



Psychological Standing: Understanding Allies in Racial Diversity Initiatives

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SUMMARY

Psychological standing (PS) partially explained the gap between Whites' and non-Whites' participation in racial diversity initiatives over-and-above other attitudinal measures. Framing diversity as either a moral or business imperative had no effect on PS, though moral framing increased donation behavior relative to business framing. For those with high PS, business framing dampened participation while moral framing increased participation.

BACKGROUND

- Members of advantaged group are critical stakeholders in diversity initiatives, but they may be reluctant to act, even if they support the initiatives (Morrison, 2011)
- One barrier may be lack of psychological standing (PS), which refers to one's sense of legitimacy to act on an issue (Ratner & Miller, 2001)
- PS can be derived from one's material stake or moral stake in an issue, though the moral stake dimension is less understood (Miller, Effron, & Zak, 2009)
- Lack of PS predicts why men are reluctant to participate in gender equity initiatives, even if they support women's rights (Sherf et al., 2017), but PS has yet to be studied in the race context
- Organizations often use two frameworks for diversity (the moral and business case) which parallel the moral and material stake dimensions of PS; but, no empirical studies have investigated this relationship

OBJECTIVES

- Develop PS scale that captures moral stake dimension
- Understand PS in race context and distinguish PS from other predictors of participation
- Assess validity with behavioral outcomes
- Understand influence of popular diversity frameworks on PS and participation in diversity initiatives

HYPOTHESES

- Whites' lower perceived PS explains why they are less likely to participate in racial diversity initiatives than non-Whites
- PS predicts participation over-and-above attitudes towards multiculturalism, concern with appearing prejudiced, and perceived efficacy
- Framing diversity as a moral or business imperative increases PS relative to control

STUDY 1: METHOD

Participants: 403 MTurk workers (48.9% White)

Procedure:

- Participants first read a vignette: "You work for a Fortune-500 company called ENS Strategies. During a team meeting, your manager highlights the CEO's priority of attaining greater racial diversity in the company... the CEO has requested volunteers to form a special taskforce..."
- Opportunity to donate \$20 windfall bonus to the Level Playing Field Institute

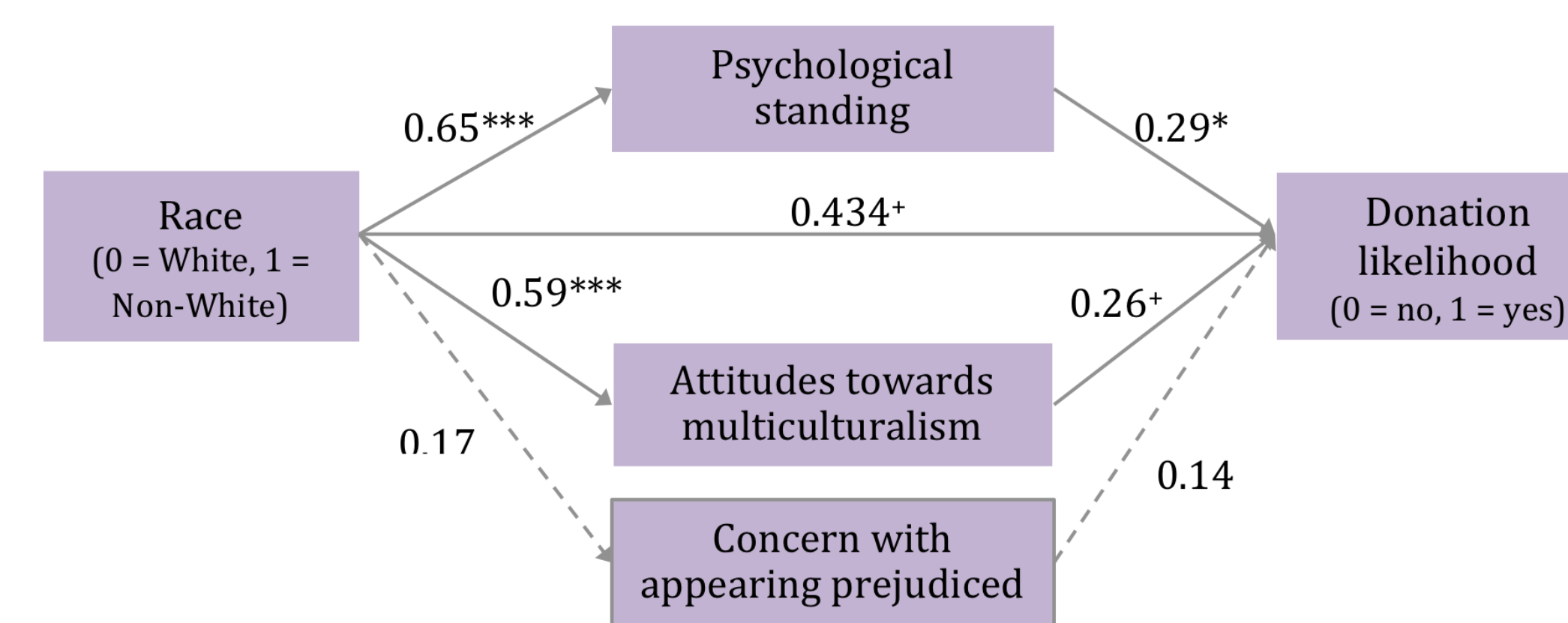
Measures:

