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BIRDS OF A FEATHER FLOCK TOGETHER: RACE VERSUS GENDER PREFERENCE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN WORKPLACE

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION:

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works of other people has been attributed, cited and referenced.

Signature: ……. Date: …….

God created the world in 6 days – but had the advantage of working alone.

(Christenson, 1987)

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Abstract

Social Identity Theory proposes that individuals derive part of their identity and their social identity, through their membership in social groups. In order to derive a positive social identity, they attempt to compare themselves more favourably in comparison to members of groups they do not belong to, which may at times leads to discrimination against out-group members.

Due to South Africa's history of race- and gender-based oppression, it is likely that race and gender are two particularly salient group memberships and that gender- and race-based discrimination are thus particularly prominent. Research has shown that discrimination in the workplace has negative effects, which result in reduced productivity as well as reduced employee engagement and wellbeing. The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which employees show a preference for co-workers from their own gender and racial groups and to establish whether their racial or gender bias is stronger.

To investigate the hypotheses, a survey was completed by 138 participants. Participants were asked to select between two photographs depicting faces in terms of who they would rather work with as a co-worker. The images consisted of males and females for each of four South African racial groups: Black African, Coloured, Indian and White.

Results indicated that females showed a preference towards working with other females while males did not show a preference for a particular gender group. Furthermore, White employees preferred to work with other White individuals while no preference emerged for the other racial groups. Finally, racial bias was found to be stronger than gender bias, particularly among White employees. This is significant for South Africa as a developing country because it means that the legally requirement of racial integration within the work environment may have a negative impact on the level of employee engagement and thus productivity.

Introduction

Organisations consist of people and the positive interaction between these people is important for organisations to function effectively (Cohen, Fink, Gadon & Willitz, 2001). Studies on group effectiveness and dynamics that lead to an increase in productivity have shown the social interaction between individuals to be an important factor, independent of company goals and any other additional extraneous variables (Hogg & Cooper, 2007). Therefore if people do not feel comfortable working with one another, they will be less inclined to co-operate and share information and resources with one another.

It has further been found that the way employees feel about their relationship with co-workers, is a direct reflection of how much they are likely to engage within their own work environment (Bakker & Schaufel, 2008). A more engaged workforce has been shown to lead to higher productivity, lower absenteeism and fewer employees suffering the effects of burnout (Bakker & Schaufel, 2008). Hence if the relationship between co-workers affects productivity levels it is important to look at these interactions, as it may result in employees working below their full potential, exhibiting low job satisfaction, resulting in high turnover and an unpleasant organisational climate (Avery, McKay & Wilson, 2007).

The quality of staff interaction is shaped by various factors including, but not limited to personality and supervisory leadership style, but may also be based on prejudices such as, for example, that women are not as good as men at maths and therefore an underlying belief that women should not be accountants as they are not as competent as men. In South Africa prejudices are likely to be predominately based on race due to the apartheid history of the country, which its economy was built upon. The legacy of systematic discrimination of women and racial ranking under apartheid remains deeply instilled in the interaction between different racial groups, with many South Africans still seeing themselves in the previous

racial categories even though apartheid was abolished close to twenty years ago (Finchilescu & Tredoux, 2010; Seeking, 2008).

This behaviour is reinforced as race is still widely discussed in politics. Policies such as the Employment Equity Act (1998) Affirmative Action and Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) (Thomas, 2002) aim to redress the discrimination of the past, but have also been blamed for continuing it and thus reinforcing the classification of individuals into racial groups (Seekings, 2008). Therefore race is likely to influence employees' attitudes towards co-workers. For example, Black African executive are often seen as token employees to meet BBBEE quotas and not perceived to be competent to do the roles they have been employed to fill (Bavarish, Hebl & Mader, 2010). Apartheid legislation discriminated against individuals based on their gender too; hence the appointment of women could be seen as equally tokenistic (Dugid, 2011). Currently there is very little research on the influence of race and gender on social interactions in South African workplaces, which, if negative, can become a barrier to employee engagement. Taking Social Identity Theory (SIT) as the theoretical framework the study presented in this dissertation seeks to generate knowledge in this area by testing how comfortable employees are with both, co-workers from different racial and gender groups.

There will be five chapters to follow. The literature review outlines relevant theories and previous literature relevant to the research question. Using Social Identity Theory (SIT) as the theoretical foundation it is assumed that employees would prefer to work with individuals belonging to the same group category as themselves and that due to South Africa's history there would be a stronger preference for members of the own racial group than for members of the own gender group (Tajfel, 1982). The method chapter expands on the research design, how data was gathered and which statistical tests were used to analyse the data. The results chapter displays the research findings according to the hypotheses. The

findings from this study are discussed further in the discussion chapter. Here, additional literature is provided that is useful to explain the results obtained. Limitations of the study and suggestions for future research are also outlined. The dissertation ends with a final conclusion.

Literature Review

This literature review starts with an outline of Social Identity Theory, which is used as the theoretical framework for this research. By outlining the South African context a rational will then be provided as to why race and gender are two particularly salient groups in South Africa. The hypotheses which have been derived from the literature are presented at the end of the literature review.

The Origin of Social Identity Theory: The Minimal Group Paradigm

Henry Tajfel and his colleagues originally developed the minimal group paradigm as part of their attempt to understand under what conditions individuals would discriminate members of other groups. Together with Flament, Bundy and Billig, Tajfel conducted a series of studies in which groups with as little meaning as possible were created. By incrementally adding meaning they wanted to establish at what point social discrimination would take place (Tajfel, Flament, Billig & Bundy, 1971, Turner, 1996).

In this minimal group experiment, voluntary study participants were assigned into groups by a coin toss, the volunteers exhibited in-group favourtism showing preferential treatment to their own in-group members although the allocation was random (Tajfel, Flament, Billig & Bundy, 1970). Thus these studies found that the mere categorisation into groups leads to individuals favouring members of their own group (classified as in-group) over members of other groups (classified as out-group), with participants allocated more resources to the own than to other group members (Diehl, 1990).

The experimental method in these studies has become known as 'minimal group paradigm' (MGP), as the groups created in these studies are minimal in that they were only created in and for the experimental situation. In the MGP intergroup discrimination was as a result therefore defined as the degree of difference between behaviour towards the in- and

towards the out-group. Hence it was found that intergroup discrimination occurs even when there is minimal in-group attachment, no previous hostility or discrimination, no previous conflict of interest or the previous existence of group membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Diehl, 1990). When it became apparent that even this minimal intergroup situation led people to discriminate, Tajfel and his colleagues were unable to explain the reasons, hence a new theory of intergroup behaviour needed to be developed (Tajfel & Turner, 1979)

This gave way to the development of Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Brown, 2002; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In the following section a more detailed overview of SIT will be presented, followed by a description of the process that SIT assumes to take place, which results in discrimination based on group membership.

Social Identity Theory

The discrepancy between the resources allocated by participants to members of different groups in the MGP was explained by Tajfel and Turner (1979) in terms of an individual's need for a positive self-concept. A positive self-concept can be derived from positive group-evaluations (Hogg, 2006). The MGP supplies no information about what it means to be a member of either of the two groups. The only way to attain a positive self-evaluation would be through group discrimination (Sachdev & Bourhis, 1985; 1987). These initial considerations were elaborated on and eventually led to the formal and more general conceptualisation of SIT.

SIT assumes that intergroup discrimination is based on three different processes that follow one after the other. These are social categorisation, social identification and social comparison (Trepte, 2006; Turner & Brown, 1978).

1. Social Categorisation

Individuals categorise their social world into different groups in order to understand their social environment. People not only perceive themselves and others as individuals and separate entities, but are also aware of social groups (such as race, age and wealth) that categorise societies and specific social situations (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears & Manstead, 1998; Trepte, 2006). This categorisation process is part of cognitive reasoning underlying social categorisation by differentiating between groups (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997).

Social categories can be flexible such as in the case of vocation or fixed as in the case of gender. Most often in fixed groups the individual's physical or biological appearance from birth categorises them as a member of specific groups, for instance in gender, one is either male or female and cannot belong to both groups. When these social categorisation are shared by the majority of groups members, they function as social stereotypes and are used to explain and even justify behaviour (Tajfel, 1982; Trepte, 2006).

Tajfel and Turner (1979) explain that "Social categorisations are conceived here as cognitive tools that segment, classify, and order the social environment, and thus enable the individual to undertake many forms of social action" (P.40) and go on to explain that this social categorisation helps identify how the individual fits into society.

2. Social Identification

Social identification leads to the individuals categorising themselves into the social category, this category or group membership allows them to develop a social identity (Mcleod, 2008; Trepte, 2006) Tajfel (1982) explained this forms

the individuals self concept which they are able to develop based on their knowledge of their membership to a social group (or groups) including the emotional significance that they identitfy with the group.

The individual's self esteem and social identity may become entangled with societal views on their group membership, as once an individual is able to form a social identity they start the social comparison process.

3. Social Comparison

Once individuals have categorised themselves as part of a group and are able to identify with the group, they begin to compare their own group with other groups (for example male versus female) (Trepte, 2006). This allows them to evaluate the relative value and status of the characteristic on which the comparison is being made. If the individual's self-esteem is to be maintained the group needs to compare favourably with other groups (McLeod, 2008).

This social comparison assists in defining the individuals place in society and if they form part of the high or low status group. Tajfel and Turner (1979) argue as one's self-esteem is tied to one's social group, in order for an individual to attain a positive self esteem, a group member will try to define one's group in a positive light. Since social groups are compared to each other, often in competition for resources, power or status, the need for a positive social identity may lead to members accentuating the differences between groups in order to create a greater disparity (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997; Tajfel, 1982; Trepte, 2006).

There have been three conditions stipulated for social comparison to take place, firstly individuals need to have internalised their own group membership as part of their social identity or their in-group. Secondly, circumstances must

allow social comparison to take place and finally the out-group needs to relevant in terms of location and similarity (Trepte, 2006).

The Role of Social Identity

Social Identity Theory (SIT) emphasises the role of the individual's social life on his or her identity formulation. According to Hogg and Cooper (2007) people evaluate and define themselves in terms of the groups to which they belong, as these groups can provide individuals with a collective self-concept, a so-called social identity. As indiviudals are part of a number of different groups, they also have multiple social identities.

Tajfel (1982) proposed that groups which people belong to, for example social class, gender or a university team, are an important source of pride and self-esteem. These groups give individuals a sense of social identity or sense of belonging to the social world where their membership adds further understanding and clarity to their own group membership. Individuals strive to attain or maintain a positive social identity to boost their self-esteem, with this positive social identity derived largely from comparisons made between the in-group (us) and relevant out-groups (them) (Brown, 2000).

In order to increase the individual's self-esteem, where possible greater status is often ascribed to the group to which the individual belongs, for example South Africans might claim that South Africa is the best country in the world (Brown, 2000;Olson, Shutts, Kinzler & Weisman, 2012).

