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Correlates of Attitudes toward Diversity among White College Students

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Abstract

Previous research illustrates numerous benefits of diversity, notably in college. Despite the benefits, not all students have positive attitudes toward diversity initiatives. Specifically, research suggests that White college students are less likely to engage in diversity-related experiences. Fostering positive diversity attitudes and general awareness about diversity-related constructs might enhance the benefits of a diverse campus. This study examined the relations of gender, year in school, openness to experience, diversity experiences, colorblind racial attitudes, and diversity attitudes. Participants were White undergraduate students from a small, private, liberal arts college. The main finding was that color-blindness negatively related to positive attitudes toward diversity. Results also showed that White women were more aware of racial issues than White men.

Keywords: diversity, color-blind racial attitudes, Whites, college students, race

Correlates of Attitudes toward Diversity among White College Students

Diversity is a critical issue in the United States, especially with the recent election of President Barack Obama. The 2008 presidential election drew national attention to discrimination, racial discourse, and diversity policies. *Diversity* includes individual, group, and social differences that facilitate learning (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2005). Various benefits come from experiencing diversity in academic settings, increasing the value of this topic. For example, experiencing diversity relates to greater intellectual engagement and increased motivation for political involvement (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, &Gurin, 2002). College is an especially important environment in which to experience diversity because the transition to this new setting aids cognitive development (Gurin et al., 2002). Whites' attitudes toward diversity are key because most Whites come from homogenous backgrounds that may leave them inexperienced in diversity interactions (Banks, 2009; Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately 9.9 million White, 1.7 million African American, half a million Asian, and 1.7 million Hispanic high school graduates were enrolled in college in 2006 (Davis & Bauman, 2008). Given that most college students are White, Whites could easily avoid interactions with People of Color on college campuses and not experience diversity's benefits. It is thus important to promote positive attitudes toward diversity in hopes that they would facilitate participation in diversity-related experiences. Yet, factors that influence one's attitude toward diversity have been relatively unexplored. To assess which variables may affect attitudes toward diversity, one must first discover which variables relate to different diversity attitudes. By investigating possible correlates of attitudes toward diversity among White college students (e.g., gender, year in school, openness, diversity experiences, and color-

blind racial attitudes), researchers will gain a deeper insight into potential influences of these attitudes.

The 2008 election of President Barack Obama may have encouraged a disregard of race in America. Some believe that America is a "post-racial" nation (Witt, 2009, para. 22), and the election of a President of Color may provide support for this belief (Orelus, 2009). Post-racial beliefs focus on the idea that racism no longer inhibits the advancement of different racial groups, such as African Americans, Asian Americans, and Mexican Americans (Steele, 2008). Comparably, the *Protestant work ethic* (PWE) associates with the notion that success is a result of hard work (Kaiser et al., 2009), which is essentially the belief in American meritocracy. The PWE downplays the importance of race by implying that lack of success is a result of one's deficiencies rather than a function of outside factors (Katz & Hass, 1988). Compared to before the election, after President Barack Obama's victory, college students had greater levels of endorsement for the Protestant work ethic (Kaiser, Drury, Spalding, Cheryan, & O'Brien, 2009). This finding suggests that college students believe the role of race is not as important as before the election.

However, recent reports of racial discrimination from the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) suggest that race still matters in the United States. *Racial discrimination* occurs when an individual is treated unfavorably due to his or her race, such that an adverse outcome results (National Research Council, 2004, p. 40). According to the SPLC, in the 3 weeks following President Barack Obama's election over 200 hate incidents concerning race occurred (Witt, 2008, para. 1, 2). *Hate crimes* consist of any type of illegal conduct that is motivated by a negative attitude toward an individual based on his or her membership in a group, such as race or religion (Green, Abelson & Garnett, 2009). Since these acts are a form of discrimination, SPLC's

reports indicate that racial discrimination is still present. Similarly, the number of active, racist hate groups increased from 888 in 2007 to 926 in 2008 (Holthouse, 2009). This increase may be attributed to President Barack Obama's election as well as the poor economy (Holthouse, 2009). Additionally, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) reported that 51.3% of single-bias hate crime incidents in 2008 were racially motivated ("Incidents and Offenses," 2009). The FBI claimed 7,783 single-bias hate crimes were committed in 2008, yet considering reporting limitations the actual statistic could be higher ("Table 1," 2009). Accuracy of the FBI's reports is contingent upon participation of agencies as well as the presence of enough evidence to deem an incident as a hate crime ("About Hate Crime Statistics," 2009; "Methodology," 2009). Nevertheless, the estimated number of racial hate crimes still demonstrates that race does matter in America and racial discrimination exists, so the changes in opinion after President Barack Obama's election were ill-founded.

Acknowledging the continued relevance of race in America, racial diversity will be the principal focus of the current study. Although concentrating on race does not provide a complete perspective of diversity, many people assume that diversity is synonymous with racial diversity. In a recent study assessing White students' definitions of diversity, race was the primary component of most students' definitions (61.6% Banks, 2009, p. 151). *Diversity* in racial terms centers on "engagement" across racial groups through various actions and activities (Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005, p. 4), not just token representation. This definition captures an integrative element necessary for the fruition of diversity's benefits. Given typical definitions of diversity, it is appropriate to focus on the racial aspect of attitudes toward diversity, including the role of color-blind racial attitudes.

Color-Blind Racial Attitudes

The down-played importance of race in America may relate to societal shifts and the establishment of color-blind racial attitudes, which is the notion that "race should not and does not matter" (Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000, p. 60). Due to changes in the framework of social acceptability after the Civil-Rights Movement, racist practices became more covert and institutionalized (Bonilla-Silva, 2001). Direct opinions about race can no longer be safely expressed (Bonilla-Silva, 2001), encouraging the de-emphasis of race in society (e.g. color-blindness). Many proponents of color-blindness do not merely ignore racial difference, but they also attempt to establish that race is irrelevant in every circumstance (Awad et al., 2005). Therefore, racial discrimination would be perceived as nonexistent by a color-blind individual.

The Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS) evaluates one's level of color-blind racial attitudes (Neville et al., 2000). Due to a transformation in socially acceptable forms of racial attitude expression, the validity of some racism scales may be declining (Neville et al., 2000). Consequently, the creation of a new measure assessing contemporary attitudes toward race was necessary. The CoBRAS evaluates individuals on three basic components relative to racial attitudes and awareness: racial privilege, institutional discrimination, and blatant racial issues (Neville et al., 2000). Therefore, the CoBRAS provides an overall measure of color-blindness that is beneficial in diversity research.

Color-blind racial attitudes may have a role in America's current opinion of race and diversity, so they are important to explore when researching diversity attitudes. Supporters of color-blindness downplay the role of race in America, so they may believe that diversity and its policies are unnecessary (Bonilla-Silva, 2001). The diminished support of diversity policies and the increased support of the PWE after President Barack Obama's election illustrate that components of color-blindness are a current problem. These two findings suggest that race is not

a factor in the United States and that diversity is unimportant. The failure to realize the relevance of race and diversity magnifies the need for research on attitudes toward diversity in general, especially because diversity can yield numerous benefits.

Benefits of Racial Diversity

Academia. Racial diversity has many benefits in the academic environment (Gurin et al., 2002). Some believe that "racial and ethnic diversity create the discrepancy, discontinuity, and disequilibrium that may produce the active thinking and intellectual engagement that educators demand" (Gurin et al., 2002, p. 341). There are two types of diversity experiences: formal and informal (Gurin et al., 2002). Formal diversity experiences consist of courses that inform students about diversity and foster multicultural understanding. In contrast, informal diversity experiences refer to interactions with other racial or ethnic groups (Gurin et al., 2002). The Michigan Student Survey (MSS) also examines participation in diversity-related events, which is another portion of formal diversity experiences.

