



My Best Friend is a Smurf: Assessing Racism through Children's Cartoons

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“My Best Friend is a Smurf!”
Assessing Racism through
Children’s Cartoons

ASHELEY ROBERTS, MORGAN OWENS, TOMMY DEROSSETT, & JANA HACKATHORN

Modern Racism

- ▶ Referred to as “symbolic racism”
- ▶ Much more subtle than “old fashioned racism” (Sniderman & Tetlock, 1986).
- ▶ We have an implicit norm to be “multi-cultural”



What's the problem?

- ▶ We don't know how racist people are.
- ▶ Modern racism is not direct, making it difficult to assess.
 - ▶ People want to avoid seeming racist.
 - ▶ Lower scores on explicit racism scales may indicate racial bias
- ▶ Implicit measures indicate a higher bias towards once race (Arkes & Tetlock, 2004).
 - ▶ These measures are still debatable on reliability/validity

Stereotype Threat

- ▶ Originally discovered in studies involving women and mathematics (Steele & Aronson, 1995).
- ▶ Idea that once you are reminded of the stereotype, you will act like it.
- ▶ White people do not like the stereotype that “whites are racist”.

This Study's Purpose

- ▶ Activate stereotype threat in Caucasian individuals
- ▶ Help create a better understanding of how we can assess modern racism
- ▶ Hypothesis:
 - ▶ White people will behave differently as a means of not seeming racist





Research Questions

Will the answers on the Smurf Identity Scale differ between the conditions?

Activating Stereotype Threat

- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEh7gxi9yws>



Conditions

No Stereotype Threat

- ▶ ...creating a **new identification survey** that will help in examining the ability of adolescents to **identify with the Smurfs**, relate in their social development, and any possible resulting experiences... Although, it may seem silly to you, please answer each of the questions on the **Smurf identification survey** as honestly and seriously as possible.

Stereotype Threat

- ▶ creating a **new prejudice, or racism, survey** that will help in examining the ability of adolescents to **identify with another race, such as the Smurfs**, and any possible resulting experiences... Although, it may seem silly to you, please answer each of the questions on the **Smurf prejudice survey** as honestly and seriously as possible.

“The Smurfs Identity Scale”



- ▶ “I have a lot in common with the Smurfs”
- ▶ “I believe in the vision and/or mission of the Smurfs”
- ▶ “I think Smurf qualities are a lot like my own qualities”
- ▶ **“I can easily identify with the Smurfs.”**

Predicted Analysis/Results

- ▶ An independent samples T-test will be conducted to analyze the differences between the two groups
- ▶ It is predicted that there will be a difference among the Smurf Identity Scale in the stereotype-threat condition than the non-stereotype threat condition.
- ▶ The direction is undetermined.

Limitations and Future Research

- ▶ People just might not care about Smurfs
 - ▶ This makes them difficult to identify with at all
- ▶ The Smurf study does allow for us to critique previous racism measures
 - ▶ This can add for the development of a better measure of racism, allowing us to fully understand the concept of “modern Racism”