Hence once individuals identify with a group they begin to display in-group favouritism. They start to look for what is known as positive distinctiveness by evaluating their own group more favourably than the out-group on a chosen dimension (Goodfriend & Smoak, 2009). This favouritism leads to distancing from the out-group or even discriminating against this group.

In theory, in-group bias emerges by a favourable evaluation of the in-group (in order to maintain a positive social identity), a devaluation of the out-group (in order to legitimise its oppression) or by a combination of both (Brewer, 1979). The majority of research indicates that generally, in-group bias tends to be due to a comparatively more positive evaluation of the in-group rather than being caused by out-group derogation (Brewer, 1979, 2001; Brown, 2000; Levin, Henry, Pratto & Sidanius, 2003). Due to humans‘ need to derive a positive social identity and therefore to compare themselves favourably with other groups social comparison serves to facilitate in-group bias (Hogg, 2006; Tajfel, 1982; Trepte, 2006).

In-group Bias and the Role of Social Status

In-group bias refers to the tendency for members in a particular in-group to believe that they are superior in comparison to other social groups. The term ‘bias’ implies that the differentiation between the in-group and out-group is unfair to the extent that it is not based on objective criteria (Hewstone, Rubin & Willis, 2002). In-group bias will only be shown if the comparison group is accepted as a relevant reference group by the out-group (Turner, 1982; Hogg, 2006).

SIT is able to predict in-group and out-group behaviour and Tajfel (1982) argues that in-group behaviour towards out-groups is often similar across a range of socio-economic conditions and societies. This similarity can be based on the socialisation of individuals which begins at birth.

The young child is taught the societal norms and values of an individual’s community, group/s and society, which are then internalised (Giddens, 2001; Olson *et al,* 2012). Therefore SIT assumes that in a particular social and historical context the beliefs about specific characteristics of the intergroup value and situation do influence the behaviours towards the relevant group (Mummendey, Klink, Mielke, Wenzel & Blanz, 1999).

Nearly all human societies have classes or groups of people who have different social statuses, indicated by differential access of different groups to materials, wealth and education (Shutts, Kinzler, Katz, Treadoux & Spelke, 2011; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Examples include the caste systems in India and South Africa's previous apartheid system.

Apartheid legally sanctioned social hierarchy, allowing the South African government to build on the knowledge and strength of an existing race and privilege based social hierarchy created by the Dutch and British colonial administration (Olson, Shutts, Kinzler & Weisman, 2012). In this race based hierarchy, Whites held the highest status with access to the most resources and wealth, Black Africans had the lowest status while Indians and Coloured (mixed racial heritage) were in between (Finchilescru & Treadoux, 2010).

High status groups usually receive a positive comparison by groups of a lower status and are able to increase their positive social identity from these group comparisons. It is for this reason that high status groups are concerned about maintaining the status hierarchy even if this means discriminating against other groups to maintain this status (Brown & Wade, 1987; Ellemers, van Knippenberg, de Vries & Wilke, 1988; Sachdev & Bourhis, 1987; Turner & Brown, 1978). A central hypothesis of SIT is that group members in an in-group will seek to find negative aspects of the out-group, to enhance their own self-image and thereby explaining the role and need for discrimination between groups (McLeod, 2008).

Intergroup Discrimination

Group discrimination can manifest in many ways with in-group favouritism shown even when there is no overt reason for such behaviour, such as in the MGP (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997; Brown, 2000). Intergroup discrimination has been witnessed even if it costs the in-group overall. This behaviour is believed to take place as it leaves the in-group feeling good

about themselves and the superiority of their group regardless of the cost (Brown, 2000; Oakes, Haslam & Turner, 1994).

Discrimination is often based on stereotypes. Stereotypes accentuate the intergroup difference when individuals may feel that the image of their group is being threatened with discrimination being both overt and covert (Spears, Doosje & Ellemers, 1997). Overt forms of discrimination lead to immediate emotional or physical harm to an individual, in comparison, subtle or covert forms of discrimination tend to affect individuals in the long term (Pavalko, Mossakowski, & Hamilton, 2003; Pascoe & Richman, 2009).

One of the main reasons why stereotypes exist is based on the lack of personal, concrete familiarity that individuals have with individuals in other racial or ethnic groups. Since there is a lack of familiarity this encourages the lumping together of unknown individuals into broad categories. Stereotypes, therefore, exaggerate differences between groups, minimize similarities and magnify differences (Brewer, 1979), thus groups appear to be very different when they may be more alike than different.

Stereotyping implies assigning individuals generalised characteristics and behaviours based on their membership in particular groups, e.g. a particular gender or racial groups (McLeod, 2008). When an individual stereotypes it helps to simplify, predict and organise large amounts of information into categories and to make assumptions of predictive behaviour from that group of people.

Which Groups Matter?

Turner (1982) describes a social group as "two or more individuals who share a common social identification of themselves or, which is nearly the same thing, perceive themselves to be members of the same social category" (p. 15). The minimal group experiment has shown that people's group membership can be decided upon by a toss of a coin. Individuals are able

to see themselves as members of a specific group, and/or are perceived in that way by others (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

In SIT the way individuals perceive their world determines what social categories or groups they use to allocate themselves and others. The categories are then internalised and become part of the individual's self-concept. Cognitive processes linked to these specific parts of the self-concept shape group behaviour. Thus, group membership is not primarily determined by how the individual feels about other individuals belonging to a group, but rather by how these individuals perceive themselves within the group (Turner, 1982; McLeod, 2008).

Furthermore, group members do not need to be in frequent contact with one another in order to be part of a group. Rather members need to be aware of their group membership or categorisation in order for the group to exist (Brewer, 2001; Diehl, 1990). For example if an individual is an Indian male they will associate with other Indian males and would be likely to show in-group favouritism towards individuals belonging to their own race and gender group.

One of the problems with researchers transferring the results of the minimal group experiment into the real world context is that it does not take into consideration any other variables that may affect group membership (Abrams & Brown, 1989; Reicher, 2004). In practice, groups and what defines different group categories are less clear. People do not only belong to one, but to numerous groups. People may be originally categorised by physical appearance, but they may also form part of a professional body, a sports group, a church.

Abrams and Brown (1989) refer to the multiple identities that the individual can possess as their own self-image or self-categorisation. They argue that different self-categorisations may be salient at different times. The same person can perceive someone as

being a member of a specific group in one situation and as belonging to a different group in another context; therefore they may change his or her perception and behaviour towards that individual based on the specific context. Additionally, different people may have different understandings of group memberships in categories such as race or gender. Thus it is important to investigate what people mean when they talk about specific group memberships and in which circumstances they are likely to categorise people as members of one group or another (Reicher, 2004).

The Salience of Gender and Race as Group Categories

Although most individuals are members of many groups, only some of these groups are meaningful in terms of how individuals define themselves and thus how they derive their social identity. Having a particular social identity does not necessarily mean that individuals know or interact with other members of the group that they derive their social identity from, it rather means that they believe that they share numerous common features with people belonging to the same group as themselves (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995).

Deaux (2001) maintains that in a work environment there are five main distinct types of social identity: Racial/ethnic, religious, political, vocational and personal relationships. Out of these groups only racial/ethnic group memberships can be recognised based on physical attributes. Judgments and stereotypes based on race or ethnicity can be drawn immediately when meeting a person. These judgements might then influence future interactions with members of these groups. The same would be the case with a person's gender, another group category which individuals are often judged on (Pascoe and Richman, 2009).

1. **Gender Based Discrimination**

In many societies there is a tendency to bring up females and males differently, with each gender being steered towards different social roles, careers and are expected to develop different aspects of their personal identity (Helgesen, 1990). This pre-conditioning from a young age has meant that women tend to take on supportive roles in the workplace such as nurses or secretaries while men tend to take on more demanding senior roles such as being Accountant or Engineers. The more supportive roles that females tend to take on means that these position are perceived to be less powerful and of a lower status, and therefore have been linked to women frequently being exposed to overt forms of discrimination based on their gender (Hennig & Jardim, 1997)

Sexism is generally seen as negative female sentiments that view females as worth less and less capable than men (Dovido, Glick & Rudman, 2005). Men are perceived as the stronger and superior gender thus the high status group, whereas women are seen as the inferior low status group. Women who are perceived to be too forceful and assertive may be criticised as being too aggressive and unfeminine, while men who exhibit sensitivity and perceptiveness to feelings are seen as weak (Cohen *et al*, 2001).

Although studies have been conducted on discrimination and prejudice in the past, many countries including South Africa have gender discrimination and equal pay legislation (Employment Equity Act, 1998, Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1998). Even with this legislation in place psychological and organisational barriers continue to bar progress for women, both in South Africa and other countries with women still receiving lower pay.

Many professions were seen only suitable for men, with top management roles mainly held by males and confirming their high status group membership. Internationally there appears to be a glass ceiling preventing women from enjoying the same opportunities as men and in South Africa White males still hold the majority of senior management roles within organisations (Ramatula, 2011). Gender discrimination has also been found in the form of

salary disparities, with unequitable pay packages further enhancing the male group's higher social status with men often paid a higher salary than women (Tapia, Kvasny & Trauth, 2004).

2. Race Based Discrimination

The construct race is viewed as controversial, as it has been argued that there is no such construct and that social class or cultures exist, but not race (Andreasen, 2000). The concept of race may be contentious and is being debated, but the effects of racism and the prejudice based on race are apparent (Grant, 2007). Furthermore, the failure to include the influence of racial ideologies that affect group dynamics makes it more difficult to explain the origins of intergroup conflict.

Race is considered a relevant group category in this study, as due to South Africa's legislated laws during the apartheid era about which racial groups were perceived as competent and which were not race is a highly salient category in South African society today (Seekings, 2008).

Yet, race based discrimination is evidenced worldwide. Hirsh and Lyons (2010) conducted a study in the United States to explore people's perceptions of racial discrimination; several kinds of discrimination were identified. Firstly, individuals from all races believed that low-status groups were discriminated against in terms of employment opportunities. African American and Hispanic workers in particular, experienced more racial discrimination on the job than White workers felt.

The Hirsh and Lyons study found that an organisation's racial demographics, specifically the racial demographics of supervisors and immediate colleagues, were the most significant variable that impacts an employee's perception of discrimination. Promotion opportunities were found to be positively associated with perceptions of discrimination for all

race groups. This means that the more an individual was confident that they would and should be promoted, the more sensitive they were to perceive discrimination (Hirsh & Lyons, 2010). Furthermore it was found that if a specific racial group is underrepresented within a department or in the organisation, the minority group is likely to be more sensitive to discriminatory behaviour. Discrimination is often reported by lower status groups, which is likely to lower employee engagement as these employees would not feel part of the in-group or safe in their organisations (Kahn, 1990).

