

Perceived Academic Competence and Overall Job Evaluations: Students' Evaluations of African American and European American Professors

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Despite the fact that few people appear to endorse negative stereotypes of Blacks, such stereotypes are widely disseminated in our culture. Consequently, such stereotypes can have pervasive consequences on one's impressions of African Americans, even by low-prejudice Whites and by Blacks themselves. Thus, we predicted that student judgments of intellectual competence would be more important when students were making global performance evaluations of Black faculty than of White faculty. Furthermore, to the extent that intellectual competence is more salient in the judgment of Black faculty, such judgments should be essentially the same among Black and White students, and for low- and high-prejudice students. For the most part, analyses of instructor evaluations at a major American university supported these expectations.

African Americans in intellectual domains are regularly seen through the lens of negative stereotypes. The belief that African Americans are less intelligent than members of other ethnic groups has a long history and is widely shared. Given the pervasiveness of the low-intelligence stereotype and past research demonstrating how stereotypes bias evaluations, we hypothesize that student ratings of African American college professors will be influenced by stereotypes alleging inferior academic and intellectual ability.

Since as early as ninth-century Basra (Lipset, 1977) and even in the past few years, intellectual inferiority has been part of the stereotype of people of African descent. For example, *ignorant*, *stupid*, *naïve*, and *superstitious* are among the 12 out of 84 most characteristic traits associated with African Americans in Katz and Braly's (1933) study. A recent replication by Rothbart and John (1993) showed *scientific* and *studious* to be among the least characteristic traits used to describe African Americans. Devine (1989) found both high- and low-prejudice European American subjects to endorse *low intelligence* and *uneducated* as characteristics of African Americans, while *stupid* was associated with African Americans in the priming study of

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Gaertner and McLaughlin (1983). More recently, Wheeler, Jarvis, and Petty (2001) found that non-Black college students primed with an African American name performed more poorly on a GRE math test, thus showing again that low intelligence is strongly associated with the stereotype of African Americans.

Overall student evaluations of African American college professors, on the face of it, are likely thoughtful, controlled judgments that are less prone to bias from such racial stereotypes (Devine, 1989). Indeed, using the data employed in the present study, Sidanius (1989) found no evidence of lower overall evaluations of African American faculty. Nevertheless, research in social cognition has suggested that the pervasiveness of the low-intelligence stereotype may bias student evaluations of African American professors early in information processing via automatic processes that affect the judgments underlying overall evaluations.

First, African Americans, by their mere presence and physical features, can elicit negative stereotypes (Allport, 1954; Bodenhausen & Wyer, 1985; Brewer, Dull, & Lui, 1981; Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Devine, 1989; Dovidio, Evans, & Tyler, 1986; Heilman, 1984; Langer, Taylor, Fiske, & Chanowitz, 1976; Pratto & Bargh, 1991; Taylor, Fiske, Etcoff, & Ruderman, 1978), especially if those stereotypes are relevant to the perceiver's current information-processing goals, as is certainly the case for the low-intelligence stereotype in an evaluative academic setting (Macrae, Bodenhausen, Milne, Thorn, & Castelli, 1997; for a review, see Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2000). Furthermore, since African Americans comprised less than 2% of the faculty at the campus studied when these data were collected, they were highly salient and very likely to attract attention (see Taylor et al., 1978).

Once activated, the intelligence stereotype is likely to bias attention toward expectancy-incongruent information (Srull & Wyer, 1989), particularly since the subjects' outcome depends on the target person in this case (Erber & Fiske, 1984). Furthermore, stereotype-inconsistent information is attended to more than is stereotype-consistent information, especially in the context of person perception and when judgments are subjective (e.g., "How tall is she on a 5-point scale?" as opposed to "How tall is she in meters?"; Biernat, 1995; Kobrynowicz & Biernat, 1997).

