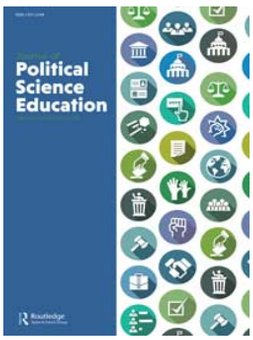

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What's in a Name … or a Face? Student Perceptions of Faculty Race

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ABSTRACT

Utilizing Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a conceptual framework, this study examines student perception of faculty of color in academia from student professor preference. Using an experimental design to test the effect of race on selection of faculty with whom to take a course, we showed student participants two types of pairings of faculty: first, pairs of photos of faculty of different races, and same age and attractiveness, then names of faculty, paired by different race were shown. The study provided evidence of racial bias with a strong preference for courses taught by White faculty by various subgroups of students, providing a snapshot of what faculty of color potentially stand to face in classroom environments.

KEYWORDS

Diversity; evaluation; faculty; perception; student

Despite progress in recent years, faculty of color in academia face a number of challenges from different directions, and recent literature underscores the chilly and unwelcoming racial climate for minority faculty on college campuses (Aguirre 2000; Flowers and Jones 2003; Jayakumar et al. 2009; Townsend 2009; Turner and Myers 2000; Turner, Myers, and Creswell 1999). Although recent research on the experiences of faculty color explores issues like tenure and promotion (Flowers and Jones 2003; Jackson 2003), campus environment (Aguirre 2000), feelings of isolation (Bennefield 1999), perceptions of job satisfaction (Flowers 2005; Laden and Hagedorn 2000; Moody 2004; Ponjuan 2005; Rosser 2005; Seifert and Umbach 2008), and teaching evaluations (DiPietro and Faye 2005; Rubin 1998; Smith 2009), not much is known about the direct relationship between faculty of color and another important stakeholder of campus life, the student. Limited research has been conducted on initial student perception of faculty of color before even stepping foot in classroom.

Using Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a conceptual framework, the primary purpose of this study is to examine student preference of instructor on the basis of race, illustrating a facet of the chilling campus climate that faculty of color stand to face on college campuses. CRT maintains that racism is a normal facet of American life in education and this study examines the experiential knowledge that faculty of color stand to accumulate during their academic career. Using an experimental design, we test the effect of race on preference of faculty with whom to take a course by showing student participants profile pictures of faculty and names of faculty of various ethnic backgrounds as they would appear in a course catalog. We hypothesize that students overall will prefer courses taught by White

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faculty rather than faculty of color. However, when the race of the student is considered, we hypothesize that White students will prefer courses taught by White faculty; minority students will prefer courses taught by minority faculty, providing some evidence of role model effect (i.e., students of color seeing faculty of color as role models). If overall preference for White faculty does exist, it would illustrate another dynamic that contributes to the chilly campus climate that faculty of color face in their daily professional lives. In the following sections of the article, we will provide a literature review of relevant research, a conceptual framework to present our findings, and the results of our study.

The environment for minority faculty

Campus climate and intergroup relations is multidimensional and includes various stakeholders such as faculty, staff, and students. Although there has been progress to diversify the faculty, the experiences of minority faculty in academia have been labeled as chilly or unwelcoming, assuming that they get their feet in the door as faculty in the first place (Aguirre 2000; Astin et al. 1997; Moody 2004; Nunpa 2003; Olivas 1988; Turner, Gonzalez, and Wood 1998; Turner and Myers 2000; Turner, Myers, and Creswell 1999). Turner, Myers, and Creswell (1999) conducted a study of African American, Native American, Latino, and Asian Pacific faculty in eight states from 1993 to 1995 that examined the issues pertaining to recruitment, development, and retention of minority faculty. "Though most faculty, over 95%, said they plan to stay in academe, they repeatedly mentioned the handicaps of isolation, lack of information about tenure and promotion, unsupportive work environments, gender bias, language barriers, lack of mentoring, and lack of support from superiors. They identified racial and ethnic bias as the most troubling challenge they faced in the academic workplace" (p. 41). In surveying law professors of color, Delgado (1989) observed that they experienced racist academic environments, and whether the campus is fortunate to have a critical mass of ethnic faculty members, the feeling of isolation and subject to discriminatory behavior is not in short supply in their experiential knowledge. Johnsrud and Sadao (1998) examined faculty experience at a highly diverse institution and found faculty sentiment on the burden of being bicultural, devalued, and exposed to racism and comes from different sources.

Critical race theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) may provide a useful perspective to help explain the unwelcoming academic environment faculty of color face by examining race, racism, and society (Delgado and Stefanic 1993; Ladson-Billings 2009; Solorzano 1998). CRT owes its origins to Critical Legal Studies (CLS), a perspective that looked beyond policy analysis and localized the plight of the oppressed in the contexts of culture and society (Ladson-Billings 1998); however, CLS had its shortcomings. "Not listening to the lived experiences and histories of those oppressed by institutionalized racism limited CLS scholarship" (Yosso 2005, 71). And lacking the element of race in its analysis further led to the progression of this line of thought. Having origins in legal research, CRT provides a lens on how societal discourse promotes hierarchies among different populations at the expense of others that could follow gender, racial, and socioeconomic lines (Aleman 2006; Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995). The use of CRT predominantly is used to illustrate the dominance of Whites in societal discourse, demonstrating how racism, overt and covert,

is entrenched in society, either through cultural norms, policy, law, or sentiment. The entrenched racism then manifests within academic cultures. Others have defined CRT as "a critique of racial reform efforts" (Closson 2010, 262), but for the purposes of our study, Solorzano (1998) articulates CRT best as "a framework or set of basic perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural, cultural, and interpersonal aspects of education that maintain the subordination of scholars of color" (p. 123).