King, Dunleavy, Jaffer, Morgan, Elder & Graebner (2011) found that interpersonal insults were the most prevalent form of discrimination being experienced by women and black individuals in an American workforce. According to a national longitudinal survey of 1,778 employed mature women it was found that a higher percentage of Black women (5.8%) than White women (.8%), reported that they experienced racial discrimination in the workplace (Pavalko, Mossakowski, & Hamilton, 2003). Further literature revealed that when being discriminated against, it is mostly observed in the form of not being promoted, or not being interviewed or hired (Baker, 1998)

The majority of South African organisation's top management teams tend to be occupied by White males. Organisational culture and behaviours are moulded by senior management, thus the majority of South African organisations tend to have a White masculine culture creating barriers to engagement that can be damaging to the employee, customers and stakeholders of the organisation (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999).

For the purpose of this study individuals will be classified according to a common classification in the South African context. The following definitions will be used in this dissertation in line with Finchilescu and Tredoux (2010) classifications: Back African refers to people indigenous to the African continent; White individuals refer to people of European

descent; Indian refers to people of Indian origin, and Coloured refers to individuals that that may have a mix of ancestry from any of the other three racial groups.

Due to South Africa's apartheid past with institutionalised discrimination, it is conceivable that gender and racial groups are particular salient groups in South African society and thus in the workplace (Grant, 2007). For many individuals living in South Africa their race, in particular, is a central element of their self-definition and becomes an important social identity (Deaux, 2001). In order to substantiate why race and gender are salient group categories in South Africa a brief historical overview is provided in the next section.

A Historical Overview of South Africa

During South Africa's apartheid era, a series of laws and acts were passed to help the apartheid-government enforce segregation of different races and maintain White dominance by restricting resources, thereby institutionalizing racial discrimination (Seekings, 2008). The White population perceived themselves to be superior as they had higher levels of education and wealth in comparison to other racial groups. Apartheid was able to maintain White power by denying political and economic liberty to other racial groups in South Africa (Seekings, 2008).

The difference between South Africa and other countries that experienced racial segregation was the systematic way the National Party, which came into power in 1948 formalised the apartheid rules as part of the law. In 1994, South Africa's general election saw the end of apartheid and the election of the African National Congress (ANC) as the ruling party (Durrheim & Dixon, 2010; Seekings, 2005).

Discrimination experienced during apartheid was not just based on race, but also on gender. Black African women were affected the most being subjected to triple oppression: as women, on race and class (Hutson, 2007; Nolde, 1991). Apartheid adopted a patriarchal

system which accentuated the subjection of women (Flepp, 1985). Furthermore, ethnic traditions, with culture depicting clearly stipulated roles for males and females in society rooted this discrimination further (Bwakali, 2001; Meer, 1992). The South African common law has its origins in Roman Dutch law where women were under the supervision of a father or husband and thus were treated and had the same rights as minors. Women were not allowed to enter into contracts in their own rights nor could they acquire or dispose of property (Meer, 2007). Similar tribal laws existed where women were seen as a man's property and did not have economic power of her own, thus substantiating the males high status role in comparison to the females lower status (Dugard 2011, Huston, 2007).

This new South Africa introduced numerous transformational strategies similar to the changes in the United States of America between the 1950s and 1960s, when the desegregation ruling was implemented along with the Civil Rights Act (Omi & Winant, 1994; as cited in Durrheim & Dixon, 2010). These changes were introduced in order to accelerate the narrowing of the inequality gap between White and generic black (African, Coloured and Indian) individuals (Durrheim & Dixon, 2010). During the transformation from the apartheid based ruling party to the new ANC, affirmative action measures and Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) policies were introduced to assist with racial equality and integration (Omi & Winant, 1994; as cited in Durrheim & Dixon, 2010).

Despite efforts by politicians and the new legislation the White racial group still holds the majority of the economic resources in South Africa, while Black Africans remain at the lower level of the hierarchy (Grant, 2007; Stainback & Tomaskovic-Devey, 2009). In the 2011 census (StatsSA, 2012) White South African households earned six times as much as their Black counterpart.

The average White household earned approximately R365,000.00 per annum followed by Indians with R251,000.00, Coloured families with R112,500.00 and Black

Africans with R60,600.00. Since the last census Black African households income has increased by 170%, but this has not been able to address the discrepancy between wealth of the White versus the previously disadvantage other South African population groups (StasSA, 2012).

The White segregation imposed by apartheid meant that Black African people were disadvantaged by poor education that confined many individuals to unskilled and low paying jobs. Although schooling is available for all South Africans the quality of the schooling and the cost of tertiary training has prevented many individuals attaining the necessary skill in order to be given higher paying roles and responsibilities within the majority of South African organisations (Seekings, 2008)

Furthermore, the 2011 census also showed that there was a large degree of unemployment within the South African context, as can be seen in Table 1. While White South Africans experienced 5% unemployment rate, Black African South Africans recorded a 30.1% unemployment rate. This difference further perpetuates the difference in wealth per household as a larger unemployment figure for a racial group would mean a lower average household income. When compounding the problems of lower level jobs and higher unemployment the high status of the White group despite being the minority can be explained. The social status associated with the Indian and Coloured community can be understood in a similar manner with the current unemployment levels 10.7% and 23.1% respectively and further reflected in the average household income and thus explaining the remaining apartheid race categories with Indians frequently still maintaining the higher status than the Coloured group (Durrheim & Dixon, 2010).

Table 1.

Unemployment statistics from June 2011 based on race and gender for South Africa depicted in thousands.

Variable	**Total**	**Not economically active**	**Economically active**			
Gender			Sub Total	Working	Unemployed	% Unemployed
Male	15740	6106	9634	7397	2237	23.3
Female	16695	8665	8029	5717	2312	28.2
Total	32436	14772	17664	13114	4550	25.8
Race			Sub Total	Working	Unemployed	% Unemployed
Black African	25381	12224	13157	9194	3963	30.1
Coloured	3029	1207	1822	1402	420	23.1
Indian	926	364	562	502	60	10.7
White	3099	977	2122	2016	105	5
Total	32435	14772	17663	13114	4556	25.8

When considering gender and evaluating the results from Table 1, it can be seen that the unemployment figures based on gender, were higher among females 28.2% versus males 23.3%, but not substantially higher. The difference in average household income received based on gender was almost double for men at R151,186.00 versus women at R70,830.00 (StatsSA, 2012). These differences show a quantitative value, that there is an observable difference between males and females in their pay and although equal pay legislation exist on paper it may not be filtering through to the individuals it was intended for. Thus females are not treated equally in many work environments and therefore discrimination may still be experienced by many women in the workplace.

These salary discrepancies could be attributed to the types of roles females often take on in the work environment, not being perceived as competent or skilled for more senior roles, but may also be due to the tendency of many young girls falling pregnant at a very young age and therefore never completing the basic level of education and thus unable to study further or gain the necessary experience to start a meaningful career (Hutson, 2007).

The higher levels of unemployment, the lower salary expectations of women and the historic triple oppression experienced in the form if gender, race and class show that it is likely that women may still maintain a lower status than men in the South African work environment.

When considering the literature discussed thus far, there definitely appear to be higher and lower status groups within SouthAfrica, thus based on Social Identity Theory and considering the South African context the following hypothesis are proposed:

H1: Individuals prefer co-workers from their own gender group.

H2: Individuals prefer co-workers from their own racial group.

H3: Racial in-group bias is stronger than gender in-group bias in the South African workplace.

Method

Research Design

A cross-sectional descriptive survey design was used to investigate employees' preferences of fictitious co-workers based on their gender and racial group membership. These images depicted faces of people that belonged to one of four racial groups, namely: Black African, Coloured, Indian and White. Primary data was collected.

Participants and Sampling

Data was collected using convenience sampling. Initially, 143 employees of one particular organisation where invited to participate in the study via email, which contained a link to an electronic survey. The organisation was selected due to ease of access as the researcher was employed by the organisation. The researcher also personally approached certain individuals within the organisation from a Coloured, Indian and Black African background to ask if they would participate as the organisation is a predominantly White female environment and the researcher was aiming to obtain a more diverse sample. It is not possible to confirm if these individuals chose to participate, but it was believed that the personal invitation would lead to more likely participation.

Of the 143 employees approached 67 completed the online questionnaire, corresponding to a response rate of 46.85%. Employees were given a two week period to respond, with the researcher sending a follow up email reminding employees of the survey after eight days.

In order to increase the sample size further, the researcher also posted the link onto her Facebook profile. The link was available for a period of one week. The final sample size for the study was 138 participants. The sample consisted of 38 (27.53%) males and 100 (72.47%) females; thus females were overrepresented. The participants' ages varied from 22

to 53 with a mean of 29.55 (SD = 5.48). The sample consisted of 11 (8%) African, 102 (74.6%) White, 10 (7.2%) Indian, 10 (7.2%) Coloured, and 2 (1.4%) other participants. A total of 2 (1.4%) participants preferred not to classify themselves into a specific racial group.

Procedure

The researcher first obtained permission to proceed with the study from the Commerce Faculty Ethics in Research committee from the University of Cape Town and written consent from the organisation's Human Resources division to administer the survey amongst the chosen organisation's staff members. (see Appendix A and B for the approval forms).

Employees were sent a link to an online questionnaire setup in Qualtrics survey software via an electronic announcement in an email. The email invited participates to take part in a survey that would take between 5-10 minutes to complete.

An incentive to participate in the survey was offered in the form of a lucky draw for a R500 gift voucher. To enter the lucky draw participants had to send an email with their name and contact details to an email address provided at the end of the survey (with the lucky draw taking place on 31 August 2012 so that anonymity and confidentiality could be guaranteed). An Excel spreadsheet was created with all the names that were sent through. The winner was selected randomly and informed telephonically based on their contact details sent through on the email.

Materials

When accessing the electronic link participants were directed to a cover page for the study. This page gave the scope of the study and informed participants that by completing the survey they provided their informed consent for their answers would be used in a tertiary study that may be published. On the following page, participants were presented with four pairs of photographic images of faces. Each of these photos either had a male or female face

depicted in the image. Faces that were presented were representative of the four racial groups of South Africa and therefore the photographic faces were either Black African, Coloured, Indian or White. Above each pair of images, they were asked the question "If you could choose who you would like to work with, which of the below individuals would you rather choose?" (see Appendix C & D for an example of the stimulus material provided).

The questionnaire was randomised with the paired comparisons on the page randomised further. There were four comparisons to be made per page based on gender and the four South African racial groups (Black African, Coloured, Indian and White). In total 36 comparisons were made by the participants including three control images (the same race and gender for two images, e.g. two different White female images) and five cartoon images to distract from race and gender as the relevant categories that participants' preferences were being assessed on. Each face was presented at least eight times. Participants were requested to include their own demographic details at the end of the questionnaire including their age, racial group (with the option not to answer this question), gender and whether they were South African citizens.