When the stereotype is activated by an individual (Stapel & Koomen, 1998), subjective judgments of that individual are implicitly contrasted with an exemplar of the stereotyped social category (e.g., How intelligent is my African American professor, compared to a typical Black person?). This implies that students should especially attend to African American professors when they are performing well, such as when giving an excellent lecture or answering a question clearly. Differential attention (to stereotype-incongruent information) causes that information to have a disproportionate

influence on overall evaluations, because information receiving more attention is more likely to influence overall impressions (Fiske, 1980; Fiske, Kenny, & Taylor, 1982). In addition, the unexpectedness of the information may provoke subjects to think more about the information and attempt to reconcile it with their impressions (Erber & Fiske, 1984). Differential attention can also influence overall evaluations through memory. Information that is more attended to is more likely to be recalled (e.g., Araya, Akrami, & Ekehammar, 2003; Fisk & Schneider, 1984; Forster, Higgins, & Werth, 2004; Pratto & Bargh, 1991), and thus more likely to influence impressions (Hastie & Park, 1986). Thus, we can predict that stereotypes may produce judgmental biases because they lead to disproportionate attention and memory for stereotype-relevant and stereotype-incongruent information.

Following this, we expect the intelligence stereotype to influence the weighting of perceived academic competence relative to perceived sensitivity to students (the two major dimensions of evaluative judgments of college instructors) in determining global evaluation scores. This implicit weighting of factors is more likely to represent an automatic process and, as such, to be affected by pervasive cultural stereotypes for high- and low-prejudice individuals alike (Devine, 1989). Furthermore, although students are likely to be aware of the pitfalls of stereotyping, we suspect that they are not aware that stereotypes cause them to weight differentially the different qualities for Black and White instructors. If so, even low-prejudice students are unlikely to compensate for this effect through consciously controlled correction. This suggests that high- and low-prejudice, as well as White and Black students should differentially weight perceived academic competence when evaluating Black faculty.

Recently, however, a series of studies have questioned whether stereotype activation is, in fact, unconditionally automatic among low- and high-prejudice people alike (Blair & Banaji, 1996; Gilbert & Hixon, 1991; Lepore & Brown, 1997; Locke, MacLeod & Walker, 1994; Macrae et al., 1997; for methodological critiques of this work, see Bargh, 1999; Moskowitz, Gollwitzer, Wasel, & Schaal, 1999). Moskowitz et al. found that although participants with chronic egalitarian goals had cognitive access to gender stereotypes, they did not activate these stereotypes and showed no facilitated response times to stereotypical attributes when they were primed with the stereotypes. Importantly, this control of stereotype activation must have occurred at a preconscious level, because the effect occurred at stimulus onset asynchronies, where conscious control cannot operate. Indeed, participants responded more slowly to stereotype-relevant words when they were instructed to ignore a stereotype-relevant prime.

This suggests that people with chronic egalitarian goals may pre-consciously inhibit, rather than activate, stereotypes when they encounter

relevant triggers in the environment. In other words, low-prejudice egalitarians may be able to control the activation of their stereotypes automatically, rather than only correct for them consciously, as suggested by Devine (1989). Sinclair and Kunda (1999) also demonstrated that motivation may influence stereotype activation and inhibition. Specifically, when they gave participants positive feedback from a Black doctor, participants inhibited the Black stereotype and activated the doctor stereotype. However, when they received negative feedback, they activated the Black stereotype and inhibited the doctor stereotype.

In the present case of student evaluations of African American faculty, one could argue that Black students and low-prejudice students would be most motivated to inhibit racial stereotypes. To the extent that these students are able to preconsciously inhibit the low-intelligence stereotype when they evaluate a Black professor, they should also weight stereotype-incongruent information about competence less in their overall evaluation than other groups of students who have automatically activated the low-intelligence stereotype.

Finally, the particular setting is important to study for several reasons. Schools are a major socialization center for children and young adults; students' experiences with African American and European American professors could help to reconfirm, or to disconfirm their stereotypes. Also, schools are probably the preeminent arena in which policies concerning racial desegregation (e.g., school busing, affirmative action) and change of stereotypes of African Americans are tested. The success or failure of these policies may be taken as cause for hope (or not) for the success of anti-discriminatory policies in other institutions. While there has been some previous effort to explore whether or not the global performance evaluations of racial minorities can be attributed to racial and gender prejudice (e.g., Basow & Silberg, 1987; Hendrix, 1995; Sidanius, 1989; Sidanius & Crane, 1989), there has been no effort of which we are aware exploring the degree to which overall performance evaluations of White and Black college instructors are differentially influenced by the evaluative dimension of intellectual competence, a central component of racial stereotypes concerning Blacks and Whites. This study is centrally focused on such an examination.

