinal dimension commonly shared across a social group seems somewhat barren and bereft of the nuances that (socially constructed) racial awareness might engage.

There is empirical evidence that awareness of racial issues is associated with employees' sensitivity to diversity issues in the organizational setting, as we present next.

### **Social identity theory and racial awareness**

Differences in attitudes may occur among individuals who share the same socio-demographic attributes. Helms' (1990) model of racioethnic awareness proposes that racial awareness is a developmental process beginning with a lack of awareness and progressing to recognition that race plays a role in social relations in the US today. In support of this theoretical perspective, Utsey *et al.* (2002) found that members of underrepresented groups had different levels of in-group identity awareness.

Social identity theory and Helms' racial awareness development theories suggest that there may be variation in perceptions of the psychological climate within a racial group as a function of racial awareness. For example, in their discussion of status hierarchies, Tajfel and Turner (1986) argue that to the extent that members of lower-status groups espouse the ideal of individual mobility, those individuals may have weaker group identity. There is empirical evidence that racial awareness is variably associated with sensitivity to organizational issues, as we present next.

There may be a more cogent explanation than racioethnicity for the differing perceptions of organizational members. It may be that perceptions of justice and TM are influenced more by racial awareness than by racioethnicity. Neville *et al.* (2000) developed a measure of color-blind racial awareness using US participants. One factor in the scale pertains to the extent to which individuals are blind to, or conversely, aware of racial privilege in society. We used this factor to assess racial (privilege) awareness in the current study and in past research cited below. For simplicity we use the term "racial awareness."

In our ongoing research stream, we have explored the various effects of racial awareness (Buttner *et al.*, 2006, 2007, 2010). In a study of unit managers across a number of organizations, we found that racial awareness influenced leader attitudes toward diversity (2006) and unit leaders' ratings of the relative importance of causes of and solutions to the professional employee of color shortage (2007). Racial awareness also moderated the relationship between a lack of diversity promise fulfillment and reports of psychological contract violation (2010). Chrobot-Mason and Hepworth (2002) found that racial attitude predicted behavioral intentions. Linnehan *et al.* (2002) found that while participants' awareness of their racioethnicity was a significant predictor of attitude toward diversity, their racioethnicity, by itself, was not. Based on social identity theory, we posit below, that racial awareness will also influence perceptions of two dimensions of the psychological contract: interactional and procedural justice. First, however, we turn to an explanation of the psychological contract and two related components of organizational justice.

### **Psychological contract theory**

The psychological contract is defined as the employee's belief about obligations or perceived promises between the employee and his/her employing organization, rather than between the employee and organizational agents (Morrison and Robinson, 1997; Rousseau, 1989).

Fulfillment of the psychological contract on the part of the employer may include employer obligations and commitments to provide organizational justice (Morrison and Robinson, 1997), including interactional and procedural justice. Interactional justice pertains to the interpersonal treatment of others, i.e. whether the supervisor treats his/her subordinates with dignity and respect in their interactions, while procedural justice pertains to the general fairness of organizational policies, practices, and reward and evaluation systems (Bies and Moag, 1986).

The theory and research cited above suggest that racioethnicity and racial awareness may affect perceptions of interactional and procedural justice. However, those findings suggest that racial awareness, because it is socially constructed and is a more idiosyncratic (learned and state-like) characteristic, may have a greater influence on perceptions of organizational justice dimensions than would an individual's socio-demographic racioethnicity. We pose two theoretically consistent research questions to test this line of reasoning:

*RQ1.* Racial awareness will be more strongly associated with perceptions of interactional justice than will racioethnicity.

*RQ2.* Racial awareness will be more strongly associated with perceptions of procedural justice than will racioethnicity.

### **The effect of racial awareness on TM**

Another dimension of the psychological contract that may be influenced by racial awareness is TM. Trust is defined by Rousseau *et al.* (1998) as “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intention or behavior of another” (p. 395). In their meta-analytic review, Dirks and Ferrin (2002) found that TM influenced a number of employee outcomes including job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intentions. Thus, investigation of organizational factors that are antecedent to the development of TM are worthy of investigation.

In their conceptualization of trust, McCauley and Kuhnert (1992) posit that employees monitor salient aspects of their organizational environment to determine whether to trust management. Giddens (1994) argues that trust must be earned and maintained over time. Giddens uses the term “active trust” (pp. 186-187) to capture the idea that trust is not passively enacted, but rather actively sustained. Consistent with Giddens' proposition, research has shown that employees are sensitive to treatment by their supervisors. Roberson and Stevens (2006) in their analysis of participants' accounts of diversity-related incidents found that one theme was treatment by management, such as the extent of (in)consistency in management treatment across diverse groups, suggesting that managerial treatment is highly salient to employees.