Photographic images were obtained from FaceResearchlab.org, a website created by University of Aberdeen for Social Science research. Standard facial models were used to keep the variances between the faces to a minimum. A graphic designer adapted four photographs and was asked to ensure that all images were consistent in size and background removing any external characteristics that may affect the participant opinion such as facial hair. The images were to be representative of the racial groups being used in this study (Black African, Coloured, Indian and White).

Development of Stimulus Material

To test the stimulus material, data was collected from 30 employees within one department of the organisation where the main study was to be conducted. The head of department was approached in person to ask permission to allow employees to participate in the pilot study. Participation was voluntary and all personal information provided by the volunteers was held as strictly confidential and anonymous. The volunteers were made up of 12 (40%) males and 18 (60%) females. The participants' ages varied from 22 to 41 with a mean of 27.70 (SD = 4.82). The sample consisted of 4 (13.33%) Coloured, 11 (36.67%) White, 2 (6.67%) Indian and 13 (43.33%) Black African participants.

Each of the participants were given a hardcopy questionnaire containing photographic images of the faces that were to be used in the main study to test whether participants would perceive the faces as Black African, Coloured, Indian and White. The questionnaire included a cover page explaining that the research formed part of a pilot study and that participation was voluntary (Please see Appendix E for a copy of the pilot study cover page). Participants were informed, that the purpose of the questionnaire was to confirm that the images that were going to be used were representative of particular racial groups within the South African context. The questionnaire itself consisted of 10 colour photographic images. Participants were asked to mark next to each image which racial group they felt the individual belonged to, namely: African, Coloured, Indian, White or Unsure (Please see Appendix F for the full pilot study images). Figure 1 shows an example for one image.

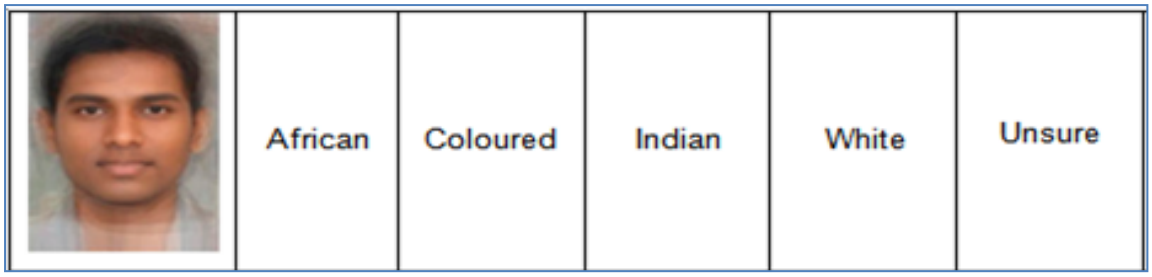

Figure 1. Example of the image reflected in the pilot study.

The questionnaire took approximately three minutes to complete by most participants with no incentive offered for the completion thereof. Frequency counts were conducted to confirm if participants consistently identified the racial group of the faces shown in the photographs.

The African male, White male, African female and White female all were classified into the correct racial group by all participants please see Table 2. The Indian female image was categorised by 29 participants (96.67%) as Indian female the other one participant categorised it as Coloured female. The Coloured male image was classified by 26 (86.67%) participants as Coloured, with two participants selecting Indian, one selecting White and one selecting the unsure option. The Indian Male image that was used for the main study was selected by 26 (86.67%) participant with two participants selecting the Coloured option and two using the unsure option. Please see Table 2 for a further breakdown of these results.

Table 2

Pilot study descriptive statistics with frequency counts and percentages

	Black African		Coloured		Indian		White		Unsure	
Photo depicted	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Black male	30	100								
Coloured male			26	86.67	2	6.67	1	3.3	1	3.33
Indian male			2	6.67	26	86.7			2	6.67
White male							30	100		
Black female	30	100								
Coloured female	2	6.67	18	60	2	6.67	5	17	2	6.67
Indian female			1	3.33	29	96.7				
White female							30	100		

The lowest frequency count for any particular image was for the Coloured female, with only 18 of the participants selecting Coloured female. The researcher choose to still use this photographic image as the Coloured racial classification is unique to South Africa and is believed to be based on a mix of ancestry from the previous three groups: White, Black African and Indian (Finchilescu & Tredoux, 2010) therefore it is not inappropriate to use this image, but the findings would need to be interpreted with caution. The researcher continued with the main study using the image from the pilot study as the majority of participants classified the faces correctly.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data was imported from Qualtrics.com and analysed using the Software Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. Frequency counts were used to count how many participants from each racial and gender group took part in the study and to assess how often each image had been preferred over another image.

Results

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the photographic image recognition as being representative of the four different racial groups, sample demographics as well as the individual's preferences towards potential peers.

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive data presented in Table 3. Reflect the minimum and maximum frequency and the percentage of times a specific image was preferred. The standard deviations show that the scores were not widely spread around the mean per image with SD < 4 for all images. The percentage of times preferred refers to the likelihood of the image being selected in comparison to the alternate image. White females were preferred 65% (M=5.55, SD =2.14) of the times over any other image with the Black African male image selected the lowest number of times 28% (M=2.98, SD = 1.59).

Table 3

Frequency count of the number of times a specific facial image was selected across all participants

Images	Minimum frequency	Maximum frequency	Mean	SD	Percentage of times preferred %
Coloured male	1	7	2.59	1.75	37
Indian male	1	8	2.85	1.59	41
African male	1	8	2.98	1.59	28
African female	1	8	3.05	1.99	43
Indian female	1	8	4.1	1.97	58
White male	1	8	4.28	2.02	61
Coloured female	1	8	4.57	1.61	63
White female	1	8	5.55	2.14	65

Results Related to Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Individuals prefer co-workers from their own gender group

In order to test the first hypothesis, analysis and tests were done to see if males or females showed a stronger preference towards photographic images of either the male or female gender group. Table 4 provides the descriptive statistics.

Table 4

Descriptive statistics for preferences exhibited between photographic images of males and females based on participants own gender

Participant gender	n	Male Mean	*SD*	Female Mean	*SD*
Male	38	7.18	3.7	8.77	7.44
Females	100	5.23	3.55	10.77	3.55

Kolmogorov Smirnov tests were conducted to test whether the preference scores for male faces and female faces were normally distributed. In the sample of male and female participants the results showed that male ($Z = 1.12$, $p = 0.2$) and females ($Z = 0.89$, $p = 0.11$) for both groups. The results were not significant and the data is considered sufficiently normally distributed to make use of a parametric test.

Paired sample t-tests were thus conducted to test the first hypothesis. Paired sample t-tests are most commonly used to compare participants' scores on the same variable collected at two different points in time. Pallant (2005) highlights that it is also appropriate to use paired samples t-test when a sample has provided responses to two different variables as long as both variables are both measured on the same scale and therefore it would be appropriate to use in this study, paired sample t tests were conducted separately for male and female participants. The paired variable group was the average preference for male faces versus the average preference for female faces. The results from the paired sample t- test for male participants were not significant ($t(38) = 1.33$, $p = 0.19$). The effect size was measured using

Cohens d was found to be very small (r=0.2) for the male group, thus males prefer male and female faces equally often as co-workers. The non-significant preference shown for males faces could be due to the smaller sample size, yet the effect size was also small (r = 0.2) as defined by Cohen (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010).

For the females results were significant ($t(99) = 7.80$ $p < 0.001$) with a large effect size (r=0.62). The female participants showed a stronger preference to work with other females, therefore the null hypothesis can be rejected for the female participants, but up held for the males.

Hypothesis 2: Individuals prefer co-workers from their own racial group.

Frequency counts were done to see how many times participants selected a facial image from their own racial group and how often they selected a facial image from another racial group. The participants who did not specify their race or selected "other" as their self categorisation were excluded from the sample. Therefore the sample consisted of 135 participants, Coloured *n* = 10 (7.4%), Indian *n*= 10 (7.4%), Black African *n*= 12 (8.89%), White *n* = 103 (76.29%) and for the overall group *n*= 135 (100%). The sample size for the individuals who belonged to other racial groups other than White was small and their results would need to be considered leniently.

The Kolmogorov_Smirnov test was used to test for normality resulting in the Black Africans (Z=0.138, p= 0.20), Coloured (Z=0.163, p=0.20), Indian (z=0.182, p=0.22), White (Z=0.136, p=0.00) and overall (Z= 0.119, p=0.00) group findings. The p-value was less than the level of risk associated with the null hypothesis ($\alpha = 0.05$) therefore non-parametric equivalent of the paired sample T-test, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was used for the White and overall group.

There were no significant results obtained from paired sample t-test tests with the Black Africa ($t(11)=0.982$, $p= 0.35$), Coloured ($t(9)=0.816$, $p=0.44$) and Indian ($t(9)=0.454$, $p=0.664$). None of these groups showed a preference towards their own in-group over other races, therefore the null hypothesis is maintained.

The results from the Wilcoxen Signed rank test that was used for the White group showed ($Z= 6.316$, $p=0.00$) indicating that the preference towards the own race group images was significantly higher than towards the other none own group images. A similar result was found for the overall group ($Z = 6.281$, $p=0.00$) which can be explained due to the overrepresentation of White participants in the sample group making up 76.29% of the sample. To reduce the likelihood of finding significant results due to chance, a Bonferroni correction was applied to these analyses ($p <0.01$) for all tests completed. Even with the correction the White group and overall group results show a significant results, thus the null hypothesis is rejected for the White and overall group, with White individuals showing a significant preference to working with other White group members. The frequency preferences exhibited by all five groups can be seen in Table 5, based on the participants racial group categorisation and the average amounts of time they selected the image that represents their own racial group in comparison to another racial group, this comparison did not take gender into consideration, therefore an individual may have been required to make a choice between an individual from their own racial group, but a different gender and therefore it is possible that there isn't a stronger own racial group preference.

Table 5

Preference means between participants own racial group and a different racial group

Participants race	*n*	Own racial group	*SD*	Different racial group	*SD*
Black African	12	8.92	3.23	7.08	3.23
Coloured	10	8.67	2.45	7.33	2.44
Indian	10	6.99	3.29	7.88	3.45
White	103	10.31	2.97	5.69	2.97
Overall	135	9.86	3.05	6.09	3.02

The null hypothesis is rejected for the White group, as there is a significant difference between the preference shown between the two groups at (α=0.05). The White group showed a strong preference to work with other White co-workers with an effect size of (r=0.61) and the overall group (dominated by White group) similarly with r=0.527. There was no significant difference in preference for the remaining groups, with the Black African participants exhibiting an effect size of (r=0.27), Coloured (r=0.26), Indian (r=0.13) showing that although the groups were small the corresponding smaller effect size corresponds to the non-significance of the test findings.

Hypothesis 3: Racial in-group bias is stronger than gender in-group bias in the South African workplace.

In order to test the third hypothesis conjoint analysis was used. Ranking conjoint analysis is a multivariate technique developed specifically to see how individuals respond to preferences between any variety of objects and is normally used for marketing purposes (Hair *et al.* 2010). It is based on the idea that individuals evaluate the value of an attribute based on various characteristics. The strength of this analysis is that participants can provide their estimates of preferences by judging choices made between combinations of these attributes, for this reason conjoint analysis was deemed appropriate to see on which attributes participants added the most weight in terms of preference, either race or gender.

