




STEREOTYPE THREAT TRIGGERED BY DATA FOCUSED ASSESSMENTS FOR MARKETING STUDENTS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This research contributes to the growing literature on inclusive pedagogy toward creating a psychologically safe environment for learning. The authors build on the prior multi-disciplinary literature suggesting that stereotype threat exists in assessment tasks. An instrument is designed and implemented to investigate whether the presence of gendered demographic data in a marketing assessment task will trigger stereotype threat, and in turn, affect the performance of female-identifying students. While exploratory in nature, the findings suggest that gendered data used for assessment purposes may negatively impact the performance of both female- and male-identifying marketing students, highlighting the importance of continuing conversations about biases in traditional marketing pedagogy.

Introduction

Recent events, such as the socially intensified fight for racial justice, social media-based movements to demand improvements in workplace safety for women, and the disruption of the traditional work environment brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic have reenergized motivation for equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) efforts. Although the pandemic temporarily halted EDI efforts in workplaces, businesses are once again examining the extent to which biases are present in the organizational culture, policies, and practices and how these may be affecting workers negatively (Dolan, Hunt, Prince, & Sancier-Sultan, 2020). Indeed, 97% of employers state that their organizations have introduced new inclusive measures in the past year (Schwantes, 2021).

The increasing emphasis on and continual importance of inclusive work environments has not gone unnoticed by marketing educators. Yet, we struggle with how to investigate and incorporate EDI into our own teaching and professional environments, especially with regards to those identity areas in which we hold privilege. Certainly, there are avenues similar to those of all organizations like examining hiring practices in an effort to increase diversity and increasing EDI development for faculty and staff. In addition, educators must consider EDI perspectives related to student admission and retention metrics and policies; faculty tenure, promotion, and retention policies; existing curriculum and

development of new curriculum to prepare students for diverse work environments; existing EDI research and its potential to cultivate new knowledge; and current pedagogical practices, whether that be efforts to develop classroom culture, course organization and materials, teaching practices or style, or assessments of learning.

Although the results and direct implications of the current research are discussed at the end of this paper, the importance of beginning a conversation about unintended biases in traditional marketing pedagogy should be noted at the onset. It is the scholarship of teaching and learning that facilitates improvement in pedagogical practice, positively influencing future generations of business practitioners and policy makers.

In this research, a common tool of both structured and unstructured problem solving in marketing education, demographic data, is examined for its potential harm to students within a common cultural context of marginalization of female-identifying individuals in business successes. While marketing, and business programs more generally, achieved gender equality in student composition earlier than, for example, the physical sciences (e.g., Stern & Kellogg, 1987), there is continuing evidence that the opportunities and outcomes of a marketing education for students with marginalized identities are beneath those with more privileged identities (Jones, 2016; Rogers, 2020). This suggests obstacles and challenges related to social justice still exist in the academic

environment (Nasif, 2022). Here, we investigate if the tacit cultural belief that female-identifying individuals achieve less success in business will trigger stereotype threat in students who are reminded of their female identity through the explicit use of gender identity in market research data presented for analysis in an assessment.

As demands for accountability in education have grown, assessment practices have become more common, and even required, at some universities. For example, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), one of the premier nongovernmental accrediting agencies, integrated assurance of learning (AoL) into its standards more than thirty years ago (Gray, Smart, & Bennett, 2017). Today, assessment and assurance of learning efforts have been widely adopted by most AACSB-accredited colleges of business, and many have relatively mature processes in place, using either standardized assessments such as the Education Testing Service (ETS) Major Field Test in Business or locally designed assessments. However, the validity of such assessments is often challenged, frequently due to concerns regarding bias against students of color, female identifying students, and students of relatively lower socio-economic status (e.g., Elsesser, 2019). Given the importance placed on assessment in the academic environment, an assessment task was chosen as the research instrument for this study.

