

### Background

- The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of professor race/ethnicity on student perceptions of their behavior and job performance (achievement, teaching effectiveness, rapport with students, overall impressions).
- More specifically, perceptions of underrepresented professors was studied (Chinese American, Latinx, or African American professor) without a White professor in comparison.

### Past Findings

- Gender:** Female professors were found to be more capable and warmer (Anderson, 2010; Anderson & Smith, 2005), and are expected to be more professional and experienced (Bennett, 1982) than male professors.
- Teaching Style:** A lenient teaching style matters to students when evaluating Latinx professors (Smith & Anderson, 2005).
- Academic Competence and Capability:** Perceptions of competence and capability have been shown to be impacted by race/ethnicity; compared with White professors, students weigh academic competence more heavily when evaluating Black professors (Ho et al., 2009).
- Race/Ethnicity:** White professors are chosen over (Mendez & Mendez, 2018) and rated more positively (Reid, 2010) than professors of color.

### Method

#### Participants

- Sample Size: 97 (18 Male, 77 Female, 1 preferred not to answer, 1 unreported)
- Age Range: 18 - 23 ( $M = 19.26$  years)
- Ethnicity: 72 White, 8 Hispanic/Latinx, 2 Asian, 2 Black/African American, 8 Multicultural, 1 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 2 other, 2 preferred not to answer
- Year in school: 38 first year, 30 second year, 18 third year, 11 fourth year
- School of Major: 32 School of Humanities and Social Sciences, 11 School of Science, 9 School of Social Work, 5 School of Business, 21 School of Nursing and Health Studies, 4 School of Education, 13 undeclared, 2 did not know
- Convenience sample from SONA research participation pool

#### Materials

- Three Vignettes (manipulating professors' ethnicity)
- Perception Questionnaire (measuring achievement, teaching effectiveness, rapport with students, overall impressions)
- Demographics Questionnaire
- Manipulation Check

#### Design

- Multigroup Between-Subjects Design
- Independent Variable: Ethnicity of the Professor (Chinese American, Latinx, or African American)
- Dependent Variable: Students' Perceptions (measured by questionnaire: achievement, teaching effectiveness, rapport with students, overall impressions)
- Only first initials were used in the professor's name to avoid inferring gender

#### Procedure

- Participating online from their own devices, participants completed informed consent and then were randomly assigned to read one of the three scenarios.
- After viewing their scenario, participants completed the perception questionnaire, then the demographics questionnaire and manipulation check.
- They were then debriefed and asked to keep what was being studied confidential.

### Results

#### Manipulation Check

The analysis revealed that 79.4% of the participants were aware of the manipulation of the professors' race/ethnicity, while 20.6% were not. The 20.6% not being aware makes the manipulation less effective.

**Hypothesis 1 (Achievement; not supported):** Chinese American professors would be rated higher than African American and Latinx professors in achievement and credentials.

- A one-way ANOVA revealed that there was no significant difference between the groups,  $F(2, 94) = .05, p = .95$ , thus the group means were not significantly different (see Table 1). There was no influence of the race/ethnicity of professors on students' evaluations of professor achievement.

**Hypothesis 2 (Teaching Effectiveness; not supported):** Latinx professors would be rated higher in teaching effectiveness than African American and Chinese American professors, and that African American professors would be rated higher in teaching effectiveness than Chinese American professors.

- A one-way ANOVA revealed that there was no significant difference between the groups,  $F(2, 94) = .98, p = .38$ , thus the group means were not significantly different (see Table 1). There was no influence of the race/ethnicity of professors on students' evaluations of professor teaching effectiveness.

**Hypothesis 3 (Rapport with Students; not supported):** African American and Latinx professors would be rated higher in rapport with students compared to Chinese American professors.

- A one-way ANOVA revealed that there was no significant difference between the groups,  $F(2, 94) = .62, p = .54$ , thus the group means were not significantly different (see Table 1). There was no influence of the race/ethnicity of professors on students' evaluations of professor rapport with students.

**Hypothesis 4 (Overall Perceptions; not supported):** Latinx and African American professors would receive higher overall impression ratings than Chinese American professors.

- A one-way ANOVA revealed that there was no significant difference between the groups,  $F(2, 94) = 2.48, p = .09$ , thus the group means were not significantly different (see Table 1). There was no influence of the race/ethnicity of professors on students' overall perceptions of professors.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for Students' Evaluations of Professors based on Race/Ethnicity

	Achievement	Teaching	Rapport	Overall	N
Chinese American	4.01 (.63)	3.09 (.80)	3.11 (.94)	3.17 (1.04)	29
African American	4.06 (.64)	3.22 (.78)	3.36 (.88)	3.47 (.89)	34
Latinx	4.05 (.51)	2.96 (.70)	3.29 (.89)	2.98 (.82)	34

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### Discussion

- Counter to predictions, professors' race/ethnicity did not alter students' ratings of professors' achievement, teaching effectiveness, rapport, and overall impressions.
- The current study was built on the comparison of underrepresented professors without White professors being present, and prior research suggesting that students' evaluations of professors can be explained in part by looking at professors' race/ethnicity (Littleford & Jones, 2017; Mendez & Mendez, 2018; Reid, 2010).
- The current findings contradict those of previous research.

### Strengths

- The results added to previous research by comparing professors from underrepresented groups without a White professor as comparison.
- The sample size used in the present study was large enough to produce reliable results.
- The multigroup design kept the study simple in order to replicate the study more easily.

### Limitations

- Convenience sample of mostly White, female, psychology students decreases the generalizability of the findings to be applied to the general public, or in this case, to the target population of college students.
- The study being conducted online was a limitation as it caused a lack of controlled administration, as participants were able to complete the study at any time, in various settings, and may have been distracted by outside variables.
- According to the manipulation check, not all participants accurately recognized the race/ethnicity of the professor that they read about in the vignettes.

### Future Directions

- Continue to examine underrepresented professors' influences on students' perceptions, without the comparison of White professors.
- Increase the number of conditions of underrepresented groups, as these are just three of the various racial/ethnic backgrounds that experience stereotypes due to their race/ethnicity.
- Increase the number of participants, and broaden the sample to participants from more diverse backgrounds, to increase the generalizability of future research.
- Look at the students' evaluations in terms of different impressions of the professors, other than the ones observed in the present study (achievement, teaching, rapport, and overall impressions).
- Conduct the study in person, controlling for time of day and environmental conditions, and avoiding the random errors of an online study.

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