

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to test whether the typical cross-race effect (CRE) could be extended to conditions where the suspect is casually familiar. To test this, participants studied a series of faces of white and Black males to create familiarity. Later, participants ($N = 1170$) took part in a multiple-block eyewitness paradigm in which they encoded a target face, followed by a distractor task, and then received a lineup where the suspect was Black or white, familiar or unfamiliar, and either guilty or innocent. We replicated the CRE but only when the suspect was familiar. Furthermore, the CA relationship was strong in all conditions except for the familiar Black suspect lineup. Follow-up research is underway to examine why the typical unfamiliar CRE was not found and to address other limitations.

Introduction

Almost half of DNA exoneration misidentification cases involved cross-race identifications where the suspect and witness were of different races (Innocence Project, 2021).

In the lab, this robust phenomenon is known as the cross-race effect (CRE; Meissner & Brigham, 2001) showing reduced recognition accuracy for unfamiliar CR faces.

Researchers have also found worse familiarity judgments (Pezdek & Stolzenberg, 2014) and source memory (e.g., Horry & Wright, 2008) for CR faces but absence of familiarity control and lineups limit eyewitness generalizability.

The Present Study

Purpose: Test whether the CRE will extend to conditions where the suspect is casually familiar using an eyewitness paradigm.

Participants

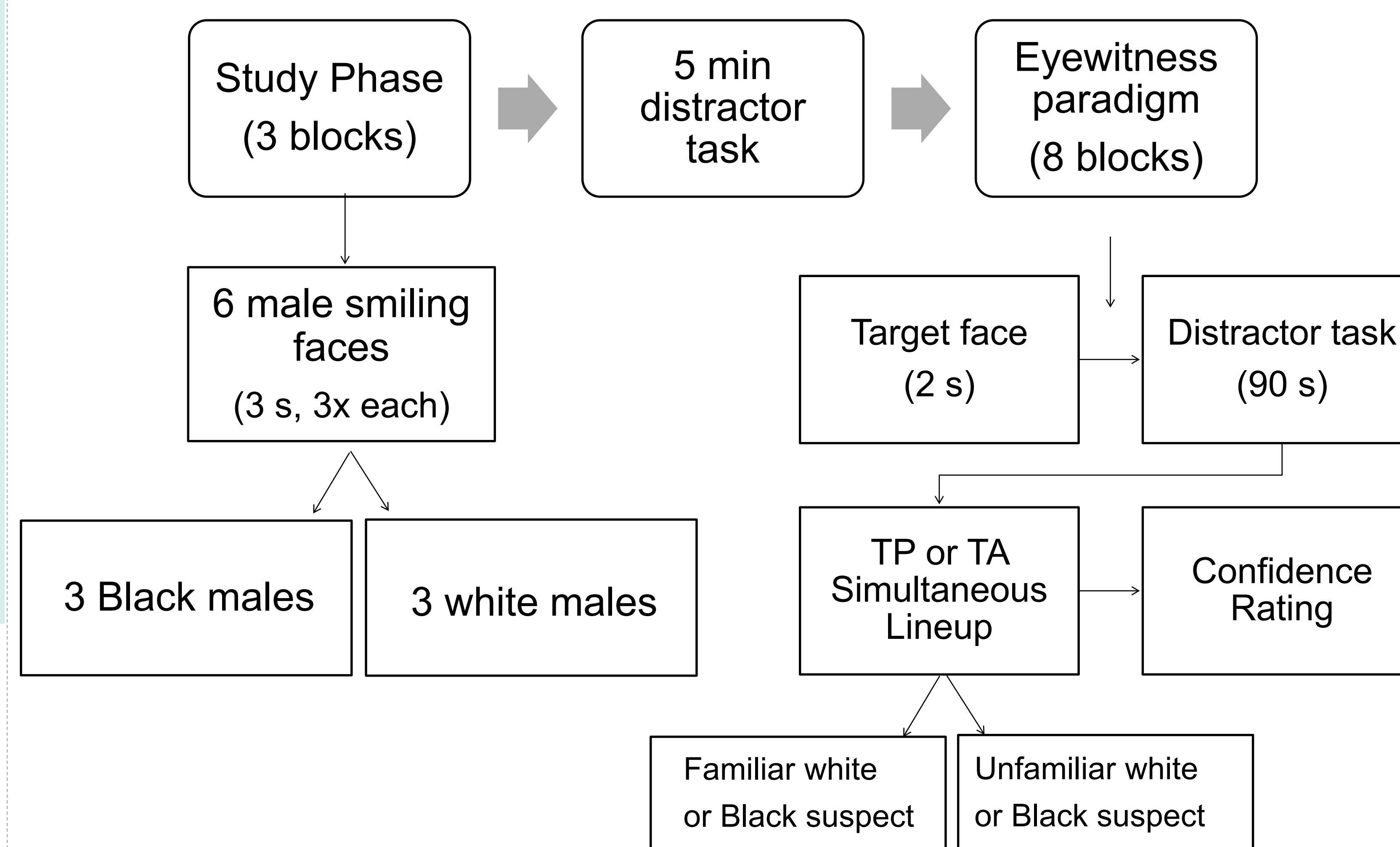
Amazon MTurk sample ($N = 1170$) of white participants

