

# **Effects of Leader Race and Leader Mistake on Patronizing Behaviors**

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*This study examined the extent to which perceptions of leadership vary as a function of leader race. Using experimental methods, results suggest that Black managers experience patronizing discrimination that consists of differential allocation of limited, but not unlimited resources. Specifically results revealed that under conditions of mistakes, evaluations of the leadership capability for Black and White managers are similar, however, salary differences emerged. More specifically, participants assigned lower salaries to Black managers when mistakes were made. We discuss implications of these findings and directions for future research.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Workplaces are becoming more diverse. As a result, there are increasing numbers of traditionally underrepresented groups (e.g., women, racial/ethnic minorities) employed in organizations, as well as increasing numbers of diverse individuals serving in managerial roles. Though increases have been made, there is a paucity of research examining the extent to which members of underrepresented groups are evaluated in leadership positions. The research that has been conducted in this area generally focuses on examining the influence of race-based stereotypes on perceptions of leadership. The current study extends previous research by examining both the extent to which there are differences in perceptions of leadership effectiveness that vary as a function of race as well as the impact of those differential perceptions on relevant workplace outcomes.

### **Research on Discrimination**

Discrimination is defined as differential treatment given to an individual as a result of membership in a particular group (Dovidio, Brigham, Johnson, & Gaertner, 1996). Thus, discrimination refers specifically to behaviors, positive or negative, given to people based solely upon group membership. There is a growing body of research examining discrimination in the workplace (see Goldman, Gutek, Stein, & Lewis, 2006 for a review). For instance, research reveals that in general women are compensated at a rate lower than men (Blau & Kahn, 2007; Dreher, Lee, & Clerkin, 2011; Smith, Tabek, Showail, Parks, & Kleist, 2005). Similarly, Black and White job applicants are contacted for interviews at

differential rates; Black applicants are less likely to be called back than White applicants (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2003). Likewise, in certain organizational contexts, older individuals are less likely to be recommended for hire than younger job applicants (Diekmann & Hirnisey, 2007). More recent research suggests that modern forms of discrimination are comprised of both illegal displays of differential treatment (e.g., differentially hiring, terminating, compensating individuals on the basis of a protected status characteristic), but, subtle displays of incivility which are not mandated by Equal Employment Opportunity legislation (Cortina, Kabat-Farr, Leskinen, Huerta, & Magley, 2011). Specifically, individuals belonging to protected classes report experiencing greater amounts of incivility compared to individuals who are not members of a protected class. As a whole, previous research suggests that protected classes (e.g., women, racial/ethnic minorities, older workers) may experience discrimination in employment settings.

Though research on the experience of workplace discrimination is increasing, there remains a shortage of research examining bias directed towards racial and ethnic minority *leaders*. A notable exception by Knight et al. (2003) found that White subordinates were rated more negatively than Black subordinates, and Black leaders were rated more negatively than White leaders. Similarly, more recent research found that individuals occupying stereotype congruent jobs (i.e., Asian manager in an engineering job) were perceived more favorably than those occupying jobs that were perceived to be stereotypically incongruent (i.e., Asian manager in a sales position; Sy, Shore, Strauss, Shore, Tram, Whitely, & Ikeda-Muromachi, 2010). In each of these studies, the authors interpreted these results on the basis of role congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Specifically, evaluations in essence reinforced the status quo. That is, Whites have traditionally occupied and, in line with the status quo *should occupy*, positions of leadership. Conversely, Blacks have traditionally occupied and, in line with the status quo *should occupy*, subordinate roles. Likewise, stereotypes about Asians suggest that Asians *should* excel in engineering roles, and *should not* perform as well in jobs which require exceptional interpersonal skills and charisma. Chung-Herrera and Lankau (2005) reveal further support. Specifically, the research found stereotypes associated with Black and Hispanic individuals to be less compatible with the “*successful manager stereotype*” than the stereotypes associated with White or Asian individuals. In sum, previous research suggests that minority leaders experience bias. An unanswered question that remains is whether the race-based stereotyping of leaders is related to discrimination. The current study attempts to address this question. We next discuss recent gender-related research on ambivalent sexism and patronizing behaviors to provide a framework for how discrimination directed towards Black leaders might emerge in the workplace.