Due to the sample restrictions with the small response rates from some of the grouping variables it was not possible to do the conjoint analysis across all four of the racial groups and the different genders, but rank ordering of the preferences were done, with no inferences made to the degree of preference for a specific racial group. Table 6 displays the results from the rank ordering of all preferences.

Table 6
Rank order of photographic images as rated by participants based on race and gender

Rank order	Race of face	Gender of face	Mean	*SD*	Percentage
1st	White	Female	5.55	2.14	65
2nd	Coloured	Female	4.57	1.61	63
3rd	White	Male	4.28	2.02	61
4th	Indian	Female	4.1	1.97	58
5th	Black African	Female	3.05	1.99	43
6th	Indian	Male	2.85	1.59	41
7th	Coloured	Male	2.59	1.75	37
8th	Black African	Male	2.98	1.59	28

White females were preferred the most being selecting 65% of the time with Black African males preferred the least at being selected 27%.

An orthogonal design was created in SPSS with two factors specified: race and gender in order to test for hypothesis three. Results were analysed to look at the preference exhibited by participants to select their own racial group over another other group as well as looking at the preferences shown between participants selecting their own gender group over another and to see which factor would be stronger in terms of preference using SIT and the theoretical framework for all study participants.

The frequency counts were conducted in order to establish the number of times the participant selected their own racial group over another as well as how many times they preferred their own gender over another. The frequency counts per factor were then assigned

a rank order for each participant. For example a participant may have selected the own race and own gender photograph seven times, the own race and other gender photograph four times, the own gender other race photograph three times and the other gender other race zero times, therefore the rank order would be:

1. Own race and own gender
2. Own race and different gender
3. Own gender and different race
4. Different gender and different race

Comparison made between non relevant factors was excluded, with participants who had matching rankings for different cards results excluded from the analysis bringing the sample to n=68.

Table 7 shows the utility scores and their standard errors. Higher utility values indicate a greater preference. Since the utilities are expressed in a standardised unit, they can be added together to give the total utility of any combination of race and gender.

Table 7

Conjoint analysis between participants gender (own and other) and race (own and other) for all study participants

		Utility Estimate	Standard Error
Race	Own	0.353	0.137
	Other	-0.353	0.137
Gender	Own	0.402	0.137
	Other	-0.402	0.137

The results from this study show that participants own race resulted in a stronger preference in terms of who participants would rather work with accounting for 59.48% of preference in comparison to race 40.52% please see figure 2. Therefore the null hypothesis would be rejected as these values are not split equally at 50%.

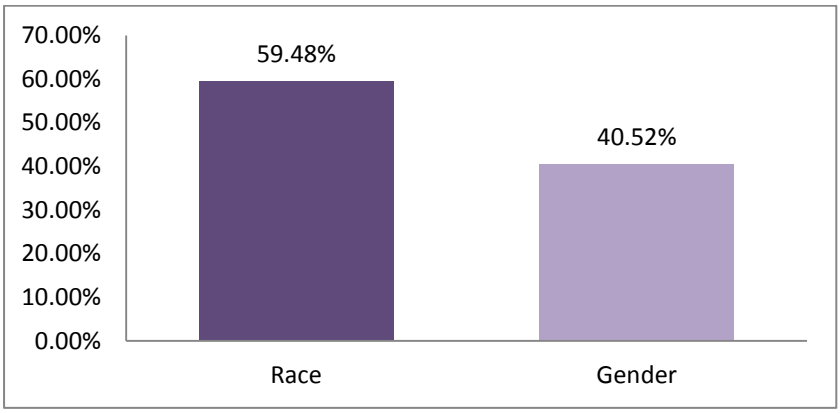

Figure 2. Visible representation of importance of preferences between race and gender based on preference percentages from conjoint analysis.

When the utility scores are plotted on a scatter graph, the preference based on own race and own gender can be seen to be the favored combination with a utility score of 0.755. Although the utility score for own race and different gender is higher than different race and own gender, the difference is not that large with only a 0.098 difference in the utility score which is small and can be easily seen on the scatter plot in figure 3. The least preferred combination for a co-worker is an individual that comes from a different race and a different gender which is explained by SIT.

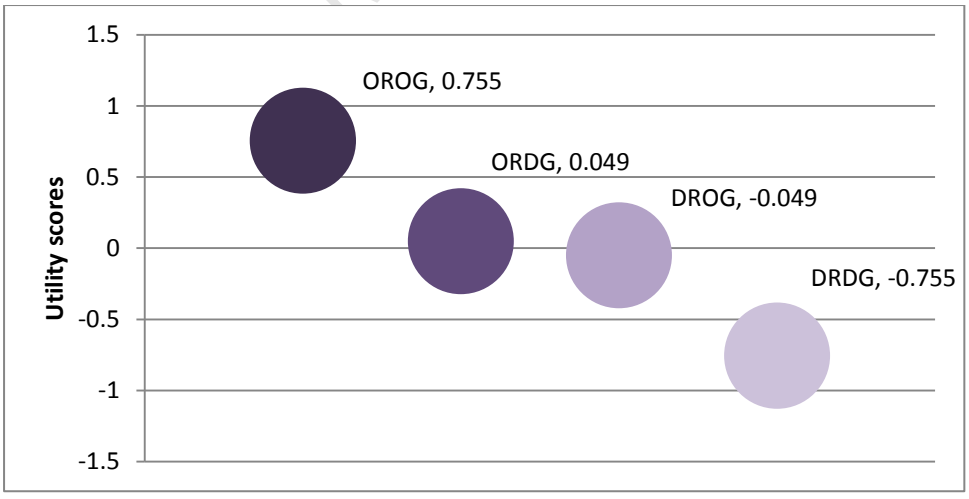

Figure 3. Utility scores plotted on a scatter plot for all participants. The abbreviations in the figure mean the following: OROG = own race and own gender; ORDG = own race and

different gender; DROG = different race and own gender; DRDG = different race and different gender

The White female group constituted 55% of the sample group and hence was overrepresented in comparison to the other seven groups. It is likely that this groups preferences may have had a large effect on the overall sample results. For hypothesis one the female group preference to working with other females was significant at $\alpha=0.05$ and for hypothesis 2 the White group had shown a preference to working with other White people after Bonferroni corrections were made at $\alpha=0.01$.

A second conjoint analysis test was done on this sample group. The White female participants had already shown significant results in the previous two hypothesis and was large enough to run the analysis on to see if there was any difference in the overall result. The other seven groups had not shown significant results for both hypothesis, but were also to small to make meaningful inference about the population as a whole. The frequency counts for the number of times the White female participants selected the photographic image for the Black African, Coloured and Indian per gender group were averaged to calculate the preference scores for each of the White female participants. A new orthogonal design was created based on 4 cards: White male, White female, other racial group female and other race group male. The averaged frequency count per group (White female, White male, other racial group female and other racial group male) were then assigned a rank order for each participant as per the previous example.

The hypothesis being tested remained the same, $n = 49$ as participants who had the same ranks for different factors were excluded from the analysis; the results are shown below in Table 8.

Table 8
Conjoint Analysis between gender(female and male) and race (White and other racial group) for White females

		Utility Estimate	Standard Error
Race	White	0.57	0.47
	Other race	-0.57	0.47
Gender	Male	-0.46	0.47
	Female	0.46	0.47

An even stronger preference was shown by race in comparison to gender, with race constituting 65.71% of the preference score and gender 34.29%. These results correlate with the rank ordering as per Table 6 were the White females were ranked first and the White males third overall showing a strong preference for the White group overall as potential co-workers.

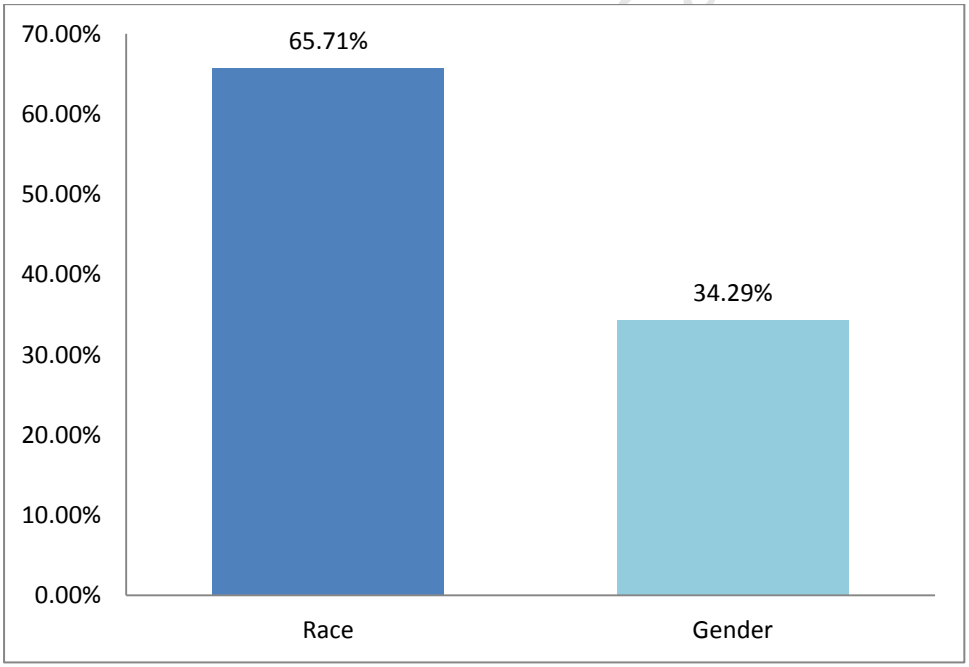

Figure 4. Visible representation of importance of preferences between race and gender for the White female group.