Theoretical Background

Stereotypes are widely held beliefs about particular traits associated with groups of people. They tend to be oversimplified views that negatively impact members of the target groups. There is no shortage in the academic and popular press media of stereotypes being imposed on others (e.g., with an emphasis on the business literature, Beatty, Givan, Franke, & Reynolds, 2015; Bennett, Hill, & Oleksiuk, 2013; Fiske & Lee, 2008; Fournier, Cheron, Tanner, Bakinda, & Wise, 2014; Gorn, Yuwei, & J. Johar, 2008). One phenomenon involves individuals internalizing stereotypes of groups to which they perceptibly belong (e.g., Bohannon, 2010, 2014; Guiso, Monte, Sapienza, & Zingales, 2008; Kinias & Sim, 2016; Reuben, Sapienza, & Zingales, 2014). Stereotype threat is a “risk of confirming, as self-characteristic, a negative stereotype about one’s group” (Steele & Aronson, 1995, p. 797). In other words, individuals who have succumbed to a stereotype threat have become aware of a particular stereotype of their group and, in turn, performs in a way that reduces their performance as a result of consciously or subconsciously internalizing that stereotype.

Although the theory of stereotype threat has been applied to some non-educational contexts, such as purchase intentions (Lee, Kim, & Vohs, 2011), illness symptoms (Li, Gao, Yu, Zhu, & Cao, 2017), and performance in the elderly (Swift, Abrams, & Marques, 2012), the most pervasive application of the theory is in regard to educational performance. For example, numerous studies have examined stereotype threat in the context of women and Black American students (e.g., Begley, 2000; Bohannon, 2014; Froehlich, Martiny, Deaux, Goetz, & Mok, 2016; McIntyre, Paulson, Taylor, Morin, & Lord, 2011; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Van Loo, Boucher, Rydell, & Rydell, 2013). Prior research has found that the wording and context of assessments alone can inhibit student performance (e.g., Zwick, 2002). For instance, Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) questions assessing geometry learning that use a figure of a hypothetical swimming pool or a football field may automatically favor wealthier students or male identifying students, respectively, who were socially constructed across their lives to find it easier to conceptualize these figurative examples (Popham, 2012).

From a marketing perspective, demographic data such as gender, ethnic identity, income, and religion, among many others, have the potential to be significant predictors of consumer behavior. Thus, marketing research studies and case analyses used for student assessment purposes often segment data by demographics, which could unconsciously trigger stereotype threat to the detriment of marginalized students’ performance on assessment tasks. The purpose of this study, then, is to examine whether the inclusion of demographic data in a marketing assessment task triggers stereotype threat, compromising the performance of female-identifying students relative to their male-identifying peers.

As mentioned previously, the literature on stereotype threat suggests that when members of a marginalized group are aware of a particular stereotype associated with their group, performance will be impacted (negatively or positively depending on the direction of the stereotype) as a result of consciously or subconsciously internalizing that stereotype. Even as policies in the United States and globally have sought to create more inclusive work and consumption environments, women and racial minorities continue to underperform in certain academic disciplines and remain underrepresented in the highest earning occupations (e.g., Jones, 2016; Rogers, 2020; Schmader & Hall, 2014). Stereotype threat has commonly been investigated in the mathematics domain given the long-standing belief that women are less proficient in mathematical and spatial abilities (e.g., Bohannon, 2014; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974), especially in

cultures where there is gender inequality in other domains (Guiso et al., 2008). The finding that stereotype threat negatively impacts female performance on mathematical tasks has been replicated numerous times (e.g., Ambady, Paik, Steele, Owen-Smith, & Mitchell, 2004; Ambady, Shih, Kim, & Pittinsky, 2001; Cadinu, Maass, Frigerio, Impagliazzo, & Latinotti, 2003; Cadinu, Maass, Rosabianca, & Kiesner, 2005; Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999; Steinberg, Okun, & Aiken, 2012), including in the context of business (Kantor, 2013; Kinias & Sim, 2016). Thus, it is expected that in a marketing context, data showing lower achievement in annual sales revenue and commission rate for female sales representatives will trigger stereotype threat.

Hypothesis 1: The inclusion of demographic data suggesting weaker performance by female sales representatives will implicitly trigger stereotype threat, resulting in female participants performing more poorly on subsequent tasks, than female participants not exposed to gendered data.

If stereotype threat is triggered, a follow-up question is whether the training and familiarity working with demographic data common in marketing coursework, has a mitigating influence on stereotype threat. Habituation, a concept recognized by behavioral psychologists and biologists more than fifty years ago, is a decrease in perception and responsiveness that develops with repeated exposure to a stimulus (e.g., Groves & Thompson, 1970; Thompson & Spencer, 1966). Given the frequency with which marketing students are exposed to demographic data in course work and discussions related to segmenting, targeting, and positioning goods, services, and ideas, it is plausible that they have habituated to the presence of demographic data (Schibrowsky, Peltier, & Collins, 1999) and it is therefore less likely to trigger stereotype threat.

