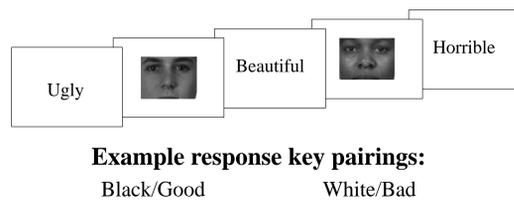


Introduction

Most people have a certain degree of prejudice towards racial groups, but many people are largely unaware of their prejudices, as the prejudices may not influence their social behavior in noticeable ways. Thus, the prejudice is *implicit*, or below the level of conscious realization. Implicit prejudices may be acquired through societal influences, such as exposure to the prejudicial attitudes of others or to racial stereotypes portrayed in the media. The Implicit Association Test (IAT) was designed to test implicit attitudes towards a set of target categories (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwarz, 1998). The IAT effectively identifies implicit prejudice towards racial groups. The racial IAT involves discriminating between faces of different races (black/white) and between words that convey concepts that are good or bad. The dual task design of the IAT requires participants to switch back and forth between judging words and faces within the same set of trials and using the same set of response keys to make their judgments of the faces and words.



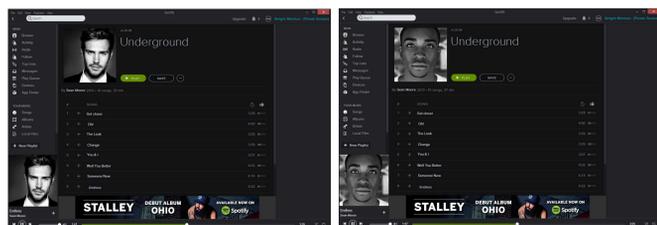
The response keys are paired in such a way that if an individual does not strongly associate the two categories, response mapping conflict will be evident in the reaction times for that response button. The IAT has revealed that it is easier for many people to associate white people with good words than to associate black people with the same words, indicating an implicit bias against black people, favoring white people.

The current study attempted to temporarily override this pro-white bias by introducing a positive stimulus: a pop song with a positive message. We attempted to selectively reinforce the association the song and race by showing a Spotify screen that featured either a black musician or white musician. This manipulation was between subjects.

Method

Subjects. Forty-two undergraduates from Purchase College, SUNY participated in this study. Two participants were determined to be outliers and excluded from analysis.

Conditions. Participants were exposed to either a white musician or a black musician in a between-subjects design.



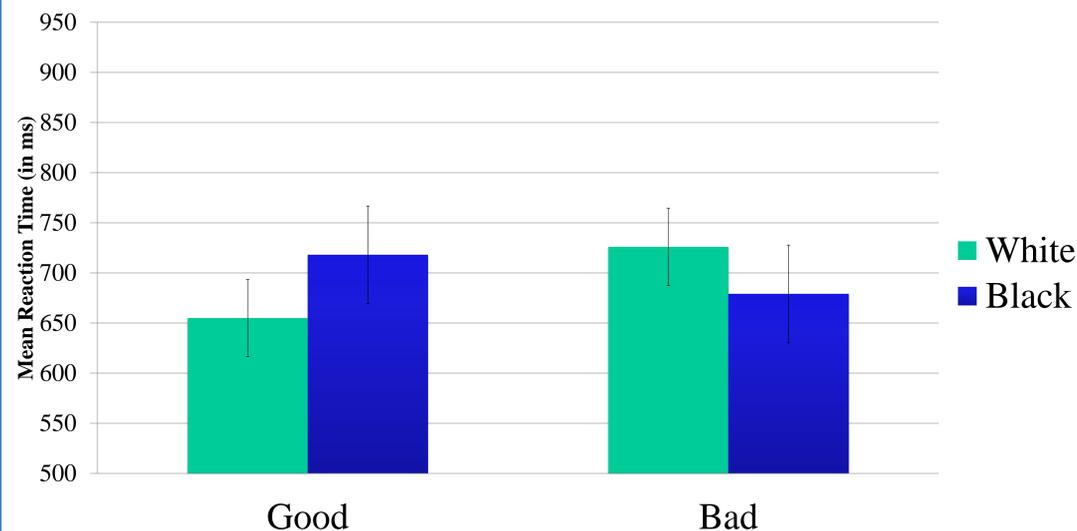
Materials. A pop song by GoldFord was played for all participants. Two Spotify screens were used depicting either a white male musician or a black male musician. IAT stimuli were the same as those used by Greenwald et al (1998). The IAT was performed on a Dell computer using the program E-Prime.