Gurin et al. (2002) analyzed the effects of diversity experiences on learning and democratic outcomes in two samples. The University of Michigan sample was acquired through the Michigan Student Survey (MSS), while the national sample derived from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP). A longitudinal study, the MSS tested 1,129 White University of Michigan students (out of a total 1,582 students) upon entry into college as well as four years later. As for the CIRP, 11,383 college students from 184 different institutions participated in the survey at the beginning of their college experience and four years later. Among the CIRP participants, there were 10,465 White students. The MSS began in 1990, while the CIRP began in 1985, both ending 4 years after their commencement. Although the MSS and the CIRP are relatively dated, results are still applicable in a general context as versions of the

instruments continue to be used on college campuses across the U.S. Measures in both surveys were self-report in nature, and dependent variables were learning and democratic outcomes. *Learning outcomes* include active thinking for the MSS, academic skills for the CIRP, and intellectual engagement and motivation for both samples. *Democracy outcomes* consist of citizenship engagement in the CIRP, perspective taking and compatibility of difference and democracy in the MSS, and racial or cultural engagement in both samples.

Across both samples, overall results of the positive effects of diversity experiences converge. Both the MSS and CIRP find that each type of diversity experience relates to a) more intellectual engagement and to b) more racial or cultural engagement. Within these two general findings, different relationships with type of diversity experiences exist. Specifically, with intellectual engagement, informal diversity experiences have stronger correlations than formal diversity experiences in the CIRP sample, but in the MSS it is the reverse. For racial or cultural engagement, informal diversity experiences have stronger relationships than formal diversity experiences in the CIRP sample. In the MSS sample, the strongest links are reported between racial or cultural engagement and classroom diversity experiences, followed by diversity interactions, then events or dialogue (Gurin et al., 2002). The discrepancies in relationships with specific diversity experiences show that both formal and informal diversity experiences relate to positive educational and democratic outcomes.

As for measures exclusive to either the CIRP or the MSS, there are similar discrepancies in type of diversity experience. In the CIRP sample, informal diversity experiences have stronger correlations than formal diversity experiences with self-assessed academic skills and citizenship engagement. *Citizenship engagement* translates to motivation for involvement in activities affecting political and social issues. As for the MSS sample, both formal and informal diversity

experiences have positive effects on active thinking. Yet, formal diversity experiences are most strongly correlated with active thinking. Similar relationships occur with intellectual engagement in the MSS, but it is only benefited by formal experiences (Gurin et al., 2002). Simply, participation in campus-related diversity events increases positive effects on learning outcomes more than informal diversity experiences in the MSS (Gurin et al., 2002). Although these findings show that both informal and formal types of diversity experiences are crucial to fully benefit from the effects of diversity in academic environments, a measure of attitudes toward diversity is not included in the study. To fill in this gap the current study determines the relationship of diversity experiences and attitudes toward diversity.

Importance of diversity in college. Overall, diversity has positive implications in various settings but it is a particularly important topic in college. Incoming college students have just begun to vote and develop their political views. College is a prime time to introduce new ideas because students' opinions can be influenced and they are old enough to make social changes. The transition to college creates the uncertainty, discontinuity, and novelty that aids cognitive growth (Gurin et al., 2002, p. 338), so exposure to diversity at this time is critical.

Providing opportunities to encounter diversity as well as diversity education at this crucial transition may shape college students' views on the topic. One study reveals that levels of explicit prejudice increase in college whereas they are somewhat stable in prior grades (Hoover & Fishbein, 1999). Promoting diversity in college is necessary to help counteract this trend of rising prejudice. Higher education can mold the future local and global leaders that will create positive change in current social issues (Hurtado, 2005). Diversity is essential in college because students come from different backgrounds. Some students may never experience diversity or consider the perspective of other groups before entering college (Gurin et al., 2004). Concisely,

the unique college environment can be influential on various individuals' perspectives of diversity and their political opinions. Given the exceptional importance of the college environment, the current study examines diversity attitudes of college students.

Interracial interactions. Indirectly, diversity can yield benefits for college students by providing more opportunities for interracial interactions. Increasing diversity in a given environment augments the probability of interacting with members of other racial groups. The contact hypothesis states that contact between two people of different races can reduce racial prejudice if it fulfills certain requirements (Allport, 1958). Various empirical studies have demonstrated that interracial contact can reduce Whites' negative racial attitudes (Kawakami, Phills, Steele, & Dovidio, 2007; Shook & Fazio, 2008; Van Laar, Levin, Sinclair, & Sidanius, 2005). Having more racial diversity in college environments increases the likelihood that students will interact with other races, and may also facilitate discussion of racial issues (Chang, 1999). Theoretically, the more racial diversity present in college the greater the possibility for interracial interactions.

Nevertheless, merely having a diverse environment may not be enough to encourage interracial interactions. Students tend to associate with others who are similar to themselves, so it may be difficult to find the motivation to engage in interracial interactions (Brazzell & Reisser, 1999). Also, racial prejudice can deter interracial contact from occurring. High levels of racial prejudice and inter-group anxiety relate to decreased interracial contact (Binder et al., 2009). This "prejudice effect" suggests that people higher in prejudice may avoid interracial contact (Binder et al., 2009, p. 844). Without intergroup interactions, the effects of the contact hypothesis never have the opportunity to occur. Consequently, racial prejudice would not be curtailed and other benefits of diversity experiences would not develop.

Formal diversity experiences. Formal diversity experiences (e.g. diversity-related courses, campus-organized activities) may ameliorate the problem of aversion toward interracial contact by first reducing negative racial attitudes. In Rudman, Ashmore, and Gary's (2001) study, Students that participated in a "prejudice and conflict" seminar reported decreased levels of both implicit and explicit forms of prejudice and stereotyping toward African Americans, compared to those that did not complete the seminar (p. 860). These results suggest that courses exposing students to an understanding of diversity can reduce racial prejudice. If racial prejudice is reduced, then the "prejudice effect" would be attenuated or eliminated. Without the "prejudice effect" students may not be as averse toward interracial interactions. Simply, diversity courses and experiences could play a role in combatting racial prejudice and promoting interracial contact.

Moreover, participation in formal diversity experiences has positive outcomes with respect to color-blind racial attitudes and universal diverse orientation (UDO). Unlike definitions of diversity that focus on interaction and inclusion, UDO represents an "awareness and acceptance of both the similarities and differences among people" (Miville et al., 1999, p. 291). Simply, UDO measures the attitude toward a presence of superficial diversity, not toward diversity-related engagements. In a study of 644 first-year college students, results reveal that White college students with a greater participation in formal diversity activities have lower color-blind racial attitudes and a more positive UDO (Spanierman, Neville, Liao, Hammer, & Wang, 2008). There was a correlation between UDO and later CoBRAS scores, but formal diversity experiences fully mediate it. Specifically, higher UDO associates with more participation in formal diversity experiences, which allowed for the later decrease in CoBRAS (Spanierman et al., 2008). Through this relationship, it is possible to predict CoBRAS using

UDO (Spanierman et al., 2008). Formal diversity experiences thus relate to UDO and color-blindness.

Informal diversity experiences. In addition to formal diversity experiences, research also examines informal diversity experiences with respect to their effects on color-blind racial attitudes and UDO (Spanierman et al., 2008). *Informal diversity experience* refers to the amount of close interracial friendships, while *formal diversity experience* translates to frequency of participation in diversity courses and activities (Spanierman et al., 2008). Informal diversity experiences are beneficial to White college students in terms of UDO and color-blindness. Specifically, White college students with more participation in interracial friendships show a more positive UDO and lower color-blind racial attitudes (Spanierman et al., 2008). In conclusion, informal diversity experiences, like formal diversity experiences, can elicit positive outcomes in White college students.