Hypothesis 2: Substantial prior use of demographic data to make marketing decisions typical of marketing coursework will mitigate stereotype threat.

Research Method

This study was designed to examine if the presence of gendered data showing weaker performance by business women would trigger stereotype threat in students with varying levels of marketing training. To investigate this, a sales management case similar to what might be assigned in marketing classes was created. The sales data showing stronger or weaker performance provided the researchers the opportunity to create an implicit

stereotype cue when gender of the sales representative was known.

Sample, Stimuli, and Procedure

A stratified sample of students in classes at varying levels of marketing education were asked to participate in the study in exchange for extra credit. Given that the assessment task was administered during class time, the response rate was 96%, with all segments exceeding a 90% response. The high response rate across all segments helps to minimize self-selection bias concerns.

The student samples were from one regional public university in the United States, including a population of approximately 9,500 undergraduate students, 1,000 graduate students, and 500 full-time faculty. Eighty percent of the students were residents of the state in which the university is located, and more than 90% identified in the majority racial category ("white"). In total, the sample selected from this population contained 130 students, approximately 50.8% male and 49.2% female, who participated in the study, with 67 students (51.5%) in the gendered treatment group and 63 (48.5%) in the control group. Although students were given the option to do so, no participants in the sample identified in a gender category that was not either female or male. In terms of exposure to marketing training, 40 students (30.8% of the sample) were majoring in modern languages and had no prior marketing training; 58 students (44.6% of the sample) were enrolled in the introductory marketing principles course and had low-level marketing training; and 32 students (24.6% of the sample) were enrolled in an advanced marketing course, many in their final semester before graduation, and had high-level marketing training.

There were two versions of the sales management case and research participants were randomly assigned to either the gendered treatment group or the control group. The only difference between the gendered treatment and the control was the inclusion of gender data, as shown in Figure 1. In the control treatment, no gender information was provided. The sales representatives were identified by a number (e.g., employee 1, employee 2). In the gendered treatment, the gender of each sales representative was provided, and the sales representatives were assigned either traditionally male or traditionally female sounding names, in the context of the predominantly western European ancestry of the student population that comprised an overwhelming majority of the sample. When gender data was provided, lower achievement in annual revenue and commission rate by female-named sales representatives can be ascertained (Steinberg et al., 2012), providing an implicit

Extra Credit
 Instructions: You can receive up to 6% extra on this exam by completing this extra credit. These results will be used anonymously for independent research purposes. All six parts must be completed to receive any extra credit.

You may **NOT** use a calculator or any other electronic device to complete this. Please use the attached sheet as scratch paper for calculations.

Problem
 The Dallas regional office of Apex Corp is trying to decide how to allocate an aggregate sum of \$50,000 in year-end bonuses among its first-year sales staff. The following is a list of its sales staff, the sales they generated for Apex Corp, and other potentially relevant data.

Employee	Sex	Years at Apex Corp	2017 Sales Revenue	Trainings Attended	Negotiated Commission Rate
1 Abigail	F	1	\$200,000	4	15%
2 Adrian	M	1	\$800,000	2	25%
3 Benjamin	M	1	\$440,000	2	25%
4 Emma	F	1	\$350,000	3	20%
5 James	M	1	\$500,000	1	20%
6 Liam	M	1	\$860,000	1	25%
7 Noah	M	1	\$600,000	1	15%
8 Olivia	F	1	\$500,000	5	10%
9 Sophia	F	1	\$200,000	2	10%
10 William	M	1	\$550,000	1	20%

(1) One consideration to take into account in allocating the bonuses is the **return on investment (ROI)** of each employee, in terms of professional development training costs and net sales revenue generated. On average, each training trip costs Apex about \$5,000 per employee, not including the opportunity cost of missed sales calls. Calculate the ROI of each employee and write it in the blank spaces below. [+2 points]

- Abigail: \$ _____
- Adrian: \$ _____
- Benjamin: \$ _____
- Emma: \$ _____
- James: \$ _____
- Liam: \$ _____
- Noah: \$ _____
- Olivia: \$ _____
- Sophia: \$ _____
- William: \$ _____