Research on black employees' perceptions suggests that they are particularly aware of treatment issues. Simons *et al.* (2007) reported that black employees were more sensitive to behavioral integrity of their supervisors than were white employees. Similarly, Davidson and Friedman

(1998) identified the persistent injustice effect, which occurs when some observers of unjust actions continue to experience a sense of injustice even after being presented with an explanation. Davidson and Friedman reported that black managers who had the highest level of racial awareness were the least likely to have their sense of injustice attenuated by an explanation or excuse. More racially aware employees may be more cognizant of the history of race relations in the US and take this awareness into the workplace. In effect, they may be “perceptually primed” (Fiske and Taylor, 1991; Simons *et al.*, 2007) to attend to interpersonal relations and be less willing to accept vulnerability with respect to their supervisor, resulting in lower TM. In our review of the literature, we found no studies which examine the relationship between racial awareness and TM. To our knowledge this component of our study is the first to parse this relationship.

We extend the findings cited above by proposing that employees of color who are more racially aware would be more sensitive to treatment by their supervisors than employees of color who are less aware. While Simons *et al.* examined between group (white vs black) sensitivity, we extend this line of research by examining within (minority) group sensitivity. We also extend the literature by examining the related variable, TM. Thus, we hypothesize that employees’ of color level of racial awareness would influence their level of trust:

*H1.* Racial awareness will affect TM such that more racially aware participants will report lower TM.

### **The effect of interactional and procedural justice on TM**

TM may also be affected by perceptions of justice, including interactional justice. Burke *et al.* (2007) include an assessment of others’ intentions, sincerity, reliability and integrity, in effect interactional justice, in their conceptualization of TM. Similarly, Dirks and Ferrin (2002) view trust in leadership through a social exchange lens where followers perceive their relationship with their leader as more than a transaction, that the relationship involves care and concern demonstrated by the leader toward the follower/subordinate, in effect constituting a relationship-based perspective. So, they argue, the follower’s perceptions of the leader’s actions and practices, including interactional justice, affect the subordinate’s trust in the leader. In particular, interactional justice, because it addresses the respect and dignity with which the leader treats the subordinate, sends a signal regarding the interpersonal nature of the relationship. Burke *et al.* (2007) propose that trustee characteristics, including perceptions of justice are determinants of trust in leadership. Andersen (2005) proposes that when followers feel they are treated with dignity and respect (interactional justice), they are more likely to trust management. In summary, issues of care and concern demonstrated by the manager are central to the trust construct. Interactional justice, as demonstrated by the actions of the leader will influence subordinate trust in his/her manager. Thus, interactional justice may be related to TM as *H2* proposes:

*H2*. Interactional justice will influence TM such that perceptions of higher interactional justice will lead to greater TM.

Similarly, subordinates' perceptions of leaders' fairness in their enactment of policies and procedures, in effect procedural justice, also may be related to subordinates' TM (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002). Procedural justice pertains to fairness in administration of employment policies and procedures which may directly affect the welfare of subordinates. Thus, based on procedural justice perceptions, subordinates may make inferences about the trustworthiness of the leader. Procedural justice may be related to TM, as proposed by *H3*:

*H3*. Procedural justice will influence TM such that perceptions of higher procedural justice will lead to greater TM.

### **The mediating effects of interactional and procedural justice**

We also argue that interactional and procedural justice may act as mediators between racial awareness and TM. Inferences about interactional justice drawn by subordinates are made based on the actions of the manager (Burke *et al.*, 2007; Dirks and Ferrin, 2002). If, as we argue above, racial awareness influences interactional justice and interactional justice influences TM, then interactional justice may mediate the relationship between racial awareness and TM. That is, if the leader/manager treats the subordinate in a respectful manner and with dignity, trust in the manager may be higher regardless of whether the subordinate has a relatively high level of racial awareness. Thus, higher levels of interactional justice could attenuate the (potentially negative) effect of higher racial awareness on TM. *H4* tests this proposition:

*H4*. Interactional justice will mediate the relationship between racial awareness and TM.

Similarly, if racial awareness affects procedural justice and procedural justice affects TM, then procedural justice may mediate the relationship between racial awareness and trust. If the manager enacts procedures that employees perceive to be fair, then the employees may have greater trust in the manager regardless of their level of racial awareness. *H5* tests this proposition:

*H5*. Procedural justice will mediate the relationship between racial awareness and TM.