Scholars have used CRT in an educational context, providing descriptive criteria in which it can be applied (Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995; Patton et al. 2007). Solorzano (1998), Ladson-Billings (1994), Yosso (2005), and others have developed these tenets in one shape or another when using CRT and they will be employed in various sections of this article. These five tenets are: (1) the intercentricity of race and racism with forms of subordination, (2) challenge the dominant ideology, (3) social justice commitment, (4) centrality of experiential knowledge, and (5) the transdisciplinary perspective.

Intercentricity of race and racism

Employing the first tenet, the *intercentricity of race and racism,* argues that race remains a significant factor in achieving equality and used to subordinate along gender, racial, surname, and culture lines among others (Yosso et al. 2009). One can point to a number of examples such as the limited number of minorities among tenured ranks in academia (American Council on Education [ACE] 2009; Snyder, Dillow, and Hoffman 2009). Although strides have been made in diversifying, inequalities among racial lines remain among the academic ranks of universities and colleges across the country by a number of measures (Hartley, Eckel, and King 2009). A National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) report (Snyder et al. 2008) revealed that African Americans and Asians constituted 6% of the full-time professoriate, respectively, followed by Latinos (4%) and Native Americans (0.5%). Although the percentage of minority full-time faculty increased from 13% of all full-time faculty members in 1995 to 16% in 2005, more progress needs to be made. In fact, the number of tenured minority faculty dropped by 1% within the same time span (Ryu 2008). "The proportionate representation of minority men and women in the faculty ranks remains overshadowed by the disproportionate representation of White men and women in the faculty ranks" (Aguirre 2000, 9). The American Council on Education raised a similar concern in a 2009 report: "There are very few young permanent faculty poised to become the future academic and administrative leaders of higher education, particularly among underrepresented groups" (Hartley, Eckel, and King, 2009, p. 20).

Challenging the dominant ideology

The second tenet of *challenging the dominant ideology* examines these notions of meritocracy privilege and power that are bestowed upon certain populations (Yosso 2005; Yosso et al. 2009). Patton et al. (2007) posit that Whites maintain the privilege of laying claim to property and dictate the norms that provide them with advantages, regardless of the detriment to other groups.

According to CRT, Whites have not only historically enjoyed the role of powerbroker of several institutions in society, including academia, but also dictate forms of the critical discourse (i.e., norms, attitudes, and perceptions) that perpetuate this hierarchy. Using

CRT in this context is not new territory, Ladson-Billings (2009) used CRT to examine how African American women were portrayed in the media and how it perpetuated negative stereotypes and perceptions of them in professions, such as teaching. Solorzano (1998) also utilized CRT in examining racial and gender *microagressions* and how it impacted the careers of Chicano/a scholars. Coupled with the chilly and alienating climate, the limited number of other minority faculty, and presumptions of competence among others, CRT offers that these obstacles may be exhibits of institutional and structural racism. And throughout time, the majority have developed a sense of privilege or presumption of reputation, competence, and standing due to their background or historic social capital.

Through the notion of privilege, White faculty may enjoy these presumptions in the minds of students socialized in the present power structure. Assumptions of competence and teaching ability may influence the relationship between student and faculty member. There are a number of studies that look at the interactions between faculty of color and students, providing different perspectives to examine this dynamic. Hameresh and Parker (2005) examined a large sample of student evaluations of university faculty and analyzed the ratings according to several characteristics, including minority status. They found that minority faculty "receive lower teaching evaluations than do majority instructors, and non-native English speakers receive substantially lower ratings than do natives" (p. 373). Smith (2009) examined the student ratings of 190 faculty members at a research institution based on gender and race. She found that Black faculty received the lowest scores on two global assessments, *overall value of course* and *overall teaching ability*. In addition, White faculty were rated higher than Black faculty on average. In a similar study, DePietro and Fay (2005) found that White faculty had higher average course evaluation ratings than both Hispanic and Asian faculty. Other studies have also found that students perceived faculty of Asian descent as less credible than White faculty (Rubin 1998).

The course content, delivery style, and race of the professor also have an effect on student perception of instructor competence. According to Hendrix (1998), students responded that the credibility of Black instructors was higher when teaching a course of ethnic or racial emphasis, but would be more apt to question this credibility if the course did not have a racial or ethnic emphasis. Smith and Anderson (2005) found that Latino faculty were given either the least or most favorable ratings in a hypothetical course, depending on whether students perceived the course had a lenient or strict teaching style. They concluded that *aversive racism* (i.e., "if students could find a way to justify the negative evaluation of ethnic minority faculty with reasons other than ethnicity, they will rate them less favorably than White professors," p. 120) provided insight into their findings.