Given our previous discussion, we believe there are grounds for positing the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. In arriving at global performance evaluations of European and African American professors, European American students will tend to give greater weight to academic competence when judging African American professors.

If intelligence stereotypes concerning Whites and Blacks are as pervasive as the literature suggests, then three additional things should follow:

Hypothesis 2. When African American students arrive at global evaluations of their instructors, they will place greater emphasis on academic competence for African American faculty, as compared with European American faculty.

Hypothesis 3. In arriving at global performance evaluations of faculty, there will be no significant difference in the tendency of European American and African American students to place greater emphasis on the academic credentials of African American faculty.

Hypothesis 4. Because of the very pervasive nature of the intelligence stereotype concerning Blacks, the tendency to place greater weight on the academic competence of Black faculty, as opposed to White faculty, will be essentially independent of students' degrees of racism.

Method

Participants and Procedure

As part of the normal pedagogical evaluation process, instructor evaluation forms were distributed to 5,655 randomly selected students at the University of Texas at Austin. Only the data from European American and African American students and concerning European American and African American faculty were examined in the present study. The data were over-sampled for African American faculty and, as a result, the analyzed data consist of ratings of 120 European American and 14 African American faculty completed by 3,123 European American students and 201 African American students. All evaluations were completed in the classroom during the normal instructor evaluation period.

Measures

Pedagogical evaluations. The pedagogical evaluative scales were all taken from the University's standard instructor evaluation form. Previous research has shown that when students are making global evaluations of their instructors' teaching performance, these global evaluations consist of approximately

four major subdimensions: (a) academic competence; (b) sensitivity to students; (c) fairness in assignments and grades; and (d) course expectations (see Frey, 1978; Overall & Marsh, 1982). However, the literature also suggests that overall, global evaluations tend to be driven predominantly by the first two of these evaluative subdimensions; namely, competence and sensitivity to students (Anderson, Alpert, & Golden, 1977; Sidanius, 1989; Sidanius & Crane, 1989).

Furthermore, when assessed as non-orthogonal dimensions, the two dimensions of competence and sensitivity to student needs are usually found to be strongly correlated (e.g., $r = .76$; see Sidanius, 1989). Because of the relative importance of these two evaluative subdimensions to global evaluation—and their relevance to racial and ethnic stereotypes (especially academic competence)—we decided to concentrate our attention on academic competence and sensitivity to students (see Appendix). The responses to the two questions concerning global evaluation were answered on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*one of the best*) to 3 (*average*) to 5 (*far below average*). Responses for the academic competence and sensitivity to students dimensions also were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*definitely yes*) to 3 (*uncertain or neutral*) to 5 (*definitely no*). Furthermore, each of these dimensions was found to have a reasonably high level of reliability (i.e., $\alpha = .84$ to $.87$). The items composing each dimension and their associated reliabilities are presented in the Appendix.

Controls. Because students' reactions to the White and Black instructors could very well (at least in part) be a function of the actual academic differences between the faculty and other factors having little to do with racial stereotypes, we did our best to control for these possible confounds. We attempted to control for the academic characteristics of the faculty by using four variables as covariates in the statistical analyses: (a) faculty member's rank (i.e., Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Full Professor, or Endowed Chair); (b) faculty member's academic degree (i.e., BA, MA, or PhD); (c) faculty member's years of teaching experience; and (d) faculty member's academic standing (as indexed by the faculty's yearly salary). In addition, because faculty in different academic departments are rewarded with different salary scales, we also entered dummy-variable codes for the academic department with which the faculty member was affiliated. The final faculty characteristic controlled for was gender.