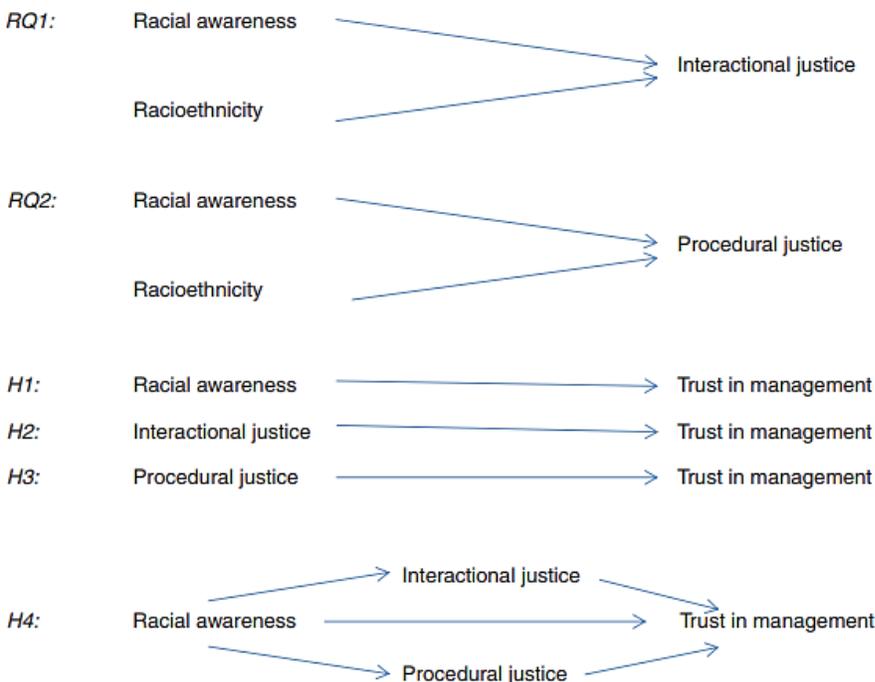
The hypothesized relationships among the study variables in the research questions and *H1-H5* are shown in Figure 1.

## **Methods**

### ***Sample***

The business school labor market was sampled for this study. Faculty of color who were alums of the PhD Project, a US-based network, were solicited by e-mail to participate in the study. The PhD Project was established in 1994 to increase the diversity of US business school faculties.

The networking organization provides mentoring, support and guidance for minority business doctoral students (PhD Project, 2014). Participants in the current study are Black, Hispanic and Native American faculty who participated in the PhD Project during their graduate school programs. Of the 667 faculty of color in the database with valid e-mail addresses, 186 (27.9 percent) completed the survey. In total, 18 surveys were deleted from the analysis due to missing data. In addition, eight respondents self-identified as US-born white non-Hispanic, so we deleted them from the sample, resulting in a sample size of 160. Average age of the respondents was 45.6 years (SD=9.5). In total, 62 percent of the sample were male and 38 percent were female. In all, 68 percent of the participants were self-reported African-American, 21 percent Hispanic, 4 percent Native American, 4 percent were non-US born and 3 percent were in the “other” category. For position, 20 percent indicated they were professors, 23 percent were associate professors, 51 percent were assistant professors, 2 percent were administrators, 2 percent were lecturers/instructors and 2 percent classified themselves as fitting into the “other” category. In all, 40 percent indicated they were employed at doctoral-granting institutions, 13 percent were at non-doctoral-granting universities and 46 percent were at four-year colleges. In all, 11 percent were at historically black colleges or universities (HBCUs). Participants had been in their current position an average of 6.9 years (SD=6.5) when they completed the survey. Among the respondents, 24 percent were in accounting, 10 percent in finance, 11 percent in information services, 35 percent in management and 20 percent were in marketing. In the PhD Project alum population of faculty of color, 28 percent were accountants, 9 percent in finance, 13 percent in information services, 31 percent in management and 19 percent in marketing. Comparison of the sample to population characteristics indicates the sample was slightly over-represented in management and slightly underrepresented in accounting.



## **Figure 1.** Hypothesized relationships among the study variables

### ***Procedure***

Approximately one week before sending out the online survey, we e-mailed potential participants announcing the survey and indicating that the research was sanctioned by the PhD Project. We then sent the survey from a university server to the e-mail addresses provided to us by the PhD Project. We designed our sending strategy to verify the accuracy of the e-mail addresses. Of the 685 e-mail addresses, 677 were valid addresses. In all, 15 individuals e-mailed to indicate they were not employed in the higher education industry and subsequently were dropped from the sample. Approximately two weeks after the initial mailing, we sent a follow-up e-mail and survey to non-respondents again inviting them to complete the survey. The survey was completed online and data entered by participants was stored on a secure server. No respondent identifying information was stored on the server.

### ***Measures***

The Colorblind Racial Attitude Scale (denoted CoBRAS) (Neville *et al.*, 2000) is a three subscale measure assessing the cognitive aspects of an individual's racial attitude. For this study the Awareness of Racial Privilege subscale (denoted Racial Awareness and abbreviated as RA), the most appropriate to measure participant's awareness of racial prejudice, was assessed on a Likert scale from 1=disagree to 5=agree. The coefficient  $\alpha$ , indicating reliability for this scale was 0.83 in the present study. Interactional justice (IJ) was measured with three items ( $\alpha=0.94$ ) developed by Folger and Konovsky (1989). We used a two-item scale ( $\alpha=0.94$ ) to measure procedural justice (PJ) on a similar five-point scale, developed by Tyler and Lind (1992). TM was assessed with a four-item scale ( $\alpha=0.94$ ) (Treadway *et al.*, 2004).