Moody (2004) argues that minority faculty must fight against the perception of incompetence when working in majority or Predominately White Institutions (PWIs), while White faculty maintain a presumption of competence. This position implies that White faculty operate from a posture of privilege, and whether it be among colleagues, students, during job interviews, or everyday academic interactions, minority faculty carry the additional burden of addressing insinuations of inferiority and incompetence. In addition, these insinuations of inferiority and incompetence are projected by students, as well as faculty: "Regarding interaction with students, there's a different expectation for us when we walk in as a minority; they automatically assume that we know less than our colleagues in the same department" (Turner and Myers 2000, 110). It is these negative

presumptions of faculty of color that students may hold well-before they step foot into a classroom in college. In addition, this negative sentiment based on racial assumptions not only place minority faculty in a lower-tier prestige compared to White faculty, but are also damaging to the psyche of minority faculty.

Centrality of experiential knowledge

The *centrality of experiential knowledge* is another important ingredient in CRT. Research utilizing CRT is predominantly qualitative in nature. The experiential knowledge or lived experience of faculty or students of color is an essential element in understanding their plight with racial subordination (Hughes and Giles 2010; Yosso 2005). "CRT draws explicitly on the lived experiences of People of Color by including such methods as storytelling, family histories, biographies, scenarios, parables, *cuentos, testimonias,* chronicles and narratives" (Yosso 2005, 74). Although this study is quantitative in nature and does not include faculty sentiment and attitudes in its data collection, it does aim to publicize some of the intricacies that faculty of color face in their interaction with one of the stakeholders in the academic environment, the undergraduate students. And by exposing this dynamic, it is hoped as Yosso (2005) posits that "when the ideology of racism is examined and racist injuries are named, victims of racism can often find their voice" (p. 75)

While CRT helps to explain the challenges of campus climate that faculty of color face, and it also provides a narrative voice to the students of color and how they respond to faculty of color while considering the role model effect (Aguirre 2000; Jayakumar et al. 2009; Smith and Wolf-Wendel 2005), demonstrating a *commitment to social justice* on the part of the faculty. Students of color see minority faculty as role models (Aguirre 2000; Smith and Wolf-Wendel 2005) and studies maintain that there is a link between the presence of minority faculty and the persistence of minority students (Blackwell 1981; de la Luz Reyes and Halcon 1991). The persistence of faculty of color can have an empowering effect and provide emotional support to students of color. "Increasing faculty of color in the academy would provide mentors, role models, and a sense of connection that students of color and junior faculty of color often lack on predominantly White campuses" (Jayakumar et al. 2009, 539). Students of color may find solace and connection with professors of shared or similar ethnic backgrounds, and prefer them as instructors as a matter of personal choice. Thus by faculty of color persisting through the tenure process and maintaining a presence on campus, they are empowering students of color in their own persistence through the collegiate experience.

The transdisciplinary perspective

CRT is not limited to a select number of disciplines, instead uses a number of different contexts and fields to examine inequalities (Yosso 2005). However, recent research utilizing the lens of CRT has been predominantly narrative, and thus, qualitative in nature (Buenavista, Jayakumar, and Misa-Escalante 2009; Gillborn 2005; Picower 2009; Riviere 2008; Solorzano and Yosso 2002; Yosso et al. 2009). Ladson-Billings (2005) lamented on the dexterity and diverse application of CRT in not only different fields, but also study approaches. Aligning with this celebrated train of thought, we extend the application of this lens not only from a transdisciplinary lens but from a methodological approach.

In addition, using CRT in a quantitative study is not unprecedented in educational research. In fact, Stage (2007) openly advocates the incorporation of critical theory in quantitative research, drawing a difference between the perspective of the positivistic researcher and critical researcher.

> A positivistic researcher seeks models that nearly completely explain phenenoma of interest, aiming for confirmation and verification to explain universal human behavior. But because much of positivistic research is based on previously developed models, the outcomes tend to replicate the *status quo* and verify meritocratic fairness. In contrast, the goal of the critical researcher is exploration or investigation. Does the model hold for a new population of interest – for example, students at urban institutions or rural, working-class students? The outcomes for any critical researcher, no matter the method, center around equity. (p. 10)

Stage (2007) posits that critical researchers must consider two intelligential labors in integrating critical theory. First, they should use data to "reveal inequities and to identify social or institutional perpetuation of systemic inequities in such processes and outcomes" (p. 10) and also raise issues with the models, measures, and analytic practices of quantitative research in order to offer competing models, measures, and analytic practices that better describe experiences of those who have not been adequately represented. Our quantitative study assesses student perception and attitudes toward faculty on the basis of race and its survey population originating from a freshman-level political science class within a PWI. The potential experiential knowledge that faculty of color, an underrepresented population in academia, accumulate is a worthy topic through the lens of critical theory. In the following sections, we will discuss our own approach and share our findings in this extension of CRT.

Hypotheses

The present literature on student perception of professors has been limited to postcourse evaluation or inferences made on a hypothetical syllabi and faculty racial background. Our study focuses student perception of faculty of color in academia from student professor preference. Using CRT and the role model effect theory, our research offers two hypotheses when looking at student perception of faculty. First, (1) students on average will prefer courses taught by White faculty than faculty of color; however, (2) when the race of the student is considered, White students will prefer courses taught by White faculty; minority students will prefer courses taught by minority faculty. Using CRT, we maintain that racism is entrenched in society and academia. Given this racial dynamic, we expect a preference for White faculty to emerge. However, going deeper into this theory, we expect due to the role model effect that minority students will prefer minority faculty because minority students will perceive minority faculty as more supportive in the overall chilly campus climate.