In addition to these controls for the nonracial characteristics of the faculty, we also controlled for a number of characteristics of the students. These characteristics include (a) gender; (b) students' academic rank (i.e., freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, or graduate student); (c) number of students in the class; (d) whether the student took the course as an elective or as a requirement; and (e) students' expected grade in the course.

Table 1

Means of Teacher Evaluation Ratings for White and Black Faculty Made by White and Black Students

	White faculty		Black faculty	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
All students				
Global evaluation	3.68	0.87	4.09	0.83
Academic competence	4.37	0.63	4.59	0.55
Sensitivity to students	3.81	0.79	3.96	0.75
White students				
Global evaluation	3.69	0.87	4.04	0.84
Academic competence	4.37	0.63	4.58	0.57
Sensitivity to students	3.81	0.79	3.91	0.76
Black students				
Global evaluation	3.53	0.90	4.33	0.73
Academic competence	4.24	0.72	4.63	0.45
Sensitivity to students	3.73	0.81	4.23	0.62

Racism. Racism was operationalized by the average response to six racial attitude questions and was judged to have a high level of face validity and reliability ($\alpha = .85$; see Appendix for items). The racism items were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*very positive*) to 5 (*very negative*). The items were finally coded such that high scores represent high racism, while low scores represent low racism.

Results

Before getting to the body of the analyses, we first decided to examine the means and standard deviations of the three evaluative dimensions (i.e., global evaluation; academic competence; and sensitivity to students for White and Black faculty, as assessed by all students and by White and Black students separately; see Table 1). Consistent with the findings of Sidanius (1989), it is interesting to note that, compared to White faculty, Black faculty tended to get higher teaching evaluations across all three evaluative dimensions (see

Table 2

Regression and Slope Analyses Concerning Influence of Academic Competence, Sensitivity to Students, and Racism in Determining Global Evaluation Scores

Predictor	White faculty (<i>B</i>)	Black faculty (<i>B</i>)	Slope difference (<i>t</i>)
White students			
Academic competence	.56**	.66**	-2.90**
Sensitivity to students	.42**	.39**	<1
Multiple prediction	$R^2_{\text{adj.}} = .56^{**}$	$R^2_{\text{adj.}} = .59^{**}$	
Black students			
Academic competence	.13	.53**	-2.44*
Sensitivity to students	.59**	.35**	<1
Multiple prediction	$R^2_{\text{adj.}} = .41^{**}$	$R^2_{\text{adj.}} = .54^{**}$	

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 1). Furthermore, this trend was consistent among both White and Black students.

The heart of the statistical analyses employed multiple regression analyses in which the global evaluation of teacher effectiveness was regressed on the assessed levels of academic competence and rated sensitivity to student needs, after considering the effects of the controls for teacher and student characteristics (e.g., teacher experience, student gender). These results were run separately among White and Black students and for White and Black faculty. Altogether, four separate regression analyses were computed. The results are presented in Table 2, in which the effects for academic competence and sensitivity to students are shown (net of the effects of the controls).

Inspection of the unstandardized regression coefficients in Table 2 seems to support the major hypotheses of this study. Namely, net of all other factors, White students seemed to place significantly more weight on the academic competence of Black instructors ($B = .66, p < .001$) than of White instructors ($B = .56, p < .001$), slope difference $t(2769) = -2.90, p < .01$. Most importantly, the same pattern was also found among Black students, such that in assessing global competence of instructors, Black students placed

significantly more weight on the academic competence of Black instructors ($B = .53, p < .001$) than of White instructors ($B = .13, ns$), slope difference $t(150) = -2.44, p < .05$. While both White and Black students placed more weight on sensitivity to student needs of White instructors than of Black instructors, in neither case were these differences across instructor race statistically significant: White students, $B_s = .42$ and $.39, p < .01$, slope difference $t(2769) < 1, ns$; Black students, $B_s = .59$ and $.35, p < .01$, slope difference $t(150) < 1, ns$.

