Exploring animated narrative vignette technology to understand empathy, aggression and racial ideologies with middle school youths

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Overview

- Define
  - Vignette
  - Relational aggression
  - Racial Ideology
- Purpose and Research Questions
- Method
- Results
- Future Directions

Vignettes as a Research Tool

- Vignettes in social science research
  - Barter & Renold, 2000
  - Finch, 1987;
  - Chau et al., 2001;
  - Mosquera, Mansead & Fischer, 2002;
  - Schoenberg & Ravdal, 2000;
  - Sleed, Durrheim, Kriel, Soloman, et al., 2002
- Vignettes as qualitative & quantitative tools
  - Forced choice
  - Likert-like
  - Open-ended
- Animated narrative vignettes
  - Tettegah, 2004, 2005

Relational aggression

- Relational aggression
  - is a form of aggression in which the harm to the victim is inflicted via "purposeful manipulation or damage to peer relationships" or feelings of acceptance (Crick, 1996, p. 23). Examples of relational aggression include social exclusion.
  - is more strongly related to emotional distress (Hawker, 1998
  - has been found to be uniquely predictive of current social and psychological maladjustment as well as depression in adulthood

Racial Ideology Is. . .

- A global term to characterize the specific theories encompassing racial attitudes (e.g., racial identity, racial beliefs).
- A "world view readily found in the population, including sets of ideas and values [about race] that cohere, that are used to publicly justify political stances [especially as they relate to racialized matters], and that shape and are shaped by society. . . Cognitively, ideology serves as a filter of what one 'sees' and responds to [interpersonally and] in the social world" (Michael Dawson 2001, p. 4-5).
- An explicit connection between individual beliefs and dominant societal racial beliefs.
- A method in which individuals' encode and interpret racial information; racial outlook.

Measuring Color-blind Racial Ideology

- Color-blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS; Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, Browne, 2000)
- CoBRAS – self-report measure consisting 20 items assessing the degree to which individuals minimize/distort the existence of structural racism in the U.S. (e.g., "Racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not an important problem today" and "Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich").

Rationale & Purpose of Study

- The purpose of the study was to explore whether animated vignette methodology was a viable fidelity to measure
  - core responses (social, anti-social and behavioral) of youth to the animated narrative vignette
  - empathic dispositions
  - to broaden the dimension of racial beliefs assessed (i.e., racial ideology) using both self-report and vignette methodologies
  - to provide initial data on the CoBRAS and the vignette responses among younger (7th and 8th graders) adolescents.

Research Question and Hypotheses

- Is ANV technology a viable fidelity to measure student responses to a simulation involving relational aggression, empathy, victimization and racial ideology?
- Greater empathy scores would be related to greater levels of identification with Jamilah as a victim.
- Provide initial psychometric information on the CoBRAS among middle school youth.

Method

- Participants
  - 104 African American/Black 7th and 8th graders; however, 30 deleted because answered a validity item, thus 74 useable responses
  - 35 boys and 36 girls (3 unidentified)
  - 31% reported experiencing racism; 64% indicated that they had not; 5% did not respond to the item
- Measures
  - Animated narrative vignette
  - Empathy Measure
  - Victimization
  - CoBRAS
  - Open-ended questions about racism
  - Demographic sheet

Vignette of Classroom Interaction

Relation aggression

Perpetrator-victim

Racial incident

- Jamilah (An African-American 4th grade female)
- Scott (A White American 4th Grade male)

Codes and Themes

- Response = how the participant would respond to the situation. There are three rows representing physical aggression, verbal response, and tell authority.
  - Physical Aggression = response includes some form of physical aggression (e.g., hit, beat up, etc.)
  - Verbal Response = participant indicated verbally responding to Scott (e.g., inquired about his intentions and thinking, insult him, etc.)
  - Tell Authority = participant would respond by telling an authority figure (e.g., teacher, principal, parent)
  - Affect = self identified affect or personal feelings of the participant (e.g., acknowledging personally feeling mad, angry, hurt, offended, etc.
- Empathy = participant expressed empathy toward the victim in the vignette
- Racism = acknowledgement of racism or racial prejudice occurring in the vignette

Verbal Responses
Yes = 42 (57%); No = 28 (39%)

- (General) "In this situation I would have told the boy I felt disrespected and asked him to apologize reason to have violence. But if we got to go there I will."
- (Retaliation) "What I would have done was told the boy that I don't want to work with him because he too white and he is hurting my eyes every time. I look at him because he is so white."

Responses to the Situation: Physical Aggression Responses

Yes = 17 (23%); No = 53 (72%)

- "I will jaw his ass in the mouth and I will have all of the black people jump his ass after school then I will jaw his ass again. Then I would tell him don't ever call me a negro again. . ."
- "I would help the sister. Then I would beat the cracker until we got tired."
- "If I was the little girl I would had hurt that boy. I would have got suspended that day. Because that's like a person walking up on you saying your mama. So I will hurt somebody for my mother."

Tell Authority Figure Responses
Yes = 37 (50%); No = 33 (45%)

- "The first thing I would do is ask for Scott to stop talking about me. Next if Scott continuously talked about me I would confront the teacher about this situation. And if the teacher doesn't confront his many acts I would then tell my mom."

Did the youth respond affectively to the situation?
Yes = 14 (19%); No = 56 (76%)

- "I would have told the teacher what he said. I would also tell him that he really hurt my feelings. I would have also asked for an apology. I would also try to avoid that person. I don't want to be around people who make negative comments like that."
- "I would have pushed him or her in the face. And I would have told my and my mom. It would make me feel hurt in the inside. I would not be able to go on until I let off some steam."

Did the youth express empathy for Jamilah, the victim?

Yes = 15 (20%); No 55 = (74%)

- "I think that is a serious case of racism. The character in the vignette (Scott) should not of said that. That remark that he made might have made Jamilla mad. This is a bad situation for Jamilla she has to put up with Scott who is semi-racist."
- "I think that he was wrong for saying that because he could have hurt her feelings. And if he were her he wouldn't want anyone talking about his skin colored or saying that."

Core Responses to Vignette: Incident Involved Racism Yes = 36 (48.6%); No = 35 (45.9%)

YES

"It is fairly unfair for a young white boy to act like that towards a black person period. It has to be someone inside of this boy's home that is feeding off this kind of behavior. It's probably that or he just doesn't know any better. "

"What I think about this situation is that the boy is really racist and he don't have the right to walk up to someone and say such a thing. . ."

NO

"I think that he was wrong for saying that to her. See if someone said that to me I will tell the teacher. "

"I think this situation is about a young white boy is thinking that the young black girl is going to wipe some of her skin on him or that some of her black personality will rub off on him."

Quantitative Findings

- Greater self-reported victimization was related to higher levels of empathy.
- Students who identified the scenario as reflecting racism, also were more willing to tell an authority figure about the incident and adopted greater perspective taking empathy.
- Alpha for the Unawareness of Racial Privilege scale of the CoBRAS is .63
- Greater CoBRAS related to lower perspective taking empathy; identification of racism in the scenario was not related to CoBRAS

Where to from here?

- Collect additional data with a variety of ANVs
- Conduct focus groups with youth about empathy – under what conditions and in what ways is it expressed toward victims of interpersonal aggression
- Identify multidimensional racial ideology types using developmentally appropriate measures, such as the animated narrative vignette methodology

Contact Information

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