Data and methods

Based on the suggestions outlined by Stage (2007), we employ a quantitative approach to explore our hypotheses through a critical theory perspective. While case studies and interviews would also shed light on our hypotheses, we have opted for a quantitative approach in order to allow us wider generalizability on student perception of faculty based on race. To test our hypotheses, we conducted a computerized survey at a large university within the Midwest. Subjects for the surveys came from Introduction to American Government

courses, and given that is a required course for all undergraduates, providing a representative cross-section population of all students at this university. There were 10 sections of Introduction to American Government and all students were given the opportunity to participate and all students across all sections were given an equal amount of extra credit for their participation. A total of 529 students participated in the survey that consisted of three sections. The demographics of the survey show that 51% of the sample were males, 49% were female; 80% were White students, and 20% of sample were non-White students. The non-White student population consisted of African Americans (6%), Native American (5%), Hispanic (4%), Asian (2%), and other minority (3%). These demographics mirror the student body fairly well. The student body of this University is 75% White, 4.5% African American, 6% Native American, 3.9% Hispanic, 1.5% Asian, 1.2% other/unknown, 1.2% multiracial, and 6.9% international. Because the racial and ethnic demographics of the survey matches the student body and we have a large sample size, we did not oversample minority students. In terms of the faculty, the student body and survey also mirror faculty demographics, except for gender. For this university, 63% of faculty are male and 37% female. For race/ethnicity, 77% of faculty are White which is a comparable racial breakdown to the general student population of the institution.

Our survey contains two main sections. First students were shown photos of pairs of faculty and asked to choose which faculty they would like to take a course from. Second, students were shown pairs of faculty names and asked again to choose with whom they would like to take a course from. Appendix A contains all prompts and question wording in all experiments used, as well as a sample of photos used.

Photo experiment

In the photo experiment, to isolate the effects of race on faculty selection, we ran a pre-experiment with 149 students (enrolled in the same class, Introduction to American Government, the semester before the main experiment). Students were shown a large selection of faculty photos. The photos in this study were found on various publicly accessible websites of research universities outside of the state where the survey was conducted. All of the pictures have similar professional backgrounds, profile, style of dress and expressions, but vary in the ages, ethnicity, and disciplines of the photographed faculty. Students were asked to assess the perceived attractiveness and age of the given photos of faculty. Prior research shows both impact evaluations of faculty (Mendez and Mendez, in press). To preserve first impressions, each photo appeared for 1.5 seconds. This was done so subjects would not overthink their response and give a socially acceptable answer. Attractiveness was assessed using a 5-point scale, where "1" indicates *not attractive* and "5" indicates *highly attractive*. For perceived age, subjects placed faculty into one of three groups: 30–44, 45–60, and over 60. Students were also asked their gender, age, ethnic background, and major. Based on these scores, each photo was given an aggregate mean attractiveness and age rating. Based on these ratings, we created pairs of faculty photos where pairs are of the same perceived level of attractiveness and age. We used these scores to create a series of different-race male-male pairs and different race female-female pairs. Again, this allowed us to isolate racial effects separately from gender effects. In total, we created 32 different race pairs with 18 male-male (9 White-Black and 9 White-other minority) and 14 female-female pairs (7 White-Black and 7 White-other minority).

Name experiment

In the second section of the survey, students were given a scenario where two identical course sections are offered at the same time and asked to choose between the two courses. Following this description, pairs of names are given, created to resemble the typical course catalog at a university. Using various indices, including the U.S. Census, and previous research we developed a list of typical White, Black, Asian, and Hispanic first and last names. Again to isolate racial effects separately from gender effects, 36 different race pairs were given (12 male-male, 12 female-female, 12 pairs without a provided first name and therefore no gender component). Within the each of the male-male and female-female pairs groups, four were White-Black, four White-Hispanic, and four White-Asian. Within the White-Asian and White-Hispanic groups, two of the four pairs included Hispanic (Asian) first and last names and two used White first names paired with a Hispanic (Asian) last name. This was done to test if the same hypothesized racial effects will still be present when a racially identifiable name was paired with an Americanized name. For the 12 pairs that included only last names and a first initial, 4 were White-Black, 4 White-Hispanic, and 4 White-Asian. Arranging pairs with first initial only controls any potential inference made on the faculty's socioeconomic status. Literature involving first and second names and employment preference based on race are mixed. Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004) found that employers are more responsive to White-sounding first names, rather than those of other racial groups while Fryer and Levitt (2004) attribute first names as maintaining a high connotation of socioeconomic status. Darolia et al. (2016) found no employer preference among fictitious resumes with fictitious names that implied race and gender; however, that survey population were employers in highly urban and diverse environments (Atlanta, Boston, Houston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Seattle, and Sacramento), not freshmen-level college students at a PWI. Providing only the first initial on part of the name experiment mitigates this dynamic.