Research examining women in leadership positions has received considerable attention in the research literature. Though women are occupying more leadership positions today than in the past, recent research suggests that an interesting paradox emerges for working women (Sümer, 2006). For instance, research reveals that stereotypes associated with womanhood (i.e., communal traits) are incompatible with the successful manager prototype (i.e., agentic traits; Welle & Heilman, 2005). As a result, female leaders are less likely to be promoted to upper management than men who perform similarly well (Eagly, 2007; Ibarra, Carter, & Silvia, 2010). Moreover, women in leadership roles are paid less than their male counterparts (Kulich, Trojanowski, Ryan, Hasalam, & Renneboog, 2011). A number of theories have been proposed to explain why such differences emerge (e.g., stereotyping, work-family balance issues). We focus on the literature related to ambivalent sexism to understand the patronizing, discriminatory behaviors examined in this study.

Glick and Fiske (1996) posit that sexism consists of two distinct forms being characterized by both feelings of protectiveness and dependence on women (i.e., benevolent sexism) and hostility toward women (i.e., hostile sexism). Thus, women face a complex form of bias that consists of both negative and seemingly positive attitudes about gender (i.e., ambivalent sexism). In a series of studies, Biernat and colleagues reveal an interesting pattern regarding the way in which discrimination manifests for women which they attribute to the ambivalent nature of sexism. Biernat and Vescio (2002) asked participants to assume the role of a hypothetical team manager and evaluate, select, and assign men and women to positions on a baseball team. Though the hypothetical team managers often praised female team members

for their efforts, they did not assign women to strategic positions on team at the same rate of male team members with similar capability. Thus, the praise that was given to women was of a patronizing nature and was not linked to desired outcomes (i.e., highly competitive positions on the team). Further support was found in a subsequent study. In this case, women were again praised more than men, but also were allocated valued resources significantly less than men (Vescio, Gervais, Snyder, & Hoover, 2005). Specifically, individuals who stereotyped women competing in a male-oriented domain gave more praise to women (compared to men) and simultaneously assigned women to positions with less potential to win a cash prize than men. In each of these studies, women were given the *unlimited resource* of praise (i.e., giving praise is of no monetary cost to the individual delivering the compliment; an instance of benevolent sexism). However, women were not given *limited resources* (i.e., competitive positions with high earning potential; an instance of hostile sexism) to the same extent of men. This pattern of patronizing behavior reinforces the status quo by placing men in positions that have traditionally been occupied by other men (i.e., high earning positions) and placing women in positions with less ability to be competitive or visible (i.e., support roles that have traditionally been occupied by women).

These findings have a number of implications in workplace settings. These results suggest that workplace discrimination may manifest in patronizing ways. Rather than be overtly discriminatory, individuals may equally allocate unlimited resources (e.g., praise) to underrepresented groups, while differentially allocating limited resources (e.g., pay, promotion). When applied in an organizational context, such behaviors might provide some insight for the continued wage gaps in earning that exists for many individuals belonging to underrepresented groups (e.g., women, racial-ethnic minorities) as well as disproportionate representation of protected classes in high-level positions in organizations. Though individuals may be praised for their work when they perform similarly to majority group members, they may not be promoted or compensated at the same rate of their majority group counterparts.

As with women, previous research reveals that individuals hold both positive and negative attitudes about Black individuals (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; Katz & Hass, 1981). The current research extends previous research by examining patronizing behavior directed towards Black individuals in a work-related context. In line with previous research examining leadership prototypes and patronizing behaviors, we hypothesize that Blacks and White leaders will receive equivalent amounts of unlimited resources, and will simultaneously receive fewer amounts of limited resources compared to White leaders.

*Hypothesis 1a: There will be no differences in the allocation of unlimited resources, in the form of leadership effectiveness, to Black and White leaders.*

*Hypothesis 1b: Black and White leaders will receive differential amounts of limited resources. Specifically, Black leaders will receive lower salary assignment, compared to White leaders.*

There is an overall tendency for individuals to engage in behaviors which are non-prejudicial and non-discriminatory. Legislation, egalitarian beliefs, and social norms for engaging in social desirable ways all may partially explain the reduction in overt displays of prejudice and discrimination. Social desirability occurs when individuals attempt to present themselves in favorable ways (Holtgraves, 2004). Current social norms discourage the expression of overt biases, and thus lead people to adopt explicit attitudes and behaviors that are non-prejudicial and non-discriminatory. Individuals may conform to social norms primarily to avoid being seen as biased and thus are able to escape the negative outcomes associated with being labeled as racist or otherwise discriminatory (Crandall, Eshleman, & O'Brien, 2002; Plant & Devine, 1998). Societal norms are changing and now suggest that many biased behaviors are simply unfair and no longer acceptable. People respond to these norms by responding in socially desirable ways, or else they suffer repercussions that range from social to monetary in nature.

