



Introduction

- ◆ Prejudice, a negative assumption or opinion about a member of a certain group, can cause discrimination towards and disenfranchisement of minority groups.
- ◆ Many different prejudice reduction techniques, such as vicarious contact, antiracist teaching, and personalizing contact are generally effective **by increasing positive feelings** towards marginalized groups (Gonzalez, Riggle, & Rostosky, 2015; McGregor, 1993).
- ◆ **Perspective-taking** (taking the point of view of an outgroup member) both increases positive feelings and **reduces negative feelings** towards marginalized groups (Batson & Ahmad, 2009).
 - ◆ **Imagine-self perspective-taking (ISPT)** – imagining oneself in another's situation and thinking about how one would think and feel in this situation; leads to emotion matching, primes more self-attributes and leads to more thoughts about the self
 - ◆ **Imagine-other perspective-taking (IOPT)** – imagining another's thoughts and feelings in a situation; leads to more empathic concern, increases situational attributions to the outgroup
- ◆ Acting methods such as **Stanislavski's system** and **everyday life performance (ELP)** give participants ample opportunity for perspective-taking.
 - ◆ **Stanislavski's system** is centered around the idea that the actor should merge their character with their own self, similar to how ISPT works (Stanislavski, 1948).
 - ◆ **ELP** is centered around the idea that an actor can portray a real person through close study of their speech and vocal patterns, and does not involve too much input from the actor's self, similar to IOPT (Hopper, 1993).
- ◆ The **self-esteem** of the perspective-taker can moderate this effect of perspective-taking on prejudice. For those with low self-esteem, perspective-taking does not reduce prejudice, likely because the person with low self-esteem does not think of themselves very highly, and it may be hard to think of others very highly due to their own low self-esteem (Galinsky & Ku, 2004).

Hypotheses

- ◆ **Hypothesis 1:** Based on past research and similarities between acting techniques and types of perspective-taking, I propose that Stanislavski's system, as a form of ISPT, will facilitate prejudice reduction.
- ◆ **Hypothesis 2:** ELP, as a form of IOPT, will facilitate prejudice reduction.
- ◆ **Hypothesis 3:** ELP (as a form of IOPT) will be more effective than Stanislavski's system (as a form of ISPT) in reducing prejudice, since the activation of the self-concept during ISPT can impede perspective-taking.
- ◆ **Hypothesis 4:** Participants with low self-esteem will show higher prejudice in both perspective-taking conditions than participants with high self-esteem, since perspective-taking can be harder for those with low self-esteem.

Method

Participants

50 St. Mary's College of Maryland students (72% female, 66% White, 40.8% age 19, 81.6% heterosexual) participated for course credit or entry into a Psychology Department raffle.

Materials

Participants were given a monologue matched to their gender discussing institutional racial discrimination towards Black people (About Us). Participants were recorded by a Canon Vixia video camera situated on a tripod when performing the monologue. Survey materials included the Symbolic Racism Scale (SRS) accompanied by distractor questions, the Rosenberg self-esteem scale, and other questions pertaining to demographics and perceptions of the study (Henry & Sears, 2002; Rosenberg, 1979)

Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to one of three monologue instructions (system, ELP, or no acting style), and were asked to follow these instructions in working with the monologue for ten to fifteen minutes. After, they completed two monologue comprehension questions without the aid of their monologue to ensure task completion and engagement with the material. Then, participants performed the monologue twice in front of a video camera. After the performance, participants completed the survey materials.

