

juvenile defendants under a more sympathetic light, believing perhaps that an intellectually disabled juvenile defendant is more easily coerced into making a false confession.

Indeed, due to the elevated false confession and false guilty plea rates among juvenile defendants (Malloy et al. [2014](#); Redlich and Shteynberg [2016](#)

participants' transfer preference when the race of the offender was explicitly identified as either "Black" or "White."

Method

Participants

We recruited 151 undergraduate students, ranged in age from 18 to 51 years ($M = 20.11$, $SD = 3.29$), from a public liberal arts university in the East coast of the USA using a research participant pool administered by the psychology program. Students received partial course credits or extra credits for their participation. There were 38 males and 113 females: 68.2% were Caucasian, 9.3% were Black, 7.9% were Asian, 6% were Hispanic, and 8.6% chose the “Other” category. All participants were US citizens and 18 years or older, so that they were jury eligible. The research was approved by our university’s Institutional Review Board.

Materials and Procedure

After signing informed consent forms and confirming that they were US citizens and 18 years or older, participants were asked to serve as mock jurors. They individually read and made judgments on one of four versions of an approximately 2000-word trial summary, following the 2 (juvenile race: Black, White) \times 2 (intellectual disability: disabled, nondisabled) between-subjects factorial design. All four versions of the trial summary depicted a first-degree murder case involving a 16-year-old juvenile defendant tried as an adult.

Juvenile race was manipulated by the first name of the defendant as either “Jamal” (Black juvenile) or “Jacob” (White juvenile) and the label used to describe him in the introductory paragraph of the trial summary as either “African American” or “Caucasian.” Intellectual disability was manipulated through a short description of the defendant in the same paragraph, modeled after Najdowski and Bottoms (2012, 2015). For the intellectually disabled defendant, the description states that a school psychologist testified that the juvenile defendant had a lower than average IQ and was developmentally delayed, functioning in the mild range of intellectual disability. In addition, the defendant had problems with time management, would forget to do homework if not reminded, had difficulty expressing himself, and lacked social skills. Moreover, despite receiving special education services, the defendant still performed poorly in school, did not have the reasoning abilities of a normal 16-year-old, but functioned at the level of a typically developing 12-year-old. For the nondisabled defendant, the description states that a school

participant and explained the specific hypotheses of the research.

Results

Verdict

Using logistic regression, we entered both the main effects of juvenile race and intellectual disability, and the interaction between juvenile race and intellectual disability into the equation. There was a significant main effect of juvenile race. Participants found the White defendant (51%) guilty more often than the Black defendant (31%), $Wald = 6.29, p = 0.01, OR = 0.42, Cox and Snell R^2 = 0.07$.

However, the above main effect was qualified by a significant two-way interaction (see Fig. 1) between juvenile race and intellectual disability: Whereas verdicts for disabled Black and White defendants were similar, participants found nondisabled White defendant (61%) guilty more often than nondisabled Black defendant (24%), $Wald = 4.50, p = 0.03, OR = 0.23, Cox and Snell R^2 = 0.07$.

Confidence in the Defendant's Guilt

Before analyzing the study data, we created a more interpretable verdict confidence variable to represent participants' confidence in the defendant's guilt by combining participants'

verdict with their confidence in the verdict (e.g., Cooper and Neuhaus 2000; Tang and Turner 2013; Wiley and Bottoms 2009). The resultant variable could range from 1 (not guilty, completely confident) to 22 (guilty, completely confident).

