

Psychological Aspects of Bias

Cheryl R Kaiser
University of Washington
Department of Psychology

Stereotypes can cause the same behavior to be construed differently

- Resume Studies (Neumark, 1996; Steinpreis et al., 1999)
- Letters of recommendation (Trix & Psenka, 2003)
- Reactions to leaders (Eagly et al., 1995; Butler & Geis, 1990)
- Competence and warmth dilemma (Fiske et al., 2002, Rudman & Glick, 1998)

When women don't look like professors: A recent student e-mail anecdote

From: _____

Sent: Friday, February 23, 2007 6:44 AM

To: kbp@u.washington.edu; ckaiser@u.washington.edu

Subject: Double Registration

Dr. Kenneth Pyle and Mrs. Kaiser,

I'm writing this email because I wish to double register for your respective courses HSTAS 424 and PSYCH 345. I'm a Psychology Major, Music and Japanese Minor, so both of these courses are vital, and my options for this quarter because of other classes are limited. Your courses only overlap for 20 minutes a week, and I am confident that I can simply come 25 minutes late to Post-war Japan on Wednesdays, and succeed. Dr. Pyle, I've taken History of Modern Japan, so I feel through being aware of your class layout, I can assess my ability on this matter.

Thank you for your considerations, and I'd like to have this resolved today if possible.

Bias is not what most people think it is

- Prejudice and discrimination are commonly understood as:
 - Intentional, conscious, harm driven
 - This can be true, but often it's the exception
- Psychological advances demonstrate that bias is often:
 - Unintentional, automatic, and outside our awareness
 - Contradictory to our conscious beliefs
- [Implicit Association Test](#) (Greenwald, Banaji and colleagues)

Implicit Attitudes

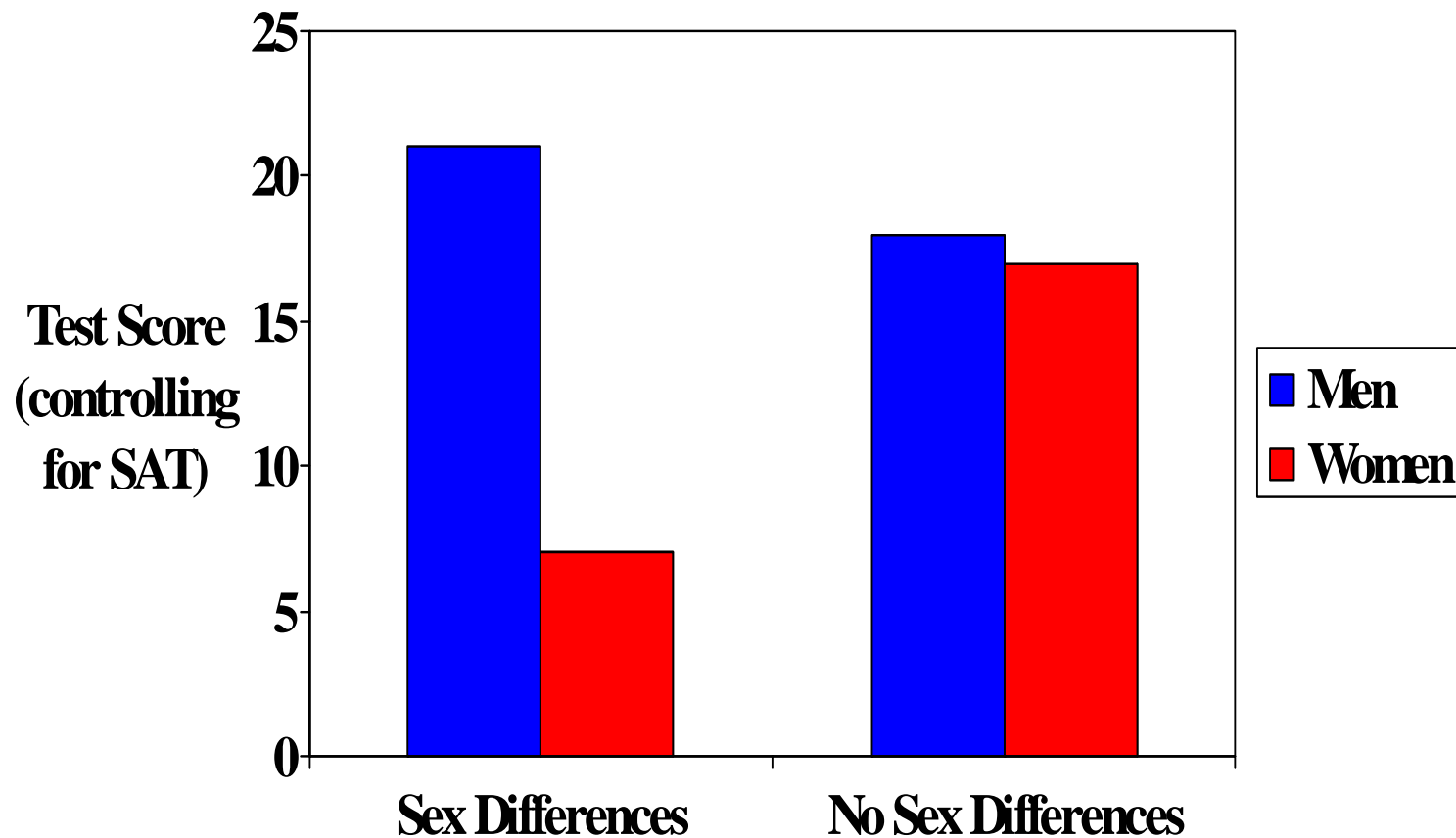
- Both men and women show implicit biases associating men with science and women with liberal arts
 - Effect Size/Cohen's $d = .72$ (medium/large effect)
- Implicit biases predict behavior
 - Meta-analysis of over 200 studies
- Variability in implicit biases
 - Environments and experiences matter