Results

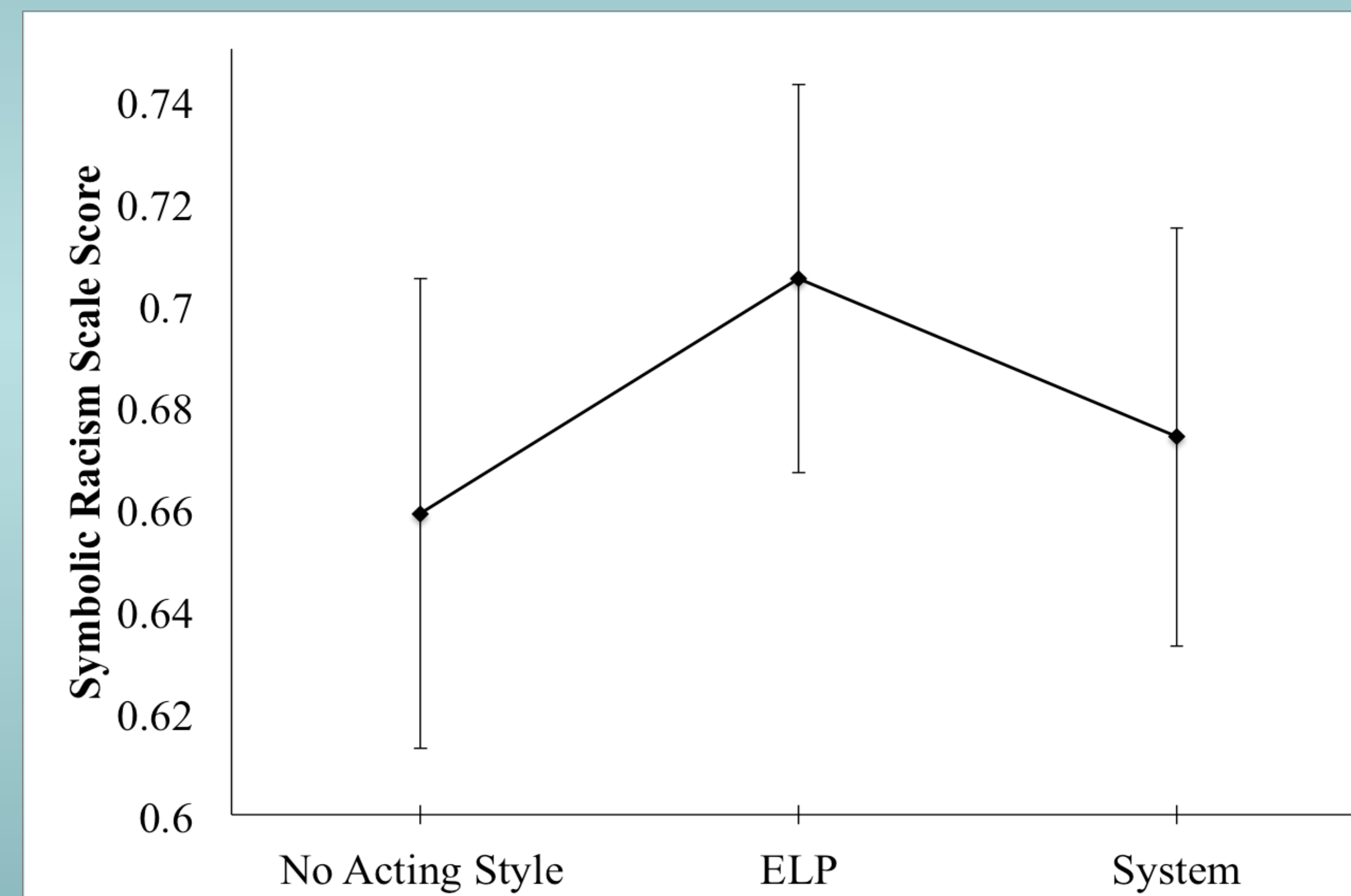


Figure 1. Mean SRS scores for each acting style. Lower scores indicate higher prejudice. Error bars represent standard error.