When the data is mapped on a scatter graph, the utility scores do not show such a large difference in preference with the White females displaying the highest utility at 1.03, but the

results for the White males in comparison to the other racial group females is relatively close, with a difference in utilities scores on 0.22

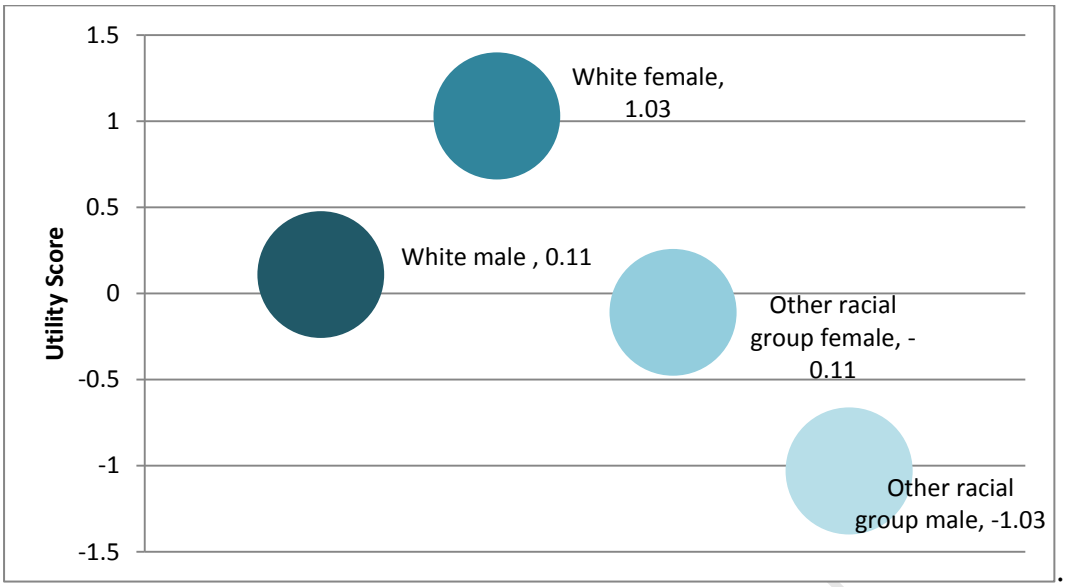

Figure 5. Utility scores in the study: White male, White female, other racial group female and other racial group male.

These findings lend to support the understanding the SIT may play a role in terms of whom individuals may choose as potential co-workers and will be looked at more in-depth in the discussion section.

Discussion

The following discussion reflects on the results obtained from the investigation into in-group preference for co-workers of different racial and gender groups in the South African context. Based on SIT it was assumed that employees would prefer to work with individuals of their own racial group and of their own gender. This study assumed that race and gender are specifically salient group memberships in South Africa based on the country's history of racial and gender based oppression. It was further expected that due to South Africa's previous apartheid system racial preferences would be more pronounced than gender preferences.

Findings

The results partially support the three hypotheses. Females strongly prefer to rather work with other females, but males showed no gender preference, in line with expectations for hypothesis one. White participants show a preference to work with other White employees yet, none of the other three racial groups represented in this study show in-group bias and do not mind which racial group their co-workers come from when testing hypothesis two. Finally as predicted, racial in-group preference is stronger than gender in-group preference within a South African context for hypothesis three.

Interpretation of the results

Gender Preferences

SIT assumes that individuals will show an in-group preference to individuals in the same social category as themselves and hence the assumption that participants would be likely to show in-group preference to individuals who are from the same gender group as themselves, yet the null hypothesis is only rejected for the female group and not the male group. Thus in the present sample group, females showed a significant preference to work with other females

as co-workers, whereas males did not show a preference in terms of gender. The male group showed no significant preference towards their fellow co-worker whether their gender was male or female.

When considering the literature and characteristic based on gender and gender bias, the different roles that the two different genders play in society may explain the differences noted in the results obtained for this sample group. When researchers have tried to characterise males, they tend to be described as more independent, displaying attributes such as ambition, aggression, autonomy, task orientation and self confidence (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Females on the other hand tend to be characterised as supportive, caring, social, communal in nature and aware about the well-being of others (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Females in history were frequently viewed as the weaker sex, with negative sentiments expressed towards women, often being perceived as worth less and less capable than men (Dovido, Glick & Rudman, 2005). In South Africa women were given the same rights as minors, playing a subservient role to their husbands and seen as inferior to men. Woman taking on the roles of care givers and the mothers based on religious and culture belief of the duty and role of a woman (Meer, 1992).

Wilson (1998) highlighted that women tended to have a more collectivist tendency than men, therefore this attribute could be a contributing factor to explain why female employees show a preference for other female co-workers. Their collective nature would be fulfilled by having other women to socialise with.

Furthermore, results from this current study support findings obtained from previous research which states that gender identification is more common and prevalent amongst females (Basow, 2000; Sprinkle, 2008). Similarities such as gender have been argued to make

communication and foster relationships of trust and reciprocity more likely (Lincoln & Miller, 1979). These relationships provide women with important emotional and social support and the strong gender identification corresponds to the definition of SIT. Furthermore Helgesen (1990) and Rosener (1990) found that women's relationships tended to be stereotyped as relationship–orientated, non-hierarchical and open to sharing power and information reinforcing the belief that women support one another in the work environment.

Thus the combination of SIT theory, were individuals tend to favour in-group members, the supportive and communal nature of women and the historical past, all contribute factors to the finding that females show a strong gender preferences. Hence there is a strong in-group preference shown by women to work with other women as work colleagues as they may believe that they may attain the social support they require from other women rather than men.

The males lack of gender preference could be explained by their independent and autonomous nature and thus they do not have the same need for companionship or social support that another male co-worker could offer, but an explanation is more likely to be found in the characteristics of the organisation from which most of the participants were sourced. The majority of employees in this organisation were White female. This means the males who are employed in this organisation have chosen to stay working in a predominantly female environment meaning that it is likely that they are less likely to show a strong preference for working with males. Males who would prefer to work with other males would likely to seek alternate employment. This is also true for the female staff, as female employees who do not feel comfortable in a predominantly female orientated environment are likely to look for alternate employment elsewhere. Therefore many participants in this sample might be those who in particular enjoy a female dominated work environment and expressed this in their answers. It would thus be necessary to replicate the study using a wider

range of participants from organisations with a more equal number of male and female participants as well as in male dominated work environments to see if similar results are obtained.

Racial Preferences

The research results reflect that, as expected almost 20 years after the end of apartheid, race is still used for social categorisation purposes, at least for White South Africans. Black Africans, Coloured and Indians do not show preferences to work with members of their own or other racial groups. White individuals still prefer to work with other White people.

The preference shown by White individuals to work with other White people is a common finding in SIT studies (Bettencourt, Charlton, Dorr & Hume, 2001; Mullen, Brown & Smit., 1992; Seekings, 2008; Shutts *et al*, 2012), The White participants in this study form part of the high status group, as they previously and currently still have greater access to wealth, material resources and education (StastSA, 2012).

High status beliefs about one's own group tend to lead the individuals to discriminate against non-group members in an attempt to maintain their social status (Tajfel, 1982). This has created a social comparison process that shapes individuals' perceptions of their group's relative value or status. With Whites being the racial group that has had access to resources that may not have been available to the other races in South Africa. These status differences are not necessarily legitimate, but there is a perceived legitimacy that may have been created by enforcing of discrimination by law.

The finding is important as dispensation of the current legislation (Employment Equity Act, 1997; Labour Relations Act, 1995; Constitution of South Africa, 1996) prohibit all forms of unfair favouritism or discrimination. According to Pascoe and Richman (2009) there are still subtle forms of discrimination and this study's results showed evidence of this.

Due to these subtle forms of discrimination it is likely that employees do not fully engage in their work environment as they may not be able to relate to or be supported by fellow co-workers and therefore may not feel part of the team. It is conceivable that the more diverse the workforce becomes, the more likely it is that these White individuals will disengage if they do not have fellow White co-workers to interact with, leading to higher absenteeism and lower productivity.

Besides the effect that discrimination has on the organisation including, high turnover expenses and law suites, there are proven negative effects on the health of those individuals who experience either actual or perceived discrimination (Pascoe & Richman, 2009). Individuals who perceive being the victim of discrimination are found to withdraw from their colleagues and are unable to exhibit positive behaviour, which includes good work performance and often are found to underperform due to the pressure being experienced (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). If employees are unengaged based on feeling discriminated against within their own organisation, they may perpetuate racial stereotypes further, in that it might reinforce the view that the members of previously disadvantage racial group are less competent and less productive than White workers.

This is particularly relevant for South Africa as Black African individuals have immense pressure to perform and not to be perceived as just a BBBEE pawn (Bavishi *et al.,* 2010). It is possible that some Black African individuals may live up to the negative stereotypes of just being a token employee who has the position they are in based on their skin colour rather than their competence, not because it is true, but rather since they are treated less favourably by White employees, than other White employees and thus become disengage from the workforce.

The legacy of apartheid and the segregation associated with it, has led to a class based society that is largely race defined. Favouritism towards a certain in-group is often based on

the superiority associated with the group, thus because the majority of White South African's have higher incomes and better educations, they are perceived as being the superior group. What makes the situation unique in South Africa is that the in-group tends to normally form part of the majority whereas in South Africa the White group only constitutes 8.9% of the population (StatsSA, 2012; Tajfel, 1982). Therefore it is possible to infer from the results of this study that participants still perceive the apartheid segregated racial groups according to a similar ranking system, showing a higher preference towards the White race based on the belief that they are still the high status group, despite forming part of the minority group within South Africa.

In recent studies there appears to be a move away from racial identities/ construct within South Africa and a move towards a collective whole and socio-economic class. In a study conducted by Grossberg, Struwig & Pillay, 2006, when individuals were asked who they are, many individuals tended to say South African and adding that they are proud to be one, but increasingly individuals have also taken on class identifications such as working class or middle class (Seekings, 2008). Thus as the inequality of the past is addressed and more individuals are given the opportunity of better education and higher level positions within organisations, the social categorisation of individuals may change and the construct race may fall away. In this current study individuals were not given the opportunity to find out more about the potential co-workers, thus the preferences would have been based on previous stereotypes associated with these races. There is still a clear distinction in economic wealth experienced across the different racial groups and this may have played a significant role in the individuals choices and may not be true reflection in a real work environment.

Furthermore, a compounding factor for the results in this study may be that the majority of participants in the survey worked in a White female dominated organisation as mentioned previously. Therefore participants might comprise of individuals who joined the

organisation or decided to remain in their current employment relationships because they felt particularly comfortable and accepted in the predominately White environment, thus the responses may not be reflective of South Africa's on the whole. Participants who answered the questionnaire via the Facebook link would also have been comfortable interacting on a friendship level with White individuals as the researcher is White, thereby having shown by their friendship that they may not have a bias against White individuals. Hence it is possible that the particular sample might have led to in-group bias among White participants and no bias for all other participants. Caution is thus advised in interpreting the results.

Gender versus Race Preference

Neither gender nor race can be chosen, yet their presence has been known to encourage discrimination and stereotypes (Ferguson, 1996). Although the ideologies of race and gender and the hierarchical structures they represent may be very different they are also intertwined. South Africa's history is marred with incidences of race and gender based discrimination socially and in the workplace and hence the interest to see which group membership would evoke the strongest bias.

In this study racial in-group bias was found to be stronger than gender bias when participants were given the choice of selecting a co-worker to work with, which corresponds to findings by Pascoe and Richman (2009). When looking at the combined preferences of both race and gender, the White female group received the highest overall preference ranking with Black African males the lowest.