Subtle Bias has Detrimental Consequences for its Targets

- Vigilant, on guard (Kaiser et al., 2006)
- Stereotype Threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995)
- Lack of Felt Belonging (Cheryan et al., 2007)
- Taxes working memory (Schmader & Johns, 2003)
- Health consequences (Clark et al., 1999; Mendes et al., 2007)

Stereotype Threat Effects

(Spencer et al., 1999)



Faculty Diversity as a Tool for Changing Bias: Women and Leadership

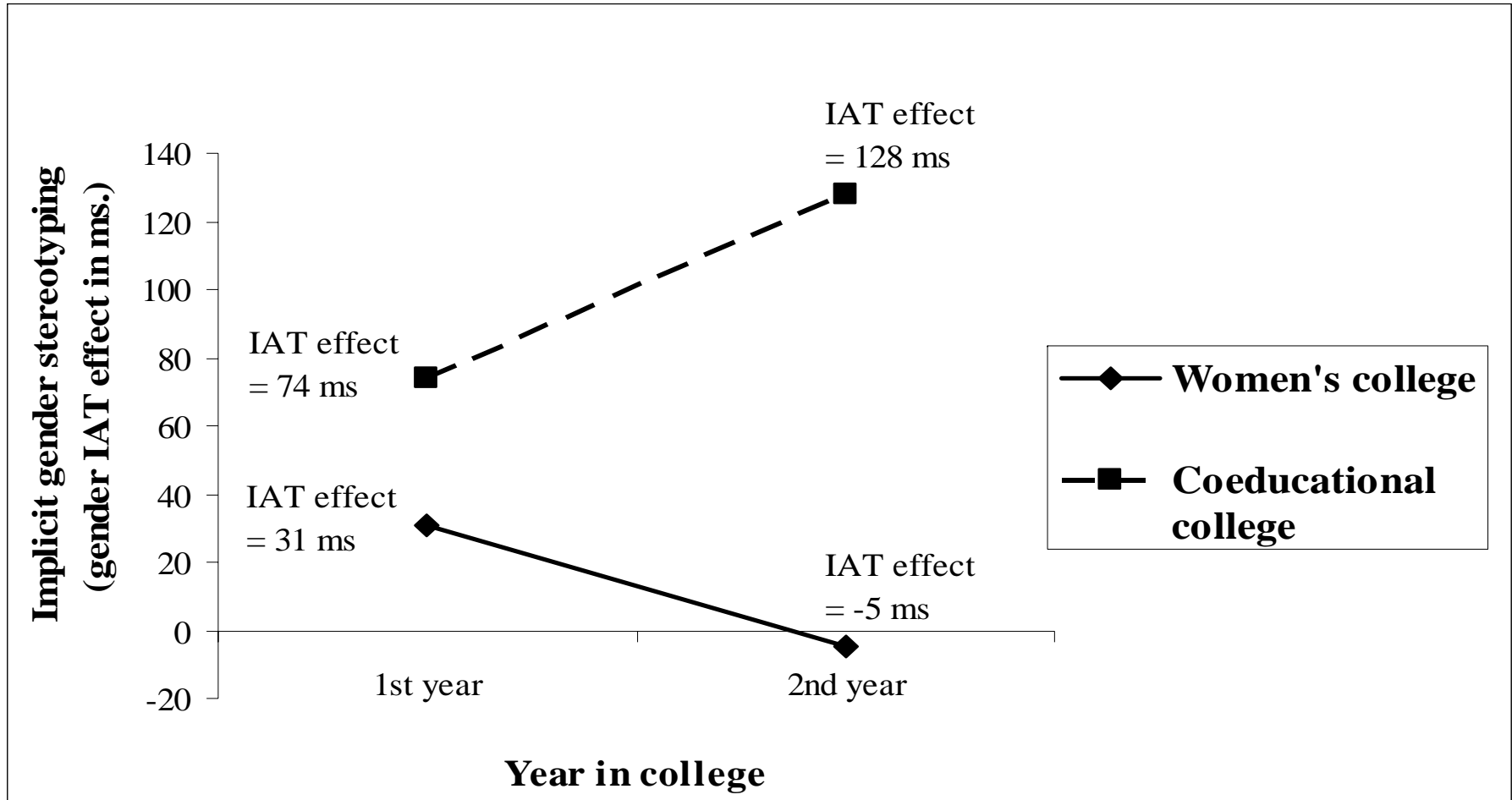
- When people think about strong leaders, the resulting image is often a man (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 1995).
 - Both women and men share this stereotype.
- Leadership stereotypes emerge more strongly when assessed at the implicit level (Blair & Banaji, 1996; Rudman & Glick, 2001).
- Can exposure to diverse faculty reduce this bias?

Development of Gender/Leadership Stereotypes

(Dasgupta & Asgari, 2004)

