

CROSS-CULTURAL NOTES

Under this heading appear summaries of studies which, in 500 words or less, provide comparable data from two or more societies through the use of a standard measuring instrument; additional details concerning the results can be obtained by communicating directly with the investigator.

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RACIAL PREFERENCES AMONG SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE AND BLACK PRESCHOOL CHILDREN*

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Some American studies² have shown that children aged three and four years display a marked preference for their own racial groups when shown black and white dolls or pictures. However, more recent studies³ indicate that the responses may be inconsistent. This change may be a function of recent attempts to encourage integration and raise the status of blacks. Little research has been done in this area in South Africa where infrequent cross-racial contact occurs between children owing to apartheid and hence preference for one's own racial group may be expected. Since blacks, however, in South Africa are accorded low status, it is possible that they prefer themselves significantly less often than whites prefer whites.

Twenty black and 20 white children (with equal numbers of boys and girls) aged 4.5 to 5.5 years were tested by an *E* of their own race to avoid possible *S-E* racial interactions. Two tasks assessed racial preference.

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¹ Reprints are available from the third author at the address shown at the end of this article.

² Goodman, M. *Race Awareness in Young Children*. Cambridge, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1952.; Porter, J. *Black Child, White Child: The Development of Racial Attitudes*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1971.

³ Fox, D., & Jordan, V. B. Racial preference and identification of black, American Chinese, and white children. *Genet. Psychol. Monog.*, 1973, 88, 229-286.; Winnick, R. H., & Taylor, J. A. Racial preference—36 years later. *J. Soc. Psychol.*, 1977, 102, 157-158.

First, Katz and Zalk's racial preference questionnaire⁴ for children was administered. In addition to the total score, racial liking and racial identification indices were obtained. Secondly, a behavioral task was employed in which the children had the option of donating a sweet to a photograph of a black or a white child. This also served as a validity check for the questionnaire data.

A 2 (race) \times 2 (sex) ANOVA was used to analyze the questionnaire scores. Significant race main effects for the racial liking ($F = 16.95$; $df = 1/36$; $p < .001$), racial identification ($F = 25.58$; $df = 1/36$; $p < .001$), and global preference ($F = 28.97$; $df = 1/36$; $p < .001$) indices emerged. In all instances, white children preferred themselves more frequently than their black counterparts preferred themselves. No significant interaction or sex main effects emerged. The two race groups also differed regarding sweet donations ($\chi^2 = 10.8$; $df = 1$; $p < .001$). Five percent of the whites donated their sweets to blacks, and 50% of the black children gave theirs to whites. This behavioral task correlated significantly with racial identification ($r = .60$; $df = 39$; $p < .001$), racial liking ($r = .62$; $df = 39$; $p < .001$), and overall preference scores ($r = .62$; $df = 39$; $p < .001$). Some validity can therefore be ascribed to the questionnaire data.

These results clearly showed racial preferences among preschool children in South Africa, which may reflect the white groups' relatively privileged position. White children rarely see their black counterparts and perceive black adults typically in low status roles. The present results may also reflect the greater ethnocentrism of South African white children, who have been shown to be significantly more ethnocentric than, for example, Indian children.⁵ That no sex differences in racial preferences were manifested is consistent with previous research.

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⁴ Katz, P. A., & Zalk, S. R. Doll preferences: An index of racial attitudes? *J. Educ. Psychol.*, 1974, 66, 663-668.

⁵ Barling, J. I., & Fincham, F. D. Cultural and sexual effects on psychological conservatism in children. *J. Soc. Psychol.*, 1979, 107, 15-21.