

FOCAL ARTICLE

Is Stereotype Threat a Useful Construct for Organizational Psychology Research and Practice?

ELISE K. KALOKERINOS, COURTNEY VON HIPPEL, AND HANNES ZACHER

*The University of Queensland***Abstract**

Stereotypes about different groups persist in organizations. Employees from such groups may experience *stereotype threat*, or the concern that they are being judged on the basis of demeaning stereotypes about groups to which they belong. The goal of this focal article is to discuss whether stereotype threat is a useful construct for organizational psychology research and practice. To this end, we focus on consequences other than acute performance deficits in laboratory settings. In particular, we examine studies that highlight the effects of stereotype threat on intrapersonal outcomes (e.g., job attitudes), interpersonal outcomes (e.g., negotiation), and on the relationship between employees and their organization. The research reviewed suggests that stereotype threat is a potentially important phenomenon in organizations, but it also highlights the paucity of research in an organizational context. We provide suggestions for future research directions as well as for the prevention and amelioration of stereotype threat in the workplace.

Stereotype threat is the concern of confirming or being reduced to a negative stereotype about one's group (Steele, 1997; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002). Over the past 2 decades, hundreds of laboratory studies have demonstrated that stereotype threat results in performance deficits when people attempt to perform difficult tasks in domains in which they are negatively stereotyped (for a meta-analysis, see Nguyen & Ryan, 2008). For example, when women are reminded of the stereotype that men are better in math, they perform considerably worse on a difficult math test compared to women who do not receive this reminder (Gresky, Eyck, Lord, & McIntyre, 2005). Although stereotype threat research began with a focus on

academic tasks, the performance-impairing effects of stereotype threat have been replicated across numerous populations and tasks. For example, White men's athletic ability (J. Stone, Lynch, Sjomeling, & Darley, 1999), poor people's language skills (Croizet & Claire, 1998), older adults' memory (Hess, Auman, Colcombe, & Rahhal, 2003), and women's driving (Yeung & von Hippel, 2008) all suffer when they are reminded about the stereotypes of their group in these domains.

Despite the vast array of studies demonstrating performance decrements brought about by stereotype threat in laboratory settings, very little research has examined the antecedents and consequences of stereotype threat outside the laboratory, particularly in organizational settings. Indeed, the field of industrial–organizational (I–O) psychology has been rather inattentive to the topic of stereotype threat (for a notable exception, see Roberson & Kulik, 2007). One exception to the general dearth of

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Courtney von Hippel.

E-mail: c.vonhippel@uq.edu.au

Address: School of Psychology, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Queensland 4072, Australia

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applied research on stereotype threat is the debate among personnel selection researchers on the role of stereotype threat in high-stakes workplace selection and higher education admission contexts (Sackett, 2003; Sackett & Ryan, 2012; see also Sackett, Borneman, & Connelly, 2008; Sackett & Lievens, 2008; Sackett, Schmitt, Ellingson, & Kabin, 2001). Specifically, Sackett and colleagues have argued that the performance deficits associated with stereotype threat are less relevant in these situations because applicants are highly motivated and incentives exist to do well (Cullen, Hardison, & Sackett, 2004; Cullen, Waters, & Sackett, 2006; Sackett, 2003; Sackett et al., 2001). Consistent with this argument, a number of papers have failed to provide evidence for stereotype threat effects in personnel selection simulations where participants were either focused on obtaining a desirable job, gaining a financial reward, or both (Mayer & Hanges, 2003; McFarland, Lev-Arey, & Ziegert, 2003; Nguyen, O'Neal, & Ryan, 2003; Ployhart, Ziegert, & McFarland, 2003). Sackett (2003) suggested that these null effects demonstrate that studies involving more "life-like" elements direct attentional resources away from concerns about racial stereotyping and toward test performance, thus eliminating the impact of stereotype threat. However, the jury is still out with regard to the impact of stereotype threat in high-stakes testing. For instance, Steele and Davies (2003) and Aronson and Dee (2011) have catalogued a variety of reasons why these null findings may be flawed.

Sackett and colleagues also noted that researchers and the popular media have often misinterpreted Steele and Aronson's (1995) seminal stereotype threat study. In Steele and Aronson's (1995) research, African American participants showed performance decrements compared to White participants in the stereotype threat condition, *after controlling for prior differences in SAT performance*. In the control condition there were no performance differences between African Americans and White participants after controlling

for these prior performance differences. Media outlets and researchers often misinterpreted these results as suggesting that eliminating stereotype threat would fully close the test performance gap between African Americans and Whites, ignoring the fact that Steele and Aronson (1995) had already accounted for much of the existing performance gap by controlling for prior differences in SAT scores (Sackett, Hardison, & Cullen, 2004; Sackett et al., 2001). What the study actually demonstrated was that stereotype threat had an independent effect above and beyond what would be expected based on prior SAT score differences.