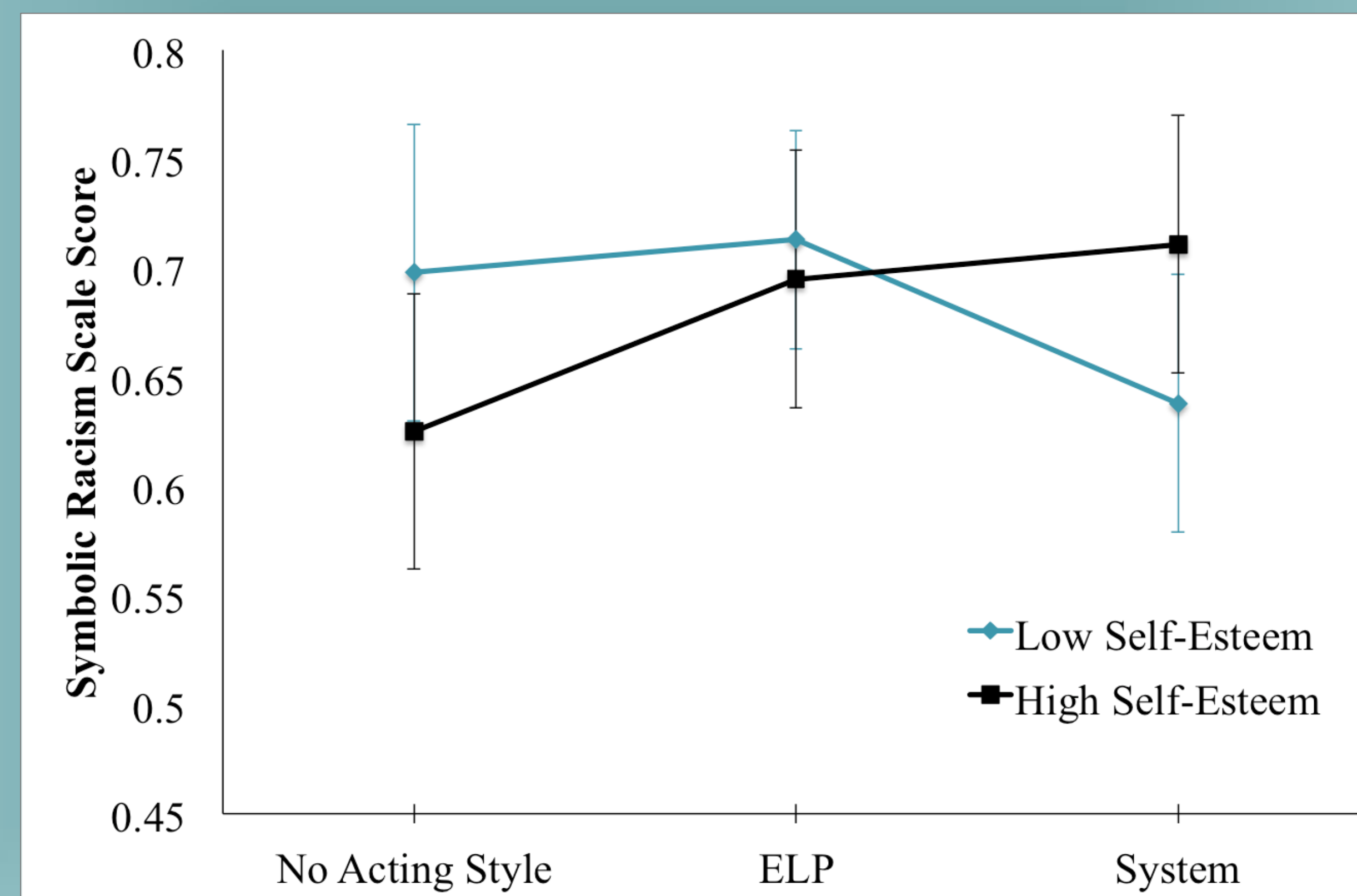


Figure 2. Mean SRS scores for each acting style, further divided into low self-esteem and high self-esteem groups. Lower scores indicate higher prejudice. Error bars represent standard error.