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Employee	Years at Apex Corp	2017 Sales Revenue	Trainings Attended	Negotiated Commission Rate
Employee 01	1	\$200,000	4	15%
Employee 02	1	\$800,000	2	25%
Employee 03	1	\$440,000	2	25%
Employee 04	1	\$350,000	3	20%
Employee 05	1	\$500,000	1	20%
Employee 06	1	\$860,000	1	25%
Employee 07	1	\$600,000	1	15%
Employee 08	1	\$500,000	5	10%
Employee 09	1	\$200,000	2	10%
Employee 10	1	\$550,000	1	20%

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- Employee 01: \$ _____
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- Employee 04: \$ _____
- Employee 05: \$ _____
- Employee 06: \$ _____
- Employee 07: \$ _____
- Employee 08: \$ _____
- Employee 09: \$ _____
- Employee 10: \$ _____

Figure 1. Stimuli: gendered versus control group.

stereotype cue. In prior stereotype threat research, cues designed to trigger or prime stereotype threat are often made explicit with the researcher or task administrator stating before the task commences that, for example, men tend to perform better than women on this task. In this study, the stereotype cue is not explicitly stated, but rather is implied by the sales data presented in the case.

In hopes of minimizing participant's internalization of socially and personally harmful stereotypes, research participants were debriefed after the experiment to inform them that the data was fictional.

Experimental Design, Measurement, and Analysis

The experimental design is a 2 (participant gender identity: male or female) \times 3 (participant marketing educational level: none, low, high) \times 2 (gender data in assessment: present, absent) between-subjects design (Cohen, 1988).

After reviewing the sales data presented in the case, students were asked to calculate three metrics for each of ten sales representatives, without the assistance of a calculator or computer. The three metrics are sales revenue generated by each sales representative, after accounting for commission; return on investment in sales training based on gross sales revenue generated by each sales representative; return on investment in

sales training based on revenue generated after accounting for commission. There were 30 possible calculations; therefore, correct scores could range from 0 to 30.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test for significant differences in mean number of correct calculations by treatment (gendered treatment versus control group), gender, and marketing data exposure (measured by students' completion of marketing courses) to identify any effects of a gendered stereotype threat from sales data suggesting weaker sales performance by female sales representatives.

Results

Students were asked to calculate three metrics for each of ten sales representatives, resulting in thirty possible correct calculations. The mean number of correct calculations across all subjects in this sample was 14.26, with a standard deviation of 9.28. The mean number of correct responses, along with standard deviation and sample size, is shown in Table 1.

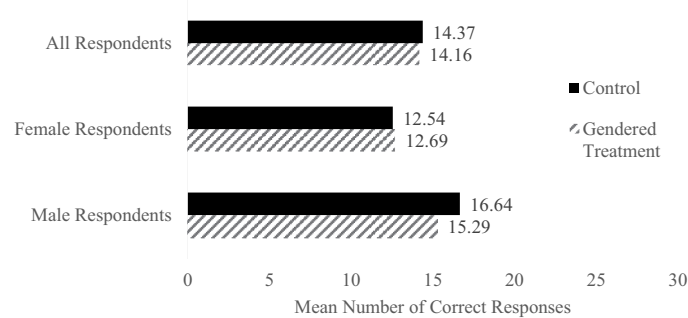
Three-way ANOVA (treatment \times gender \times marketing training level) is used to test hypotheses. Hypothesis 1 posits that the inclusion of (fictional) data showing weaker sales performance by female sales representatives would trigger stereotype threat, resulting in female participants in the gendered treatment group performing more poorly on subsequent tasks. As shown in Table 2

Table 1. Mean number of correct responses by treatment, marketing training, and gender.