Since the focus of this study was racial awareness, over and above racioethnicity, participant racioethnicity was included as a series of dummy variables where the participant's self-identified racioethnicity was coded with a value of 1 and other racioethnic classifications were coded with a 0. Also, since respondent sex has been shown to affect perceptions of organizational diversity dimensions (e.g. Kossek and Zonia, 1993; Mor Barak *et al.*, 1998; Hite, 2004), we included respondent sex, coded as 0=male and 1=female, as a control in our analyses.

### ***Analysis***

We undertook correlation analysis, factor analysis and regression analyses of the study variables. While Baron and Kenny's (1986) method along with the Sobel (1982) test have been commonly employed to test for mediation in the past, Preacher and Hayes (2004) and Zhao *et al.* (2010) raise several issues regarding its use. First, Preacher and Hayes (2004) point out that since the indirect effect is the product of two parameters, the sampling distribution often violates the assumption of normality. Zhao *et al.* also argue that mediation should be assessed by the size of the indirect effect (i.e. the effect of racial awareness on TM through interactional or

procedural justice), rather than by the lack of a direct effect. Further, they assert that there should be only one requirement to determine mediation, that the indirect effect ( $a \times b$ , or estimates of the effects of racial awareness  $\times$  interactional justice, e.g.) is significant. Therefore both Preacher and Hayes and Zhao *et al.* argue that a bootstrap procedure of sampling with replacement is a more effective test of mediation. Accordingly, to assess the mediating effects of interactional justice and procedural justice on the relationship between racial awareness and TM, we conducted two sets of bootstrapping analyses (Preacher and Hayes, 2004), using 10,000 bootstrap samples and a 95 percent confidence level. Bootstrapping estimates the size of the indirect effect using bias-corrected confidence intervals and multiple random resamples of the data with replacement. We performed this procedure using SPSS 21 with Hayes' INDIRECT macro (Hayes, 2013; Preacher and Hayes, 2004).

## Results

The means, standard deviations and correlations among the study variables are shown in Table I. Scale standard deviations relative to the mean showed acceptable within measure variance and the magnitude and direction of the correlation coefficients were consistent with the hypothesized relationships.

Table II presents a factor analysis of the study variables: interactional and procedural justice, awareness of racial issues and TM. Results showed that the four variables are empirically distinct.

**Table I.** Correlations among the study variables<sup>a</sup>

| Variable                  | Mean | SD   | (1)   | (2)     | (3)     | (4)   | (5)    | (6)   | (7)     | (8)    | (9) | (10) |
|---------------------------|------|------|-------|---------|---------|-------|--------|-------|---------|--------|-----|------|
| (1) Sex                   | 0.37 | 0.48 | –     |         |         |       |        |       |         |        |     |      |
| (2) Hispanic              | 0.21 | 0.41 | 0.01  | –       |         |       |        |       |         |        |     |      |
| (3) African-American      | 0.69 | 0.47 | 0.02  | –0.77** | –       |       |        |       |         |        |     |      |
| (4) Native American       | 0.04 | 0.21 | 0.04  | –0.11   | –0.32** | –     |        |       |         |        |     |      |
| (5) Non-US born           | 0.04 | 0.19 | –0.15 | –0.10   | –0.29** | –0.04 | –      |       |         |        |     |      |
| (6) Other                 | 0.05 | 0.22 | –0.06 | –0.12   | –0.34** | –0.05 | 0.86** | –     |         |        |     |      |
| (7) Racial awareness      | 3.89 | 0.75 | –0.03 | –0.30** | 0.34**  | –0.18 | 0.05   | 0.03  | –       |        |     |      |
| (8) Interactional justice | 3.62 | 1.25 | –0.01 | –0.01   | 0.08    | –0.09 | –0.10  | –0.05 | –0.23** | –      |     |      |
| (9) Procedural justice    | 2.77 | 1.15 | –0.01 | 0.07    | –0.00   | –0.12 | –0.03  | 0.03  | –0.16*  | 0.61** | –   |      |

|                          |      |      |      |      |      |        |      |      |        |        |       |   |
|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|------|------|--------|--------|-------|---|
| (10) Trust in management | 2.97 | 1.09 | 0.04 | 0.00 | 0.04 | -0.19* | 0.04 | 0.03 | -0.16* | 0.26** | 0.20* | - |
|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|------|------|--------|--------|-------|---|

Notes: <sup>a</sup>Where n=160; for Sex: 0=Male 1=Female. \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01