- Mediators
 - Psychological standing (13-item, 7-point)
 - Attitudes towards multiculturalism (Morrison et al. 2010)
 - Concern with appearing prejudiced (Dunton & Fazio, 1997)
- Outcomes
 - Willingness to join taskforce (7-point)
 - Anticipated engagement (7-point)
 - Donation likelihood (yes/no)
 - Donation amount

STUDY 1: RESULTS

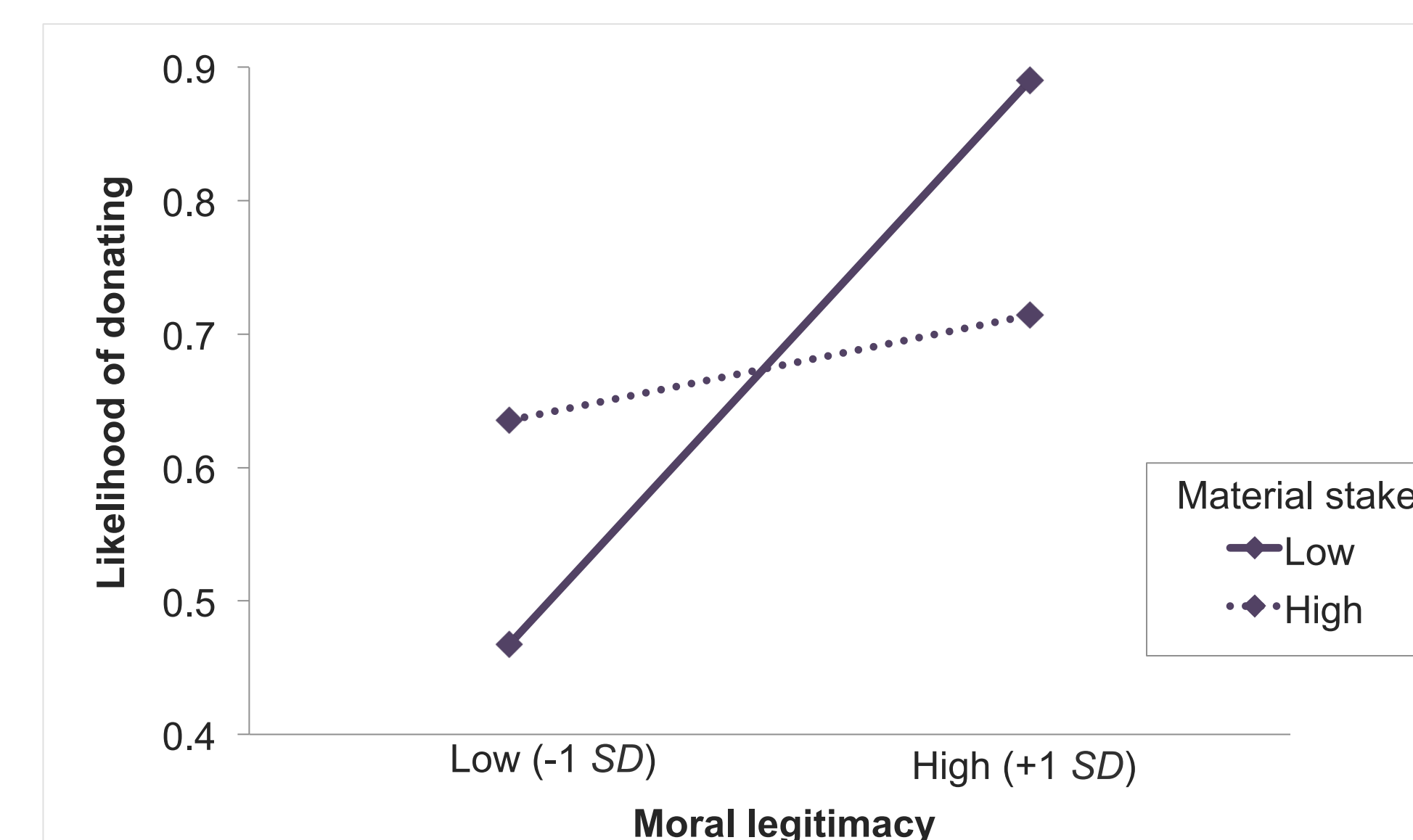
- Factor analyses reveal two factors in PS ($\alpha = 0.93$)
 - Material stake ($\alpha = 0.80$)
 - Moral legitimacy ($\alpha = 0.94$)
- Full-scale PS and each subscale was positively correlated with all outcome variables
- Whites reported lower PS than non-Whites and were less likely to participate – this was observed in all four outcome variables