To further explore the question of pervasiveness of this effect across the White and the Black student bodies, we examined evidence of a three-way interaction of Perceived Academic Competence \times Instructor's Race \times Student's Race. In other words, the question then became whether or not the two-way interaction between perceived academic competence and instructor race was significantly affected by the race of the student. After entering the main effects for sensitivity, student's race, competence, and instructor's race, all three of the two-way interactions among the latter three variables, and all other controls, the introduction of the product term of Instructor's Race \times Student's Race \times Perceived Academic Competence into the multiple regression analysis disclosed no evidence of a three-way interaction, $t(2950) = 1.10, ns$. In other words, the two-way interaction between instructor's race and perceived academic competence was essentially the same among White and Black students.

While both Black and White students showed the same pattern in emphasizing the importance of academic competence for Black as opposed to White faculty, there was one major difference in the rating behavior of Black students. Regardless of faculty ethnicity, Table 2 shows that in making global evaluations of faculty, both academic competence and sensitivity to student needs were considered. In addition, academic competence appeared to play a more important role than did sensitivity to student needs (e.g., White students/Black faculty: competence, $B = .66$; and sensitivity, $B = .39$). The same general pattern was also found when Black students made global evaluations of Black faculty. However, and somewhat surprisingly, a very different pattern was found when Black students made evaluations of White faculty. In this case the only factor of concern to Black students appeared to be the White instructors' sensitivity to student needs ($B = .59, p < .01$), while perceived academic competence of the White faculty appeared to be essentially irrelevant ($B = .13, ns$).²

²Use of a LISREL equality constraint model for these two coefficients shows them to be significantly different from one another, $\chi^2(1) = 3.94, p < .05$.

Finally, we explored the degree to which the greater emphasis on academic competence when evaluating Black versus White faculty was consistent across the dimension of explicit racism among White and Black students. To explore this question, we used multiple regression and examined the three-way interaction of Instructor's Race \times Perceived Competence \times Student's Explicit Racism among both White and Black students. The results for the White students show that after entering all of the control variables (including sensitivity to student needs), the main effects of instructor's race, perceived academic competence, explicit racism (using the racism measure discussed previously), and all two-way interactions among these three variables, the additional inclusion of the three-way interaction term did not produce a statistically significant increase in variance accounted for ($B = -.01$, $t(2766) < 1$, *ns*). In other words, the two-way interaction between instructor's race and perceived academic competence was essentially the same across the dimension of explicit racism.

We then repeated the same analysis among Black students. However, in this case, there was indeed evidence of a three-way interaction between instructor's race, perceived academic competence, and explicit racism (i.e., three-way term; $B = -.73$, $t(147) = -2.10$, $p < .05$). What the nature of this interaction suggests is that the two-way interaction between perceived academic competence and racism is different for White and Black faculty. A simple slopes probe of these results shows that when Black students are evaluating White faculty, there is a significant two-way interaction between perceived academic competence and anti-Black racism (two-way interaction; $B = -.71$, $t(62) = -3.38$, $p < .01$). In this case, the factor of academic competence had a strong positive effect on global evaluation among Black students with low levels of anti-Black racism (i.e., 1 *SD* below the mean; $B = .57$). In contrast, among Black students with relatively high levels of anti-Black racism (i.e., 1 *SD* above the mean), academic competence played essentially no role in the global evaluation of White faculty ($B = .01$). In contrast, when Black students were evaluating Black faculty, racism did not play a strong moderating role in the relationship between global evaluation and perceived academic competence (two-way interaction; $B = -.13$, $t(68) < 1$, *ns*). This relationship was relatively strong for Black students with low levels of anti-Black racism (i.e., 1 *SD* below the mean; $B = .60$), as for Black students with relatively high levels of anti-Black racism (i.e., 1 *SD* above the mean; $B = .50$).

Discussion

Because of the salience of African American faculty, we expected that the stereotypical expectation that African Americans are generally intellectually

inferior to European Americans would result in assessments of academic competence influencing overall evaluations of African American faculty more than for European American faculty. Furthermore, we expected this effect to be pervasive, affecting both European American and African American students, and low- and high-prejudice students equally.