To give some context as to the names used, for example in the White-Black condition, a White name such as "Susan Davidson" would be paired with a Black name such as "Yolanda Harris." For the White-Hispanic pairs, an example would be "Robert Beck" and "Caesar Sanchez." And within the White-Asian pairs an example would be "Christopher Adkins" and "Thuc Huynh." A full listing of the names and pairs used can be found in Appendix B.

For both the photo and name sections of the survey, the photos and names appeared on the computer screen for 1.5 seconds to preserve first impressions: The longer subjects have to assess a photo or a name, the more likely they are to override their first impression and correct their assessment according to socially desirable norms (Sczesny and Kuhnen 2004). Therefore, since our concern is the analysis of racial biases, we limit the time the photos and name appear in order to avoid this self-correction. In the final section of the survey, students were also asked their gender, age, ethnic background, and major.

Results

Photo experiment

Based on the survey responses, we conducted both difference of means tests and logistic regression analysis to test our hypotheses. When students were asked which faculty they

prefer, we coded the choice as a 1 if the White faculty was chosen and a 0 if the non-White faculty was chosen. We also controlled for the race of the faculty pair. We created three dummy variables for White dyads, Black dyads, and non-Black other minority dyads (1 if the pair belongs to the group, 0 otherwise). We also controlled for if the dyad was two male faculty members (coded as 1) or two female faculty members (coded as 0). The gender of the student was coded 1 for male students and 0 for female students and the race of the student was coded as 1 for White students and 0 for minority students.

As a simple test of if White faculty are chosen more often than non-White faculty, we conducted a series of difference of means tests. A difference of means tests allow us to compare the means across two groups and determine if there is a statistically significant effect and if the two groups are different from one another. Since our variable of interest (if White faculty member is chosen) is coded 0 or 1, there are three possibilities. First, one group will have a mean difference above 0.50 meaning they are more likely to chose White faculty members. Similarly, a mean below 0.50 means the group is less likely to choose White faculty members. Means at 0.50 show not preference for White faculty members compared to non-White faculty members.

We begin with a simple test of the whole sample and compare the rate of choosing a White faculty member compared to either a Black faculty member or non-White, non-Black faculty member. The results show a statistically significant mean difference, with White faculty chosen having a mean of 0.59 and non-White faculty having a mean of 0.41. There is a 18% difference between non-White and White faculty being selected, and this difference is quite important (since this is a 0 to 1 scale, we multiply by 100 to convert the results to percentages). White faculty are preferred compared to non-White faculty, supporting the first hypothesis

Next we consider characteristics of the faculty dyads, repeating this test separately for the male-male faculty pairs and the female-female faculty pairs to determine if White faculty are preferred regardless of the gender of the faculty. Both conditions show again statistically significant differences with White faculty compared to non-White faculty being chosen more frequently regardless of gender of the faculty. For those seeing male-male photos, the mean for choosing the White faculty member is 0.57, showing a 14% difference over choosing a minority faculty member. For those seeing female-female pairs, the mean for choosing the White faculty member is 0.62, or a 24% difference between selecting White female faculty member and non-White female faculty members. Given the larger mean when faculty members are female, we test the difference between these groups and find that there is a significant difference. However, both means are above 0.50, meaning though White faculty are more likely to be chosen when the faculty are female, White faculty are still chosen more often than minority faculty for both male and female faculty.

Next, we test if the race of the faculty dyad matters. Here we conduct separate difference of means tests for White-Black pairs, and White-non-Black non-White pairs. Again the results show that White faculty are chosen more often. The mean within White-Black faculty dyads is 0.58 (16% difference), and the mean within White-non-Black non-White dyads is 0.59 (18% difference). The difference between these two groups is not statistically significant, meaning regardless of if the minority faculty member was Black or non-White non-Black, White faculty were still chosen more often.

Having shown support for the first hypothesis that White faculty are preferred, across the characteristics of the faculty dyad, we turn our attention to student characteristics to

test our second hypothesis—White students are more likely than non-White students to prefer White faculty, and vice versa. The results show that both non-White students prefer White faculty (mean = 0.52, or a small 4% difference) as do White students (mean = 0.60, 20% difference). Further, the difference between these groups is significant, showing White students are more likely than non-White students to prefer White faculty. However, non-White students, while more likely to chose non-White faculty compared to White students, still are more likely to chose White faculty overall (since the mean is above 0.50). Here we chose to place all minority students into one group. We did conduct the difference of means for each group independently and tested the difference across the racial/ethnic groups. We found that all groups except Hispanics prefer White faculty (means over 0.50). The means for each groups are as follows: Hispanics 0.45, Blacks 0.53, Whites 0.60, Asians 0.58, Native Americans 0.59, Other 0.50. However, only the differences between Blacks and each racial/ethnic group were significant.

Lastly, we repeat the above difference of means test between male and female students to determine if the gender of the student alters our findings. These results show no significant differences. Both male students and female students are more likely to choose White faculty.

Having established that there are effects with respect to a racial bias in faculty preference, we next employ a logistic regression to further test our hypotheses. The benefit of a regression analysis over the *t*-tests is that with this analysis we can include all of our control variables to better isolate the racial biases. Whether the White faculty member was chosen serves as the dependent variable. The main independent variable is the racial status of the student. We present the results of a simplified model with all minority students in one group. However, we will break out the results for each racial/ethnic group within the discussion below. Further, we control for the racial dynamics of the dyad, the gender of the dyad, and the gender of the student. Table 1 presents these results.

