

# Sample research paper on race bias, facial recognition and recall: the effects of...

[Sociology](#), [Racism](#)



## **Abstract**

Own race bias is a variable that has been discussed in numerous studies and researches. Its importance and limitations have been some of the focus of those previously published articles. The objective of this paper is to present a unique study that aims to verify whether own race bias still carries the same effect when it comes to memory, recall, and recognition (of faces) when it gets paired with another independent variable which is school affiliation. Using empirical evidences obtained from the current research's implementation, the researchers were able to verify that the respondents' ability to memorize, recall, and recognize faces (using photographs) were still significantly affected by the presence of own race bias; in this case however, the additional independent variable which was the school affiliation was also at play, and have also been found to have significant effects on the dependent variable which was the memory, recall, and recognition (of faces).

It is important to note that this particular research was started based on the general consensus and findings (from the review of related literatures), that own race bias indeed has a significant impact in these kinds of situation. In an academic journal published in the Journal of General Psychology, for example, the authors evaluated the own age face recognition bias by using a specified set of encoding procedures to test its potential applications and limitations in a real world setting; the results of this study indicated that in-group (which in this case is own age bias or own age face recognition bias) categorization processes that requires little conscious processing may be spontaneous and automatic .

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In another academic journal published in *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, the authors focused on evaluating the effects of ethnic groups on facial recognition using an exemplar-based model that was aimed at discovering the differences between out and in-group differences when it comes to things such as facial recognition. The authors of that study concluded that there was indeed the presence of in-group bias (i. e. own race bias) when it comes to activities such as facial recognition .

And lastly, in another study published in *Acta Psychologica*, the authors investigated on the impact of value-directed remembering on the own-race bias by using a value-based paradigm designed to determine the effects of own-race bias on value-based recognition. The authors in that study concluded that own-race bias was indeed one of the factors that contributed to the participants' response or way of assessing value, indicating that this might have an impact on value and motivation on memory (aside from simple facial recognition) . Based on these findings, there is reason to believe, and to hypothesize, that own race bias may indeed be a factor in facial recognition and recall as well.

The results of the study were rather mixed. This is mainly due to the fact that there were two sets of variables compared namely the effects of own race bias on memory and facial recognition and the effects of school affiliation on memory and facial recognition. It is worth noting that the data analyses for these two sets of variables (although one common variable among these two sets was the presence of own race bias) were done separately. Ultimately, the authors of the study were still able to locate key findings in the study. Based on the analyses conducted, it has been found

that own race bias had a significant impact on the respondents' ability to recognize and recall faces. This finding pertains to the first set of variables (own race bias and its effects on memory and facial recognition). Another key result and finding in the study indicated that school affiliation (which is the independent variable that was unique to this study) also had a significant effect on the respondents' ability to memorize things, or in this case, recall and recognize faces. So far, all of the findings were consistent with the research hypothesis that suggested that the race of the people whose face was on the photographs and school affiliation significantly affected the respondents' ability to recognize, recall, and memorize faces.

It is worth reiterating that the objective of this research, and of all the related procedural and statistical processes involved, was to examine the effects that affiliation of the photographs, race of the people whose face was on the photographs, and the combination of the two had on facial recognition rates among the respondents. Specifically, in this study, there were two races involved (at least their photographs): Caucasian and African American. The respondents were asked to use their memory to recall and make associations with two sets of photographs, the first set of photographs was comprised of faces of individuals with specific labels on which educational institution they attended. The second set of photographs was comprised of faces of individuals without such labels. The purpose of the said activity was to determine whether either, both, or none of the two variables: facial recognition and recall via association of educational institution attended and facial recognition and recall via association of race (i. e. own race bias), contributed to the outcome of the study.

However, another key finding that raises the possibility of stirring confusion was the one that suggests that the ability of the participants to recall and recognize faces using the provided photographs did not change (meaning the independent variables did not have any effects or impact on the dependent variable which was the recall and recognition ability of the respondents) when there was one thing in common—school affiliation. One possible theory that may rationalize this key finding is the possibility that although both the two factors namely same school affiliation and own race bias can have significant effects on the ability of an individual to memorize, recall, and recognizes faces in a later situation, their effects are not really meant to intertwine. This pertains to the research hypothesis that the author has successfully proven.

This means that there is a plateau on their effects. Another possibility theory that may rationalize this key finding is the one that suggests that an individual's ability to recognize, recall, and memorize faces (based on photographs that is) can only be dependent on one variable: own race bias or same school affiliation. In the case of this research, however, these two theories were not sufficiently tested. It would therefore be unwise and un-academic to draw conclusions based on untested theories—such as the two rationalization theories that were just presented.

The general consensus that was obtained based on the review of related literatures suggests that own race bias and possibly other factors such as same school affiliation can indeed contribute to an individual's ability to memorize, recognize, and recall faces, regardless whether it is by means of looking at a photograph or not . In summary, based on the present findings,

it can be concluded that when faces were placed in a certain in-group, even if it is randomly assigned by the researchers, they process those faces more deeply, allowing them to have a better recall and recognition of the face of the members of the in-groups, which explains why people who belonged to the same race and to the same school were able to have a better recall and recognition of faces.

The results and findings of this current research suggest the same thing. This means that the review of related literatures, the research hypothesis presented in the study, and the results and findings obtained after the implementation phase of the research, all directly correlate with each other. That is, they all point to the fact that own race bias (plus same school affiliation) indeed contribute to an individual's ability to memorize, recall, and recognize faces, as supported by the findings that suggest that when faces were placed in a certain in-group, even if it is randomly assigned by the researchers, they process those faces more deeply, allowing them to have a better recall and recognition of the face of the members of the in-groups, which explains why people who belonged to the same race and to the same school were able to have a better recall and recognition of faces. The theoretical and application implications of this present research are vast. Firstly, two possible theories were developed as a result of the discussion of the results and findings. These two theories can be used as a starting point by other or future researchers in conducting their own study. Secondly, the results and findings in this present research can be used to further cement the already established finding that suggests that own race bias; even when paired with other independent variables (which in this case is same school

affiliation) can still have significant impacts on an individual's ability to memorize, recall, and recognizes faces.

One major limitation of this research is that it only focused on two independent variables that can affect an individual's facial recognition. These two variables were race (i. e. own race bias) and school affiliation. It did not take into consideration any other possible variables that may have also contributed to the participants' ability to recall and recognize faces in the photographs. This is why for the future direction of this research, other independent variables such as social circles and peer connections may be used.

## **References**

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