Limitations of diversity experiences. However, some possible obstacles to the efficacy of diversity-related courses and experiences may arise. Multicultural experiences may negatively affect a students' perceptions (Garmon, 2005), especially if the interactions are limited and impersonal (Pattanaik, 1997). Having negative informal diversity interactions could reinforce group differences (Hurtado, 2005). Also, one diversity course or experience may not be sufficient to change attitudes about diversity, and it is most beneficial when diversity training occurs over time (Brown, 2004; Grant, 1994; Ukpokodu, 2004). Garmon (2005) proposes six factors that are essential in transforming diversity attitudes, particularly of preservice teachers: a) openness, b) self-awareness and reflectiveness, c) commitment to social justice, d) intercultural experiences, e) educational experiences, and f) support group experiences. Openness refers to the personality trait of openness to experience, which is categorized by being imaginative,

appreciating beauty and art, having intellectual curiosity, and possessing a willingness to acknowledge various aspects of experience (Costa & McCrae 1992; McCrae & Costa, 1980; McCrae & Costa, 1985). Garmon believes that students possess a wide array of opinions and experiences, so a "tailoring" of diversity instruction to accommodate a student's needs may be critical (2005, p. 283). Although this information provokes issues with the efficacy of informal and formal diversity experiences, they still have the potential to positively affect college students.

Importance of Attitudes toward Diversity

Recognizing the problems with formal diversity experiences increases the importance of researching diversity attitudes. More positive UDO relates to more participation in diversity experiences (Spanierman et al., 2008). If one has a negative attitude toward diversity, it is less likely that he or she will partake in diversity-related activities. Therefore, benefits of participating in diversity experiences may not reach those with negative diversity attitudes. To ensure that as many people as possible reap the benefits of diversity, it is crucial to research attitudes toward diversity and their correlates. Knowing the potential influences of Whites' positive attitudes toward diversity would allow researchers to better promote them. Without diversity promotion, not everyone would experience its range of benefits, particularly White college students.

Predictive capability of attitudes toward diversity. Diversity attitudes can indirectly predict color-blind racial attitudes (Spanierman et al., 2008). Specifically, higher UDO associates with more participation in formal diversity experiences, allowing for the later decrease in CoBRAS (Spanierman et al., 2008). Through this relationship, it is possible to predict CoBRAS using UDO (Spanierman et al., 2008). Since CoBRAS relate to racist beliefs (Gushue &

Constantine, 2007; Neville et al., 2000), the inverse relationship between UDO and CoBRAS suggests a beneficial affect of positive diversity attitudes. In other research, racist beliefs are linked to discrimination, particularly with hiring decisions (McConahay, 1983). The link between racism and discrimination makes the affects of positive diversity attitudes more crucial. Given attitudes toward diversity's relationship with other constructs (e.g. color-blindness), diversity attitudes is an important construct to research.

Since diversity is beneficial in contemporary society and diversity orientation predicts color-blindness, it is necessary to determine factors that covary with positive and negative diversity attitudes. Diversity attitudes' ability to predict CoBRAS, which are related to racism (Gushue & Constantine, 2007; Neville et al., 2000), emphasizes the benefit of exploring components that relate to positive attitudes toward diversity. The current study attempts to identify correlates of college students' attitudes toward diversity. Correlates of positive diversity attitudes may eventually aid the efforts of diversity promotion.

Measuring Attitudes toward Diversity

The Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale (M-GUDS) assesses the construct of Universal Diverse Orientation (UDO) (Miville et al., 1999), but is excluded from the current study. Much of the literature uses UDO as an indicator of attitudes toward diversity. However, UDO has connotations in a superficial awareness and tolerance of others' differences (Fuertes, Miville, Mohr, Sedlacek, & Gretchen, 2000). The UDO contains items pertaining indirectly to diversity, so the link to diversity is subtle and implied. In order to gain a clear understanding of attitudes toward diversity, researchers should implement a more direct measure. The present study attempts to overcome the limitations of UDO research by using a different measure of diversity attitudes.

For the current study, a diversity attitudes scale from Gurin, Peng, Lopez, and Nagda (1999) is utilized. This scale centers on attitudes toward diversity at a given academic institution, while assessing divisiveness of racial diversity and multiculturalism. It is appropriate for this study because it examines unambiguous attitudes toward diversity, revealing students' explicit opinions. With increased clarity of diversity attitudes, research can establish a better comprehension of their correlates. A higher degree of understanding could aid the efficiency and success of future efforts to promote positive diversity attitudes.

Possible Correlates of Attitudes toward Diversity

Gender. Within the literature, there are gender differences regarding levels of racial prejudice and various diversity-related measures. Self-reported comfort with other races or ethnicities based on social distance is higher for women than men (Hoover & Fishbein, 1999; Parillo & Donoghue, 2005). In terms of modern racist attitudes, White women show lower levels than White men (Awad, Cokley, & Ravitch, 2005). The Modern Racism Scale (MRS) measures modern racist attitudes, which reflect more covert racist beliefs such as a) discrimination is absent in America, b) African Americans receive undeserved respect, c) African Americans have excessive demands in terms of equal rights, and d) African Americans are unnecessarily angry in America (McConahay, Hardee, & Batts, 1981). Compared to men, women have higher levels of involvement in diversity-related experiences, they endorse affirmative action policies more, they value efforts of diversity promotion, and they value diversity itself (Aberson, 2007; Beaton & Tougas, 2002; Kossek & Zonia, 1993, Mor Barak, Cherin, & Berkman, 1998). Women also view current diversity more negatively than men and believe more diversity is necessary (Mor Barak et al., 1998). Based on these results, it appears that women's attitudes toward race, diversity promotion, and diversity activities are more positive than those of men.

While most research suggests that women have lower levels of prejudice, Ekehammar, Akrami, and Araya (2003) show that Swedish women have higher negative implicit attitudes toward immigrants than Swedish men. In contrast, the same study reveals that Swedish men have higher levels of explicit prejudice than Swedish women (Ekehammar, et al., 2003). Due to Ekehammar et al.'s (2003) specific sample, results from their study regarding gender differences may not be generalizable to White, American college students. The ages of participants were between 17 and 49 years old, but specific ranges varied depending on the experiment (Ekehammar et al., 2003). Although age range would include most college students, the study does not focus on them. In the experiment with the highest recruitment, there were only 47 participants. The small sample sizes further inhibits the experiments' ability to fully capture variability specific to college students. Since a large body of research focuses on gender differences in explicit prejudice, it is difficult to make conclusions about gender's relationship to implicit forms of racism. Although research is mixed, gender differences are often reported regarding the level of racial prejudice.

Buttner, Lowe, and Billings-Harris (2006) find no relationship between gender and attitudes toward diversity, but a limited sample may be influencing results. The mostly White sample consists of those in positions of power within a business school, with an average age of 54 years. Considering the age, occupation, and position held, more polarization of opinions and experiences of diversity is likely. To become a business school leader, it is possible that completion of diversity training and courses is a requirement. Also, self-report surveys were mailed to participants. Perhaps the freedom of time to complete the survey would encourage socially desirable responses. With diversity in education and business becoming a primary topic in contemporary society, these participants may have felt an obligation to respond to positively

to items about diversity. Therefore, Buttner et al.'s (2006) sample is not representative of the entire population, so results may lack generalizability.