Design and Materials

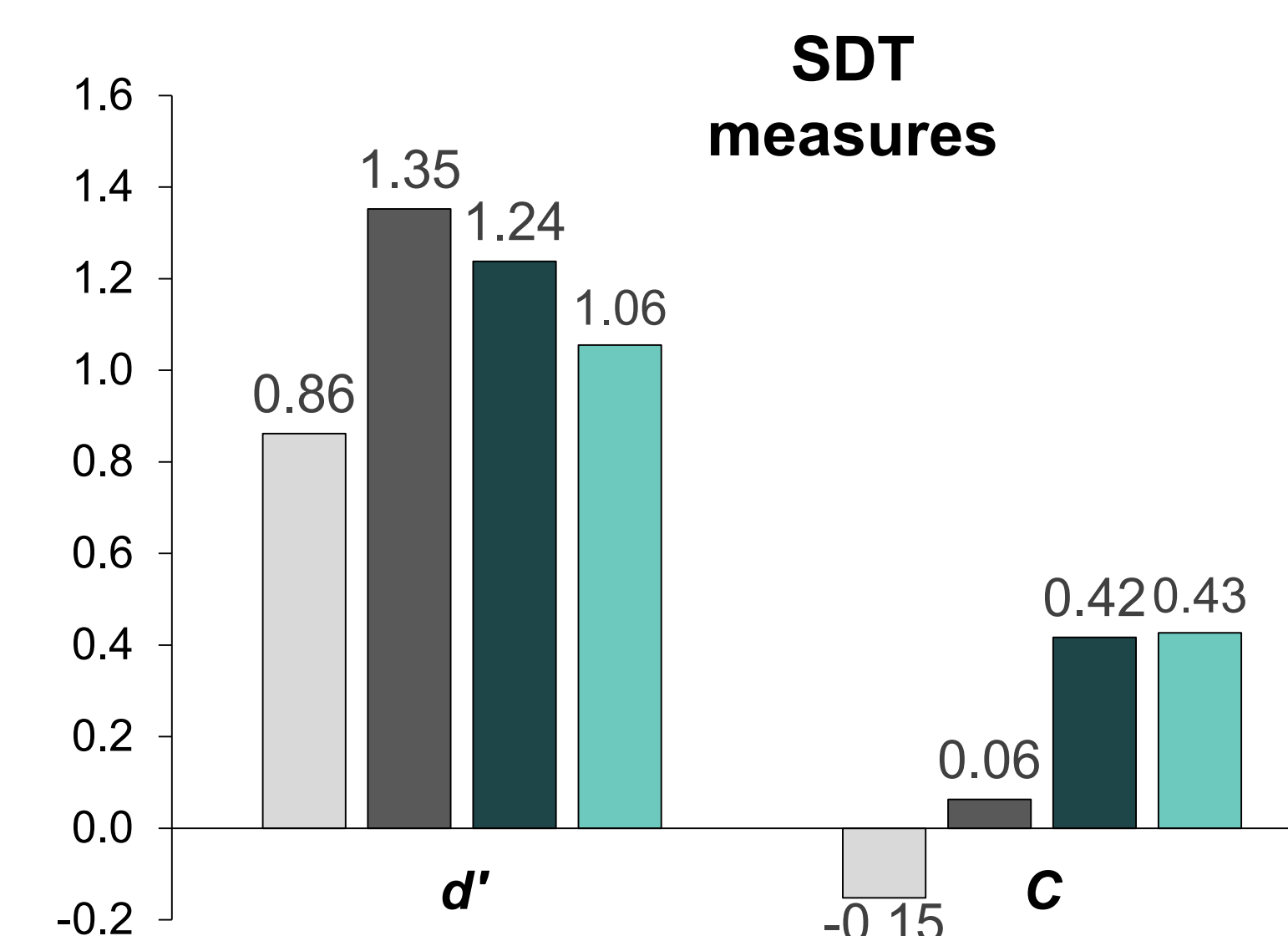
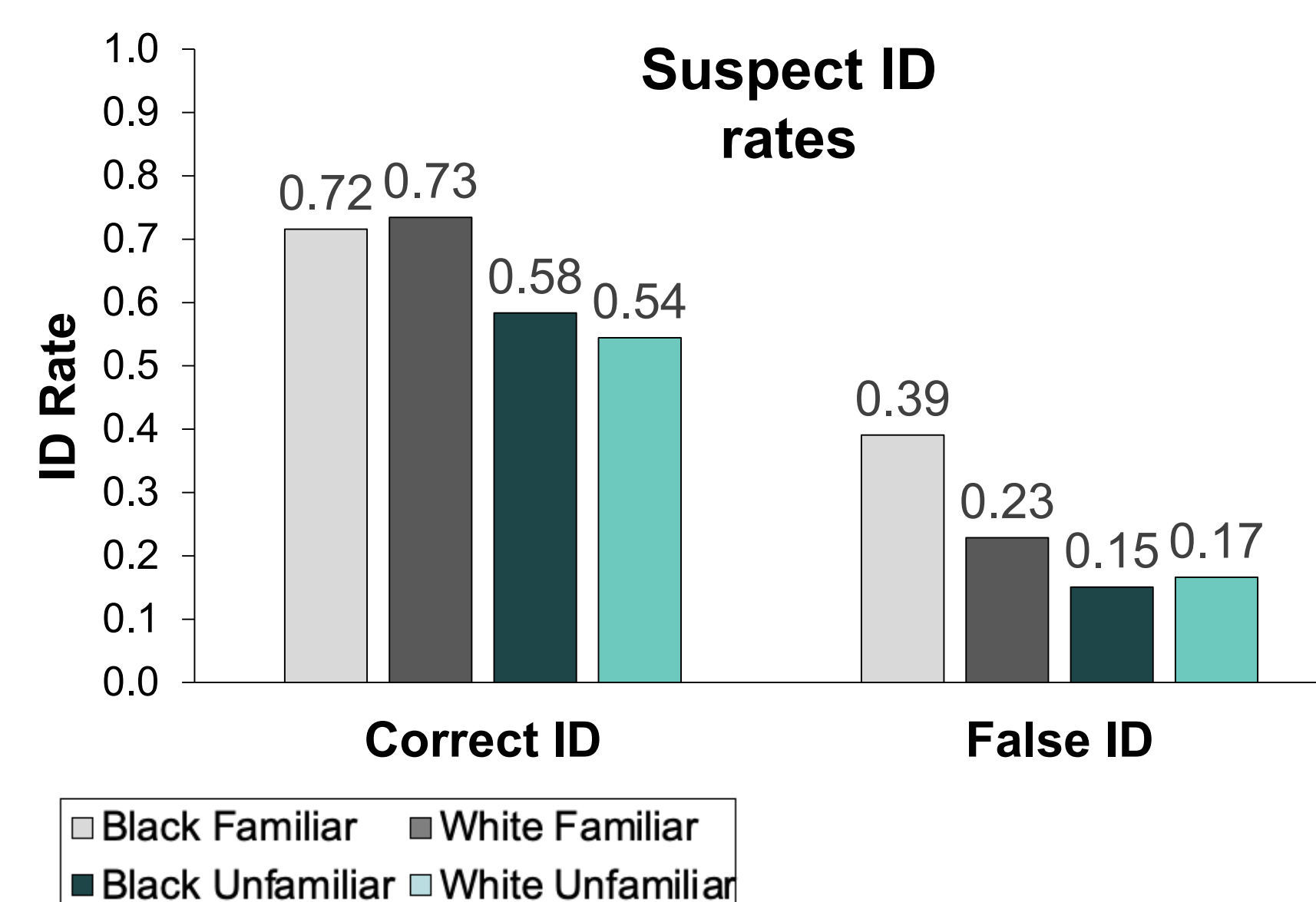
