

Background & Rationale

Many students report experiencing tensions with faculty and other students because of their racialized identities (Booker, 2007).

These conflicts are a result of racial bias, which consists of how people think about others (racial attitudes) and how they behave with others (intergroup comfort; Dovidio et al., 2004).

The Game of Social Life (Bramesfeld, 2015) was developed to teach structural inequality, and so it can improve racial attitudes. But what about intergroup comfort?

Researchers have suggested that dialogue sessions can help students develop the comfort and communication skills required for having conversations with people of other racial and ethnic groups (Nagda et al., 2004).

Therefore, in the present study we added a dialogue session to the game of social life and compared its efficacy in reducing racial bias in students to the game by itself.

Research Question & Hypothesis

Can The Game of Social Life combined with a dialogue session improve knowledge about structural inequality and intergroup comfort more than The Game of Social Life by itself?

Hypothesis: The Game of Social Life combined with a dialogue session will be similar to The Game of Social Life by itself in increasing knowledge about structural inequality, but better than it at increasing intergroup comfort.

Participants

- The data collection is still ongoing
- But till now, 66 undergraduate students have volunteered to participate in the Game only (N = 52) or Game + Dialogue condition (N = 14) through Sona
- 48 females and 18 males
- Self-identified racial orientation was 57 racialized and 9 non-racialized

Measures

Racial attitudes: **Knowledge of structural inequality**, adapted from Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS; Neville et al., 2000), the Awareness of Privilege and Oppression Scale-2 (APOS-2; McClellan et al., 2019)

Intergroup comfort: **Comfort in communicating with people of other races**, adapted from Comfort in Communicating Across Differences scale (Nagda & Zuniga, 2003)