Though prejudices are reduced as a result of social norms, recent research also reveals that there are conditions under which individuals are likely to display their true prejudicial attitudes. According to the Justification-Suppression Model of Prejudice (JSM; Crandall & Eshleman, 2003), individuals are most

likely to display their true attitudes when given justifications for displaying biases (e.g., stereotype confirming information). Justifications serve as “releasing mechanism” for prejudice because an alternative explanation for behavior exists. Previous research examining the JSM in customer service settings reveals that heavyweight women who engage in stereotype confirming behavior (i.e., consuming high caloric food) experience more negative treatment from store personnel than heavyweight women who do not engage in stereotypical behavior (King et al., 2006).

The current research examines the extent to which different types of managerial mistakes serve as releasing mechanisms. In line with previous research on the JSM, we selected mistakes that were of a stereotypical nature. Individuals are not likely to display any true biases that they have about Blacks in leadership roles as such displays are illegal, offensive, and contrary to social norms. Thus, in conditions under which Black and White leaders perform equally well, there *should* be no differences in the amount of unlimited resources (i.e., evaluations) and limited resources (i.e., salary, promotion) directed toward Black and White leaders. However, in conditions under which Black and White leaders make mistakes (a potentially stereotype confirming situation), Black leaders should receive fewer unlimited resources (i.e., lower evaluations) as well as limited resources (i.e., pay, promotion) toward leaders. The types of mistakes that Black leaders make serve as a justification or releasing mechanism for prejudicial behaviors. Thus, any biases can be attributed to the mistake rather than prejudicial beliefs.

*Hypothesis 2a: Under conditions in which a mistake is made, Black leaders will receive fewer amounts of unlimited resources compared to White leaders.*

*Hypothesis 2b: Under conditions in which a mistake is made, Black leaders will receive fewer amounts of limited resources compared to White leaders.*

Plant and Devine (1998) identified an individual difference variable that potentially explains the expression of biased attitudes and beliefs. Plant and Devine (1998) suggested that people vary in the extent to which they possess internal and external motivations for responding without prejudice. Internal motivation is one’s desire to suppress prejudicial displays due to feelings of guilt and shame, and feelings that such displays are unfair in nature. Thus, individuals with an internal motivation to suppress truly want to engage in behaviors which are non-prejudicial in nature. Conversely, individuals with a high external motivation to suppress reduce displays of overt biases to mask truly prejudicial beliefs. These individuals are driven to suppress their true feelings of disdain and antipathy as a result of social norms. Previous research examining motivation to suppress has found that individuals with a high external motivation to suppress are likely to display biased beliefs when given justifications for doing so. This individual difference variable may partially explain the likelihood of displaying prejudice towards Black leaders who make mistakes. That is, individuals that are highly motivated to suppress their prejudice may be highly likely to display their biases when legitimate alternatives are present. Thus, rather than giving a lower evaluations as a result of category membership (i.e., being Black), individuals can attribute their behavior to the individual’s poor performance (i.e., mistakes).

We hypothesized that there would be no differences on the allocation of unlimited and limited resources when no mistakes were made. Thus we predicted that Blacks and Whites will receive similar ratings of leadership quality and resources when no mistakes are made. However, we do anticipate differences in the ratings of leadership quality and resource allocation when Blacks make stereotypical mistakes. Previous research has found that there are widely held beliefs about Blacks (e.g., lazy, aggressive, unintelligent). Thus, stereotype confirming information (the presence of mistakes) should justify the expression of prejudice (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003). Therefore, we expected that the motivation to respond without prejudice would account for the effect of leader race and mistake (i.e., the presence of mistakes) on unlimited resources (i.e., leader evaluations) and limited resources (i.e., salary assignment).