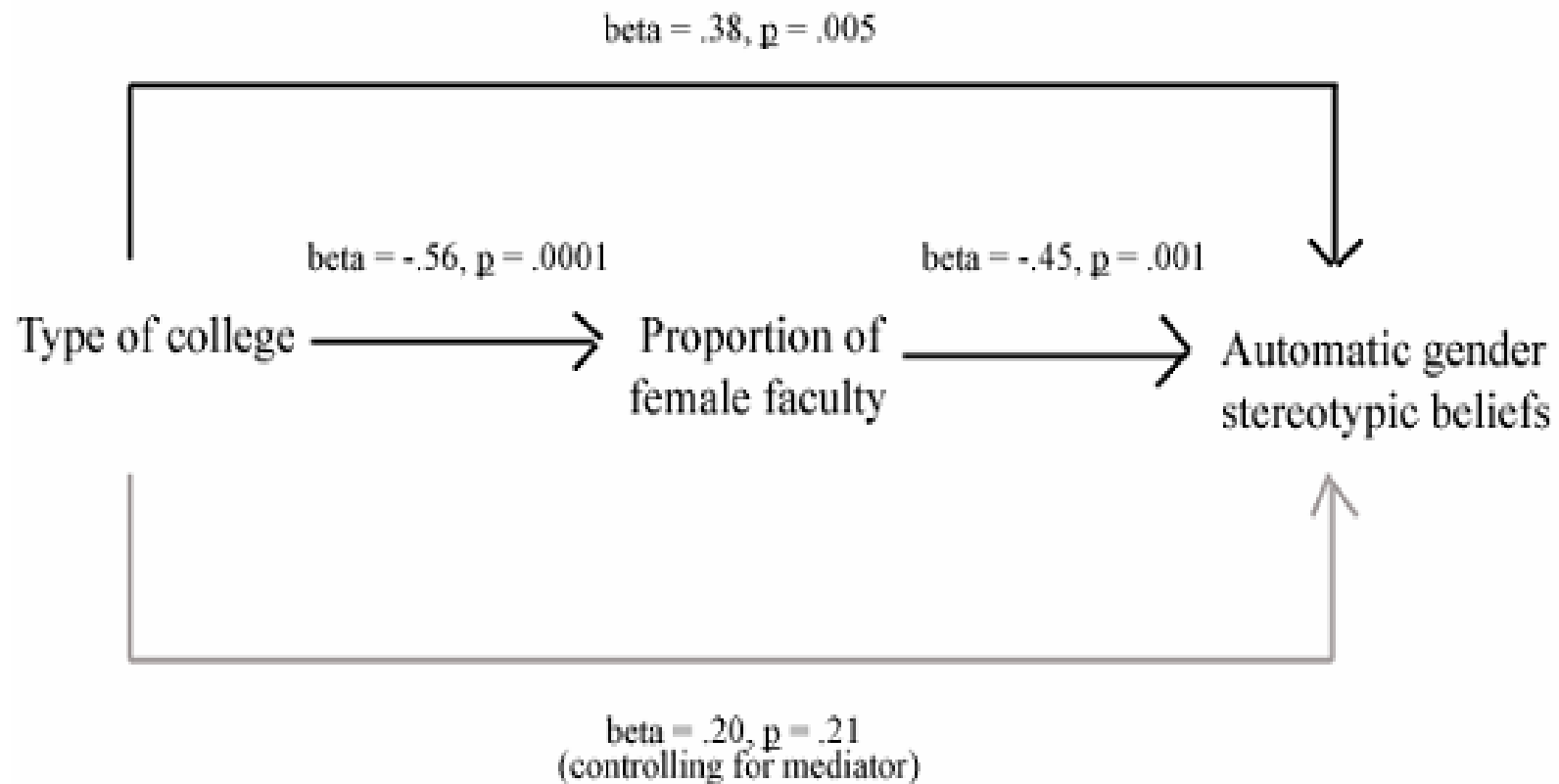
- Do women's implicit gender/leadership stereotypes change over time as a function of whether they attend a women's or coed college?
- Longitudinal study examining first year female students from women's college and coed college.
- During first and second school years, assessed implicit stereotypes about gender and leadership and professors' gender.

College environment contributes to changes in implicit gender stereotypes



Type of college X Year in college: $F(1, 48) = 3.52, p = .07$ (from Dasgupta & Asgari, 2004, *JESP*)

Exposure to female faculty mediates the effect of college environment on implicit gender stereotypes



Sobel test: $z = 2.79, p = .005$

(from Dasgupta & Asgari, 2004, *JESP*)

Conclusions

- Bias is not what we think
 - it often exists within many well intentioned men and women of all different backgrounds
- Subtle bias can have powerful effects on its targets
- One's engagement or disengagement with particular disciplines can develop implicitly as a function of their environments. These decisions are not solely due to conscious choice.
- Faculty leaders can create environments that help recruit and retain diverse faculty
 - doing this can diversify their fields