Procedure

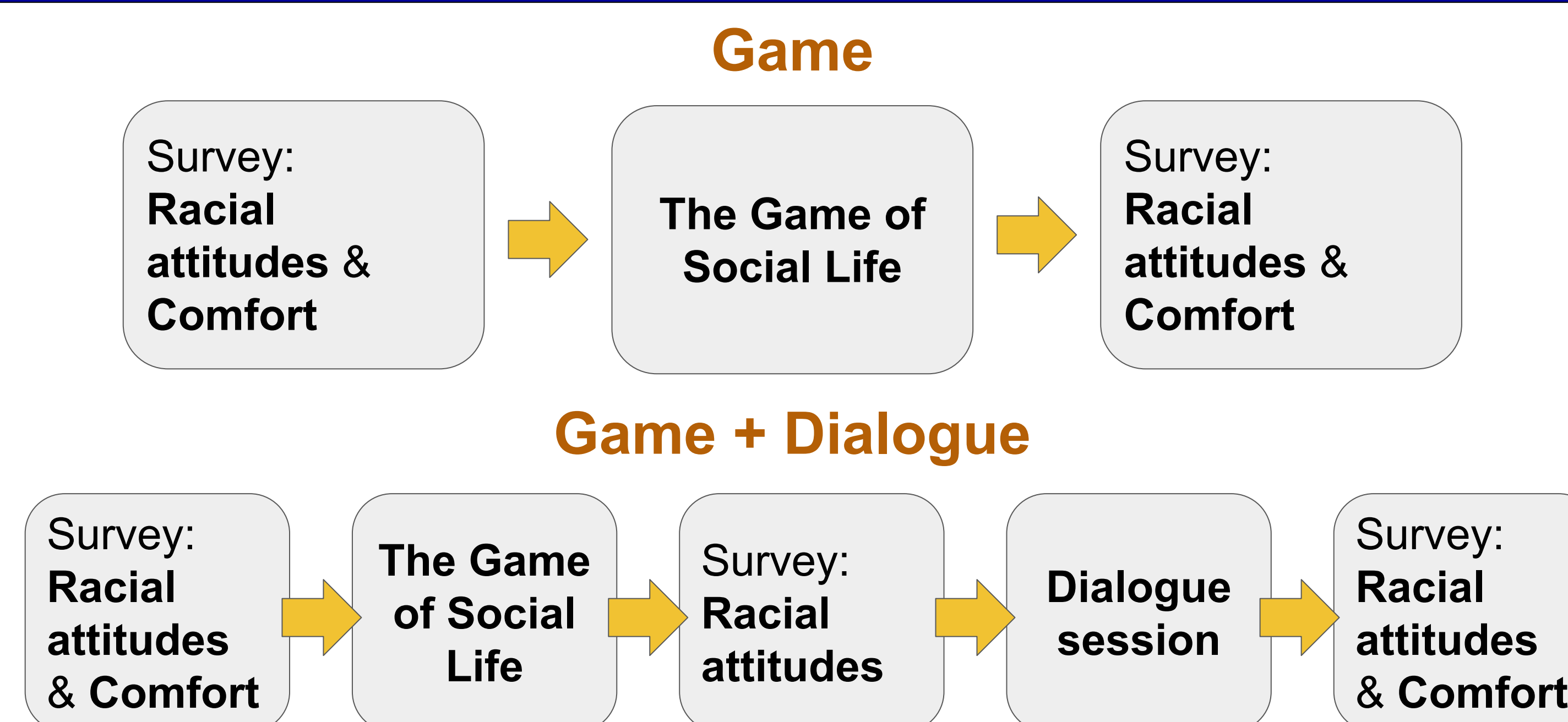


Figure 1. Procedure followed by participants in each of the two conditions

Results

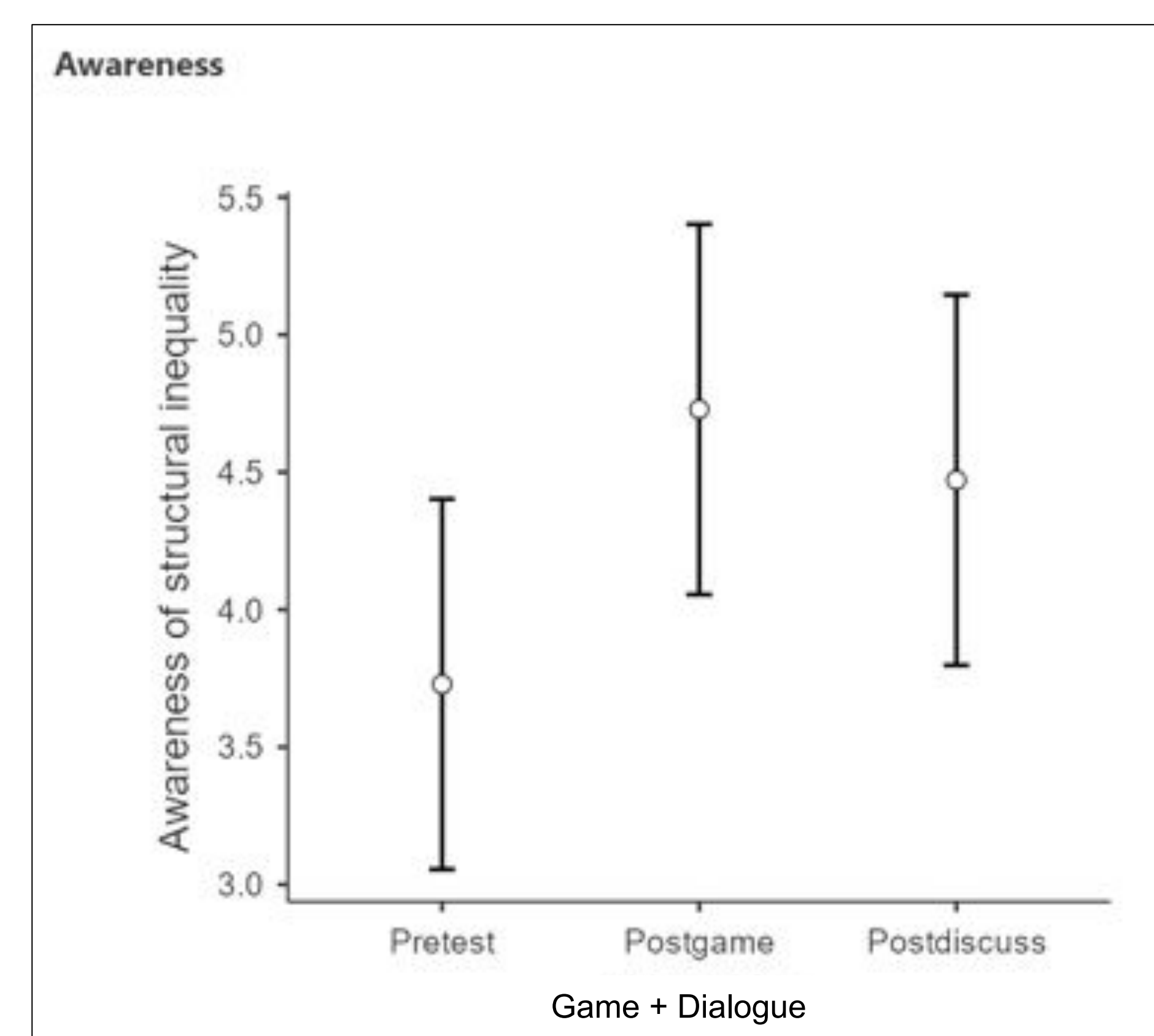


Figure 2. Comparison of mean awareness of structural inequality scores at pretest, post-game, and post-dialogue for students in the game plus dialogue condition

Students' awareness of structural inequality increased after playing the game ($M = 4.73$, $SD = 1.14$), compared to before playing the game ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 1.12$), $t(26) = 3.096$, $p = .012$. Although the gains were no longer statistically significant after the discussion ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 1.39$) relative to the pretest, it trends in that direction, $p = .074$.