*Hypothesis 3: Motivation to respond without prejudice accounts for the relation between leader race and the allocation of limited and unlimited resources under conditions in which a mistake is made.*

## **Method**

### *Participants*

A total of 425 adults were asked to participate in the study. Forty three percent of participants were women and 17.6% of the sample did not report their gender. Thirty-eight percent of the sample reported being non-White. Participants were diverse with respect to their occupation with 44% of the sample reporting current enrollment in college, 44% reported full-time professional employment, 7.5% of the sample worked in retail establishments, 4.2% in the service sector, and 6.5% of respondents did not specify their occupation.

### *Design and Procedure*

A 2 (Leader Race: White or Black) x 5 (Leader Mistake: no mistake, general mistake, intelligence mistake, aggressive mistake, and lazy mistake) full factorial design was used to explore the effect of leader race and leader mistake on leader evaluations. We focused on male managers in the experimental materials to control for gender differences of perceptions of leadership (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly, Wood, & Diekmann, 2000).

We used a research approach in which undergraduate research assistants handout surveys to collect data as a recruiting technique (e.g., King, Madera, Mendoza, Hebl, & Knight, 2006; King, Shapiro, Hebl, Singletary, & Turner, 2006; Payne & Webber, 2006). The research assistants were provided with clear verbal and written directions on how and who to recruit, and were instructed to find twenty adults willing to participate in the study. Once the research assistants identified a willing participant, the individual was given an experimental packet. The packet included an envelope, instructions, a hypothetical review of a manager that manipulated the leader's race and the type of mistake, and a questionnaire that included the dependent measures.

Participants were told that they were participating in a study that "examines perceptions of managers based on employee evaluations," and that they were going to read a manager's evaluation and answer questions about the manager. First, previous research suggests an individual's name provides indirect evidence about one's race/ethnicity or sex (Bertrand, & Mullainathan, 2003; King et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2005). Thus, we used a methodology similar to that used in previous research (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2003; King et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2005). Specifically, participants examined a manager's resume, which manipulated the race of the manager by using a stereotypical Black or White name for the manager. As in previous research, the names were first pre-tested to ensure the names would be perceived as Black or White (King et al., 2006).

Second, participants read an evaluation of the manager that included a mistake manipulation. We developed a list of mistakes based upon previous research. Specifically, Devine and Elliot (1995) revealed that there continue to be number of widely held stereotypes about Black individuals (e.g., unintelligent, aggressive, lazy, athletic, violent, poor). In the current study, we included stereotypes that were related to employment and specifically focused on stereotypes involving intelligence, aggression, and work ethic. As a result, we developed five mistake manipulations to address the commonly held stereotypes and other common workplace issues. The manipulations consisted of reading an evaluation specifying that the manager: 1) made no mistakes (control condition); 2) made unspecified mistakes (general mistake condition, with no specifics); 3) made managerial mistakes reflecting that the manager was not very bright (i.e., intelligence mistake); 4) was too hostile and aggressive with coworkers and subordinates (i.e., aggressive mistake); or 5) did not finish reports on time, was late to meetings, and took too many days off from work (i.e., lazy mistake).

Third, participants evaluated the manager by completing a questionnaire – an unlimited resource measure, which was followed by a question that asked participants to either increase or decrease the salary of the manager – a limited resource measure. Fourth, participants were asked a series of

demographic questions, which were followed by Plant and Devine's (1998) motivation to respond without prejudice (MRP). This was administered after the evaluation of the leader so as not to reveal what was being studied and potentially skew the results through priming effects. Fifth, participants completed manipulation checks. Sixth and last, participants returned the questionnaire in a sealed envelope to the research assistant who then returned the sealed questionnaire to the experimenters.

## Measures

### *Leader Evaluation*

To assess the first dependent variable, the participants' evaluation of the leader, we constructed an unlimited resource measure intended to evaluate the leader using a Likert-type 7-point scale. A Principal Components Factor Analysis with Varimax rotation revealed four meaningful factors. These factors included "Leader Legitimacy" (eigenvalue = 8.17; 43.08% of variance), "Leader Intelligence," (eigenvalue = 3.04; 16% of variance), "Leader Aggressiveness," (eigenvalue = 1.09; 5.8% of variance), and "Leader Agreeableness" (eigenvalue = 1.06; 5.5% of variance). All item loadings were greater than .65. Items were averaged within each factor to create variables for analyses. The internal consistency reliabilities for the four factors were acceptable: Leader Legitimacy ( $\alpha = .93$ ), Leader Intelligence ( $\alpha = .83$ ), Leader Aggressiveness ( $\alpha = .83$ ), and Leader Agreeableness ( $\alpha = .85$ ).