Additionally, gender differences may not be as prevalent among business leaders. Buttner et al.'s (2006) sample is composed of 73% men and 27% women, which may attest to the male dominance of leadership positions within business school. Since the sample is disproportionately male, it is possible that a full range of women's attitudes was not present in the data, and it may have affected women's opinions in general. Ely (1995) explains that male-dominated organizations' success standards often mirror stereotypical male characteristics. When there are high-status and low-status divisions in organizational groups, those from the lower status may try to assimilate into the higher status group culturally as well as psychologically (Ely, 1995; Williams & Giles, 1978). In the business world, women and men form the low-status and high-status groups, respectively. Being part of the low-status group, women may mimic typical characteristics of businessmen by transforming their "thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and expectations" at work to maintain a positive sense of self (Ely, 1995; Tajfel, 1982). If this is true for the sample in Buttner et al.'s (2006), women's attitudes toward diversity may have mirrored that of men. This adaptation of women's behavior could decrease the variability between men and women, so gender differences would not have been found on this measure. Thus, it is crucial to assess attitudes toward diversity and its relationship to gender in a different population.

Given these gender differences in most of the literature, it is possible that such contrasts may also be present with attitudes toward diversity, making gender a necessary correlate to pursue. Typically, women have more involvement in diversity activities and value diversity more than men (Aberson, 2007; Beaton & Tougas, 2002; Kossek & Zonia, 1993, Mor Barak, Cherin, & Berkman, 1998), so a similarly positive relationship with attitudes toward diversity is logical.

More specifically, it is hypothesized that women will have stronger positive attitudes toward diversity than men.

Year in school. Year in school may have an impact on one's involvement with informal and formal diversity experiences. Using a longitudinal design, Hurtado (2005) collects data from college students a) at first-year orientation, b) subsequent times throughout the first year, and c) at the end of their second year. Interestingly, students who take diversity courses by their second year in college experience better educational outcomes in 76% of the measured areas. Hurtado (2005) emphasizes the importance of this finding and expresses that major changes take place within the first two years of college. Before college, students do not commonly live in diverse areas and assessing students later in their academic career helps control for influence of pre-college experiences (Gurin et al., 2002). Assessment later in college also allows students to take advantage of informal and formal diversity experiences. In Brown's (2004) study on multicultural education, a junior was assumed to have more exposure to underrepresented cultures as well as having fulfilled diversity course prerequisites. Moreover, 93% of college students originate from ethnically homogenous areas and schools (Brown, 2004, p. 328). Having more years of college education may mean a greater likelihood that students encounter and participate in diversity activities. With these diversity encounters come the possibility of racial prejudice reductions and positive attitudes toward diversity. Therefore, it is hypothesized that a greater number of years in school will correlate with more positive attitudes toward diversity.

Openness to experience. The personality trait of openness to experience has been related to participation in diversity experiences. Initial openness to diversity experiences relates to a greater willingness to participate in formal diversity activities (Spanierman et al., 2008). Consequently, color-blind racial attitudes are decreased (Spanierman et al., 2008). Openness to

experience may predispose an individual to partake in formal diversity experiences. Considering this predisposition, the effects of diversity experiences on racial prejudice, color-blindness, and UDO are more likely to occur in those who are open to experience.

Research shows that openness to experience relates to higher levels of UDO. Among graduate students in counseling, higher levels of openness to experience relate to higher UDO scores (Thompson, Brossart, Carlozzi, & Miville, 2002). Not only do these two variables relate to one another, but openness to experience is also a significant predictor of UDO (Thompson et al., 2002). In a sample of undergraduate students, openness to experience did positively correlate with UDO, yet it was weak (Strauss & Connerley, 2003). Similarly, openness is not a strong predictor of UDO scores despite the relationship being significant (Strauss & Connerley, 2003). When the composite UDO is broken down, openness to experience demonstrates a stronger prediction of the diversity of contact component (Strauss & Connerley, 2003). Even though the relationship between UDO and openness to experience seems to vary in strength, it is documented in the literature.

Openness may also play a role in one's flexibility of attitudes toward diversity. As mentioned earlier, Garmon (2005) believes that openness is a critical component in changing preservice teachers' attitudes toward diversity. Without an open mind, one may disregard new ideas about diversity. Having more openness to experience in this case would allow diversity experiences to affect one's attitudes toward diversity. Simply, it is hypothesized that higher degrees of openness to experience would relate to positive attitudes toward diversity.

Diversity Experiences.

Formal diversity experiences. As previously discussed, participation in formal diversity experiences relates to more positive UDO (Spanierman et al., 2008). UDO is one measure of

attitudes toward diversity, so it is hypothesized that a similar relationship would occur between formal diversity experiences and the current study's attitudes toward diversity scale. It is thus hypothesized that greater participation in formal diversity experiences would relate to more positive attitudes toward diversity.

Informal diversity experiences. Informal diversity experiences also relate to UDO (Spanierman et al., 2008), as mentioned before. Specifically, having more interracial friendships positively correlates with UDO (Spanierman et al., 2008). The current study hypothesizes that higher informal diversity experiences will relate to more positive attitudes toward diversity.

Color-blind racial attitudes. Finally, CoBRAS may correlate negatively with diversity attitudes because it is a hindrance to racial diversity. Essentially opposing constructs, value for diversity translates into an appreciation of difference, while color-blindness promotes the absolute disregard of racial difference (Awad et al., 2005). Given the opposing natures of positive attitudes toward diversity and color-blindness, it is logical that an inverse relationship would exist between them.

Moreover, the relationship between color-blind racial attitudes and racism suggests a link between color-blindness and attitudes toward diversity. Color-blind racial attitudes may foster racial prejudice (Gushue & Constantine, 2007) and they have a strong positive relationship with modern racist attitudes (Neville et al., 2000). Revisiting the "prejudice effect," racist attitudes may deter college students from engaging in informal diversity experiences (Binder et al., 2009). If this is the case, benefits of such diversity activities relative to high levels of UDO would not occur. UDO measures diversity orientation, so it is similar to diversity attitudes. By these methods, color-blind racial attitudes may relate negatively to attitudes toward diversity. Thus, it the hypothesis is that high color-blind racial attitudes will correlate with more negative attitudes

toward diversity.

One component of color-blindness, awareness of racial privilege, can predict attitudes toward diversity (Buttner et al., 2006). To explain, awareness of racial privilege positively affects business school leaders' attitudes toward diversity (Buttner et al., 2006). An awareness of racial privilege is an opposite component of color-blindness, so it would mean a lower overall CoBRAS score. Buttner et al. (2006) shows that one component of color-blindness has a negative relationship with attitudes toward diversity. Hypothetically, if one part of color-blindness elicits such a link to diversity attitudes, color-blindness as a whole may show similar results. Nevertheless, Buttner et al. (2006) have a specialized sample that may have biased the results. Considering the possible bias, one should interpret conclusions from Buttner et al. (2006) with caution. The best way to determine the validity of Buttner et al.'s (2006) finding is to reassess the relationship of attitudes toward diversity and color-blindness in a more general population. Also, using a different measure of attitudes toward diversity as well as a complete measure of color-blindness could strengthen the validity of Buttner et al. (2006). Since an element of color-blindness had affects attitudes toward diversity, it is necessary to examine if color-blindness as a whole also influences this variable.

Current Study

This study focuses on White students' attitudes toward diversity. Levi and Fried's (2008) study asserts that Whites have more negative attitudes toward affirmative action policies in the workplace than African Americans. Since affirmative action is one type of diversity policy, it may reflect a component of attitudes toward diversity in general. Whites are the primary racial group on college campuses, so negative attitudes toward diversity would hinder a large number of students. These negative diversity attitudes may translate into decreased diversity experiences,

so White college students would not fully benefit from such participation. Accordingly, White college students' attitudes toward racial diversity merit research since their views are the most biased, and possible influences of these attitudes should be explored. Potential correlates of positive attitudes toward racial diversity must undergo examination before establishing their possible influences.