	Gendered Treatment			Control Group			Total		
	Mean	Std Dev	n	Mean	Std Dev	n	Mean	Std Dev	n
No MKT Training	14.68	9.59	22	13.56	9.65	18	14.18	9.51	40
Men	17.83	10.09	6	8.00	11.31	2	15.38	10.60	8
Women	13.50	9.45	16	14.25	9.62	16	13.88	9.39	32
Low MKT Training	15.14	8.30	29	12.97	10.18	29	14.05	9.27	58
Men	15.30	9.14	23	14.89	10.86	18	15.12	9.81	41
Women	14.50	4.14	6	9.82	8.47	11	11.47	7.45	17
High MKT Training	11.69	8.60	16	17.81	9.15	16	14.75	9.27	32
Men	13.56	9.26	9	22.75	7.78	8	17.88	9.58	17
Women	9.29	7.65	7	12.88	7.94	8	11.20	7.75	15
Total Men	15.29	9.15	38	16.64	10.65	28	15.86	9.76	66
Total Women	12.69	8.21	29	12.54	8.87	35	12.61	8.51	64
Total Sample	14.16	8.79	67	14.37	9.84	63	14.26	9.28	130

Table 2. Three-way analysis of variance: treatment \times gender \times marketing education level.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Treatment	1.18	1	1.18	0.01	0.91
Gender	198.35	1	198.35	2.36	0.13
Education	24.76	2	12.38	0.15	0.86
Gender \times Treatment	0.31	1	0.31	0.01	0.95
Treatment \times Education	501.33	2	250.66	2.98	0.05
Gender \times Education	205.26	2	102.63	1.22	0.30
Treatment \times Gender \times Education	239.26	2	119.63	1.42	0.25

**Figure 2.** Mean number of correct responses by treatment and gender.

and Figure 2, the stimuli presented did not demonstrate stereotype threat as originally hypothesized. The difference in performance between students in the gendered treatment group (mean = 14.16) is not significantly different ($p = .91$) than the control group (mean = 14.37). What's more, there is no significant interaction effect by gender of the participant ($p = .95$).

Hypothesis 2 suggests that familiarity and practice using demographic data to make marketing decisions, typical of marketing coursework, would mitigate stereotype threat. To test this hypothesis, advanced marketing students, who should have had more exposure to demographic data in their marketing coursework, are compared with entry-level business students and non-business (nor social sciences) students. Since the follow-up task requires mathematical calculations to aid in making managerial decisions, performance should not be impacted by degree of marketing knowledge. As such,

we would not expect to see a significant difference by level of marketing training alone. Indeed, mean performance on the math calculations by students do not vary significantly by marketing training ($p = .86$), with mean performance ranging from 14 to 15 correct responses across all educational segments.

Hypothesis 2, though, suggests that if stereotype threat is triggered, it would have less impact on advanced marketing students than students with less familiarity working with demographic data. The treatment by marketing training interaction effect was significant ($p = .05$), with students with no marketing training or low in marketing training performing similarly on the mathematical calculations across treatment groups, and the more advanced marketing students performing worse in the gendered treatment, with a mean of 11.69 versus 17.81 correct calculations for the control group. This finding, students with more advanced

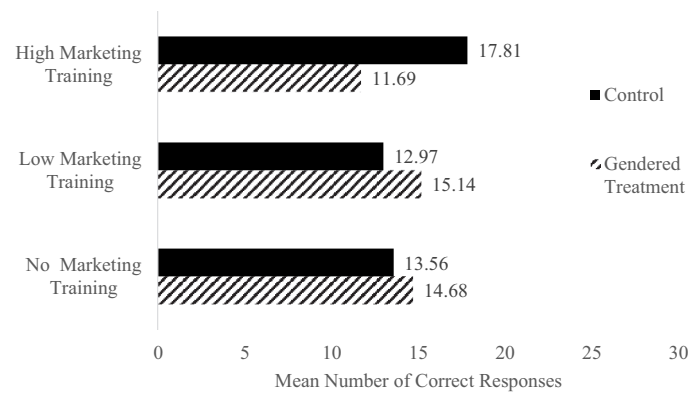


Figure 3. Mean number of correct responses by treatment and marketing education level.

Table 3. Analysis of variance: gender \times treatment for advanced marketing students.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Treatment	324.27	1	324.27	4.77	0.04
Gender	397.00	1	397.00	5.84	0.02
Treatment x Gender	62.34	1	62.34	0.92	0.35

marketing training, who should be comfortable and familiar working with demographic data, performing worse when the gendered data cue was present, is illustrated in Figure 3.

