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Colorblind Racial Attitudes and Emotion Dysregulation: Impact on White People's Ethnocultural Empathy and Feelings towards People of Color

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Colorblind Racial Attitudes and Emotion Dysregulation: Impact on White People's Ethnocultural Empathy and Feelings towards People of Color

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Introduction:

Although progress has been made, racism persists in various forms, often manifesting in subtle and systemic ways that perpetuate racial inequities^{1,2,3}. Researchers have found that colorblind racial attitudes, which minimize the importance of race⁴, are a key barrier that impedes White individuals' understanding of systemic racism and negatively impacts their attitudes and empathy towards people of color^{5,6}. Limited research has explored the relationship between colorblind racial attitudes and emotion dysregulation, with one study finding that higher emotion dysregulation was associated with lower colorblind racial attitudes⁷. This study aims to examine how emotion dysregulation relates to White people's ethnocultural empathy and warmth toward people of color, and to explore the role of colorblind attitudes as a potential moderator. Understanding these dynamics could help identify intervention points to dismantle racial biases and address systemic racism at the relational level^{7,8,9}.

Current study:

Research question: Do colorblind racial attitudes moderate the relationship between emotion dysregulation and feelings towards people of color in White people?

Hypotheses:

- 1) Lower colorblind racial attitudes will demonstrate a positive correlation between emotion dysregulation and outcome variables: ethnocultural empathy and warmth toward people of color
- 2) Higher colorblind racial attitudes will demonstrate a negative correlation between emotion dysregulation and our outcome variables: ethnocultural empathy and warmth toward people of color

Methods:

- Responses taken from the preintervention responses of a larger intervention online study (Hochman & Suyemoto, 2020)

Participants

- 511 White people ages 19-50 range (M = 34.29; SD = 7.59)
- 311 female; 189 male; 5 queer/gender queer; 3 transgender; 3 not listed
- 422 heterosexual; 51 bisexual; 12 gay/lesbian; 11 asexual; 9 pansexual; 4 queer; 2 not listed
- Highly educated: 130 some college; 181 college degree; 67 postgraduate degrees

Inclusion criteria:

- Participants who fall into the upper and lower quartile ranges of colorblind racial attitudes based on their colorblind racial attitudes scales (CoBRAS) scores.

Methods (continued):

Measures

Predictors:

1. Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS; Gratz & Roemer, 2008):
 - Higher scores = more difficulty in emotion regulation
2. Colorblind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS; Neville et al., 2000)
 - Higher scores = higher colorblind racial attitudes