Procedure. Pop music was playing when the participant entered the testing area, and one of two Spotify screens was open on a computer in front of the participant while the consent form was being filled out. The music was then turned off. The participant performed the racial IAT on a computer, filled out a questionnaire, was debriefed, compensated, and dismissed.

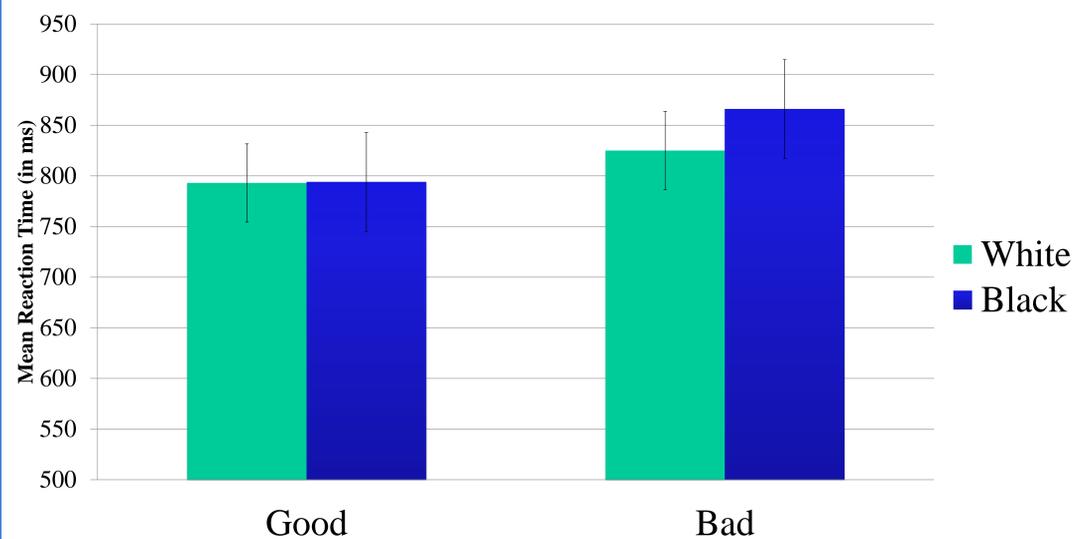
Results

The reaction times to the dual task conditions (i.e., respond to color of face and quality of word) were analyzed with a 2x2x2 ANOVA (Color of face: black/white; Word: good/bad; Condition: black musician, white musician). The 2x2x2 interaction (Face x Word x Condition) was not significant [$F(1,38)=0.97, p=.33, \eta p^2 = .025, power=.16$]. However, the means (displayed below) are consistent with the predictions of the hypothesis. These inconclusive results may reflect a lack of statistical power.

IAT Scores in White Musician Condition



IAT Scores in Black Musician Condition



Discussion

We attempted to manipulate the results of the racial IAT, which classically shows a racial bias against blacks, by introducing a positive stimulus that was manipulated between subjects so that it was associated with either a black individual or a white individual.

We predicted that pro-white bias would be evident when the positive song was associated with a white individual. The data conformed to this prediction.

We predicted that pro-white bias would be reduced when the positive song was associated with a black individual. The reaction time pattern suggests that not only was it reduced, but it was completely eliminated. Although these findings did not reach the level of statistical significance, the pattern of results suggests that music may have the power to shift racial associations. Further research is necessary to make this conclusion. It is possible that this pattern will become statistically significant upon the collection of more data. The power estimate from this experiment is 0.16, indicating that the lack of significance in this study may reflect that there is an insufficient number of subjects to test this hypothesis. While we cannot reject the null hypothesis, it is possible that this failure to reject the null hypothesis is a Type II error.

While it is unclear how implicit bias translates to prejudicial behavior, it is likely that it is one of many factors predicting violence and prejudice against members of a racial group. Our findings, though not significant, reveal a response pattern that is consistent with the hypothesis that implicit prejudice may be influenced by emphasizing positive racial associates. It is likely that the negative racial stereotypes depicted in music, movies, and on TV are perpetuating prejudicial attitudes and actions. However, we may be able to counteract prejudice by emphasizing positive racial associates.

References

Greenwald, A.G., McGhee, D.E., Schwarz, L.K. (1998). Measuring individual differences in the implicit cognition: The implicit associations test. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 68, 228-246.

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