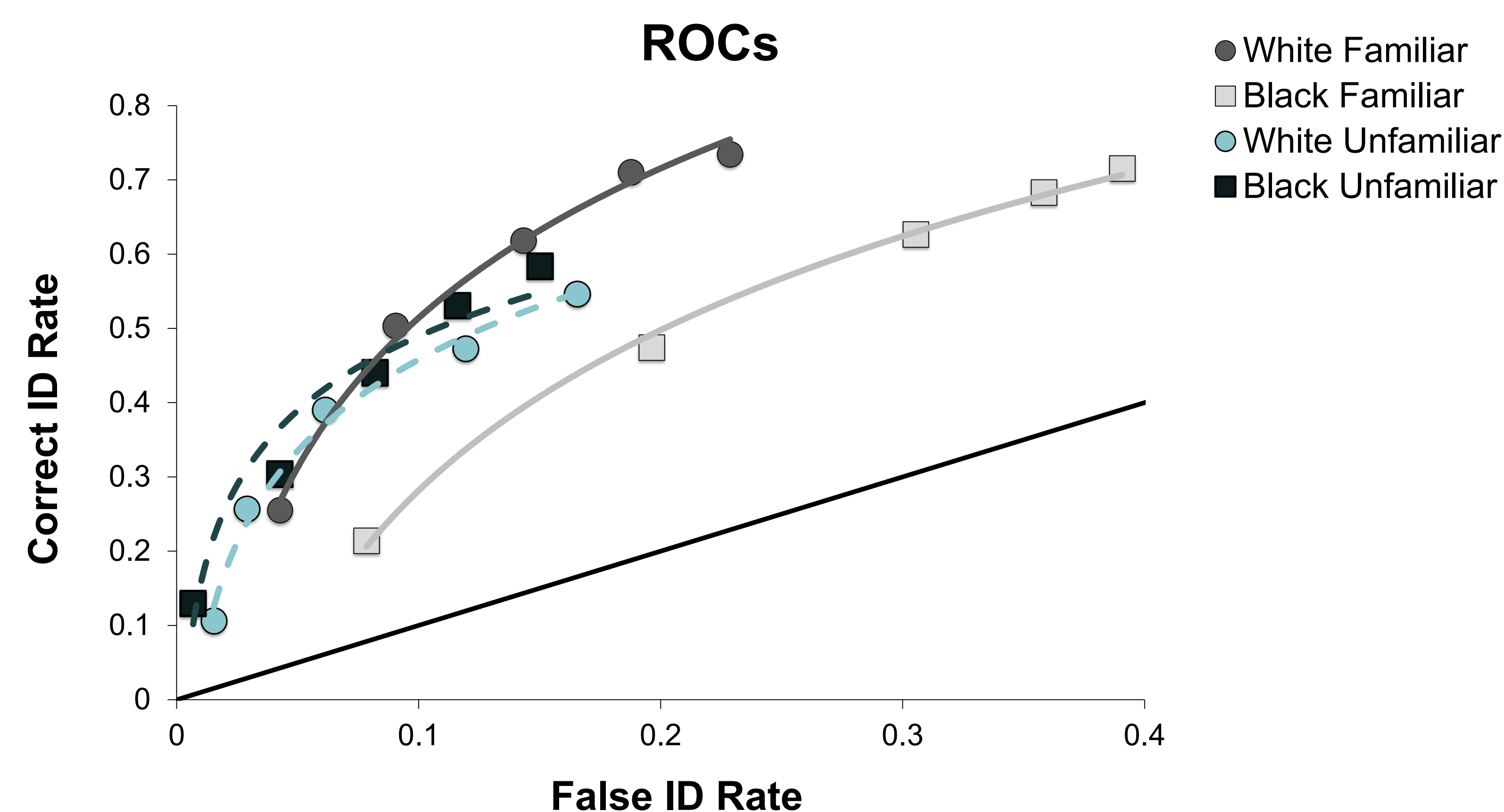
2 (Suspect familiarity: familiar, unfamiliar) x 2 (Suspect race: Black, white) x 2 (Target: present, absent) within-subjects factorial design