### *Assigned Salary*

To assess the second dependent variable, a limited resource measure, participants were asked to increase or decrease the salary of the manager based on the manipulated evaluation. They were asked to put a negative (-) or positive (+) sign in front of the salary to indicate the decrease or increase. The average modified salary was a decrease of \$51.12 ( $SD = 5,720.76$ ); salary decreases ranged from \$100 to \$30,000, and salary increases ranged from \$115 to \$35,000.

### *Motivation to Respond Without Prejudice*

Participants completed the motivation to respond without prejudice (MRP) scale (Plant and Devine, 1998), which has both an internal and external motivational factors. An example of an item testing for internal motivation is: "Being non-prejudiced towards Black people is important to my self-concept." For external motivation, a sample item is: "I attempt to appear non-prejudiced towards Black people in order to avoid disapproval from others." The internal consistency reliabilities for both factors were acceptable: Internal Motivation ( $\alpha = .81$ ) and External Motivation ( $\alpha = .84$ ).

### *Manipulation Checks*

We used open items asking participants to recall the manager's name, gender, and race. Responses were coded as either correct, scored as 1, or wrong, scored as 0. Participants that did not provide the correct responses were not used in the analyses.

## RESULTS

To test our hypotheses, we conducted a 2 (Leader Race: White or Black) x 5 (Leader Mistake: no mistake, general mistake, intelligence mistake, aggressive mistake, and lazy mistake) MANOVA with leader legitimacy, leader intelligence, leader aggressiveness, leader agreeableness, and assigned salary as the dependent variables. The results showed non-significant main effects of leader race on the measures of unlimited resources: leader legitimacy,  $F(1, 401) = .02, p > .05, \eta^2 = .001$ , leader intelligence,  $F(1, 401) = .03, p > .05, \eta^2 = .001$ , leader aggressiveness,  $F(1, 401) = .24, p > .05, \eta^2 = .001$ , and leader agreeableness,  $F(1, 401) = 1.32, p > .05, \eta^2 = .003$ . The results also showed a non-significant effect for the measure of limited resources (i.e., assigned salary):  $F(1, 401) = .93, p > .05, \eta^2 = .002$ . Thus, we found support for hypothesis 1a (i.e., Black and White leaders will receive equivalent amounts of unlimited

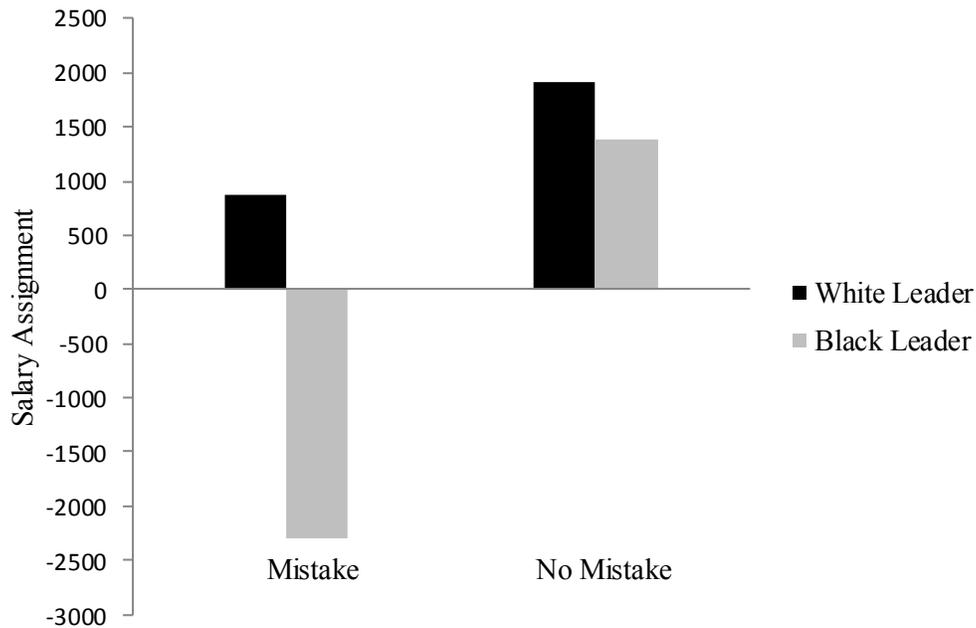
resources), but not for hypothesis 1b (i.e., Black leaders will receive significantly fewer amounts of limited resources compared to their White counterparts).