These preferences are important to investigate, as in order to have harmonious relations with co-workers, there needs to be a sense of support and acceptance in work settings and if subtle discrimination exist employees may not feel accepted or part of the team and may even feel isolated. Studies have shown that when employees feel secure in exposing

their true selves to others when performing their jobs, they are more likely to fully engage (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). In contrast poor relations with co-workers could heighten defensiveness, resulting in greater detachment in the work setting, thus if there is a particular bias on any specific characteristic this may affect the individual's ability to develop meaningful relationships in a work environment.

In hypothesis one and two significant results were obtained that showed a preference by females to work with other females and that White individuals prefer to work with other White co-workers, therefore the White females being ranked first corresponds with these findings as it combines the findings of the two previous hypotheses.

The results for hypothesis three can be explained by drawing on the SIT, which states that individuals tend to evaluate members of their own group (in-group) more positively than members of another group (out-group) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Although a gender preference exhibited in this study, the racial preference is much stronger. The relative difference in class or status that race creates between group membership is thus much larger.

According to Bavarish *et al.,* (2010) to reduce discrimination individuals need to interact more with individuals with different groups than their own. Since individuals have more exposure to members of the other gender group than members of different racial groups, they are more likely to discriminate on race than gender. The participants in this study are likely to be more comfortable with individuals from a different gender group than racial group as it is more familiar to them. Individuals from different gender groups come from the same socio-economic class, having been brought up in the same or similar households. Most individuals grow up in households that have both females and males and although subtle discrimination may be present it is not always tangible and measurable, but normally based on cultural beliefs and accepted behaviour.

In contrast the large inequality of wealth within the South African community can be clearly measured and compared based on a racial level. SIT is based on the perceived value and status of a group's membership with the majority of White South Africans still controlling the majority of the economic wealth of the country, hence the stronger preference exhibited based on race is likely to continue until this inequality is addressed.

As stated above findings from the 2011 Census data, White South Africans earn more and tend to have a higher probability of being employed (StatsSA, 2012), thus providing evidence for why the White group holds the high status ranking as per the definition of SIT (Olson *et al*, 2012; Seekings, 2008; Shutts *et al*, 2011; Tajfel, 1982). Due to the large socio-economic class difference in South Africa between the races, an explanation is given why race was the predominate factor that participants based their preferences on as individuals are likely to discriminate on factors that may affect their self-concept (Taijfel, 1982).

Furthermore since there is such a large difference in socio-economic class participants from other races may choose to rather work with a White co-worker or another higher status group if their own racial group has low status. Van Knippenberg and Van Oers (2011) argue that low status groups evaluate the out-group particularly favourably on dimensions that have to do with socio-economic success, such as income and status.

This perceived status differences for both high and low status groups, is considered to be legitimate, with the group's superiority versus inferiority reflected by both groups' behaviour (James, 2000). Therefore, under these conditions, low status groups might not only show less in-group bias than high status groups, but could even show out-group favouritism (Bettencourt & Bartholow, 1998) which would mean that individuals from a Coloured background may choose to rather work with a high status White co-worker than a low status Coloured co-worker.

The strong preference to work with White females (who were ranked as the first choice of co-workers) can be further explained by the over representation by White females in the sample group. Conjoint analysis looks at all participants ranking and does not look at individual groups rating, therefore it is likely that the majority of the sample ranks that were used for the overall conjoint analysis test were White females and with an even stronger racial preference exhibited on the second conjoint analysis test which specifically focused on the White female group. Hence this is possibly why the overall study results were slightly lower for preference of own race among the overall study participant in comparison to that of the White female sample who showed a higher preference to work with individuals from their own race and gender.

This high status classification that leads to discrimination, is not just reserved for adults, but has also been noted in young children. Children are also sensitive to differences in social status of different groups. In a variety of settings children who form part on the in-group show greater favouritism to other children from the same race as opposed to those children from a lower status racial groups (Aboud, 1988; Ramsey & Meyers, 1990, Spencer, 1984). For example White American pre-schoolers show more in-group favouritism than Hispanic or Black children (Aboud & Skerry, 1984) White Canadian preschoolers' show more in-group favouritism than First National children (Hunsberger, 1978) White New Zealand pre-schoolers show more in-group favouritism than Maori children (Vaughan, 1964). White British children show more in-group favouritism than West Indian and Asian children (Davey & Mullin, 1980) and White South Africa children show more in-group favouritism than Black African children, who show no in-group favouritism (Fincham, 1978; Shutts, Kinzler, Katz, Treadoux & Spelke, 2011).

Children from lower status groups generally prefer higher status racial groups over lower status groups. For example Black children in America prefer Whites over Hispanics

with Hispanic American children preferring Whites over Blacks (Teplin, 1976). Asian British children prefer Whites over West Indians and West Indian children prefer Whites over Asians (Davey & Mullin, 1980). Similar children from high status racial groups favour other higher status racial groups, for example White Australian children favour Asian children over Aborigines (Black-Gutman & Hickson, 1996). Coloured South African children favour Whites over Black African, which mirrors the relative wealth, education and opportunity of these racial groups within South Africa (Shutts et al, 2011).

Although in-group favouritism based on gender exists among children too, the racial preference exhibited is explained by children's ability to recognise economic status at a young age and associate certain types of houses and cars with certain races and thus replicating the White high status classification exhibited by the adults using economic wealth as the predictor of perceived status (Shutts *et al*, 2011). If children believe that relative status is of different groups is important, then it is not surprising when adults exhibit similar views given that people tend to believe that the way things are is the way they ought to be. Therefore by observing status hierarchies in society from a young age, individuals may see higher status racial groups as more deserving of their status (Shutt et al, 2012).

Thus the concept of race and racial classification in South Africa still remains the strongest indicator with regards to who employees would rather select as their co-workers and therefore a racial preference is stronger than a gender bias.

Limitations and Practical Implications

When conducting this study, the first limitation that the researcher noted was that the sample may not be representative of the population that the researcher is interested in, with the majority of the participants holding a tertiary qualification, therefore the responses may not be representative of South Africa as a whole. These individuals may not have felt the discrimination that less educated individuals may have experienced in the workplace and hence the indifference shown towards the preference of race may be based on individuals who are from the same socio-economic class as the majority of White South Africans and thus may not have considered race to be a relevant construct.

As has been discussed Pascoe et al (1999) argues that it is not race that causes discrimination, but rather differences in class. Since this study was conducted using photographic images participants would not know what classes individuals would form part of, therefore their preferences of co-workers would be based only on stereotypes of these groups. Therefore a recommendation would be that this study be replicated using a larger sample size which is more equally distributed across race, gender and varying educational levels.

Secondly, Vecchio (2002) suggests that the use of imaginary people as reference points may reflect stereotyping that occurs primarily in the absence of specific information about individuals. It can therefore be concluded that this study and other studies may tend to over represent gender or racial biases that actually exist within organisations. Yet, Brewer's (1979) research found that more in-group bias was shown with real people than in artificial groups that are created for study purposes. Therefore it is possible that current research study which used artificial groups to test its hypothesis, based on Brewer (1979) study it is likely that White South African's are more prone to show a stronger racial and gender bias than represented by these findings. The SIT bias may be underrepresented for the Black African,

Coloured and Indian racial groups due to small sample size and the lack of information regarding socio-economic class in the images presented. Men may have a bias that has not been noted due to the female dominance in the industry.

Thirdly, it is recommended, that if the study is replicated, at the end of the main study the participants should categorise images according to the four defined racial groups, if the participant choose a race other than what was intended by the researcher for that image, results using that image should be excluded. The researcher ideally would have also liked to have run the conjoint analysis for each of the four races and both genders, but due to the smaller representation some of the sample group it was not possible to have drawn valid inferences.

Finally the results of this study are independent of others factors that need to consider such as participants views on gender or races that may be influenced by external factors. These elements cannot be controlled unless pre-psychometric testing is done.

The practical outcomes from this study are that subtle discrimination, is still likely to be present in the majority of South African workforces. According to Bavishi *et al*., (2010), a potential solution to combat out-group discrimination or in-group bias, would be to increase the number of employees from different racial groups within the workforce to ensure a more diversity and create better support systems for individuals. By creating more diversity, individuals are given greater exposure to other races and thus may assist in altering some of the stereotypes associated with these races.

As South Africans benefit from the availability of resources for all races and genders and if they are able to reduce the inequality presently experienced, the country may be able to look past the colour of individuals skin and rather form opinion on the actual individual. Currently it would appear as though many individuals from racial groups other than the

White racial classification may still feel discriminated within the workplace which means that many individuals may not be fully engaged. If this is true then South African organisation may have a harder time competing in a global arena as lower engagement tends to present lower productivity, higher absenteeism and less job satisfaction. South African organisations will need to work harder to create team cohesion and support systems for all staff to address this. It is recommended that further studies be done between SIT and employee engagement especially within a South African context.

Although there are a few limitations and internal threats to this study, it is believed that these do not outweigh that the potential research outcomes that could assist organisations and employees in their perceptions of their workforces, this research is recommended to be rather be used as a yard stick against which to measure company dynamics and the changes South Africa may need to make in order to address the construct of race still.

Conclusion

One of the most common findings in SIT related research is that high status groups tend to express more in-group favouritism than lower status groups. In South Africa's the apartheid history and discrimination based on race appears to still be present in the perceived status of different races. This perceived status difference is likely to be based on social economic class rather than the construct race, but due to the inequality of wealth amongst the vast population primarily along racial lines, the high status White group are shown to still be perceived as the preferred racial group to be worked with.

White individuals show a preference to working with other White group members which means employees from other racial groups may still feel subtle discrimination within the workplace. This discrimination is believed to exist as per SIT in order for the higher status group to maintain their high status, they are likely to discriminate against other lower status groups to maintain their social identity.

Furthermore, this research has shown that in-group or collective behaviour in females is a lot stronger than males, thus inferring that females show a stronger preference to work with other females while males do not show similar requirement. Overall the construct of race has been shown to exhibit the stronger preference between two in-group preferences of race and gender.

Although discrimination is not tolerated legally, a greater consequence is thus that these subtle forms of discrimination are not conducive to creating an engaged workforce. The consequences for South African workforces with the enforcement of a representative workforce as required by Employment Equity and BBBEE, may mean lower level of productivity and profitability as there is a lack of support and security for employees which are drivers for employee engagement, but further studies will need to be done with regards to SIT and employee engagement in South Africa.