Suspect photos taken from Meissner database

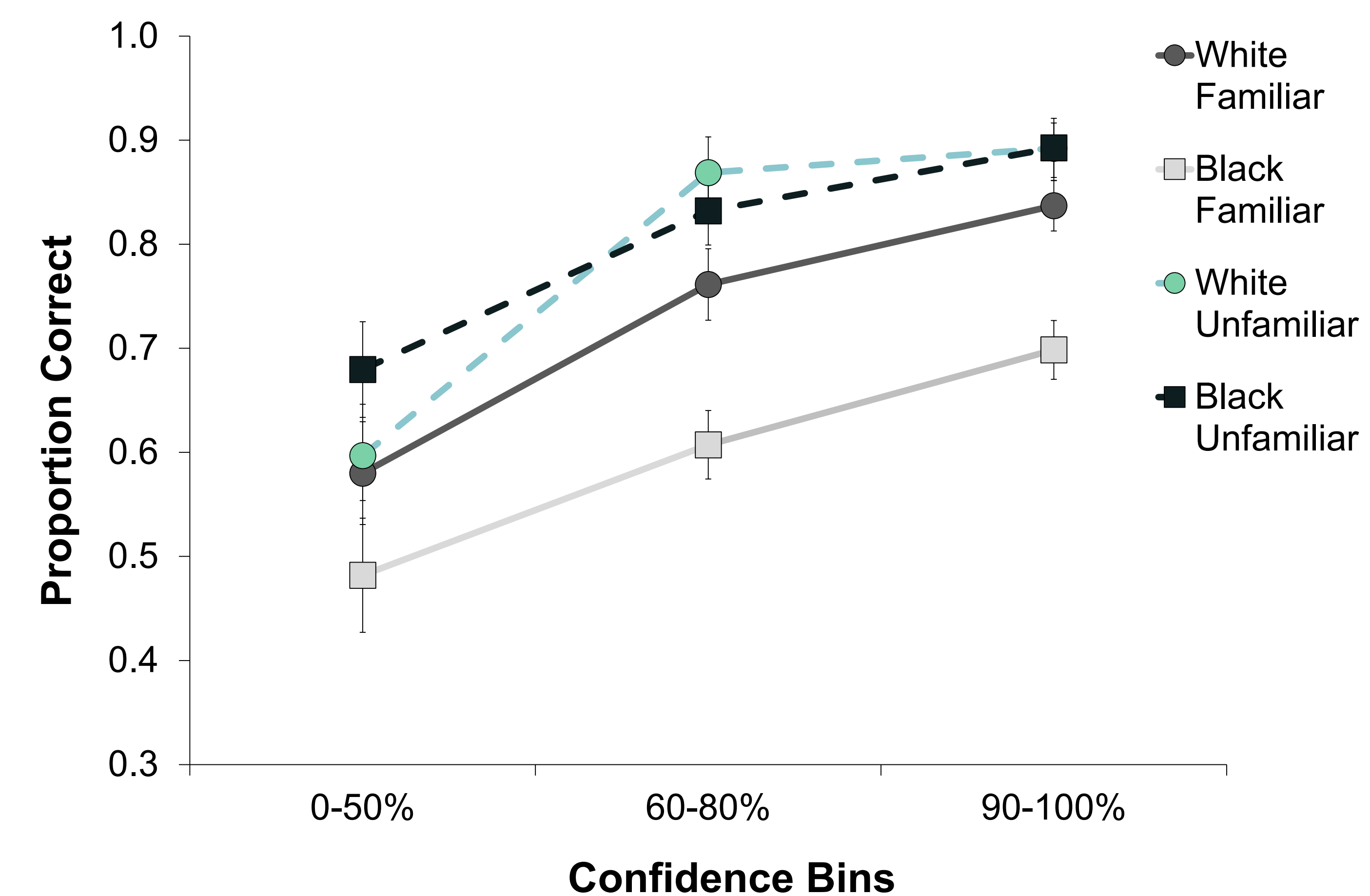
Procedure



ROCs



CACs



Conclusion

We replicated the CRE, but only for familiar suspects.

Prior familiarity led to a more liberal response criterion than when the suspect was unfamiliar.

The confidence-accuracy relationship was fairly strong for unfamiliar Black and white suspects (Nguyen et al., 2017).

- However, it was impaired for familiar suspects, particularly when the suspect was Black.

Follow-up research is being conducted to rule out any stimulus specific effects and to address limitations of not counterbalancing the role of familiar/unfamiliar across suspects.

References

Innocence Project (2021). <http://www.innocenceproject.org/>.

Meissner, C. A., & Brigham, J. C. (2001). Thirty years of investigating The Own-race bias in memory For faces: A Meta-analytic review. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 7(1), 3-35.

Nguyen, T. B., Pezdek, K., & Wixted, J. T. (2017). Evidence for a confidence-accuracy relationship for same- and cross-race faces. *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 70(12), 2518–2534.

Pezdek, K., & Stolzenberg, S. (2014). Are individuals' familiarity judgments diagnostic of prior contact? *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 20(4), 302-314.