**Table II.** Factor analysis of the study variables<sup>a</sup>

|  | Factor 1 | Factor 2 | Factor 3 | Factor 4 |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <i>Interactional Justice scale</i>   |          |          |          |          |
| During my last performance evaluation, my department chair showed a real interest in trying to be fair                         | -0.09    | 0.10     | 0.92     | 0.17     |
| During my last performance evaluation, my department chair was honest in dealing with me                                       | -0.14    | 0.07     | 0.91     | 0.16     |
| During my last performance evaluation, my department chair considered my views about performance                               | -0.09    | 0.22     | 0.88     | 0.18     |
| <i>Procedural Justice Scale</i>  |          |          |          |          |
| The performance evaluation system at this university is a fair one   | 0.02     | 0.04     | 0.50     | 0.78     |
| I am satisfied with the way performance evaluations are done at the university   | 0.02     | 0.14     | 0.50     | 0.75     |
| <i>Awareness of Racial Privilege Scale</i>   |          |          |          |          |
| White people in the US have certain advantages because of the color of their skin  | 0.69     | -0.11    | 0.06     | -0.06    |
| Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not   | 0.74     | -0.11    | -0.15    | 0.12     |
| Race plays an important role in who gets sent to prison  | 0.80     | -0.03    | 0.02     | -0.03    |
| 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 US | 0.81     | 0.08     | -0.08    | 0.06     |
| Racial and ethnic minorities do not have the same opportunities as white people in the US                                      | 0.71     | -0.16    | -0.07    | -0.14    |
| Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich                                      | 0.52     | -0.01    | 0.02     | -0.57    |
| White people are more to blame for racial discrimination than members of racial and ethnic minority groups                     | 0.62     | 0.01     | -0.15    | -0.12    |
| <i>Trust in Management Scale</i>   |          |          |          |          |
| The administrators at my university cannot be trusted (RS)   | -0.14    | 0.81     | 0.15     | 0.04     |
| I have complete trust that university administrators and my department chair will treat me fairly                              | 0.01     | 0.91     | 0.07     | 0.05     |
| I can count on university administrators for help if I have difficulties on my job   | -0.05    | 0.94     | 0.10     | 0.03     |
| I can discuss problems with administrators without it being used against me  | -0.09    | 0.93     | 0.06     | 0.05     |

Note: <sup>a</sup>Eigenvalues of the factors were: 4.98, 3.04, 2.69, and 0.93 respectively, explaining 73 percent of the variance

The first research question predicted that respondent racial awareness would have a greater effect on perceptions of interactional justice than would racioethnicity. We conducted a regression analysis of the effect of participant sex, the five dummy variables representing racioethnicity (African-American, Hispanic, Native American, non-US born and other), and racial awareness on interactional justice. The results of the regression analysis were significant ( $F=2.42, p<0.05$ ). The dummy variables for racioethnicity and participant sex had no effect on interactional justice. Racial awareness was significantly associated with interactional justice ( $t=-3.56, p<0.001$ , standardized  $\beta=-0.30$ ). It appears that racioethnicity is not an effective proxy for racial awareness in predicting interactional justice. Thus, *RQ1* was supported as shown in Table III.

**Table III.** Results of regression for minority faculty representation<sup>a</sup>

|                           | Interactional Justice (RQ1) | Procedural Justice (RQ2) | Trust in Management (H1) | Trust in Management (H2) | Trust in Management (H3) |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Constant                  | 0.00 (1.0)                  | 0.00 (0.91)              | 0.00 (0.85)              | 0.00 (0.80)              | 0.00 (0.77)**            |
| Sex                       | -0.05 (0.21)                | -0.02 (0.19)             | 0.02 (0.18)              | 0.03 (0.18)              | 0.03 (0.18)              |
| Hispanic                  | -0.11 (0.90)                | 0.62 (0.83)*             | -0.45 (0.77)             | -0.45 (0.76)             | -0.61 (0.78)*            |
| African-American          | 0.02 (0.88)                 | 0.73 (0.81)*             | -0.43 (0.75)             | -0.51 (0.74)             | -0.67 (0.75)*            |
| Native American           | -0.16 (1.0)                 | 0.16 (0.91)              | -0.42 (0.85)**           | -0.39 (0.84)*            | -0.46 (0.85)*            |
| Non-US born               | -0.19 (1.02)                | -0.22 (0.94)             | 0.09 (0.87)              | 0.12 (0.87)              | 0.12 (0.88)              |
| Other                     | 0.10 (1.23)                 | 0.56 (1.13)**            | -0.26 (1.05)             | -0.31 (1.04)             | -0.40 (1.07)             |
| <i>Predictors</i>         |                             |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| Racial awareness          | -0.30 (0.14)*               | -0.21 (0.13)*            | -0.22 (0.12)*            | -                        | -                        |
| Interactional justice     | -                           | -                        | -                        | 0.25 (0.07)**            | -                        |
| Procedural justice        | -                           | -                        | -                        | -                        | 0.21 (0.08)**            |
| F                         | 2.42*                       | 2.16*                    | 2.27*                    | 2.77**                   | 2.32*                    |
| R <sup>2</sup> (adjusted) | 0.10 (0.06)                 | 0.09 (0.05)              | 0.10 (0.05)              | 0.11 (0.07)              | 0.10 (0.06)              |

Notes:  $n=132$ . Values on left are standardized estimates, and values on right (in parenthesis) are unstandardized standard error coefficients. \* $p<0.05$ ; \*\* $p<0.01$

The second research question predicted that racial awareness would have a greater effect on perceptions of procedural justice than would respondent racioethnicity. Again, we conducted a regression analysis of the effect of respondent sex, the five dummy variables representing racioethnicity, and racial awareness on procedural justice. The results of the regression analysis were significant ( $F=2.16, p<0.05$ ). Racial awareness affected ratings of procedural justice ( $t=-2.48, p<0.05$ , standardized  $\beta=-0.21$ ). Three categories of racioethnicity, African-American, Hispanic, and “other” were significant predictors of procedural justice. Being African-American significantly influenced ratings of procedural justice ( $t=2.17, p<0.05$ , standardized  $\beta=0.73$ ).