The results show that White faculty are preferred by White students compared to non-White students. We calculated predicted probabilities for the significant variables (those with a *p*-value of less than .05), holding all other variables at their mean values. This shows that White students have a .60 probability of choosing a White faculty member, while non-White students have a .53 probability of choosing a White faculty member. When we conduct additional analyses breaking out the racial/ethnic groups, we find Whites still have a significant effect and a preference for White faculty. Further, Blacks

Table 1. Selection of White faculty based on faculty photos.

Student-White	0.31*** (0.07)
Student-Male	−0.03 (0.06)
Male-Male Faculty Pairs	−0.20*** (0.03)
White-Black Faculty Pairs	−0.05 (0.04)
Constant	−0.27 (0.07)
N	32 paired photos per 529 students = 16,928
Chi^2, *df*, prob.	61.85, 4, .00

Note. Logistic regression analysis. White faculty chosen: 1 if White faculty member was chosen between male-male dyads and female-female dyads, 0 all others. Student-White: 1 if student was White, 0 all others. Student-Male: 1 if student was male, 0 if female. Male-Male Faculty Pairs: 1 if faculty dyad was male-male pair, 0 if dyad was female-female dyad. White-Black Faculty Pairs: 1 if faculty (male-male pair or female-female pair) had 1 White faculty member, 0 all others.

***$p < 0.00$, **$p < .01$.

have a negative coefficient, meaning they are less likely than others to prefer White faculty. While this is true, the predicted probability is .53, showing a smaller preference for White faculty than other groups, but still a majority of Blacks prefer White faculty photos. Further, across all analyses, when the dyad is female-female, White faculty are more often chosen. Here we find students shown female-female pairs have a .62 probability of choosing a White faculty member, while those shown male-male pairs have a .57 probability of choosing White faculty members. We show support for our first hypothesis and mixed support for our second hypothesis.

Name experiment

For the name experiment, we follow the same format for the results as we did for the photo experiment, first conducting a series of difference of means tests and then following this with a multivariable logistic regression analysis. First, we show significant differences where White faculty are chosen compared to non-White faculty. The mean is 0.65, compared to 0.35 for choosing the non-White faculty member (a 30% difference). This is statistically significant. We found this to be true both for faculty with first names shown and those without first names shown. Further, this preference holds for both male-male pairs (mean = 0.63, 26% difference) and female-female pairs (mean = 0.67, 34% difference). Again, as with the photo experiment, female-female pairs result is a larger racial bias, and this difference compared to male-male pairs is statistically significant. We also tested the effect of showing the first name or not and found White faculty were still preferred among the group without first names (where only the last name could be used to infer race/ethnicity). Here the mean 0.64 of choosing White faculty when the first name was not given, compared to choosing non-White faculty. Lastly, among faculty characteristics, the race of the dyad does matter. While across all groups (White-Black pairs, White-Hispanic pairs, and White-Asian pairs), a significant difference is found for a preference for White faculty, the difference is largest among White-Asian pairs (mean = 0.75, a 50% difference) followed by White-Hispanic pairs (mean = 0.66, a 32% difference). The mean for choosing White faculty among White-Black pairs is 0.52 (a 4% difference). Further, the differences between these groups are significant.

In terms of the characteristics of the student, White students are more likely to prefer White faculty (mean = 0.65, a 30% difference) compared to non-White students (mean = 0.60, a 20% difference). This difference is statistically significant. However, again, as with the photo experiment, non-White students do prefer White faculty compared to non-White faculty. When we run additional analyses to breakout the effects across racial/ethnic groups, we find consistent results where all groups prefer White faculty. The means are: Hispanics 0.59, Blacks 0.57, Whites 0.60, Asians 0.54, Native Americans 0.66, Other 0.61. Lastly, we find significant gender differences. Female students are significantly more likely to prefer White faculty (mean = 0.67, a 34% difference) compared to male students (mean = 0.63, a 26% difference).

We model the same logistic regression as we did with the photo experiment. Table 2 presents these results. Here we find White students prefer White faculty compared to non-White students. We calculated predicted probabilities for the variables of interest while holding all of the other variables at their mean values. Based on our model, White students have a .67 probability of choosing a White faculty member, while non-White

Table 2. Selection of White faculty based on faculty names.

Student-White	0.26*** (0.07)
Student-Male	−0.18*** (0.05)
Male-Male Faculty Pairs	−0.19*** (0.04)
No First Name Faculty Pairs	−0.17*** (0.04)
White-Asian Faculty Pairs	1.07*** (0.06)
White-Hispanic Faculty Pairs	0.60*** (0.04)
Constant	0.08 (0.07)
N	36 paired photos per 529 students = 19,044
Chi^2, *df,* prob.	411.30, 6, .04

Note. Logistic regression analysis. White faculty chosen: 1 if White faculty member was chosen between male-male dyads and female-female dyads, 0 all others. Student-White: 1 if student was White, 0 all others. Student-Male: 1 if student was male, 0 if female. Male-Male Faculty Pairs: 1 if faculty dyad was male-male pair, 0 all others. No First Name Faculty Pairs: 1 if faculty dyad had an initial for the first name, 0 all others. White-Asian Faculty Pairs: 1 if faculty pair had 1 White faculty member and 1 Asian member, 0 all others. White-Hispanic Faculty Pairs: 1 if faculty pair had 1 White faculty member and 1 Hispanic member, 0 all others.

