



Student Evaluation Proposal Analysis
6 November 2017
CUPE local 3903 – negotiations
York University



Using surface cues to make judgements

Research suggests that when a student does not know a professor, students are likely to use surface cues, such as race/ethnicity and gender, to make judgments about them (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990) (Bavishi, Madera, and Hebl, 2010).

Anish Bavishi et al. 2010. "The Effect of Professor Ethnicity and Gender on Student Evaluations: Judged Before Met" *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, Vol. 3, No. 4, pp 245-256.

Studies show particular groups are targetted

“The results indicate that participants made evaluations based on the ethnicity and gender of the professor. In particular, they rated AfricanAmerican professors to be less legitimate and competent than Caucasian and Asian American professors” p. 251-252

Proliferating stereotypes

“Furthermore, when racial ethnic minorities make up a small percentage of a population, evaluations of ethnic minorities may be likely to be driven by stereotypes more than by objective qualifications. That is, as African Americans are very underrepresented in academia...stereotypes about them may proliferate” (252)

Occupational stereotypes

As women and ethnic minorities continue to enter into academia, it is important to understand the potential barriers that individuals from such groups face.

Previous research has pointed to gender, racial, and occupational stereotypes as potential difficulties that such individuals may encounter. The current study similarly found that students' perceptions of university professors are influenced by professors' department, gender, and ethnicity, suggesting that different groups may receive different treatments (253).

Questionable trustworthiness

“Sinclair and Kunda (2000) reported that students who received better grades also gave their college instructors higher evaluations, whereas low grades disproportionately reduced the ratings of women instructors in comparison to men instructors.”

- Joey Sprague and Kelley Massoni. 2005. “Student Evaluation and Gendered Expectations: What We Can’t Count Can Hurt Us” *Sex Roles*, vol. 53, no 11/12

Conceals differential standards

- However, this approach to evaluating teaching or to studying whether and how gender enters into the evaluation process is based on two assumptions that the research literature suggests are untenable. First, it assumes a universal metric: that a “3” is a “3” and a “5” is a “5,” no matter who the teacher is.
- Second, it assumes that a specific rating corresponds to equivalent behaviors or abilities across professors and instructors. But if, as the research suggests, students use different baselines for men and women, or, in some cases, they draw on totally different behaviors to evaluate a trait, quantitative studies are notable to detect these gender differences
- Sprague and Massoni, 782

Standardization as equal on its face but masks a ongoing inequality

- Student evaluation as gender performance—Men are tough, women are mean.
- “Shifting standards”: men are judged by one standard, women are judged by another standard, p. 791.
- “We believe these data are consistent with our reading of the implications of the literatures on the sociology of gender, on social cognition, and on the student evaluation of teaching. Together they raise concern that underlying the apparently equivalent evaluation procedures there is covert gender bias.”

Potential impact of gender

- Respondents offered accounts of student sexism and prejudice, describing themselves as undervalued first by virtue of being women, and second through lacking the appropriate attributes for fulfilling the traditional academic stereotype.
- Many had experienced, and/or had heard from colleagues about, episodes of sexism in face to face interactions with students.
- Carson, Lloyd. 2001. Gender relations in higher education: exploring lecturers' perceptions of student evaluations. *Research Papers in Education*, 16(4) 2001, p.