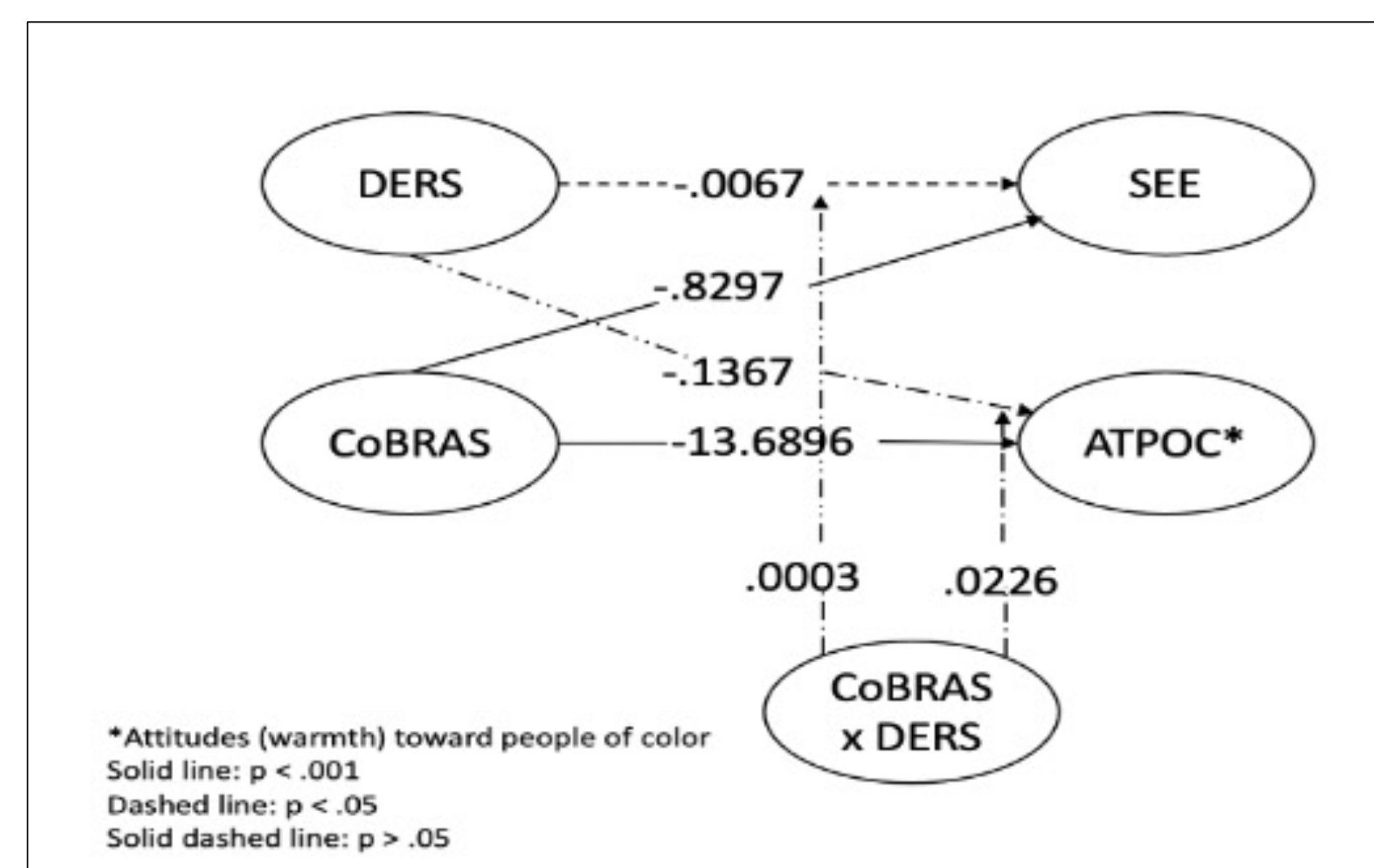
Outcomes:

1. Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE; Wang et al., 2003)
 - Higher scores = higher empathy
2. Attitudes (warmth) toward POC on a feeling thermometer scale (Hochman et al., 2020)
 - Higher scores = more warmth

Data Analysis:

- Identify participants who fall into the upper, middle, and lower quartile ranges based on CoBRAS score using rank cases in SPSS
- Moderation analyses were conducted using PROCESS macro version 4.2 for SPSS (Hayes, 2022) using ten thousand bootstrap bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals (95% CI)