***$p < .00$, **$p < .01$.

students have a .61 probability of choosing a White faculty member. When we use additional regressions to breakout racial/ethnic groups, Whites still show a significant, positive effect. Asians and Blacks have a negative effect, meaning they are less likely to choose White faculty names (the predicted probabilities are .53 and .56, respectively). We also find female students are more likely to chose White faculty, as are students who are shown female-female pairs. Female students have a .67 probability of choosing a White faculty member, while male students have a .63 probability of choosing a White faculty member. For those shown female-female pairs, students have a .68 probability of choosing a White faculty member, while those shown male-male pairs have a .64 probability of choosing a White faculty member, and those shown pairs with no first name have a .64 probability. This particular finding warrants a closer examination in future studies to undercover specific explanations for this phenomena. Lastly, the race of the dyad does matter, with both White-Asian and White-Hispanic dyads showing a larger preference for White faculty when compared to White-Black dyads. The probability of a student choosing a White faculty member is .76 when the dyad is White-Asian, compared to .66 when the dyad is White-Hispanic and .55 when the dyad is White-Black.

Discussion and conclusions

The findings of this study may not focus on student preference of faculty than it is about whose epistemology they value more. We found that students maintain positive assumptions toward White faculty when given instructor options, either by profile picture or in name according to a format that one would see in a university schedule. The findings do not provide commentary on the evaluations that students provide at the end of the semester. Instead, this study specifically focuses on the perception that students may harbor for faculty on the basis of race and gender before they even step foot in the classroom, which is a new approach in examining this dynamic. Student respondents in the photo section of the survey had a strong, statistically significant preference for White faculty compared to minority faculty, and this preference became stronger when only limiting the responses to White students. Using the framework of CRT, overall student selection of White faculty by picture alone indicates assumptions of competence that is granted

for one group of faculty at a higher frequency than others (Turner and Myers 2000). In fact, given the design of the survey, students valued the knowledge and competence of White faculty over others.

The findings of the name comparison mirror the photo section of the survey with one glaring, disturbing exception and one caveat. When students were given the option of selecting a hypothetical course, faculty members with a name of Asian descent were only selected 24% of the time. This finding lends some support to Rubin (1998) who found that student perception of credibility of Asian professors is unduly discounted when compared to White faculty. And although White faculty names were substantially preferred over Hispanic names (34.61%) and Black names (44.88%), those with names of Asian descent faired substantially worse. In fact, no matter how the student responses were categorized, by gender or race, Asian names received the lowest percentage of student selection, followed by Hispanic names and Black names, illustrating again how students invest their assumptions of competence. This has direct implications on the intercentricity of race and racism hinging on subordination on the basis of race and surname (Yosso et al. 2009), illustrating another emotional obstacle that faculty of color must contend with on the pathway to tenure or promotion (Hughes and Giles 2010; Smith, Yosso, and Solorzano 2006). Additionally, students may harbor perceptions of language proficiency of Hispanics and Asians in some cases which may provide some explanation to this dynamic. According to a 2006 Pew Research Center report, those surveyed perceived immigrants from Latin American and Asian countries as lagging in their English proficiency (Kohut et al. 2006). Some aspect of this sentiment maybe reflected among our survey participants.

When considering our second hypothesis, students of color tend to be more comfortable in classroom environments where either a language or cultural background is shared (McCrosky 1998). Whereas minority students chose an African American faculty member over White faculty in the photo section of the survey, the difference appeared narrow (0.37%) and was not statistically significant different. A few possibilities may provide some explanation. One possible explanation is that some minority students may either not care about the race of professor or unconsciously subscribe themselves to the notions of White privilege, assuming that the White faculty member may be more knowledgeable and beneficial to have in class. In other words, these students may have already subscribed to the dominant ideology (Yosso 2005). A second explanation might be that the Freshmen students in the sample have not encountered many faculty of color, therefore they have not observed faculty of color as role models. However, the more plausible explanation may lie with a caveat and the manner in which minority responses were categorized in this study. Had African American responses only been considered and appropriate case numbers been present for meaningful analysis, the difference would have been more robust and statistically significant, thus presenting a limitation of the study.

Overall, this study serves as a commentary on campus climate toward faculty of color and sheds light on the potential tapestry of their experiential knowledge as academics at a PWI (Harper and Hurtado 2007; Locks et al. 2008; Rankin and Reason 2005; Smith and Johnson-Bailey 2011–2012), namely toward faculty of color. Overall, students preferred White faculty both by profile picture and listed names, providing evidence of their dominance of cultural norms and assumption of competence, using the CRT framework. The findings of this study align with previous research that find minority faculty have lower levels of job satisfaction than their White male counterparts (Allen et al. 2002).

One reason might be related to the apparent racial biases and potential for hostility toward faculty of color. Faculty of color must not only address feelings of isolation as they meander the tenure and promotion process, but also must cope with methods to overcome student perception of their competence even before syllabi are disseminated in class.