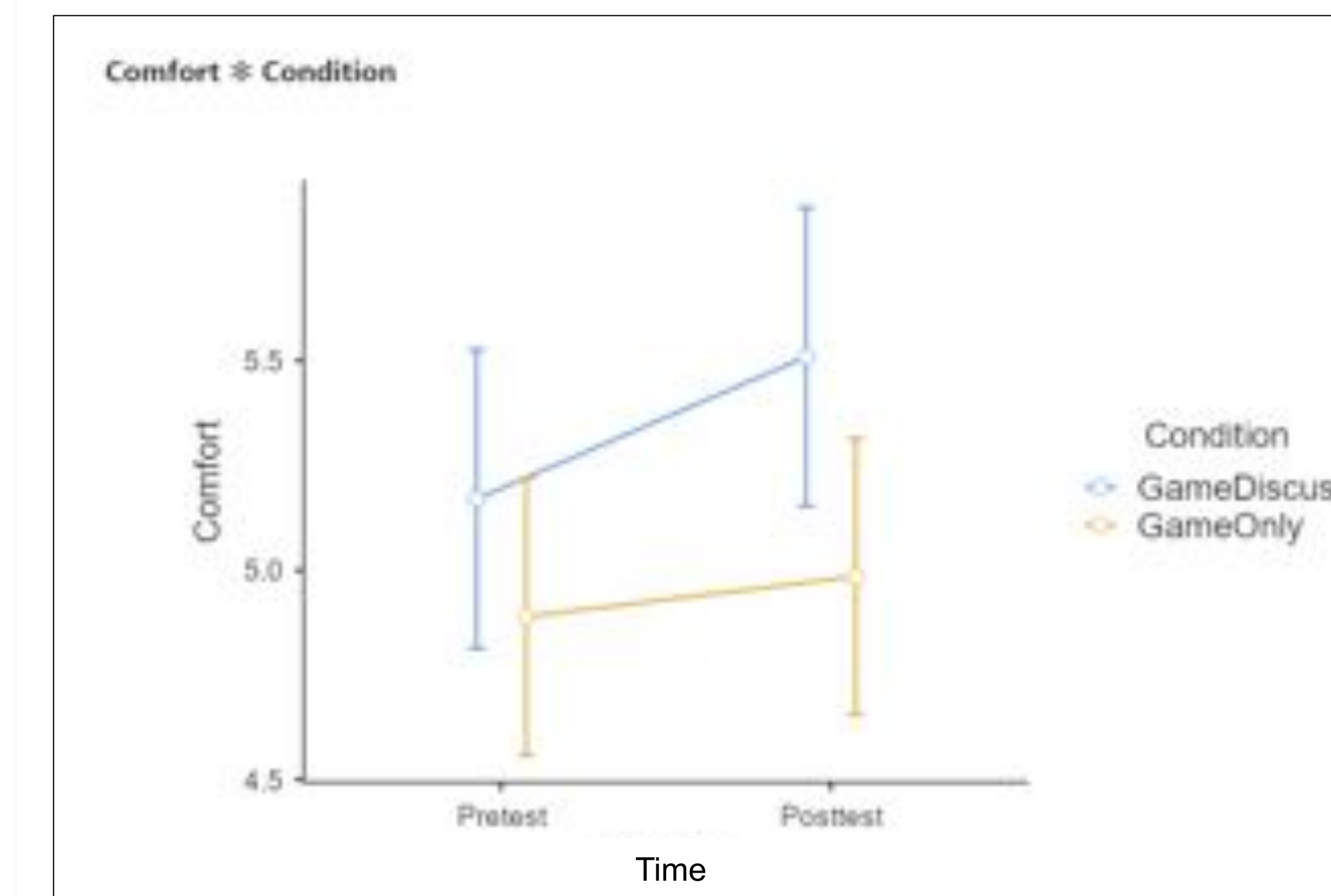


Figure 3. Comparison of mean comfort scores of students in game plus dialogue and game only conditions at pretest and posttest measures

Comfort in communicating with people of other groups increased for students participating in either of the two conditions compared to before participating, $F(1, 64) = 5.61$, $p = .021$, $\eta^2 = 0.04$. Although interaction between time and condition is not statistically significant, $p = .191$, the trend that emerges is promising.

Discussion & Recommendations

We found that although simulations games are effective at increasing knowledge, their ability to reduce racial bias can be improved by supplementing them with a post-game dialogue session.

One limitation of this study was that we solely focused on experiences of racism. The original game adopted an intersectionality perspective to examine the compounding and transformative effects of one's identity on experiences of privilege and oppression. This limited focus was noticed by study participants and informs an important future area for our research lab.

References

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