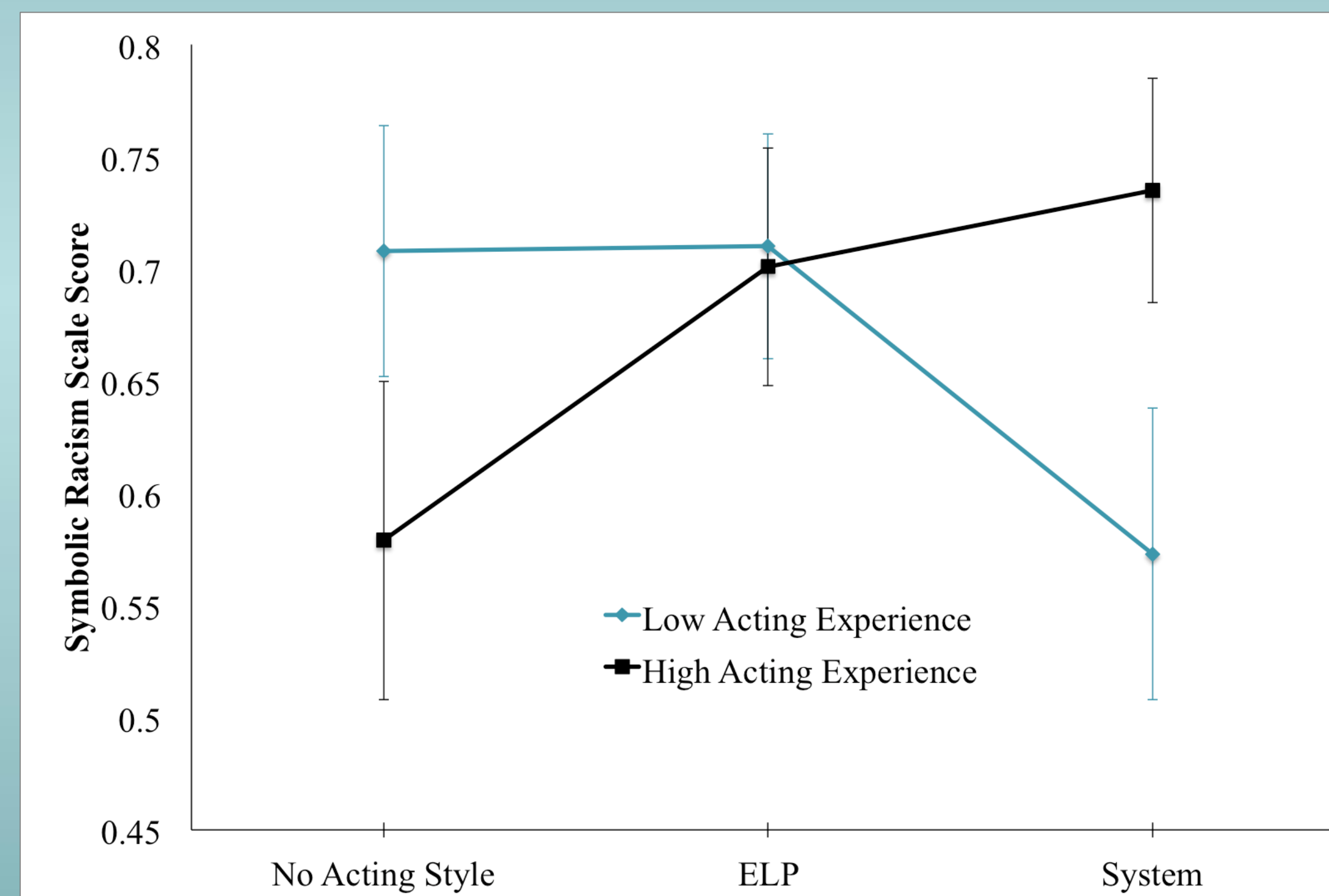


Figure 3. Mean SRS scores for each acting style, further divided into low acting experience and high acting experience groups. Lower scores indicate higher prejudice. Error bars represent standard error.

Results

- ◆ **Figure 1.** To test hypotheses 1, 2, and 3, a one-way between-subjects ANOVA was conducted to determine if the system instructions ($M = 0.67$, $SD = 0.18$), ELP instructions ($M = 0.71$, $SD = 0.16$), or control instructions ($M = 0.66$, $SD = 0.16$) had an effect on Symbolic Racism Scale scores. There was not a significant difference between any of the three groups, $F(2, 45) = .343$, $p = .712$, $\eta^2 = .015$.
- ◆ **Figure 2.** To test hypothesis 4, a 2x3 factorial ANOVA was conducted to determine if there was an interaction between self-esteem (low or high) and acting style (system, ELP, or control) on Symbolic Racism Scale scores. There was not a significant interaction between self-esteem and acting style, $F(2, 42) = .719$, $p = .493$, $\eta^2 = .033$. There was not a significant main effect of self-esteem, $F(1, 42) = .016$, $p = .899$, $\eta^2 = .001$. There was not a significant main effect of acting style, $F(2, 42) = .275$, $p = .761$, $\eta^2 = .012$.
- ◆ **Figure 3.** An exploratory 2x3 factorial ANOVA was conducted to determine if there was an interaction between acting experience (low experience or high experience) and acting style (system, ELP, or control) on Symbolic Racism Scale scores. There was an interaction that approached significance between acting experience and acting style, $F(2, 47) = 2.921$, $p = .065$, $\eta^2 = .11$. There was not a significant main effect of acting experience, $F(1, 47) = .03$, $p = .864$, $\eta^2 = .001$. There was not a significant main effect of acting style, $F(2, 47) = .018$, $p = .703$, $\eta^2 = .001$.

Discussion

- ◆ Although none of the results were significant, and none of the hypotheses were supported, some interesting patterns did emerge. The general pattern of the analysis in Figure 1 does coincide with Hypothesis 3 in that the ELP mean was highest (lowest in prejudice), followed by the system mean and then the no acting style mean. Additionally, in contrast with Hypothesis 4, the only time low self-esteem participants had a lower mean (higher prejudice) than high self-esteem participants was in the system condition.
- ◆ However, the most interesting finding is that Figures 2 and 3 follow a very similar pattern. Both low self-esteem and low acting experience groups had higher mean SRS scores (lower prejudice) in the no acting style condition compared to high self-esteem and high acting experience groups, and the inverse is true for the system condition. On both graphs, the means between high and low groups are closest in the ELP condition. This may mean that acting experience could possibly function the same way that self-esteem does in interacting with acting styles, such that a lack of something, either confidence or experience with acting can impact the prejudice reduction process.
- ◆ To build on this research, a more sensitive racism measure may be needed. Perhaps more practice with the monologue or a training session that taught the acting style beforehand would help to achieve the hypothesized results, especially since the interaction between acting style and acting experience approached significance.
- ◆ In conclusion, the patterns found in these results can help to further explore the relationship between acting styles and prejudice reduction.

References

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