A two-way ANOVA (treatment \times gender) is used to further examine performance within the advanced marketing segment. Although, the size of the groups is small and findings should be viewed with caution until they are corroborated in future research, it appears that both female- and male-identifying students in the advanced marketing segment performed more poorly in the gendered treatment (treatment p -value = .04) than in the control group, with the impact being greater for men. Table 3 and Figure 4 illustrate these results.

Discussion

The results of the current research have the potential to highlight ethical issues in marketing pedagogy that uses

applied data, as well as to inform marketing assessment design to be more accessible to different categories of students. While the notion that classroom materials should minimize overt stereotypes is now convention, the more complex issue of how assessments can unintentionally microaggress against students with marginalized identities must be considered in order to achieve inclusive classrooms. As such, educators must consider the potential for stereotype threats in assessments. As far as we know, the triggering of stereotype threat in students due to the common and frequently used demographic categories used in marketing education examples (Schibrowsky et al., 1999) has not been explored in our discipline's prior research.

It was initially hypothesized that advanced marketing students would be less impacted by the inclusion of gendered data due to frequency of exposure to demographic data in their coursework and resulting habituation. The findings contradict this hypothesis. One

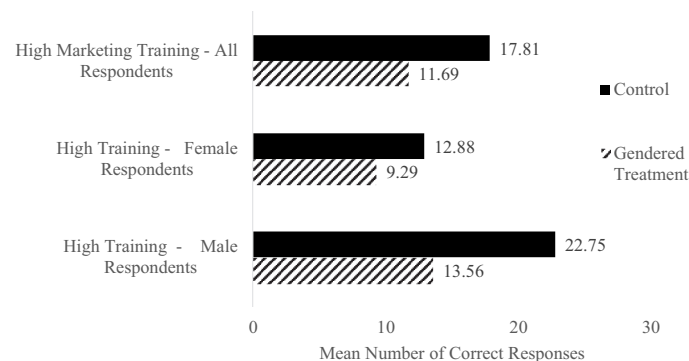


Figure 4. Mean number of correct responses by treatment and gender, advanced marketing training.

explanation may be that the implicit stereotype cue (i.e., data showing weaker sales performance by female representatives) rather than an overt cue explicitly stating existing differences in performance between male and female representatives, may not have been strong enough to trigger stereotype threat, especially in the non-business and early-business student segments. Prior stereotype threat research found that research participants who strongly identify with a domain (mathematics, science, or spatial skills, for example) show stronger stereotype threat effects (e.g., Cadinu et al., 2003, 2005; Pronin, Steele, & Ross, 2004; Steele, 1997; Steinberg et al., 2012). At the onset of this study, the authors had not considered that the manipulation showing poor sales performance by female representatives may be more relevant to advanced marketing students; thus, triggering stronger stereotype threat, given much of the prior research in this area is in the mathematics domain. It's plausible that stereotype threat was not triggered in the sales scenario provided in this study for students less likely to identify with marketing as a career. Another explanation is that gender stereotypes in advanced marketing students had more time to develop. Students are open to and internalize a great deal of changes in their world outlook in college (e.g., Jaschik, 2018). Like many business colleges in the United States, the university where this experiment was conducted has a gender imbalance in its business student enrollment and faculty composition. Seeing less representation of women in the business college, could serve to reinforce a prior constructed stereotype threat regarding the success of women in business, particularly in the quantitative business fields (Krishna & Orhun, 2020).

However, neither of these explanations explains why male advanced marketing students performed worse when gendered data was present. If anything, the presentation of data showing weaker sales performance by female representatives could have triggered "stereotype lift," a phenomenon where the positive stereotype improves performance, as evidenced in the social sciences (e.g., Pruyssers & Blais, 2014), although this did not occur. While this unexplained finding is perplexing and warrants additional research, it is plausible that the inclusion of demographic data suggesting poorer sales performance by female representatives, if noted by students, either distracted them or created anxiety. Subtle cues, such as data implicitly showing weaker sales performance by female representatives as opposed to an explicit statement, may lead participants to utilize cognitive resources to reduce uncertainty about whether bias exists, thus limiting working memory and performance (Kinias & Sim, 2016; Stone & McWhinnie, 2008). If participants were trying to interpret the sales data to determine if there was a gender bias, it could have distracted, or interfered with, the cognitive