Hispanic status also influenced procedural justice ratings ( $t=2.09$ ,  $p<0.05$ , standardized  $\beta=0.62$ ). “Other” racioethnic status was associated with procedural justice ( $t=2.59$ ,  $p<0.01$ , standardized  $\beta=0.56$ ). Respondent sex did not affect procedural justice ratings. While the research question that racial awareness would influence procedural justice ratings was partially supported, the results with respect to the effect of racioethnic status suggest a more complicated picture.

*H1* predicted that perceptions of racial awareness would affect employee’s TM such that greater racial awareness would lead to lower trust. The overall regression result was significant ( $F=2.27$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Results of the regression analysis testing for the effect of racial awareness were negative and in the predicted direction ( $t=-2.57$ ,  $p<0.05$ , standardized  $\beta=-0.22$ ). One category of racioethnicity, Native American, also affected ratings of TM ( $t=-2.60$ ,  $p<0.01$ , standardized  $\beta=-0.42$ ). No other racioethnic dimension, nor respondent sex, was associated with TM. *H1* was supported.

The second hypothesis predicted that interactional justice would influence TM such that perceptions of higher interactional justice would lead to greater trust. We conducted a regression analysis, testing the effect of respondent racioethnicity, sex and interactional justice on TM. The overall regression results were significant ( $F=2.77$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Interactional justice affected TM ( $t=3.14$ ,  $p<0.01$ , standardized  $\beta=0.25$ ). Again, the racioethnic category, Native American also influenced TM ( $t=-2.39$ ,  $p<0.05$ , standardized  $\beta=-0.39$ ). No other racioethnic dimension, nor respondent sex, was associated with TM. Thus, the second hypothesis was supported.

*H3* predicted that procedural justice would influence TM such that higher levels of procedural justice would be associated with greater TM. The overall regression was significant ( $F=2.32$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Procedural justice was positively associated with TM ( $t=2.62$ ,  $p<0.01$ , standardized  $\beta=0.21$ ). The racioethnic dimensions African-American, Hispanic and Native American were associated with TM. The racioethnic status of being African-American was negatively associated with TM ( $t=-2.02$ ,  $p<0.05$ , standardized  $\beta=-0.67$ ), for Hispanic status, ( $t=-2.03$ ,  $p<0.05$ , standardized  $\beta=-0.61$ ) and for Native Americans ( $t=-2.81$ ,  $p<0.01$ , standardized  $\beta=-0.46$ ). Respondent sex was not associated with TM. Thus, the results, while supporting the third hypothesis, present a more complicated picture of the relationship between procedural justice and TM than we anticipated.

The fourth hypothesis predicted that interactional justice would mediate the relationship between racial awareness and TM. To test this hypothesis, we conducted a bootstrapping procedure to test for mediation. According to Zhao *et al.* (2010), mediation has occurred and the indirect effect is significant when the confidence interval estimate of the indirect effect does not include zero (0). The indirect effect of racial awareness on TM through interactional justice was negative and significant, as indicated with an estimated mean of the indirect effect of  $-0.0866$  and a 95 percent bias-corrected bootstrap interval that excluded zero ( $-0.1953$  to  $-0.0133$ ). Thus, the estimate of the indirect effect was within the confidence interval as shown in Table IV. The

hypothesis that interactional justice mediates the relationship between racial awareness and TM was supported by the findings. Further, the findings suggest that competing mediation (Zhao *et al.*, 2010) exists; that is, as shown in Table IV, the effect of racial awareness on interactional justice is negative while the effect of interactional justice on TM is positive.

**Table IV.** Bootstrap results of direct and indirect effects of racial awareness through interactional justice on trust in management<sup>a</sup>

| Independent Variables  | Mediator               | Dependent Variable  | $\beta$ direct effect | $\beta$ indirect effect (IE) | Mean IE <sup>2</sup> | SE of mean | 95% confidence interval |         |
|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|------------|-------------------------|---------|
|                        |                        |                     |                       |                              |                      |            | Lower                   | Higher  |
| Interactional justice  |                        |                     |                       |                              |                      |            |                         |         |
| Sex→                   | Trust in management    | 0.067               |                       |                              |                      |            |                         |         |
| Hispanic→              | Trust in management    | -1.122              |                       |                              |                      |            |                         |         |
| African-American→      | Trust in management    | -0.968              |                       |                              |                      |            |                         |         |
| Native American→       | Trust in management    | -2.038*             |                       |                              |                      |            |                         |         |
| Non-US born→           | Trust in management    | 0.717               |                       |                              |                      |            |                         |         |
| Other→                 | Trust in management    | -1.362              |                       |                              |                      |            |                         |         |
| Racial awareness→      | Interactional justice  | -0.502***           |                       |                              |                      |            |                         |         |
| Interactional justice→ | Trust in management    | 0.174*              |                       |                              |                      |            |                         |         |
| Racial awareness→      | Interactional justice→ | Trust in management | -0.222                | -0.087*                      | -0.087               | 0.045      | -0.1953                 | -0.0133 |

