**Empathy and Anti-racism**

*Perspective-taking influences compassion and, in turn, anti-racist beliefs*

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**SUMMARY/ABSTRACT**

Can empathy increase anti-racism? How might this happen, given empathy’s multidimensional nature (Davis, 1983; Smith, 1759; Zaki, 2020)?

We develop a conceptual model whereby perspective-taking (cognitive empathy) influences compassion (emotional empathy) and thereby promotes anti-racist beliefs.

Analysis of a cross-sectional dataset (N = 311) provides evidence for this conceptualization.

**RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

![Diagram showing the relationship between perspective-taking, compassion, and anti-racism with regression coefficients.]

**Correlates of Emotional Empathy (Trait/Dispositional Compassion)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Correlation Coefficient (r)</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>income and compassion are unrelated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.18**</td>
<td>as level of education increases, compassion decreases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatism</td>
<td>-.34***</td>
<td>as political conservatism increases, compassion decreases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (in years)</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>older age is associated with increased compassion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (male = 1)</td>
<td>-.16**</td>
<td>(on average) females show greater compassion than males</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001*

**DISCUSSION**

This study provides initial evidence that perspective-taking (cognitive empathy) begets compassion (emotional empathy) that, in turn, fosters anti-racist beliefs and action tendencies.

We recommend that future research build on this work in at least two ways.

1) Manipulate perspective-taking (versus a control condition) to determine if these relations still hold.

2) Measure behavioral (rather than self-report) outcome variables. Anti-racism, a new construct for psychology, might be operationalized in interesting and informative ways.

**METHOD**

Data on adults were collected from an online crowd-sourcing platform (Amazon’s Mechanical Turk).

Three psychological constructs were measured:

- **Perspective-taking** (Davis, 1983)
- **Compassion** or empathic concern (Davis, 1983)
- **Beliefs in Anti-racism** (a novel face valid self-report measure developed by this lab)

Given its intentional brevity (four items), this measure showed acceptable reliability (alpha = .67). Also, factor analysis showed that items loaded on a single factor.

(Items are available upon request.)