The results showed significant main effects of leader mistakes on the dependent measures: leader legitimacy,  $F(4, 401) = 22.2, p < .05, \eta^2 = .18$ , leader intelligence,  $F(4, 401) = 19.56, p < .01, \eta^2 = .16$ , leader aggressiveness,  $F(4, 401) = 43.12, p < .05, \eta^2 = .36$ , leader agreeableness,  $F(4, 401) = 16.63, p < .05, \eta^2 = .14$ , and assigned salary  $F(4, 401) = 13.33, p < .05, \eta^2 = .12$ .

To examine the hypotheses that under conditions in which a mistake is made, Black leaders will receive fewer amounts of unlimited resources (H2a) and limited resources (H2b) compared to White leaders, we examined the interaction effect between leader race and leader mistake on the dependent variables. The results showed non-significant interaction effects between leader race and leader mistake for the non-zero-sum measures: leader legitimacy,  $F(4, 401) = 1.04, p > .05, \eta^2 = .01$ , leader intelligence,  $F(4, 401) = 1.38, p > .05, \eta^2 = .01$ , leader aggressiveness,  $F(4, 401) = .51, p > .05, \eta^2 = .01$ , and leader agreeableness,  $F(4, 401) = .09, p > .05, \eta^2 = .001$ .

The results, however, showed a significant interaction effect for limited resources:  $F(4, 401) = 2.44, p < .05, \eta^2 = .024$ . More specifically, simple effect analyses revealed that the significant difference between the White ( $M = \$875, SD = \$2,004$ ) and Black ( $M = -\$2,356, SD = \$501$ ) managers occurred in the aggressive mistake,  $t(45) = 3.38, p < .05$ , see Figure 1.

**FIGURE 1**  
**THE INTERACTION EFFECT OF LEADER RACE AND LEADER MISTAKE ON SALARY ASSIGNMENT**



Although not significant, a similar trend to decrease the salary of the Black manager more than the White manager occurred with the other mistake conditions: no mistake,  $M_{White} = \$1,904$  and  $M_{Black} = \$1,501$ , general mistake,  $M_{White} = \$1,389$  and  $M_{Black} = \$1,163$ , and intelligence mistake,  $M_{White} = -\$1,010$  and  $M_{Black} = -\$2,906$ . One exception occurred in the lazy mistake condition in which White managers were allocated fewer resources than Black managers,  $M_{White} = -\$4,708$  and  $M_{Black} = -\$2,180$ . Thus, the results supported hypothesis 2b, but not hypothesis 2a. For our final analyses we conducted an ANCOVA

with leader race and leader mistake as the independent variable, unlimited resources (i.e., leader evaluations: leader legitimacy, leader intelligence, leader aggressiveness, and leader agreeableness) and limited resources (i.e., assigned salary) as the dependent variables, and the motivation to suppress measures as the covariates. The results showed that motivation to suppress decreased the significant interaction between leader race and leader mistake on salary assignment to non-significant:  $F(1, 401) = .053, p > .05, \eta^2 = .001$ . Thus, motivation to suppress prejudice accounted for the relation between leader race and leader mistake on limited resources (i.e., salary assignment), partially supporting hypothesis 3. No other effects changed as a function of controlling participants' motivation to suppress prejudice.

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current research was to examine the effects of leader race and leader mistake on workplace outcomes. Specifically, we examined whether Black leaders experienced patronizing discrimination. In line with the literature on patronizing behavior (Biernat & Vescio, 2002; Vescio et al., 2005), we expected and found support for the equivalent distribution of unlimited resources given to Black and White leaders, which in the current study was operationalized as subjective evaluations of hypothetical leaders. Although we expected that Black leaders would receive significantly fewer amounts of limited resources, operationalized as salary assignment) compared to their White counterparts, we did not find support for this hypothesis. Thus, the results partially supported previous research on patronizing discrimination.