- PS partially explains gap in participation, over-and-above other mediators



Note: $R^2 = 0.114$; PS, $b = .190$, 95% CI [.027, .397], and attitudes towards MC, $b = .154$, 95% CI [.003, .361] mediate effect of race on donation likelihood

- Material stake x moral legitimacy interaction suggests that making material consequences salient can dampen participation



STUDY 2: METHOD

Participants: 493 MTurk workers (50.5% White)

Procedure:

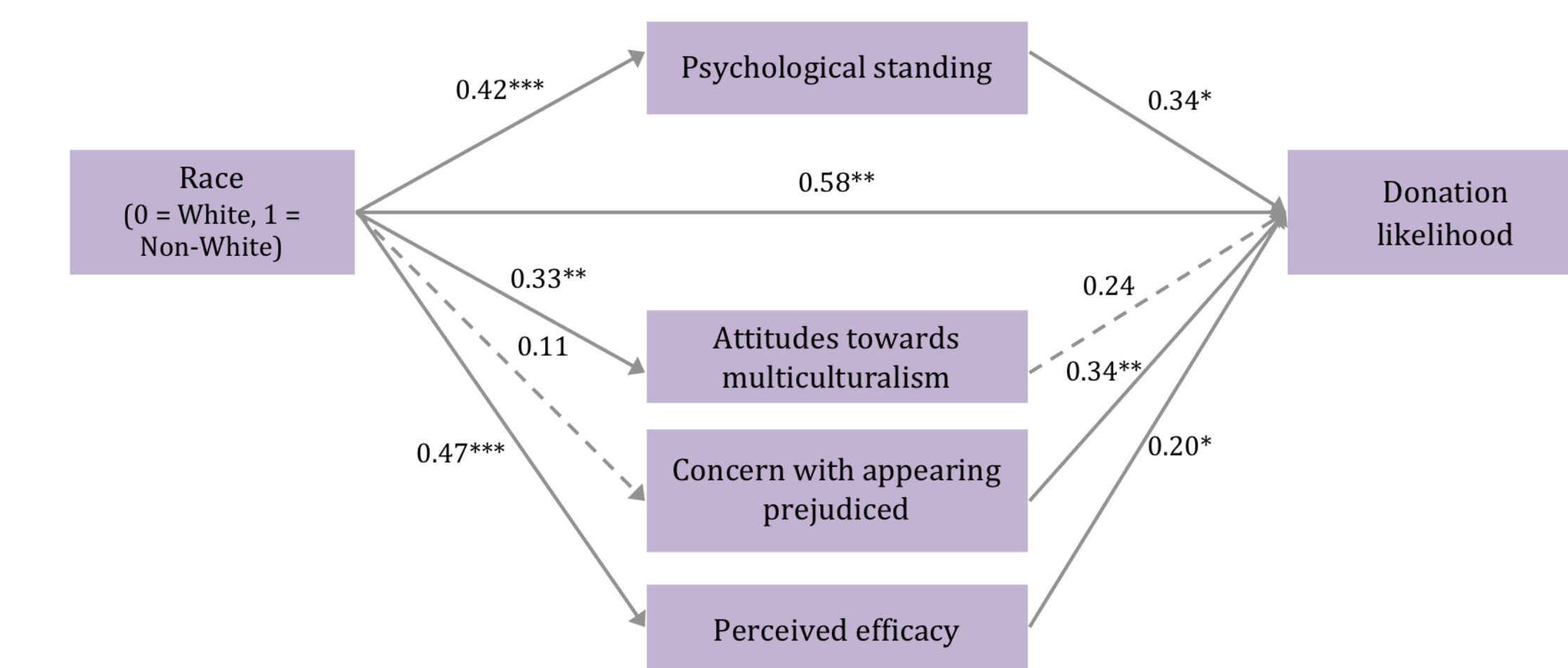
- Participants received one of 3 vignettes:
 - Control (same as Study 1)
 - Moral: "As a socially responsible business, it is necessary to ensure that all groups can benefit from the opportunities that the industry is creating."
 - Business: "As a global-reaching business, it is necessary to ensure that the workplace reflects the diversity of the customer base."
- Same windfall bonus and donation opportunity as Study 1

Added measures:

- Perceived efficacy (3-items; Sherf et al., 2017)