Using large groups of European and African American university students, with one exception, all of the hypotheses were confirmed. Among both African American and European American students, the results show that academic competence was weighted significantly more in overall evaluations of African American faculty than of European American faculty.

While the behavior of Black students resembled that of White students in that both groups put more emphasis on the academic competence of Black than of White faculty, there are two interesting ways in which the behavior of Black and White students diverged. First, when White students made global evaluations of both Black and White faculty, and when Black students made global evaluations of Black faculty, much more weight was placed on academic competence than on sensitivity to student needs. However, this pattern was strongly reversed when Black students made global evaluations of White faculty. In this case, academic competence appeared to play no net role in students' overall assessment of faculty performance. Rather, Black students appeared to be exclusively concerned with and attentive to instructors' perceived sensitivity to student needs. These data might well suggest that Black students are most acutely concerned with fair treatment at the hands of White faculty because of their chronically higher expectations of racial discrimination in mainstream institutions (see Gallup, 1997). Thus, it would appear that fair treatment at the hands of White faculty is a salient issue for Black students, and the relative academic competence of Black faculty is a salient issue for both White and Black students.

There are two caveats to this conclusion, however. First, note that Black students did not value sensitivity significantly more for White instructors than they did for Black instructors. In addition, the same pattern was replicated among White students, who also valued sensitivity slightly more for White than for Black instructors, but again not significantly so. Thus, Black and White students displayed the same general pattern, valuing the sensitivity of White instructors slightly, but not significantly more than the sensitivity of Black instructors.

The second caveat, and the second way in which the behavior of White and Black students differed, concerns the moderating role of racism in the interaction between academic competence and instructor race when making global evaluations of instructors. Among White students, the relative weight given to the academic competence of Black versus White faculty was

essentially independent of students' levels of racism. Thus, for Whites, racial "liberals" and racial "conservatives" both had an equally strong tendency to place greater weight on the academic competence of Black faculty than of White faculty. However, this was not the tendency among Black students. In this case, the more Black students accepted anti-Black and racist norms, the greater weight they placed on the academic competence of Black, as compared to White faculty. Thus, among Black students who strongly accepted anti-Black and racist norms, while academic competence played a strong role in their evaluations of Black faculty, academic competence played essentially no role in their evaluations of White faculty. Given that the lack of weight placed on academic competence with respect to White faculty can be attributed to a specific population of Black students (i.e., those subscribing to anti-Black norms), one cannot necessarily conclude that only the sensitivity of White faculty matters to Black students, which was the tentative and seemingly obvious conclusion to be drawn. It could be that the Black students who endorse racist stereotypes against their own racial group discount the academic competency of White instructors because they take the academic competency of Whites (and Whites only) completely for granted. Accordingly, they do not weight stereotype-congruent academic competency in their evaluation of specific White instructors, but they do highly weight stereotype-incongruent academic competency in their evaluations of Black instructors.

Altogether, these results show that the overall performance evaluations of Black and White faculty differ in interesting ways, and in ways that are congruent with the pervasive stereotypes of Whites and Blacks in the minds of White and Black actors (e.g., Devine, 1989; Lobel, 1987). While the overall performance evaluations of Black faculty did not appear to be lower than those given to White faculty, the data clearly suggest that the attributional processes producing these overall ratings differed as a function of the race of the instructor.

Because the study design used here was a survey of actual instructors in actual university classrooms, rather than a laboratory experiment, we cannot be completely certain that the effects that we observed here are solely a function of racial stereotypes and expectations in the minds of the respondents, rather than being a result of actual academic differences between the White and Black faculty. Thus, for example, if the African American faculty really were academically superior to their European American colleagues, their greater academic prowess could have made the academic competence dimension that much more accessible in the minds of all the student evaluators.