Notes: <sup>a</sup>Where n=158. Sex: 0=Male; 1=Female. \*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.001; number of bootstrap iterations=10,000

**Table V.** Bootstrap results of direct and indirect effects of racial awareness through procedural justice on trust in management<sup>a</sup>

| Independent Variables | Mediator            | Dependent Variable | $\beta$ direct effect | $\beta$ indirect effect (IE) | Mean IE <sup>2</sup> | SE of mean | 95% confidence interval |        |
|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|------------|-------------------------|--------|
|                       |                     |                    |                       |                              |                      |            | Lower                   | Higher |
| Interactional justice |                     |                    |                       |                              |                      |            |                         |        |
| Sex→                  | Trust in management | 0.054              |                       |                              |                      |            |                         |        |

|                        |                        |                     |         |         |        |       |         |         |  |
|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|---------|---------|--------|-------|---------|---------|--|
| Hispanic→              | Trust in management    | -1.465              |         |         |        |       |         |         |  |
| African-American→      | Trust in management    | -1.248              |         |         |        |       |         |         |  |
| Native American→       | Trust in management    | -2.350**            |         |         |        |       |         |         |  |
| Non-US born→           | Trust in management    | 0.717               |         |         |        |       |         |         |  |
| Other→                 | Trust in management    | -1.738              |         |         |        |       |         |         |  |
| Racial awareness→      | Interactional justice  | -0.321*             |         |         |        |       |         |         |  |
| Interactional justice→ | Trust in management    | 0.164*              |         |         |        |       |         |         |  |
| Racial awareness→      | Interactional justice→ | Trust in management | -0.309* | -0.053* | -0.055 | 0.037 | -0.1493 | -0.0032 |  |

Notes: <sup>a</sup>Where n=158. Sex: 0=Male; 1=Female. \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01; number of bootstrap iterations=10,000

The fifth hypothesis predicted that procedural justice would mediate the relationship between racial awareness and TM. To test this hypothesis, again we conducted a bootstrapping procedure to test for mediation. The indirect effect of racial awareness on trust via procedural justice was negative and significant with an estimated mean for the indirect effect of  $-0.055$  with a bias-corrected bootstrap interval that excluded zero ( $-0.1493$  to  $-0.0032$ ). Thus, as shown in Table V, the hypothesis that racial awareness indirectly influences TM through procedural justice was supported by the findings. As was the case with the findings for *H4*, the findings suggest that competing mediation (Zhao *et al.*, 2010) exists; that is, as shown in Table V, the effect of racial awareness on procedural justice is negative while the effect of procedural justice on TM is positive.

## Discussion

This study directly assesses the relative impact of employee racioethnicity and racial (privilege) awareness in determining attitudes about organizational outcomes. The results add to the evolving literature addressing the effect of racial awareness on interactional justice, procedural justice, and TM. These three intermediary outcomes are of substantial interest to both diversity scholars and practitioners because of their subsequent effects on important employee outcomes including job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intentions (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002).

The findings of this study provide further evidence that less refined demographic proxies for attitudes, such as a person's racioethnicity, have far less utility for organizational research than more fine grained, socially constructed attitudinal measures that capture individual differences in identity cognition. The effects of racioethnic status, while at times significant, were inconsistent across the results of the research questions and hypotheses. The social-construction of racial

awareness means that related attitudes are more idiosyncratic and subject to experience. Using demographic proxies for attitudes may not capture valuable findings about attitudes of diverse employees, an area of evolving research on employee inclusion (Findlay *et al.*, 2007). Measuring attitudes directly rather than by demographic proxy is consistent with the call by Kirkman *et al.* (2006, 2009) for cross (cultural) group research and is supported by the findings of Buttner *et al.* (2006, 2007, 2010), Chrobot-Mason and Hepworth (2002) and Linnehan *et al.* (2002) in the diversity management literature.

The results of this study suggest that for professionals of color, racial awareness is a more consistent predictor than racioethnicity of interactional and procedural justice perceptions. The direction of these relationships is negative with professionals of color who are more racially aware reporting lower levels of interactional and procedural justice. This finding is consistent with Davidson and Friedman (1998) who found that racially aware black managers were least likely to be mollified by explanations for injustices and with Simons *et al.* (2007) who found that underrepresented groups were more sensitive to treatment and process issues. However, what we cannot know from Simons *et al.*'s research is whether these between group differences were a function of the racioethnicity of the respondents or whether the differences could be better explained by exploring differences in racial awareness across these same groups. It may well be that rather than capturing differences due to racioethnicity, prior studies measuring racial differences have benefited from one group having a greater representation of racially aware members than the comparison group.