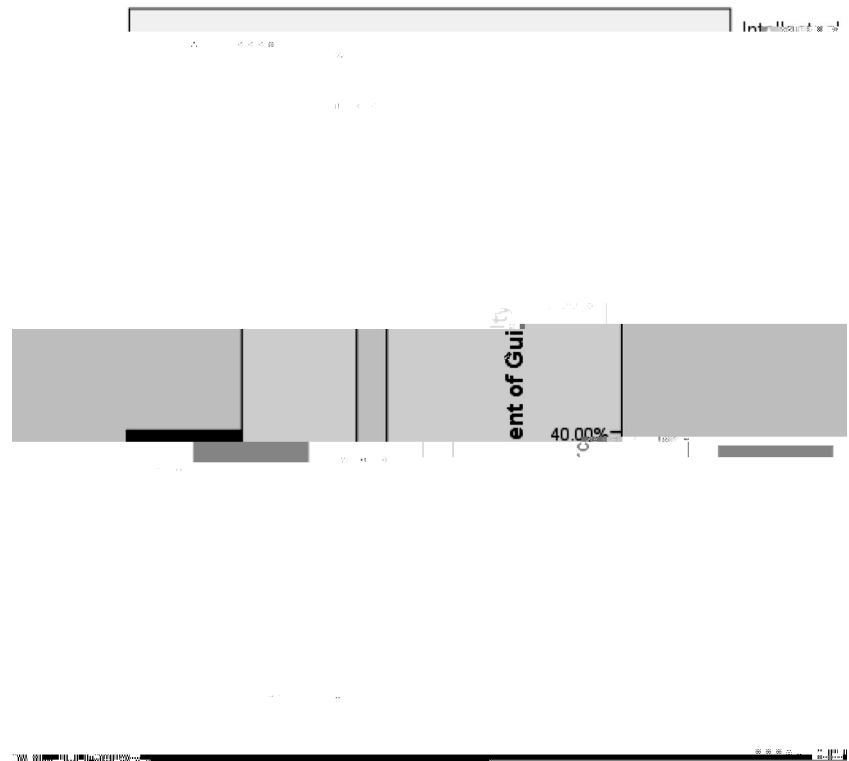
We conducted a 2 (juvenile race: Black, White) \times 2 (intellectual disability: disabled, nondisabled) between-subjects ANOVA on this variable and revealed a pattern of findings similar to those on verdict. There was a significant main effect of juvenile race. Participants had higher confidence in the White ($M = 11.67, SD = 7.53$) than the Black ($M = 8.83, SD = 7.25$) defendant's guilt, $F(1, 147) = 5.80, p = 0.02, \eta_p^2 = 0.04$.

However, the above main effect was qualified by a significant interaction (see Fig. 2) between juvenile race and intellectual disability, $F(1, 147) = 5.88, p = 0.02, \eta_p^2 = 0.04$. Simple effects analyses revealed that whereas ratings for disabled Black and White defendants were similar, participants had higher confidence in the nondisabled White defendant's guilt ($M = 13.08, SD = 7.49$) than in the nondisabled Black defendant's guilt ($M = 7.34, SD = 6.68$), $F(1, 147) = 11.60, p = 0.001, \eta_p^2 = 0.07$.

Probability of Crime Commission

A 2 (juvenile race: Black, White) \times 2 (intellectual disability: disabled, nondisabled) between-subjects ANOVA did not find any main effects on the probability of crime commission ratings. However, juvenile race and intellectual disability

Fig. 1 Significant two-way interaction between juvenile race and intellectual disability on verdict



interacted (Fig. 3) to influence participant perception on the probability that the defendant committed the charged crime, $F(1, 148) = 4.65, p = 0.03, \eta^2$

(corresponding to Model 7 in Hayes 2013) with the PROCESS macro. We tested to see if juvenile race moderated the relationships among intellectual disability, the perceived voluntariness of the confession, and verdict.

As Fig. 6 illustrates, the index for this moderated mediation

juvenile race. When juvenile race was at a higher level (i.e., White juvenile per our coding), the conditional indirect effect of intellectual disability on verdict via perceived voluntariness of the confession was significant in a positive direction, $\beta = 0.59$ (0.26), 95% CI [0.19, 1.19]. In contrast, when juvenile race was at a low level (i.e., Black juvenile per our coding), the effect was not significant, $\beta = 0.00$ (0.20), 95% CI [-0.44, 0.38]. Moreover, the direct effect of intellectual disability on verdict was not significant, $\beta = -0.19$ (0.36), $\beta = 0.59$, 95% CI [-0.90, 0.52]. Therefore, this model was a full mediation model. Overall then, juvenile race was a moderator for the

positive pathway from intellectual disability through perceived voluntariness of the confession to verdict. For White juveniles, the lack of intellectual disability was linked to higher perceived voluntariness of the confession, which predicted more guilty verdicts.

to White than to Black defendants. It would seem that juvenile race impacts case judgment differently depending on other factors, as past research has generated null findings (e.g., Stalans and Henry 1994), found Black (e.g., Rattan et al. 2012; Stevenson and Bottoms 2009) or White (Peck and Jennings 2016; Pica et al. 2017) juvenile defendants judged more harshly. It is difficult to pinpoint the exact combinations of factors that led juvenile race to impact case judgment in such divergent ways.