Method

Participants

Participants came from larger mass testing data that was collected over 3 semesters from a small, private, liberal arts university in Midwestern United States. The racial makeup of the university's student population is 76% White. Initially the study contained data from 1 semester, consisting of 82 White undergraduate students, 45 of which were female and 37 were male. The original sample of one semester had measures of openness to experience and diversity experiences among other variables of interest that the other two semesters did not. Due to missing data and lack of significance for the model, openness and diversity experiences were excluded to allow for merging of data to increase sample size and power. Regarding formal diversity experiences of this sample, 59% of students had not yet met the university's diversity flag course requirement, 41% of students had taken 1 or no courses that emphasized diversity, and 53.1% of students believed that their courses taken at the university did not influence their views toward racial or ethnic diversity. For informal diversity experiences, 45.7% of students disagreed with having had meaningful or honest discussions about race with people from a different racial or ethnic group, 63.4% of students agreed that they had interacted with a person from a different racial or ethnic group on a personal level, and 54.9% of students had 1 or 2 of their 6 closest friends that were from a different racial or ethnic group. Yet, 32.9% of students

reported that their 6 closest friends consist entirely of White students. In this sample 44.2% of White students felt that they were not a part of the university's commitment to diversity, while 26.8% reported a neutral position on this opinion.

The final sample merged data from across semesters and included 278 White undergraduates from the same university, but 54 were excluded due to missing data. Some participants were missing substantial portions of the survey because of a copying error and others did not answer enough items from scales of interest. Of the remaining 224 White participants, 127 were female and 97 were male. Of these participants, 86% lived in mostly or entirely White neighborhoods growing up, 67.5% attended mostly or entirely White high schools, and 87.9% had a circle of close friends that were mostly or entirely White when growing up.

Measures

Gender. One self-report item measured gender in an open-ended format. Participants were not given gender options but indicated their gender freely in the provided blank. In the final sample 43.8% of participants were male and 56.7% were female.

Year in School. One item directly inquired about year in school. This was a self-report measure and participants checked which category they belonged to regarding year in school (*first year* = 1 (61.2%), *sophomore* = 2 (23.2%), *junior* = 3 (9.4%), *senior* = 4 (5.8%]. Due to the low number of upper-class students, the variable was recoded as first year students (61.4%) and a second group which included all other students (38.6%).

Openness to Experience. A 10-item scale measuring constructs similar to those in the NEO-PI-R was acquired from the International Personality Item Pool to assess openness to experience (Goldberg, 1999; Goldberg et al. 2006). Participants responded to each item using a five-point accuracy scale (*1*= very inaccurate, *5* = very accurate), indicating the degree that each

statement reflected the participant's behaviors. Sample items include "am not interested in abstract ideas," "do not like art," "tend to vote for liberal political candidates," and "have a vivid imagination." See Appendix A for a complete list of items. Established reliability for this openness scale is α = .82 (Cronbach's α in current sample = .73). Greater scores translate into more openness to experience.

Diversity Experiences.

Formal diversity experiences. A scale measuring formal diversity experiences similar to items addressed in previous research was created using two items. Initially, four items attempted to measure student involvement in formal diversity experiences. The first item inquired about the frequency of attending campus or community events that expose people to racial or ethnic diversity. Due to a formatting error, the response scale was not included in the surveys so a mixture of qualitative and numerical data was received. This item was dropped from analyses. Item two and three were used in the formal diversity experiences scale, which measured the number of courses students have taken about diversity in general as well as the impact courses have had on one's perspective of racial or ethnic diversity. Lastly, the fourth item simply asked if students had completed their diversity flag general education requirement, which is a campus policy to enforce enrollment in diversity-related courses. Since this item was framed dichotomously in terms of yes or no, it was not included in the scale. Reliability of the scale was unacceptable, so it was dropped from analyses (α = .26). Higher scores on the formal diversity experiences scale represented having more formal diversity experiences.

Informal diversity experiences. Three items were aggregated to create a scale of informal diversity experiences at the given institution. Participants responded to two of the items based on seven-point scales measuring extent of agreement with the statements. These two items were "I

have been able to interact with someone from a different racial or ethnic group on a personal level, such as sharing problems or feelings" and "I have had meaningful and honest discussions about race with people from a different racial or ethnic group." Lastly, the third item asked students to think of their six closest friends at the academic institution, and indicate how many of those friends were from a racial or ethnic group different than the student's. Informal diversity experiences exhibited a less than optimal reliability when all three items were used, $\alpha = .63$, and when only Items Two and Three were used, $\alpha = .33$. In contrast, Items One and Two of informal diversity experiences yielded a reliability of $\alpha = .71$, so these two were used to make the scale for analyses. The greater the score on the informal diversity experiences scale indicated a greater amount of informal diversity experiences.

Color-Blind-Racial Attitudes. The 20-item color-blind racial attitudes scale (CoBRAS) evaluated participants' color-blind racial attitudes (Neville et al., 2000). Three components of color-blind racial attitudes were assessed, including racial privilege, institutional discrimination, and blatant racial issues. This was a self-report measure to which participants indicated their degree of accord for each statement on a six-point scale (*1*= strongly disagree, *6*= strongly agree). A statement of the institutional discrimination subscale is "due to racial discrimination, programs such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality," and an example of the blatant racial issues subscale is "racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not an important problem today." Items of the racial privilege subscale include "white people in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin," and "race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not." A complete list of items can be found in Appendix B. Higher scores symbolize greater unawareness of the three constructs addressed by the subscales. Previous reliability for CoBRAS measures was $\alpha = .86$ for the composite

(Cronbach's α in current sample = .80), α = .80 for racial privilege (Cronbach's α in current sample = .76), α = .80 for institutional discrimination (Cronbach's α in current sample = .67), and α = .70 for blatant racial issues (Cronbach's α in current sample = .66; Neville et al., 2000). For this study, the three CoBRAS subscales as well as their composite were used to better identify the relationship that the specific components and the overall construct have with attitudes toward diversity.

Attitudes toward Diversity. Five items measured participants' attitudes toward diversity at their academic institution. This scale has a Cronbach's α range of 0.78 to 0.86 (Gurin et al., 1999). The current study's α was lower than established, but still acceptable for analyses (α = .70). Participants indicated the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with the five statements about diversity. Level of agreement to each statement was measured on a seven-point scale (*1* = strongly disagree, *7* = strongly agree). Statements such as "the university's focus on diversity puts too much emphasis on differences between racial or ethnic groups," "the university's emphasis on diversity means I can't talk honestly about racial, ethnic, or gender issues," and "the current focus on multiculturalism in our schools undermines the common ties that bind us as a nation" were included in the diversity scale. All items in the scale can be found in Appendix C. Items were coded so that higher scores indicate more positive attitudes toward diversity.

Procedure

Data was acquired from mass data collection that was conducted through General Psychology courses. College students enrolled in General Psychology were invited to complete various surveys during class. A research assistant went to each General Psychology course and the professor exited the room. Then, the assistant distributed packets containing surveys and the consent form. After the assistant directed students to the consent form, they were able to read it

and pose any questions. The form outlined the voluntary nature of the study, potential risks, confidentiality, and the ability to withdrawal at any time without penalty. Anonymity could not be assured because students filled out call-back cards for the opportunity to participate in other studies. However, students were assigned ID numbers that did not correspond to their student ID and call back cards were stored and entered separately. Participants did not receive compensation for filling out the survey, but course credit was given if they participated in any subsequent studies.