The results, however, reveal an interesting pattern when examining the interaction between leader race and leader mistake. Similar to conditions in which no mistake was made, there were no significant differences in the allocation of unlimited resources to Black and White leaders who made mistakes. That is, leaders who made mistakes were perceived as having the same amount of leadership capability regardless of race. Conversely, there was a significant difference in the amount of limited resources given to Black and White leaders who made mistakes. Specifically, the results revealed that participants tended to decrease the salaries of Black managers more than the salaries of the White managers when mistakes were made. Additional analyses revealed that the results were influenced by one's motivation to suppress prejudice. Thus, those who suppress bias because of external pressures, were most likely to exhibit their bias when a justification was present. Given the heightened sensitivity to possible discrimination in today's workplace, norms regarding the appropriateness of behavior directed toward individuals in protected classes are likely to be particularly salient. That is, individuals are likely to be particularly careful when making judgments about employees. However, when justifications (e.g., mistakes) are present, minorities may receive fewer limited resources. Thus, the current study suggests that under conditions of mistakes, Black and White managers receive equivalent evaluations of their leadership capability, but are not given the same salary assignment. This finding is in line with previous research on patronizing behaviors as well as on shifting standards for resource allocation (Biernat et al., 2009). In sum, the results suggest that when individuals use their own discretion when determining how to distribute limited resources (e.g., pay raises), individuals may create disparities when justifications (e.g., mistakes) are present.

### *Theoretical Contributions*

The overall findings are in fact in line with the JSM (Crandall & Eshleman, 2002). Specifically, when no mistake is made, individuals are unlikely to discriminate as there is no alternative explanation for behavior. Thus, in these situations, there were no differences in the allocation of unlimited and limited resources. On the other hand, when mistakes are made individuals may attribute their decision to provide fewer limited resources to an individual's poor performance and not to their own bias. In line with the JSM, when alternative explanations for behavior are present discrimination is likely occur. For Black managers, the differential treatment that they receive is of a patronizing nature. Specifically, when mistakes are made Black managers receive leadership evaluations (i.e., an unlimited resource) that are

equivalent to White managers; however, they simultaneously receive less pay (i.e., a limited resource) than their White counterparts who also make mistakes.

The current research suggests that discrimination is complex. As with women, Black leaders experience discrimination that is patronizing in nature. Specifically, both women and Black leaders are given equivalent or sometimes greater amounts of unlimited resources (e.g., praise, leadership evaluations) but simultaneously receive fewer amounts of limited resources (e.g., selection for competitive/high earning positions, salary assignment). In previous research examining patronizing behaviors directed towards women, women received fewer amounts of limited resources compared to men. It is important to note that previous research has not examined the impact of mistakes on manifestations of patronizing behavior directed towards women. However, based upon previous research we predicted that patronizing behavior directed towards Black managers would emerge across all conditions, even when mistakes were not present. Contrary to results from previous studies involving women, the patronizing behavior for Black leaders emerged only under certain conditions, specifically, when an incumbent makes mistakes. That is, when no mistakes were made, Black and White managers received equivalent ratings of leadership capability as well as similar amounts of salary assignment. Conversely, when mistakes were made, Black managers received similar ratings of leadership capability but were allocated less money than White managers. Contrary to previous research, the patronizing discrimination experienced by Black managers appears to be influenced by contextual information. On the other hand, the patronizing discrimination directed towards women appears to be less influenced by contextual information. In sum, results reveal that patronizing behaviors exhibited toward minority leaders shares both similarities with (i.e., emerges in a patronizing fashion) and differences (i.e., contextually driven) from that experienced by women.

#### *Practical Implications*

Discrimination continues to be an issue for employed individuals. In 2011, there were a total of 99,947 charges of discrimination with approximately 35% of those claims due to race (EEOC, 2012). Previous research suggests that employment discrimination is complex. The current study reveals that Black managers experience patronizing discrimination. Specifically, when mistakes are made Black managers receive leadership evaluations (i.e., an unlimited resource) that are equivalent to White managers; however, they simultaneously receive less pay (i.e., a limited resource) than their White counterparts who also make mistakes. Thus, patronizing forms of discrimination may partially explain the pay disparity that exists between Black and White managers.

