

## Introduction

- **Cultural diversity** and **implicit biases** highly **prevalent** in modern societies [1] with tremendous effects
  - Interference with **decision-making processes**
  - **Unconscious** and **automatic** features of prejudiced **judgement** and social behavior
  - Influences of **Stereotype Threat** in educational settings on grades, career choices, work environments
- **Critical reflection** in Higher Education to bring **lasting** and effective **change** in students' lives [2]
  - Concept of self-reflection **encourages habits** of individual and collective attention and analysis
  - Societal challenges addressed by drawing on **prior experiences**
- **Cognitive dissonance** brings awareness of **discrepancies** between **behavior** and professed **views**, motivating behavioral change [3]

**Issue:** self-other asymmetry in people's recognition of biased thinking and behavior that results from preexisting beliefs (myside bias) and social stigmas (social biases) [5]

**Approach:** raising awareness of existence of implicit bias as important first step towards reducing bias [6]

- **Can we make students aware of their own biases by provoking cognitive dissonance?**

## Methods

### Sample:

- 404 participants, enrolled in bachelor studies (teacher training and vocational training)

### Measures:

- **Implicit Association Test (IAT)** on skin-tone [7], including 12 computer-generated faces (6 female, 6 male) with light or dark skin tones and 16 German adjectives (8 positive, 8 negative)
- **Cognitive Reflection Test (CRT)** [8,9,10] and self-rating items