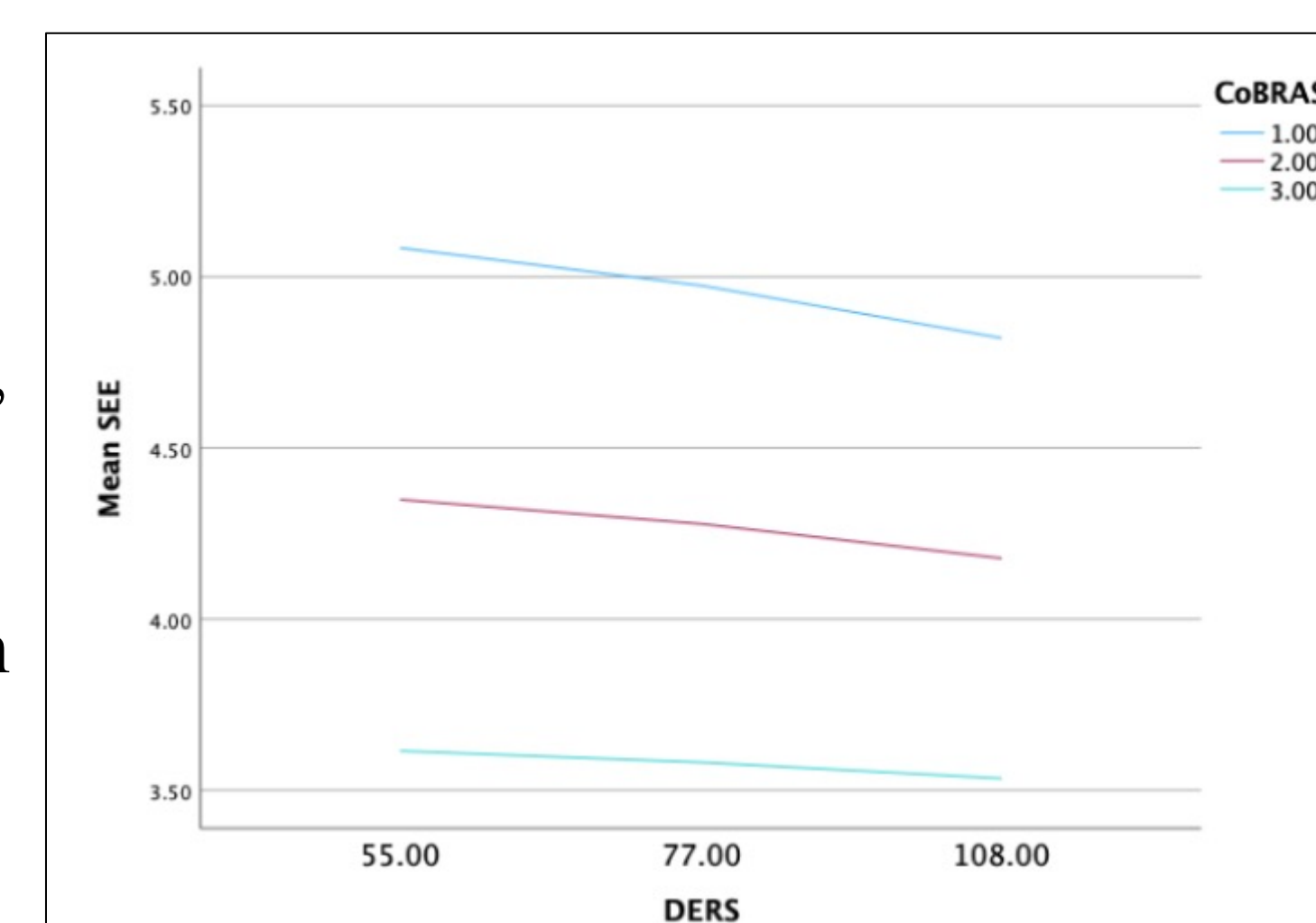
Results:



Although participants with higher emotion dysregulation had lower colorblind racial attitudes, this did not change their ethnocultural empathy and warmth towards people of color.