Results

Preliminary Statistical Analyses

The initial question included the measurements of openness to experience, and both informal and formal diversity experiences. Therefore, after determining reliability of measures, we ran an ANCOVA to explore if there were significant predictors. ANCOVA analyses were implemented for this study due to the mixture of categorical and continuous variables. An ANCOVA allows for control of potential covariates to concentrate on the relationship between the predictor and criterion. Nevertheless, one can still assess the relationship between the covariates and the criterion. Differences between levels of categorical variables were expected, suggesting the use of ANCOVA over regression. Transforming categorical variables into continuous variables and running a regression is possible, but for this study it was not appropriate. A smaller sample of 82 White students contributed data on openness to experience as well as diversity experiences. The formal diversity experiences scale was not analyzed as a covariate due to inadequate reliability. The model was not significant, $F(5, 76) = 2.18$, $p > .05$, *ns*. Since the model was not significant, coefficients from the analysis cannot be interpreted. Openness and diversity experiences were excluded from further analyses to allow for merging of

data. The larger data set did not include measures of openness to experience or diversity experiences, but did contain all other variables of interest. Merging the data increased sample size and thus power, augmenting the model's ability to detect relationship if they do truly exist. Therefore openness to experience and diversity experiences were dropped.

Descriptive Statistical Analyses

In the larger sample, with the merged data, responses from 224 White participants were analyzed. Means, standard deviations, and Pearson's correlations for each variable are shown in Table 1. The blatant racial issues subscale of CoBRAS had a significant negative correlation with gender (r = -.15). An independent t-test found that females had significantly lower CoBRAS blatant racial issues scores (M = 15.47, SD = 4.48, N = 126) than males (M = 16.93, SD = 5.39, N = 97), $t(221) = 2.21$, $p < .05$. Positive diversity attitudes had a significant correlation with composite CoBRAS (r = -.27) and the blatant racial issues subscale of CoBRAS (r = -.24). Institutional discrimination of CoBRAS was significantly correlated to positive attitudes toward diversity (r = -.33). Yet, positive attitudes toward diversity were not significantly related to the racial privilege subscale of CoBRAS, gender, or year in school. The range for the CoBRAS composite scale was 63, with a minimum of 31 and a maximum of 94. The Blatant Racial Issues' range was 22, with a minimum of 6 (possible 6) and a maximum of 28 (possible 36). As for the Institutional Discrimination Subscale, the range was 27 with a minimum of 12 (possible 7) and a maximum of 39 (possible 42). Finally, the range of the Racial Privilege Subscale was 32 with a minimum of 10 (possible 7) and a maximum of 42 (possible 42).

Inferential Statistical Analyses

A univariate analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) analyzed the relationship between diversity attitudes and CoBRAS and covariates, gender and year in school. The model was

significant, $F(5, 214) = 6.75$, $p < .01$, with 7.3% of the variance explained. Standard errors, beta weights, and significance levels can be found in Table 2. The only significant predictor of attitudes toward diversity was CoBRAS, ($B = -.10$, $SE = .03$) $p < .01$.

A second ANCOVA was run to examine if the subscales of COBRAS each were significant correlates. The model was significant $F(3, 216) = 6.73$, $p < .01$ and explained 11.6% of the variance. Standard errors, beta weights, and significance levels can be found in Table 3. Institutional discrimination ($B = -.23$, $SE = .06$) and blatant racial issues ($B = -.18$, $SE = .08$) subscales were significant predictors of attitudes toward diversity, but the racial privilege subscale was not ($B = .06$, $SE = .06$).

Discussion

This study analyzes the relationships of gender, year in school, openness to experience, diversity experiences, color-blind racial attitudes, and attitudes toward diversity of White undergraduate students. The purpose of the current research is to uncover influences of Whites' positive attitudes toward diversity to aid their future promotion. Diversity has a vast array of benefits on college campuses, and positive attitudes may increase the likelihood of experiencing such benefits. Results support only one of the proposed hypotheses, specifically for color-blind racial attitudes. No significant relationships were found with regard to gender, year in school, openness to experience, and diversity experiences. However, color blind racial attitudes are negatively related to positive attitudes toward diversity. This study replicates some of the reviewed literature, but not others.

Some means, standard deviations, and correlations from the current study were similar to previous research while others differed. The means and standard deviations of composite CoBRAS, the CoBRAS Racial Privilege Subscale, the CoBRAS Institutional Discrimination

Subscale, and the CoBRAS Blatant Racial Issues Subscale were almost identical to those for White students in previous research (Neville et al. 2000). Means and standard deviations of the attitudes toward diversity scale do not appear in Gurin et al. (1999) because it was not a primary variable of interest. Therefore, it is unclear if the scores of diversity attitudes in this study are similar to other studies. As for correlations, the relationship between gender and diversity attitudes was not significant, which is unlike other research between gender and UDO for Whites (Spanierman et al., 2008). In contrast, the current study supports the Buttner et al. (2006) analysis of gender and UDO that yielded non-significant results. Spanierman et al. (2008) found no significant correlations between gender and composite CoBRAS, as did this study. Considering CoBRAS racial privilege, the current study found no relationship with gender while Buttner et al. (2006) found a significant positive relationship (with *female* = 1 and *male* = 0).

Color-Blind Racial Attitudes

Composite CoBRAS. Coinciding with the present hypothesis and past research, color-blind racial attitudes relate to attitudes toward diversity. The hypothesis states that color-blind racial attitudes would negatively relate to positive attitudes toward diversity. Gushue and Constantine (2007) and Neville et al. (2000) both found that color-blind racial attitudes relate strongly to measures of racial prejudice. Regarding the Binder et al. (2009) "prejudice effect," a logical negative relationship between Whites' color-blind racial attitudes and their positive attitudes toward diversity is understandable. Results of the present study support the hypothesis and they replicate other research.

The magnitude of the relationship between Whites' color-blind racial attitudes and their attitudes toward diversity demonstrate the necessity of exploring other factors. Since color-blindness did not explain all of the variance of diversity attitudes, the former only partially

influences the latter. A major objective of the current study is to uncover factors that relate to positive attitudes toward diversity. This study only reveals color-blindness as a factor in positive attitudes toward diversity, thus investigation of more variables is necessary.

CoBRAS subscales. Only two of the CoBRAS subscales relate significantly to attitudes toward diversity. Institutional discrimination has the strongest relationship with attitudes toward diversity, followed by blatant racial issues. Yet, racial privilege does not relate to attitudes toward diversity. This lack of relationship counters results from Buttner et al. (2006), who focus on the racial privilege subscale and the UDO measure of attitudes toward diversity. Both institutional discrimination and blatant racial issues have the same negative valence as composite color-blind racial attitudes, which coincides with the proposed hypothesis. Simply, a greater awareness of institutional discrimination and blatant racial issues relates to Whites' positive attitudes toward diversity.

Unpacking the constructs of institutional discrimination and blatant racial issues clarifies the connotations of their relationship with Whites' diversity attitudes. Items from the institutional discrimination subscale reflect a disagreement with affirmative action policies and a dismissal of others' culture. For example, students with low awareness of institutional discrimination believe people of other cultures should conform to American culture. As for the blatant racial issues subscale, it reflects the opinion that racism is no longer a problem and discussion of racial issues should not occur. Furthermore, those with an unawareness of blatant racial issues believe that educational institution should exclude the history of other races and ethnicities. White students who hold these types of attitudes are more likely to view institutional diversity as being divisive.

In this sample 44.2% of White students felt that they were not a part of the university's commitment to diversity, and 26.8% of students were neutral on this thought. Previous research

on Whites' definitions of diversity, found that 80% of undergraduates view Whites as having a part in diversity (Banks, 2009). The difference between the current study's results and those in the study of diversity definitions may highlight the contrast between institutional diversity attitudes and those toward diversity in general. Nonetheless, when acknowledging the growing number of People of Color in America, these negative perspectives of institutional diversity and of the experience of people from other cultures' could be detrimental. This issue demonstrates the importance of clarifying the definition and benefits of diversity initiatives.