resources needed to perform rigorous math calculations for both men and women. It is also plausible that the demographic data showing weaker sales performance by female representatives created dissonance or anxiety for both female and male students given increased demand for equitable workplaces by younger generations and society as a whole, thus impacting their ability to accurately perform mathematical calculations without a computer or calculator. Prior research has found that anxiety or worry about providing the "right" answer can interfere with performance (e.g., Dembo & Eaton, 1997; Hill & Wigfield, 1984). Relatedly, the increased exposure to topics which focus on diversity in a marketing curriculum, such as the portrayal of women (and men) in the media, stigma associated with being a person of color or relatively low socioeconomic status (and its impact on perception, attitudes, and consumer behavior), or the importance of mirroring and relating to your target market, may increase student sensitivity to these topics, serving to blur or cloud students' judgment and ability to focus on mathematical problems when gendered data is present.

Implications for Marketing Education Practice

While at first glance, it appears the inclusion of gendered data showing weaker sales performance by female representatives did not trigger stereotype threat, upon closer inspection mathematical performance by advanced marketing students was negatively impacted. The inclusion of gendered data did not significantly impact the performance of students less likely to identify with marketing as a major or career (i.e., nonbusiness students or business students early in their program). However, it also did not improve their performance.

The findings suggest that while demographic data is often used for marketing segmentation and positioning of products, it is not always necessary, or recommended, for this data to be included in assessments of learning. Educators should carefully consider when demographic data must be included in a marketing assessment to make informed managerial decisions and when it is additional data that is not crucial to the assessment objective, and thus, may serve as a distraction, reducing rather than improving performance. Moreover, since marketing is only one of several disciplinary areas that relate demographic indicators to other concepts, this exploratory research has potential implications for students of disciplines across the social sciences.

Future Research

Without additional research, we only know that in this exploratory study, the inclusion of gender data did not

result in stereotype threat for most respondents and, to the extent that inclusion of gendered data led to poorer performance by advanced marketing students, it did not disproportionately impact female students. The findings suggest that the presence of gendered data in an assessment task may induce stereotype threat for students who more strongly identify with the marketing major and marketing as a career. However, this finding should be replicated across other universities, other business majors where gendered data is ubiquitous (e.g., accounting and management), and other geographical and cultural areas. The advanced marketing students participating in this study come from one midwestern university where multiple marketing professors participate in scholarship and community activism related to EDI, trauma informed pedagogy, and consumer stigma, which suggests students may be getting a stronger dose of these topics than what is typical from comparable marketing programs and could be impacting student sensitivity to the inclusion of (fictional) demographic data showing weaker sales performance by women. Future research should also examine how the type of experimental task and all facets of identity-centered data impact stereotype threat in the marketing domain.

Conclusion

Certainly, the significance of the findings in the current study are interesting, and they have the potential to contribute to the conversation of teaching equitably in diverse classrooms, even if it is not in the way originally hypothesized. However, the empirical results ultimately seem to be less important, in the context of equitable and inclusive classrooms, than the fact that we are beginning to have these conversations in our scholarship of teaching and learning in marketing. It should become common practice to think beyond simply avoiding overt biases in our classroom materials, and rather, we should consider how all identity-based information can affect students inequitably. For instance, if gendered data does not contribute to the main objective of an assessment, then why do we so often include it? Indeed, students must learn how to discount extraneous information in applied problem solving, but if such data has the potential to trigger inequity in students with marginalized identities, then we must consider classroom solutions that mitigate this harm (e.g., Johns, Schmader, & Martens, 2005).

Given the host of data suggesting that stereotype threat exists in assessment tasks and the importance of providing substantive educational content that is accessible to all students as equitably as possible, as marketing

educators, it is imperative that we notice curricular instances that could provoke or maintain stereotype threats and thereby impact the performance and confidence of our students. This research, along with other stereotype threat research outside the marketing domain (and hopefully more that are forthcoming within it), emphasizes the importance of creating a psychologically safe and non-distracting environment for marketing assessment efforts, even if that means eliminating less critical demographic information. EDI initiatives have become increasingly important to all of the stakeholders of university education, including employers of our students, coworkers to our students, customers of our students' professional organizations, suppliers to our students' professional organizations, and all of our general communities. As educators, we need to prepare students to live and work in inclusive environments, and, more importantly, to help foster them. To do so, we must examine their foundations created by our own pedagogical practices and how we assess them for effectiveness.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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