One explanation for our counterintuitive finding on juvenile race can be gleaned from the modern racism literature. Modern racism theory proposes that modern racists are more likely to discriminate when a non-race justification exists, or the appropriate response is not apparent (McConahay 1983). For example, Black and White job applicants are hired at equal rates when they are both highly qualified. However, when they both have equally low qualifications, the Black applicant is less likely to be hired, because the low qualifications now serve as a non-race justification not to hire the Black applicant (Brief et al. 2000; McConahay 1983). In our study, the trial summary was constructed to maintain balance of evidence between the prosecution and the defense. Presumably, mock jurors in our study did not have a non-race related justification to convict or acquit; that is, the evidence did not lean strongly toward guilt or acquittal. Thus, the nondisabled Black defendant was not discriminated against. Further, mock jurors seem to have overcorrected their bias toward the nondisabled Black defendant compared to the nondisabled White defendant, known as a “bend-over-backward” effect. Previous research (e.g., Olson and Fazio 2004; Pica et al. 2017) has found that individuals will overcorrect for bias and act in a more positive manner toward Black individuals in an effort to appear non-prejudiced.

Another explanation can be found when considering that the main effect of juvenile race on verdict and confidence in the defendant’s guilt was restricted to nondisabled juvenile defendants. In the process of operationalizing intellectual disability, we also described the “normally developing” aspects of juvenile defendants without intellectual disability. It was likely that these “normal” qualities such as managing time well, completing homework voluntarily, having adequate social skills, and performing well in school have combined to depict a nondisabled juvenile who seemed well adjusted. Participants might have thus judged the nondisabled White juvenile harshly but the nondisabled Black juvenile leniently in accord with the expectancy-violation theory (Jussim et al. 1987). This theory states that when stereotype-inconsistent information is presented about a target, the target will be evaluated more extremely in the direction of the violated expectancy. For example, Jackson et al. (1993) found that stereotype-inconsistent target (i.e., Black persons with superior qualifications, or White persons with inferior qualifications) was judged more extremely in the direction of the

inconsistency. Specifically, strong Black persons were evaluated more favorably than strong White persons while weak White persons were evaluated less favorably than weak Black persons.

In our study, nondisabled, well-adjusted Black juvenile defendants may have been stereotype-inconsistent (e.g., going against the stereotype of a problematic Black delinquent with low IQ) in a positive manner, but nondisabled, well-adjusted White juvenile defendants may have been stereotype-inconsistent (i.e., going against the stereotype of a law-

White juvenile defendants. In short, our research showed that disabled Black juveniles are at risk of being treated in a biased way, lending support to the consideration of juvenile race when examining public perception of juvenile defendants with intellectual disability.

Henkel LA (2008) Jurors' reactions to recanted confessions: do the defendant's personal and dispositional characteristics play a role? *Crim Law Forum* 14(6):565-578

Henry LL, Ridley AA, Perry JJ, Crane LL (2011) Perceived credibility

Wiley TA, Bottoms BL (2009) Effects of defendant sexual orientation on jurors' perceptions of child sexual assault. *Law Hum Behav* 33(1): 46–60. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10979-008-9131-2>

Wilson C (2017), Study: "Adultification" has black girls facing harsher punishments. *ABA J*, 20

Woody W, Forrest KD (2009) Effects of false-evidence ploys and expert testimony on jurors' verdicts, recommended sentences, and

perceptions of confession evidence. *Behav Sci Law* 27(3):333–360. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bsl.8>

Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.