The fact that there was no relationship between Whites' attitudes toward diversity and the racial privilege subscale suggests that perhaps something is notable about the current study's sample. Attending a small, private university may make a difference in participants' perceptions of racial privilege. Private universities are known for being more expensive to attend, implying that students in the sample are more likely to come from higher-income backgrounds. Historically, those with higher incomes tend to benefit the most from privilege and being an all-White sample adds the benefit of White privilege. Often those who benefit from discriminatory practices do not recognize their privilege (Kivel, 2002). This characteristic of the sample may influence the lack of relationship between attitudes toward diversity and racial privilege. Considering the ranges of the subscales, Racial Privilege is the highest and its maximum is the highest possible score on that scale. Ranges are not often reported in the literature, so it is difficult to assess this sample's relationship with others based on range. In contrast, means and standard deviations of this sample do coincide with established numbers (Neville et al., 2000). Despite this similar CoBRAS statistics, characteristics of the sample may have influenced diversity attitude scores and CoBRAS relationship with those attitudes. To support such a claim more research on the divisive diversity attitudes scale and various demographic characteristics

must occur.

The reliability of the CoBRAS Racial Privilege subscale may also explain the lack of relationship with diversity attitudes. Racial Privilege reliability was lower than optimal, but it was still adequate for testing. Even though the reliability of the racial privilege subscale did not differ much from past research (Neville et al, 2000), this discrepancy may have affected replicability. For example, Buttner et al. (2006) only used the Racial Privilege subscale and found a significant relationship with diversity attitudes, as measured by UDO. The reliability of the Racial Privilege subscale in Buttner et al. (2006) was lower than that of the current study (in Buttner α = .68). This information decreases the chance that Racial Privilege reliability was the issue in this study. Yet, in Buttner et al., 658 participants were included in the analyses so lower reliability for a given scale is not a substantial problem. If Racial Privilege reliability in the current study was higher, a relationship with diversity attitudes may have been found.

However, it is also possible that there was no relationship between diversity attitudes and racial privilege due to the nature of the diversity attitudes scale in this study. The scale from this study focuses on a divisive aspect of negative attitudes toward diversity (Gurin et al., 1999), while UDO symbolizes an awareness and acceptance of diversity (Miville et al., 1999). Contemplating how results in the current study differ from previous research on diversity attitudes, UDO and the divisive attitudes toward diversity scale may be measuring different aspects of diversity attitudes. Moreover, the current scale assesses diversity attitudes at the institutional level. Another potential explanation deals with the overt nature of the divisive diversity attitudes scale. Perhaps the current racial climate and the emphasis on diversity make students reluctant to report negative attitudes of diversity. It may be apparent to students that the divisive diversity attitudes scale measures opposition of diversity initiatives. Thus, it would be

beneficial for future research to test both UDO and the divisive attitudes toward diversity scale in concert to establish their relationship.

Gender

No significant differences between genders were found with regard to attitudes toward diversity, which does not support the hypothesis of the current study as well as most previous research. The prediction of this study is that women would have more positive attitudes toward diversity than men, but results show their attitudes do not differ. Hoover and Fishbein (1999), Parillo and Donoghue (2005), Awad et al. (2005), Aberson (2007), Beaton and Tougas (2002), Kossek and Zonia (1993), Morbarak et al. (1998), and Ekehammar et al. (2003) all reported gender differences with respect to diversity-related constructs. Although the above research did not deal directly with attitudes toward diversity, their principle of gender differences was not replicated. However, the lack of gender differences replicates the findings of Buttner et al. (2006).

In contrast, gender is significantly correlated to the Blatant Racial Issues Subscale of CoBRAS. Gender negatively relates to blatant racial issues, illustrating that women tend to be more aware of blatant racial issues. In previous research women score lower than men on unawareness of all three CoBRAS aspects (Neville et al., 2000). Such relationships are logical because women may be more likely than men to understand issues of discrimination due to their experience with sexism (Neville et al., 2000). For institutional discrimination and racial privilege there are no relationships with gender, suggesting economic class may interact with gender. As previously explained, the small, private university is likely to attract students that come from a privileged background. Often White privilege is present due to institutional forms of discrimination, so unawareness of such privilege would reasonably relate to unawareness of

institutional discrimination. Economic standing may have thus interacted with gender characteristics with respect to aspects of color-blindness.

Year in School

Contrary to the present hypothesis and common assumptions in the literature, year in school does not correlate with Whites' attitudes toward diversity. Expectations include having more years in college relates to more positive attitudes toward diversity. Results do not support the current hypothesis or the implications set forth by Hurtado (2005), Gurin et al. (2002), and Brown (2004).

Openness to Experience

Since the model was not significant, the relationship between openness to experience and Whites' attitudes toward diversity could not be determined. The hypothesis states that openness would positively relate to positive attitudes toward diversity, and Garmon (2005) thinks openness can change attitudes toward diversity. Even though Spanierman et al. (2008) measure openness to diversity using UDO and not a traditional Openness to Experience Scale, the constructs are similar. Spanierman et al. (2008) do not measure the construct of attitudes toward diversity as defined by this study, but their results indicating a relationship of openness with CoBRAS and participation in diversity experiences suggested similar correlations with this study's measure of diversity attitudes. Likewise, Thompson et al. (2002), and Strauss and Connerley (2003) demonstrate weak correlations between UDO and openness. The current study does not provide insight into the hypothesis because the model was not significant, and replication of previous research cannot be determined.

Diversity Experiences

Once again, the model was not significant so the relation between diversity experiences

and Whites' attitudes toward diversity cannot be concluded. Both formal and informal diversity experiences were expected to positively relate to positive attitudes toward diversity. Spanierman et al. (2008) show that formal and informal diversity experiences positively relate to UDO. Yet, the current results do not replicate the conceptual relationship between these constructs and cannot support the hypothesis because the model lacked significance.

Limitations

Specific limitations. One setback for the year in school measure is the lack of adequate representation for each year. It is possible that differences may be undetectable when comparing first year students to sophomores, juniors, and seniors combined. If White students do not experience much diversity until sophomore or junior year and diversity experiences do drive differences between years in school, this grouping would not find such contrasts. Simply, diversity attitudes of White upper-class students would average out, masking differences on this variable. Initially year in school was run as a continuous variable, which would discount this possibility. However, there are not enough upper-class students in this study to adequately represent each year in school, making limited variability likely. It is thus necessary that an adequate number of students for each class partake in future studies so differences between years in school can be detected, if present at all.

Considering the strength of the relationship between openness and diversity attitudes in past research, it is possible that the small sample size and the type of scale would inhibit the ability to find such a relationship among White students in the current sample. Although the relationship between openness and diversity attitudes cannot be asserted because the model lacked significance, possible limitations of the sample and scale should be considered in future research. Both sample size and effect size affect statistical power. The sample size of 83

participants may not capture adequate variability to reveal weaker relationships. Additionally, the current Openness to Experience scale only consists of 10 items. A more elaborate scale of openness may better represent different aspects of the construct, allowing for distinction of nuances between them. For example, Thompson et al. (2002) find that openness to aesthetics as well as openness to values elicit the strongest correlations with UDO, but openness to fantasy does not correlate with UDO. The scale in the current study was too small to represent all openness subtypes. Similarly, the openness scale redundantly includes statements and their opposites, reducing the scope of openness measured. One pair of items with such an issue includes "do not like art" with "believe in the importance of art." Therefore, it appears that the openness scale from the present study detects specific and limited facets of openness to experience. In future research it would be beneficial to utilize a longer and more complete scale of openness that could detect even subtle relationships.