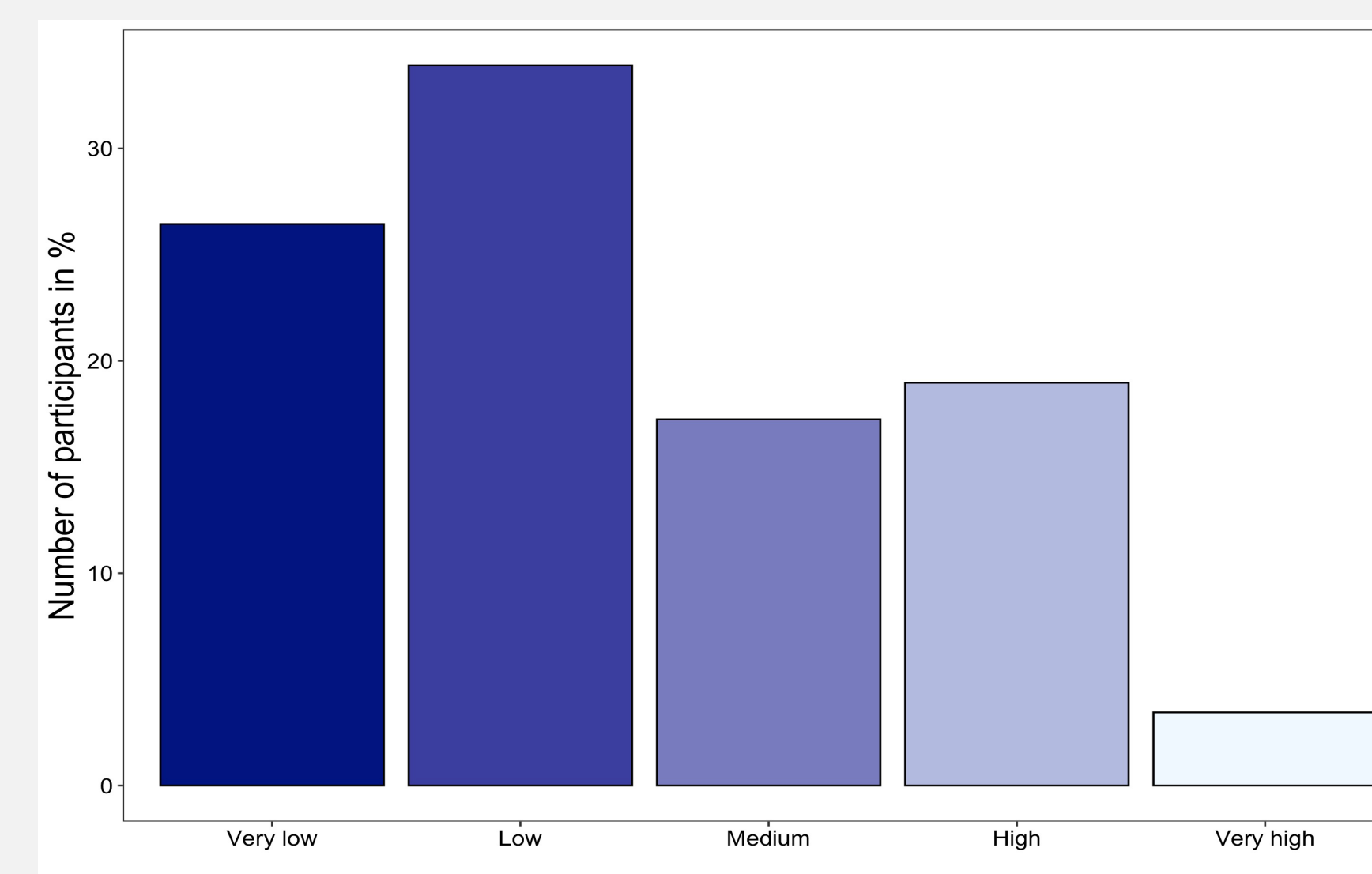


### Procedure:

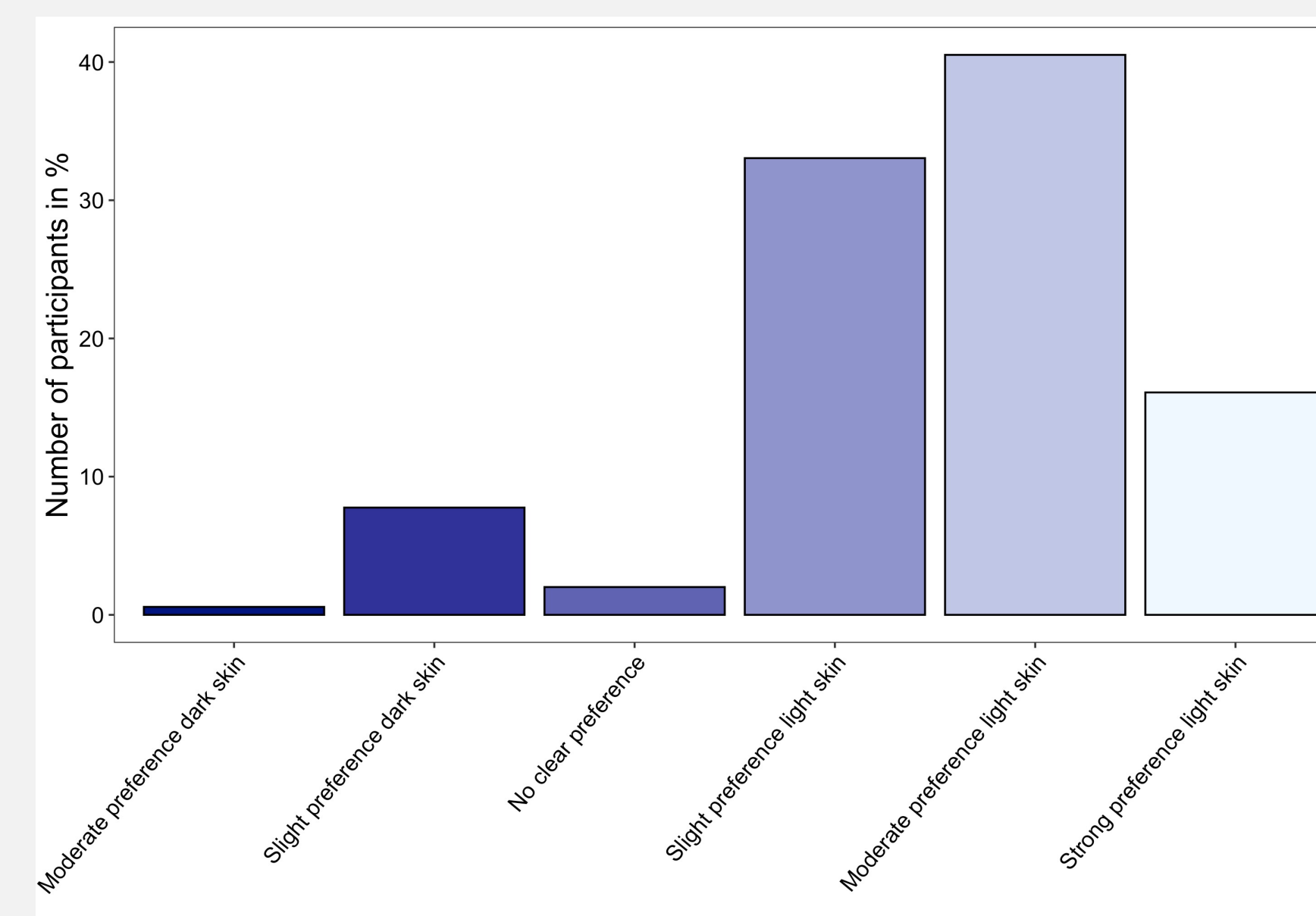
- Part of preparation process for mandatory introduction lecture on Educational Psychology for BA students
- Pre-lecture survey with two CRT items, IAT and self-rating items on stereotypes and biases
- Lecture, providing background on origins and impacts of stereotypes and biases in education; part of the debriefing process
- Post-lecture survey includes three CRT items and fosters reflection on previous IAT results

## Results

- Results from pre-lecture survey based on 348 cases (due to missing cases or too many errors in IAT):



*Students described tendency to having stereotypes and biases as predominantly low or very low*



*Evaluation of IAT results with D-Score [11] indicates students' tendency to prefer lighter skin tone*

- 39% of students also participated in post-lecture survey:
  - Were there changes in the approach to solving CRT-questions post online lecture?  
**Yes:** 29,3% **No:** 34,2% **Unsure:** 1,5% **No answer:** 35%
  - Were there changes in interpreting IAT results post online lecture?  
**Yes:** 24% **No:** 46% **No answer:** 30%
  - *Reported changes* included taking more time to think and reflect about things

## Discussion

- Students are often not aware of their own biases
- Results evoked **strong reactions** towards IAT results to dissolve cognitive dissonance
  - Criticism of test validity and/or results
  - Anger toward the test
  - Desire to change and increase awareness of own biases

### Limitations:

- More fine-grained response categories to determine the preference of skin-tone needed
- No randomized order of category combinations

### Implications:

- IAT useful tool to initiate self-reflection process about (unconscious) bias and stereotypes
- Importance of guided "debriefing" after taking the IAT to support self-reflection processes
- Resulting cognitive dissonance and various strategies to deal with it need further exploration

## References

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