Our results show glaring racial biases that have the potential to be acted on when students select courses. The implications here can affect minority faculty in many ways, from course enrollment numbers, to biases that present themselves within the course and affect student and faculty interactions, as well as evaluations that can have substantial consequences for promotion and tenure. At the very least, this study provides further context and voice to the experiential knowledge that faculty of color accumulate as they persist in academia.

Notes on contributors

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Appendix A. Survey Experiment Description

Below you will find the survey prompts given for each of the main sections for the two survey experiments.

Attractiveness Prompt

We will be presenting a series of pictures of faculty. Please rate the PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS of each faculty member on a scale from 1–5. A "1" is *least attractive,* meaning you find the faculty member physically unattractive. A "5" is *most attractive,* meaning you find the faculty member physically attractive.

To indicate your response, type the number that corresponds to your rating using the appropriate number key.

After you select a number, the next picture will appear for you to evaluate.

Each picture will appear for 1.5 seconds, but you can record your evaluation at any point once the picture appears.

Example
(picture omitted)
1 2 3 4 5
Least attractive Most attractive
Age Prompt

We will be presenting a series of pictures of faculty. Please evaluate the age of each faculty member.

To indicate your response, type the number that corresponds to the age range listed.

A "1" indicates ages 30–44, a "2" indicates ages 45–59, and a "3" indicates ages over 60.

After you select a number, the next picture will appear for you to evaluate.

Each picture will appear for 1.5 seconds, but you can record your evaluation at any point once the picture appears.

(picture omitted)
30–44 years 45–60 years old Over 60 years old
A B C
Course Selection-Photos Prompt

We will be presenting a series of pictures of faculty members. Put one finger on the "A" key and one finger on the "B" key.

When each pair of faculty members is presented press either the "A" or the "B" key to indicate which faculty member you would prefer to take a course from.

The faculty members will have an "A" or a "B" under their picture, with the "A" faculty on the left and the "B" faculty on the right.

EACH PICTURE WILL APPEAR FOR 2 SECONDS, BUT YOU CAN RECORD YOUR EVALUATION AT ANY POINT ONCE THE PICTURE APPEARS.

Once you select "A" or "B," the next set of pictures will appear for you to evaluate.

Example
(picture omitted) (picture omitted)
A B
Course Selection-Name Prompt

We will be presenting a series of names of faculty members. Put one finger on the "A" key and one finger on the "B" key.

When each pair of faculty members is presented press either the "A" or the "B" key to indicate which faculty member you would prefer to take a course from.

The faculty members will have and "A" or a "B" under their name, with the "A" faculty on the left and the "B" faculty on the right.

EACH NAME WILL APPEAR FOR 2 SECONDS, BUT YOU CAN RECORD YOUR EVALUATION AT ANY POINT ONCE THE NAME APPEARS.

Once you select "A" or "B," the next set of names will appear for you to evaluate.

Example: White Female-Black Female Dyad
Susan Davidson Yolanda Harrison
A B

Appendix B. Names in the Name Experiment, by Group and Pair

MALE-MALE PAIRS
WHITE first and last name-ASIAN first and last name
Christopher Adkins vs. Thuc Huynh
Stephen McLaughlin vs. Tuan Hunag

WHITE first and last name-ASIAN last name, WHITE first name
Anthony Brady vs. Stven Ngo
Eric Christensen vs. Mike Liu

WHITE first and last name-HISPANIC first and last name
Robert Beck vs. Cesar Sanchez
Michael May vs. Carlos Martinez

WHITE first and last name-HISPANIC last name, WHITE first name
Kevin Warner vs. Joe Chavez
Thomas Cohen vs. Jim Gomez

WHITE first and last name-BLACK first and last name
Matthew Keller vs. Darnell Coleman
Stephen Welch vs. Darryl Williams
Gregory Hoffman vs, Terrance Joseph
Brain Meyer vs. Jamal Banks

FEMALE-FEMALE PAIRS
WHITE first and last name-ASIAN first and last name
Barbara Potter vs. Mai Choi
Cheryl Mullins vs. Ming Duong

WHITE first and last name-ASIAN last name, WHITE first name
Dawn Barker vs. Michelle Chen
Lori Lambert vs. Pamela Hoang

WHITE first and last name-HISPANIC first and last name
Brenda Erikson vs. Maria Ramirez
Elizabeth Wolfe vs. Selena Hernandez

WHITE first and last name-HISPANIC last name, WHITE first name
Tina Carpenter vs. Lisa Diaz
Carol O'Brien vs. Patricia Ruiz

WHITE first and last name-BLACK first and last name
Heather Robbins vs. Nia Haines
Diane Griffith vs. Aaliyah Singleton

Susan Davidson vs. Yolanda Harris
Janet Weaver vs. Jasmin Robinson

FIRST INITIAL ONLY
WHITE last name-ASIAN last name
K. Peterson vs. T. Wu
T. Wood vs. R. Lu
N. McCarthy vs. L. Li
L. Bishop vs. M. Vo

WHITE last name-HISPANIC last name
R. Walsh vs. R. Torres
H. Powers vs. M. Alvarez
M. Schneider vs. T. Morales
T. Weber vs. J. Lopez

WHITE last name-BLACK last name
M. Becker vs. R. Hinton
R. Sharp vs. H. Flowers
T. Higgins vs. J. Hampton
J. Larson vs. T. Houston