This line of reasoning is similar to that of Kirkman *et al.* (2006) in the cross-cultural literature, who argue that assigning country scores to individuals as a proxy for attitudinal differences is a crude and less effectual method of exploring organizational phenomena than direct measures of attitudinal differences. Consequently they have called for a reexamination of the findings of much of the cross-cultural literature and a moratorium on the use of demographic and affiliation measures (e.g. nationality) as a proxy for attitudes. Extending this argument to the diversity management literature, we suggest that a number of studies which have reported racioethnicity effects should be replicated with attitudinal measures to determine if the relationship explored could be strengthened by using attitudinal measures such as racial awareness rather than demographic proxy measures such as racioethnicity.

Racial awareness also influenced professional of color TM. Professionals of color with greater racial awareness reported lower levels of trust. This finding has important implications for managerial practice. The literature has shown that trust is the "grease" of relationships that allows interactions to occur more efficiently, for information to be shared more deeply, and for alternative perspectives to be asserted with less fear of reprisal (Andersen, 2005; Dirks and Ferrin, 2002). For managers to understand that it is an employee's racial awareness driving lower TM rather than the person's demographic membership reframes the managerial challenge. Two important practical implications arise from this understanding. First, if trust is lowered by an employee's awareness of managerial and organizational practices that privilege some racial

groups, then trust can be improved by changing managerial behavior and organizational practices, in effect trust should be “actively” managed (Giddens, 1994). Most managers in the US are white and male (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). Thus, awareness of racial privilege may be salient for professionals of color, particularly black Americans, in interactions with their (white male) superiors. Second, trust may be lowered not only among employees of color who are racially aware but potentially also among majority employees who are racially aware as well. Future research should test this possibility. Third, as organizations shift their focus to more inclusive policies, our findings suggest that additional research is needed to determine what strategies will make underrepresented group members feel more integral to their organizations (Findlay *et al.*, 2007; Roberson, 2006).

We found that interactional and procedural justice mediated the relationship between racial awareness and TM. Further, the results indicated that the effect of racial awareness on these organizational justice dimensions was negative, while the effect of the justice dimensions on TM were positive. These findings may provide helpful guidance for managers of professionals of color. Supervisors who treat subordinates of color with dignity and respect in their interactions and who attend carefully to fairness in administration of employment policies and procedures in their unit may have effective relationships regardless of the subordinate’s level of racial awareness, including sensitivity to racial privilege. It appears that the effect of racial awareness, including sensitivity to racial privilege, may be attenuated by careful attention to interactional and procedural justice.

Interactional and procedural justice may mitigate or eliminate the potentially negative effect of a high level of racial awareness on subordinate trust. Collectively, we suggest that findings such as ours recast the managerial challenge from one of learned managerial helplessness (employees in underrepresented groups have greater racial awareness due to the negative effect of larger social issues outside the control of the manager) to one where informed managerial behavior can enhance effectiveness (work-related attitudes are shaped by the employees’ of color experiences and leaders/managers can respond behaviorally and procedurally to shape those attitudes). Though our study only investigated these relationships for an employee of color sample we suggest that future research obtain a minority and majority sample to tease out our speculation that across group similarities in attitudes better explain the relationships we have investigated than do between group demographic differences. The study was conducted in the USA which has a unique racial history. Future research could assess the generalizability of the findings in other national contexts.

There are several limitations to the current study. One potential limitation is the possibility of same-source bias. However, concerns that these findings are the result of same-source bias are reduced by the significant relationships of the results found herein, by the evidence that they are consistent with prior theorizing and empirical results, and by recent methodological research which suggests that concerns about same-source bias have been overstated in the organizational literature (Spector, 2006). A second limitation pertains to the selectivity of the sample in that a

highly trained group of professionals of color served as participants and thus, the generalizability of the findings remains to be investigated. Our respondents were all members of the PhD Project networking association whose purpose is to increase participation of members from historically underrepresented groups in the academy. It is possible that their membership and our statement of PhD Project leadership support in the cover letter heightened respondents' racial awareness as they completed the survey. Finally, the majority of the sample was African-American. The number of participants from other racioethnic groups was comparatively small. Future research could oversample professionals from other underrepresented groups, including Asian, Hispanic and Native American as well as white professional employees, to determine whether their racial awareness affects attitudes about justice and trust differently. Results of the current study suggest that there were minor, inconsistent significant differences as a function of racioethnicity among minority groups.

In conclusion, as the global marketplace becomes more complex and organizations seek to find balance among the deeper-level needs and values of individuals, enhanced understanding of racial awareness effects may help organizational leaders transcend the surface-level demographic differences among individuals in the workplace.

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