Various limitations exist regarding diversity experiences, which should be acknowledged in future study. For this research the model was not significant, so it is impossible to determine whether these limitations affect this study. Nonetheless, discussing such issues is beneficial for other studies of diversity attitudes and experiences. One constraint of the formal diversity experience scale is the poor internal consistency reliability, suggesting that replicability is compromised. The poor reliability could explain why the formal diversity experiences scale did not detect differences. Additionally, both diversity experiences scales do not contain many items, decreasing their potential to explain variability and making it difficult to accurately measure the constructs as a whole. Another limitation is the poor racial diversity of the institution from which the sample came. An overwhelming majority of the students at that institution are White (76%), which may reduce opportunities to have informal diversity experiences. Such low racial diversity

makes it easier for White students to associate solely or primarily with other White students. Consequently, White students may have to deliberately seek informal interactions with those from a different racial or ethnic group. As assessed in the smaller sample, 32.9% of students report that their 6 closest friends all were White, with 54.9% of students claiming 1 or 2 of their closest friends were from a different racial or ethnic group. Also from the smaller sample, 45.7% of students claim they had not had meaningful or honest discussions about race with people from a different racial or ethnic group. This result suggests that although some students do have a couple close friends who are of a different race or ethnicity, they do not necessarily discuss racial issues. Therefore, the lack of meaningful informal diversity experiences may inhibit any potential relationships with attitudes toward diversity.

General limitations. General limitations of the current study may affect the results and future research on Whites' attitudes toward diversity should account for them. Data was gathered from participants over 3 different semesters, so a cohort effect may be present. Analyses between the semesters show there were no such differences between them, so this potential setback is not an issue. Another limitation is that convenience sampling was used, in that only participants enrolled in general psychology courses participated in the study. It is true that general psychology courses are not solely for psychology majors, so the sample may be somewhat representative of the campus population. In future studies researchers should pursue a better method of recruitment to gather a sample with a true representation of university students in general. The fact that data comes from a small, private, mostly White university in the Midwest could also affect results, so generalizability to other populations is questionable. Similarly, the present study does not represent the experience of People of Color because it only analyzes data from White students. Results from this study can only apply to White people, so future studies

are necessary to assess how diversity attitudes relate to the tested variables among People of Color. Next, items from the diversity attitudes scale center on participants' perspectives of the respective institution's diversity policy. The study never inquired about the students' awareness of the diversity policy, and their perception of such policy may affect their opinion of diversity. Likewise, the results may be applicable only to institutions that have similar diversity policies and publicity of such policies.

Future Directions

There are different options for the future exploration of attitudes toward diversity as well as applications of such study. Color-blindness is found to have a role in Whites' negative attitudes toward diversity, so researchers should study ways to reduce color-blindness in attempt to improve diversity attitudes among Whites. Even though color-blind racial attitudes relate to diversity attitudes, the relationship indicates that other factors also affect diversity attitudes. With inspection of other influences, researchers could construct a more complete picture of methods in diversity attitude promotion. Much of the literature on attitudes toward diversity uses the UDO assessment. It is thus critical future research tests the relationship between UDO and the divisive attitudes toward diversity scale to fully understand past and present research. A precise comprehension of the aspects of diversity attitudes and which variables influence each facet would increase the efficiency of promotion efforts. Furthermore, to realize the full potential of diversity's benefits one must engage in diversity-related experiences. In social psychological literature attitudes do not always translate into similar behaviors. Comprehensive study of measures of diversity attitudes and diversity-related behaviors would determine their relationship. Ultimately, such research could lead to encouraging engagement in diversity-related experiences.

Implications.

Results of the current study have several implications. Reflecting on the importance of color-blindness in shaping diversity attitudes, education may aid the development of positive diversity attitudes. Specifically, education focused on increasing awareness of institutional discrimination and blatant racial issues may be beneficial. Integrating information on racial issues and racial discrimination into the college curriculum is one method of action. Generally, marketing the importance and benefit of diversity could directly augment positive attitudes toward diversity. The diversity attitudes scale for this study focuses on perceptions of divisiveness, so emphasizing the unifying quality of diversity may help dispel Whites' negative attitudes. White students may also not be aware of an institution's diversity initiatives, so such principles should be overtly advertised. Understanding an institution's commitment to diversity may convey the importance of diversity to students. Whites' diversity attitudes are important because Whites' make up a large portion of the college population and often they come from homogenous backgrounds. Although this study only examines Whites' diversity attitudes, research on the diversity attitudes of People of Color are also important. White students make up one part of the spectrum of attitudes toward diversity, so to understand the entire picture the diversity attitudes of People of Color must be considered. Eventually, the body of research on diversity attitudes could facilitate the creation of inclusive environments on college campuses for all races and ethnicities.

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Table 1

Pearson Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations

Variable	*M(SD)*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*
1. Gender[a]							
2. Year in school		-.13					
3. CoBRAS full	65.99(12.83)	-.11	-.23				
4. CoBRAS racial privilege	26.11(6.31)	-.02	-.06	.78**			
5. CoBRAS institutional discrimination	23.78(5.79)	-.1 0	.05	.70**	.23**		
6. CoBRAS blatant racial issues	16.10(4.94)	-.15*	-.04	.78**	.47**	.36**	
7. Diversity attitudes	21.74(4.92)	.11	-.10	-.27**	-.06	-.33**	-.24**

[a] For gender: *male* = 1 and *female* = 2

*$p < .05$

**$p < .01$

Table 2

Parameter Estimates for ANCOVA of Attitudes Toward Diversity for Composite CoBRAS

	B	*SE*	*p*
Intercept	28.00	1.73	.00**
Gender	-.65	.66	.32
Year in school	.98	.67	.14
CoBRAS full	-.10	.03	.00**

**$p < .01$

Table 3

Parameter Estimates for ANCOVA of Attitudes Toward Diversity for CoBRAS Subscales

	B	*SE*	*p*
Intercept	28.03	1.74	.00**
Gender	-.47	.64	.47
Year in School	.84	.65	.20
CoBRAS racial privilege	.06	.06	.26
CoBRAS institutional discrimination	-.23	.06	.00**
CoBRAS blatant racial issues	-.18	.08	.02*

*$p < .05$

**$p < .01$

Appendix A

Items in the Openness to Experience Measure

1) Believe in the importance of art.

2) Have a vivid imagination.

3) Am not interested in abstract ideas.

4) Tend to vote for liberal political candidates.

5) Avoid philosophical discussions.

6) Do not like art.

7) Tend to vote for conservative political candidates.

8) Carry the conversation to a higher level.

9) Do not enjoy going to art museums.

10) Enjoy hearing new ideas.

Appendix B

Items in the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS)

Racial Privilege

1) White people in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.

2) Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich.

3) Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not.

4) Race plays an important role in who gets sent to prison.

5) Race plays a major role in the type of social services (such as type of health care or day care) that people receive in the U.S.

6) Racial and ethnic minorities do not have the same opportunities as White people in the U.S.

7) White people are more to blame for racial discrimination in the U.S. than racial and ethnic minorities.

Institutional Discrimination

8) Social policies, such as affirmative action, discriminate unfairly against White people.

9) White people in the U.S. are discriminated against because of the color their skin.

10) English should be the only official language in the U.S.

11) Due to racial discrimination, programs such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality.

12) Racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.

13) It is important that people begin to think of themselves as American and not African American, Mexican American or Italian American.

14) Immigrants should try to fit into the culture and adopt the values of the U.S.

Blatant Racial Issues

15) Racism is a major problem in the U.S.

Appendix B (continued)

16) Racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not an important problem today.

17) Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension.

18) It is important for political leaders to talk about racism to help work through or solve society's problems.

19) It is important for public schools to teach about the history and contributions of racial and ethnic minorities.

20) Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations.

Appendix C

Items in the Attitudes toward Diversity Measure

1) The university's commitment to diversity fosters more division among racial or ethnic groups than intergroup understanding.

2) The university's focus on diversity puts too much emphasis on differences between racial or ethnic groups.

3) The university's emphasis on diversity means I can't talk honestly about racial, ethnic of gender issues.

4) The current focus on multiculturalism in our schools undermines the common ties that bind us as a nation.

5) Thinking about groups is largely divisive.