While our survey design does not allow us to completely eliminate this alternative explanation of the findings, the design does allow us a reasonable

amount of control over this alternative explanation. We have done our best to control for the actual academic competence of the instructors by controlling for such factors as teaching experience, academic department, academic rank, formal degree qualifications, and academic salary, which, net of academic rank and department, provides a reasonably good index of academic competence. However, we must still be open to the possibility that these controls may not have been completely successful. For example, it is still possible that our control for academic rank itself may very well have been contaminated with racial bias insofar as Black academics may not have achieved the same academic rank as their equally qualified White colleagues. This and similar possibilities force us to interpret our results with a certain amount of caution. However, we would also suggest that whatever shortcoming the study has in internal validity is made up by its substantially higher level of external validity as a result of the fact that it is assessing real evaluations of real instructors within a real institutional setting.

However, even if we can be reasonably certain that the differential weighting of academic competence for Black as compared to White faculty was not a result of actual differences among the faculty themselves, in principle, one still does not know whether this differential weighting was conscious and deliberate, or the result of the students' implicit and unconscious biases. One can imagine that if the students were trying to be fair, they may have deliberately weighted academic competence more for African American faculty. This is not, in our view, what caused this effect. Although students may likely attempt to be unprejudiced in their evaluations of Black professors, we think it is unlikely that students are aware that stereotypes may cause them to weight stereotype-inconsistent information differentially. If not, they cannot consciously correct for this bias. We think it is more likely that the nondeliberative general expectancy invoked by the stereotype led to certain kinds of information being attended and remembered, and that these had disproportionate influences on overall impressions.

One might also be concerned that global evaluation scores and academic competence ratings are more likely to activate a social desirability bias relative to the sensitivity index, given that the latter is less related to negative stereotypes concerning Blacks. If this were the case, we would also expect a greater relationship between academic competence and global evaluation ratings. Future studies might do well to measure social desirability in order to control for this factor and thereby rule out this alternative explanation.

In the present study, one might expect low-prejudice Whites to be more influenced by social desirability bias than either high-prejudice Whites or Blacks. The fact that the relationship between competence and global

evaluation was not significantly stronger among low-prejudice Whites, then, provides some assurance that this alternative explanation does not carry the effect. Furthermore, these students rated their instructors anonymously, following typical protocols for teacher evaluations, which should mitigate social desirability concerns to some extent.

Finally, our results suggest that it might be worth extending instructor evaluation research to explore the possible consequences of stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995). For example, if minority faculty are aware of the fact that students' overall performance evaluations of them place more weight on academic competence than is the case for their White colleagues, then there is some reason to suspect that they, too, may be susceptible to the pernicious effects of stereotype threat and perform below their actual academic potential within the classroom situation. Thus, the unintentional weight placed on the academic competence of Black instructors, while seemingly innocuous because it does not affect overall evaluations here, might very well have damaging consequences in other situations.

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Appendix

Items Composing Global Evaluation, Academic Competence, Sensitivity to Students, and Racism

Global Evaluation ($\alpha = .84$)

1. Compared with all the instructors I have had, both in high school and college, this instructor is:
2. Compared with all the courses I have had, both in high school and in college, this course is:

Academic Competence ($\alpha = .87$)

1. The instructor seems well-prepared for lecture or discussion.
2. The instructor shows a scholarly grasp of the course material.
3. The instructor shows confidence before the class.
4. The instructor keeps lectures and class discussions focused on the subject of the course.
5. The instructor uses clear and relevant examples.

Sensitivity to Students ($\alpha = .84$)

1. The instructor seems to be sensitive to the feelings and needs of the students.
2. The instructor makes me feel free to ask questions, disagree, and express my ideas.
3. The instructor is generally accessible to students outside of class.
4. The instructor usually seems to be aware of whether the class was following the presentation with understanding.
5. I am satisfied with the way the performance of students is evaluated in this course.

Racism ($\alpha = .85$)

1. Racial equality
2. Black neighbors in your neighborhood
3. Interracial dating
4. Each ethnic group should stay in its own place.
5. White superiority
6. Interracial marriage

Note. Responses were rated on the following 5-point scales: global evaluation, 1 (*one of the best*) to 3 (*average*) to 5 (*far below average*); academic competence and sensitivity to students, 1 (*definitely yes*) to 3 (*uncertain or neutral*) to 5 (*definitely no*); racism, 1 (*very positive*) to 5 (*very negative*).