Because our results suggest that patronizing discrimination occurs in employment settings, organizations should take steps to prevent the occurrence of this bias. For instance, rather than allowing an evaluator to determine an incumbent's raise or salary, another process might be utilized to make such decisions. Such a process might involve the use of technology to determine pay based upon an individual's evaluations, or when purchasing software is not feasible, removing identifying information so that inferences about an individual's background do not influence subsequent recommendations about pay.

#### *Limitations and Future Research*

As with most research there are important limitations. First, though the current research was not conducted in an actual organization, it does provide a first step at examining how patronizing behaviors manifest in organizations. Future research might examine the phenomena in actual organizations to determine how patronizing behaviors naturally emerge. Such instances of patronizing discrimination may be less likely to occur in organizations with highly developed Human Resource practices. For instance, organizations that invest significant capital in training may be less susceptible to such biases. Similarly, there may be a variety of other ways that patronizing behavior is exhibited. For instance, rather than differentially allocate raises, patronizing discrimination might involve differentially recommending individuals for promotion, placing individuals into visible positions, or a may manifest in a variety of other organizationally relevant ways. To more fully understand patronizing discrimination, future

research should examine the extent to which patronizing behavior emerges in other ways. In sum, future research is needed to examine the extent to which such behaviors actually emerge in organizations and to assess whether there are organizational characteristics which moderate the occurrence.

Second, a possible limitation of the results is our lack of effect hypothesis (i.e., Black and White leaders will receive equivalent amounts of unlimited resources). Although it is relatively not acceptable to develop null hypotheses, there are researchers who believe that there should be a more comprehensive understanding of “when a phenomenon occurs and when it does not” (Cortina & Folger, 1998, p. 335). In addition, our manipulations, procedure, and findings were in line with valid past research (i.e., Biernat & Vescio, 2002; Vescio et al., 2005). As a result, the current research provides insight into situations under which discrimination (in the form of patronizing behaviors) is likely to occur and when it is not. Future research might examine if leader race and leader mistake influence other measures of unlimited and limited resources, such as the allocation of praises (unlimited resource) and promotions (limited resource).

Third, the current study focused on examining the impact of race on patronizing discrimination. Thus, it is unclear whether the results are applicable for other protected classes. Future research should examine whether patronizing discrimination is directed toward other marginalized groups (e.g., older workers, disabled workers, working mothers). In addition, given that individuals may belong to multiple protected groups, future research is needed to examine the extent to which patronizing behaviors manifests for individuals belonging to multiple protected groups. It is possible that different patterns will emerge for different groups, and future research is needed to explore these patterns.

Fourth, organizations should take steps to reduce the occurrence of patronizing discrimination. The current study sought to understand patronizing discrimination, but did not examine mechanisms for reducing such displays. It is important for future research to examine a variety of ways to reduce such displays. As mentioned previously, one way to remediate the occurrence might consist of removing identifying information. Thus, future research might examine whether removing names or references to gender, and then making decisions such as assigning salary reduces patronizing discrimination. In sum, future research is needed to examine the advantages and disadvantages as well as the overall effectiveness of a variety of remediation strategies.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research suggests that racial discrimination, in general, as well as, racial discrimination involving Black leaders in particular, is complicated. While Black and White managers are given similar leader evaluations (i.e., perceptions of leadership legitimacy, favorability, leadership ability; an unlimited resource) regardless of whether or not mistakes are made, the presence of mistakes leads to differential allocation of limited resources that vary as a function of race. Furthermore, the level of prejudice accounts for the relation between leader race and leader mistake on limited resources. In sum, results suggest that, in some contexts, Black leaders experience differential treatment that is characterized by a pattern of patronizing, discriminatory behaviors. What these results suggest for organizations is that it is important to monitor how resources, such as promotions, are allocated among employees to assure that distributions are not biased. It is important to note that although the current study focused on salary promotions as a resource, other resources such as training opportunities, work assignments, and management promotions should also be monitored as these may be limited resources. Some organizations have formal systems to monitor its compliance with civil rights laws to ensure non-discriminatory promotions into management (Bell, Connerley, & Cocchiara, 2009). By providing fair and equal access to resources, organizations will be able to circumvent the occurrence of patronizing discrimination.

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