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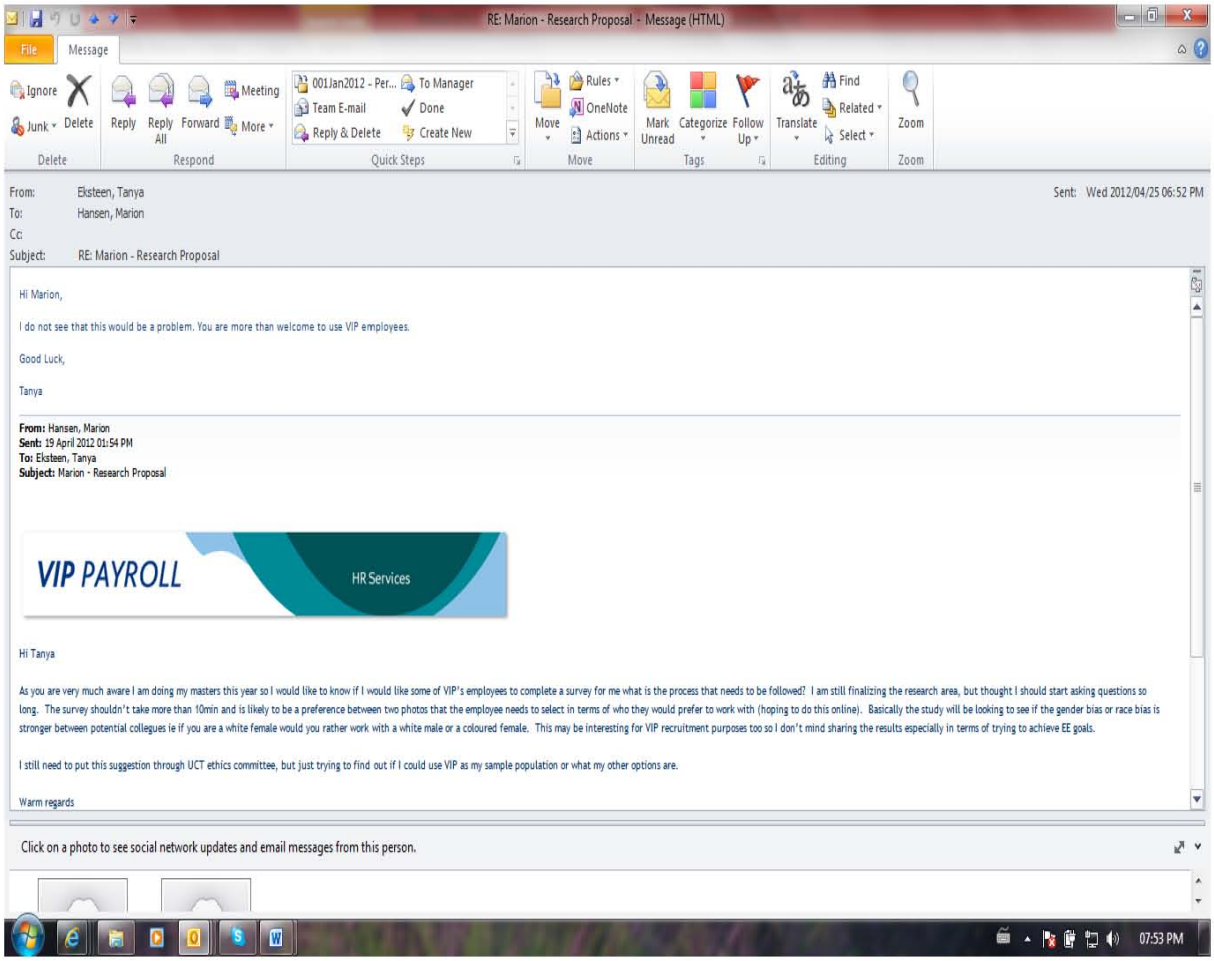
Appendices

Appendix A

Email approval from organisation where survey was completed



Appendix B

Commerce Ethics Committee Approval: The title of the project changed, but the content and methodology stayed the same.

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Faculty of Commerce
Ethics in Research Committee

Courier: Room 2.21 Leslie Commerce Building Upper Campus University of Cape Town
Post: University of Cape Town • Private Bag • Rondebosch 7701
Email: Irwin.brown@uct.ac.za
Telephone: +27 21 650-2311
Fax No.: +27 21 689-7570

UCT/COM/067/2012

03 July 2012

Mr Marion Hansen
Department of Management Studies
University of Cape Town
Mazster.marion@gmail.com

Dear Researcher

Project title: A picture in our heads: Race versus gender in-group bias in the workplace.

This letter serves to confirm that the project entitled, **"A picture in our heads: Race versus gender in-group bias in the workplace"**, as described in your final submitted protocol dated 15 June 2012, has been approved. You may proceed with the research.

Please note that if you make any substantial change in your research procedure that could affect the experiences of the participants, you must submit a revised protocol to the Committee for approval.

Best wishes for great success with your research.

Regards,

IRWIN BROWN

Prof Irwin Brown
Commerce Faculty Ethics in Research Committee

Appendix C

Example of main study cover page

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Informed consent for participation in an academic research study

Department of Organisational Psychology

Research conducted by:
Miss M Hansen (HNSMAR006)
Cell: 0798746936

Dear Respondent

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Marion Hansen, a Masters student from the Department of Organisational Psychology at the University of Cape Town.

The purpose of this pilot study is to confirm the images provided represent the racial groups indicated.

Please note the following:

- All responses you provide will be treated as strictly confidential.
- Your participation in this study is very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.
- Please answer the attached questionnaire as completely and honestly as possible. This should not take more than 5 minutes of your time.
- The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only, and may be published in an academic journal. Upon request, you will be provided with a summary of the findings for this research.
- If further research is planned using the data collected from your responses, or the aim of the research differs significantly from the above aims, you may be contacted to provide further consent for such research.
- Please feel free to contact my study supervisor, Ines Meyer (021 650 3829) if you have any questions, concerns or comments regarding the study.

Please sign the form to indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided above.
- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

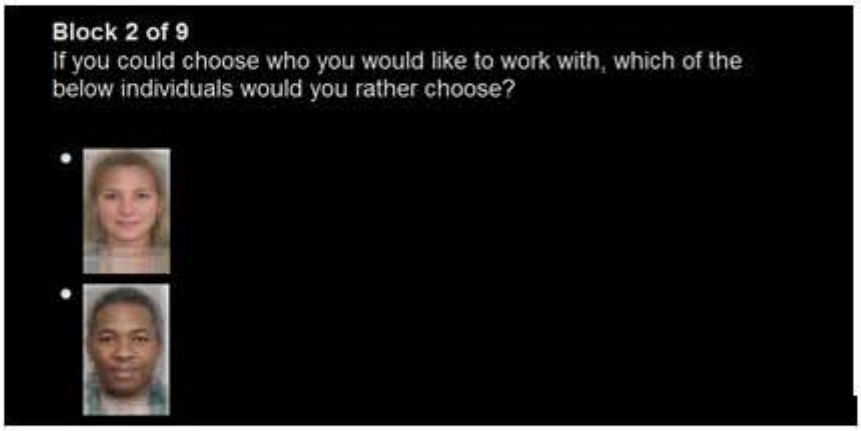
Please note: By typing an "X" instead of your name, you are giving your consent, and are indicating that you have read and understood the information provided above.

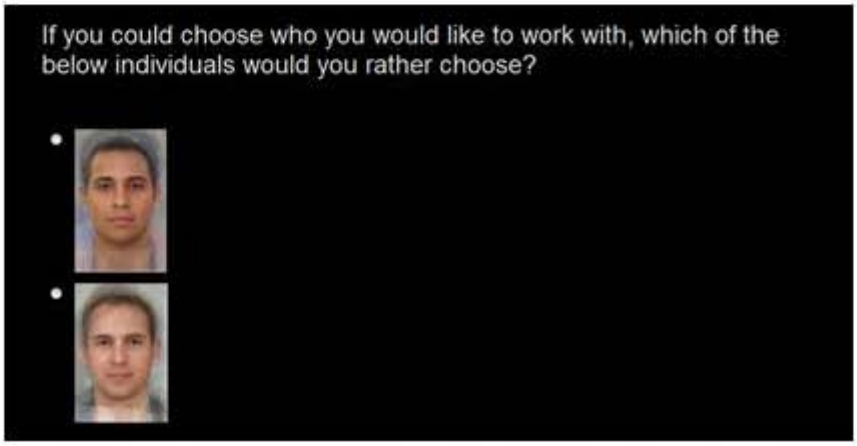
_____ _____

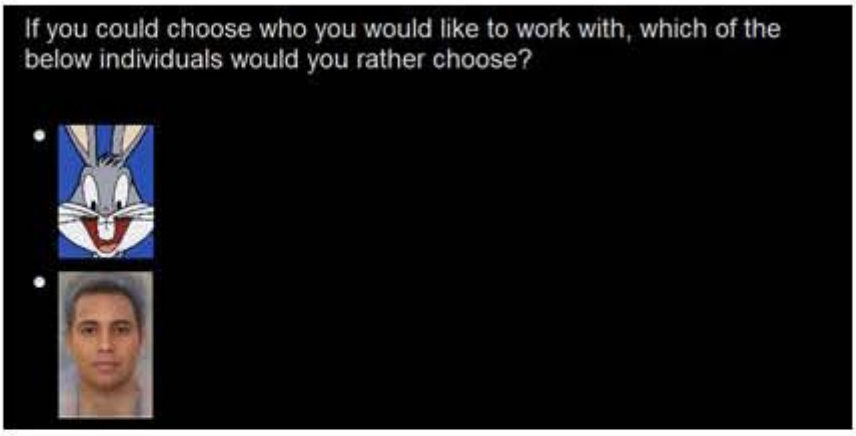
Respondent's signature **Date**

Appendix D

Below are examples of print screens that participants in the main study would have seen to make their selection from.







Appendix E

Example of pilot study cover page

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Informed consent for participation in an academic research study

Department of Organisational Psychology

PILOT STUDY TO CONFIRM THE RACE OF INDIVIUDALS DISPLAYED IN THE IMAGES PROVIDED

Research conducted by:
Miss M Hansen (HNSMAR006)
Cell: 0798746936

Dear Respondent

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Marion Hansen, a Masters student from the Department of Organisational Psychology at the University of Cape Town.

The purpose of this pilot study is to confirm the images provided represent the racial groups indicated.

Please note the following:

- All responses you provide will be treated as strictly confidential.
- Your participation in this study is very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.
- Please answer the attached questionnaire as completely and honestly as possible. This should not take more than 5 minutes of your time.
- The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only, and may be published in an academic journal. Upon request, you will be provided with a summary of the findings for this research.
- If further research is planned using the data collected from your responses, or the aim of the research differs significantly from the above aims, you may be contacted to provide further consent for such research.
- Please feel free to contact my study supervisor, Ines Meyer (021 650 3829) if you have any questions, concerns or comments regarding the study.

Please sign the form to indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided above.
- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

Please note: By typing an "X" instead of your name, you are giving your consent, and are indicating that you have read and understood the information provided above.

Respondent's signature **Date**

Appendix F

Example of pilot study questionnaire

Instructions:

Please select the race you believe the individuals represents in the below pictures by placing an X over the race

	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Unsure		African	Coloured	Indian	White	Unsure
	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Unsure		African	Coloured	Indian	White	Unsure
	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Unsure		African	Coloured	Indian	White	Unsure
	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Unsure		African	Coloured	Indian	White	Unsure
	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Unsure		African	Coloured	Indian	White	Unsure