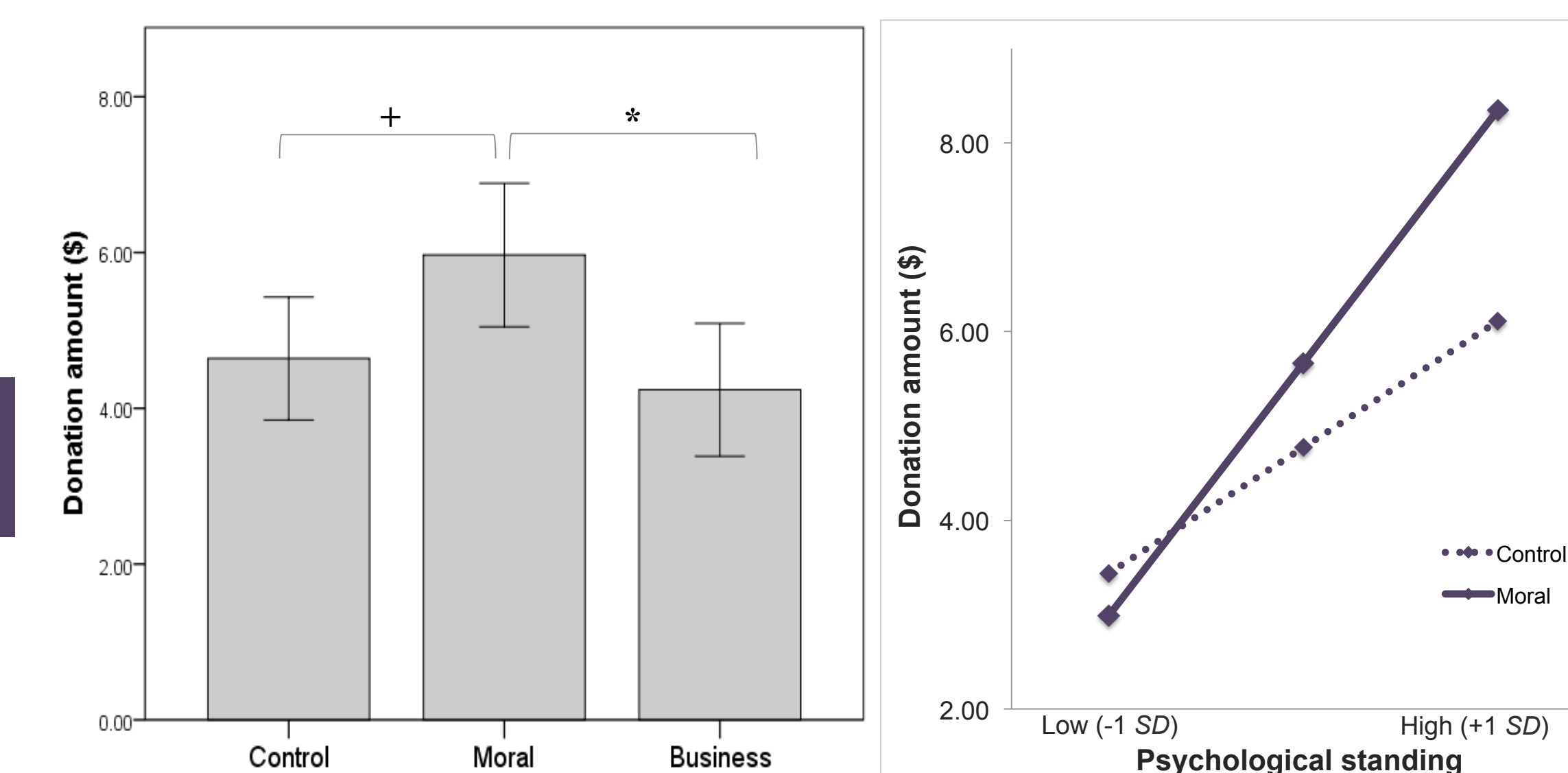
STUDY 2: RESULTS

- Study 1 correlations replicated
- PS still explained unique variance in most outcomes, even with efficacy included



Note: $R^2 = 0.201$; PS, $b = .142$, 95% CI [.038, .309], and perceived efficacy, $b = .094$, 95% CI [.011, .232], mediate effect of race on donation likelihood

- No main effect of framing on PS, no race x framing effect on PS
- Main effect of framing framing x PS interactions on behavioral outcomes



CONCLUSIONS

- PS acts more as a stable trait – framing had no effect on PS though it did interact with PS
- Organizations that overemphasize financial incentives to diversity may be dissuading potential advocates, particularly those who perceive high PS
- Business framing can still be effective for those who perceive low PS
- Future studies may manipulate PS directly to determine causal effects

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