Ethnocultural Empathy

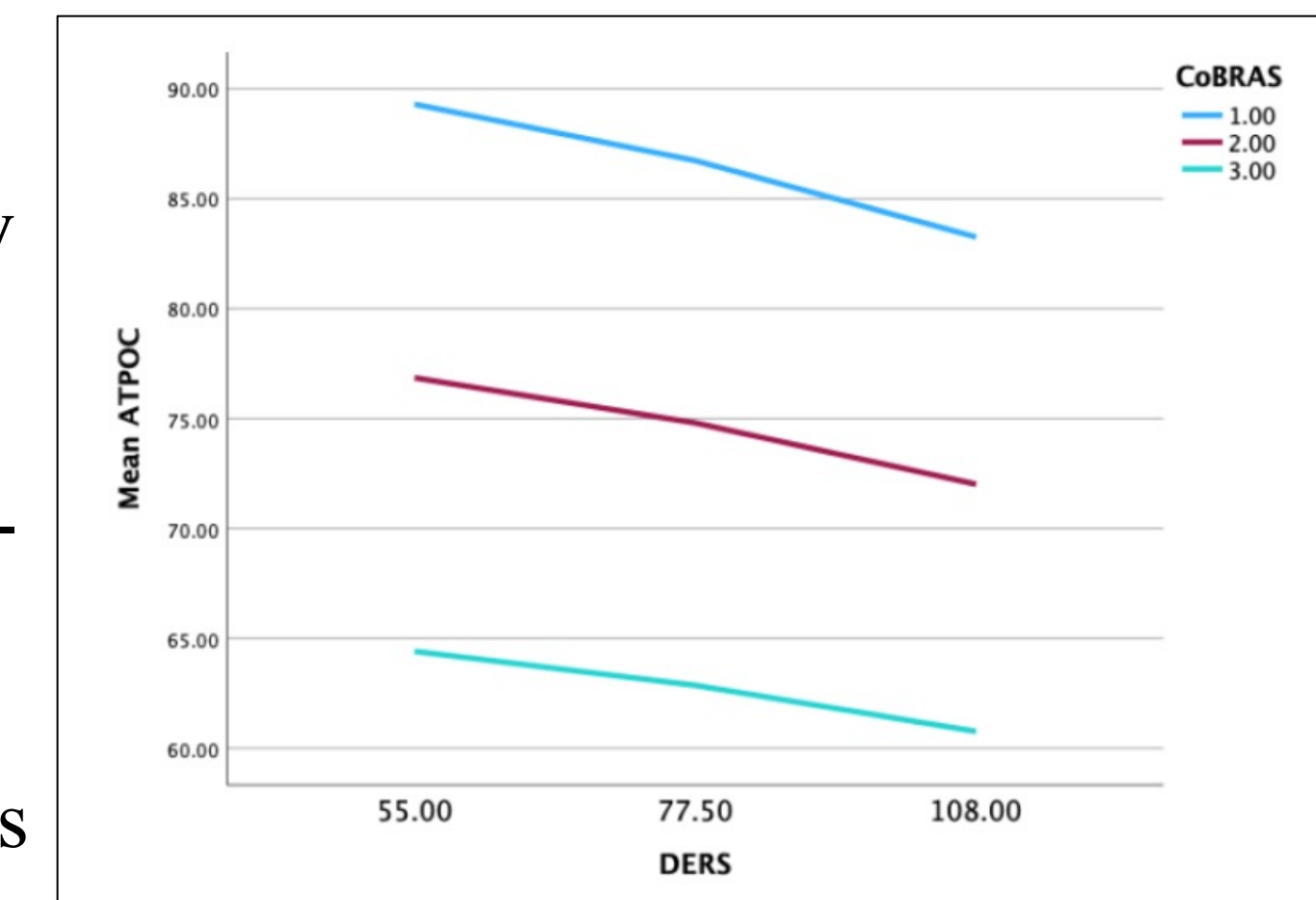
- Emotion dysregulation and colorblind racial attitude had significant impact on ethnocultural empathy (b = -0.0067, p = 0.01, b = -0.8297, p < 0.0001, R² = 0.42)
- The interaction effect between emotion dysregulation and colorblind racial attitudes was not significant (b = 0.0003, p = 0.2)
- Colorblind racial attitudes did not moderate the relationship between emotion dysregulation and ethnocultural empathy.



Results (continued):

Attitudes (Warmth) Toward People of Color

- Emotion dysregulation did not significantly impact APOC (b = -0.1, p = 0.09), and colorblind racial attitudes had a significant negative impact on APOC (b = -13.7, p < 0.0001) (R² = 0.19)
- The interaction between emotion dysregulation and colorblind racial attitudes did not significantly impact attitudes (warmth) (b = 0.02, p = 0.58)
- Colorblind racial attitudes did not moderate the relationship between emotion dysregulation and APOC



Discussion:

Findings support hypothesis 2:

White people with higher colorblind racial attitudes had a negative correlation between emotional dysregulation and our outcome variables: ethnocultural empathy and warmth toward people of color

White people with higher colorblind racial attitudes had lower ethnocultural empathy

Findings did not support hypothesis 1:

White people with lower colorblind racial attitudes demonstrated a correlation opposite of what was predicted

Despite this, white people with lower colorblind racial attitudes had higher ethnocultural empathy and warmth toward people of color when compared to those with higher colorblind racial attitudes with emotion dysregulation held constant

Future Directions:

- Investigate the interaction between DERS and CoBRAS for SEE and attitudes (warmth) toward people of color
- Test CoBRAS as a mediator of emotion dysregulation and ethnocultural empathy
- Consider cohort specific interventions
- High/Low CoBRAS group
- Look into development of anti-racism interventions
- Explore behavioral responses to racism

Selected References:

<https://qrco.de/bf0iaa>