Despite these various points of contention highlighted by Sackett and colleagues, they have noted that stereotype threat may have important and independent effects on test performance. Nevertheless it seems these debates have caused many I–O psychologists to view stereotype threat as a phenomenon that is confined to laboratory settings and diverted their attention from the possibility that stereotype threat may lead to other important outcomes in organizations. For instance, stereotype threat may result in unfavorable job attitudes, disidentification at work, altered decision making, and lowered career aspirations. Given these wide-ranging consequences of stereotype threat, the time appears ripe to examine whether stereotype threat is a useful construct in organizations. The dual aims of this focal article are to stimulate discussion about the relevance of stereotype threat in organizational settings and to highlight future research directions that could help determine its organizational significance. In service of these goals, we focus primarily on potential employee outcomes other than immediate performance decrements and on organizational situations other than high-stakes personnel selection.

The remainder of this article unfolds as follows. First, we provide a more detailed discussion of stereotype threat. Next, we explore the relevance of stereotype threat for organizations by identifying the ways that stereotype threat may impact

employees. Given these potential consequences of stereotype threat, we then turn to the question of what factors can cause stereotype threat in an organizational setting. We end by highlighting the need for further research that investigates stereotype threat in applied settings and by urging practitioners to consider the potential deleterious consequences of stereotype threat.

What Exactly Is Stereotype Threat?

Every job involves being judged by other people, yet employees from negatively stereotyped groups have the added concern of being judged on the basis of their group membership (Roberson & Kulik, 2007). Stereotype threat is the concern that others are evaluating you through the lens of negative group-based stereotypes (Steele, 1997). Importantly, it is not necessary to actually be stereotyped by others to experience stereotype threat nor must people believe the stereotype about their group or themselves is true. Rather, people need only worry that they may be stereotyped for stereotype threat effects to emerge. Consider, for example, the ways that employees in our research described incidents that triggered stereotype threat:

I had a big disagreement with my boss and he upset me so much I left and had a bit of a cry. I felt weak and girly. I think he thought of me as a weak woman at the time, and it was distressing for me,

Because I am now older than many of our clients, I get the impression it is felt that I no longer am "in touch" with the clients, despite the fact my specialist knowledge means I have a good understanding of my area. Because my organisation is "innovative," "cutting edge" and encouraging of new ideas, it is sometimes assumed anyone over 40 won't have any ideas worth listening to. Or am I just old and paranoid and idealess?

In neither of these cases is it clear that the subjective experiences these employees described reflect actual stereotyping

on the part of their colleagues. Rather, it is their concern of being stereotyped that constitutes stereotype threat (nevertheless, being treated in a stereotypic fashion by colleagues does increase the likelihood that people will experience stereotype threat; Logel et al., 2009).

It is also important to note that the accuracy of the stereotype is irrelevant to whether people experience stereotype threat. For example, a common stereotype is that men are better than women at math, and this stereotype is matched by data that show men outperforming women on the math component of the SAT over the past 40 years (College Board, 2012). Although these data suggest the stereotype is accurate on average, the data also show that the performance distributions of men and women overlap to a substantial degree, meaning that any individual woman might be better at math than any individual man. As a consequence, even if she is talented at math, a woman might still be susceptible to stereotype threat. She may worry about being negatively evaluated in math based on her group membership (i.e., experience stereotype threat), and as a result, her performance could suffer. Indeed, it seems it is these exceptionally talented individuals who are most susceptible to stereotype threat (Steele, 1997).

This description of stereotype threat does not speak to whether stereotype threat is an acute or a more chronic state. The majority of research on stereotype threat treats it as an acute state. Stereotype threat is typically manipulated in the laboratory by reminding participants about the underperformance of a particular disadvantaged group (e.g., Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999) or by reminding participants of their membership in a stereotyped group prior to the administration of a difficult test (e.g., Steele & Aronson, 1995). With manipulations such as these, it is the acute reminder of participants' group membership and the associated stereotypes that lead to stereotype threat. For example, in a classic study by Shih, Pittinsky, and Ambady (1999) Asian-American women were asked to take

a difficult math test after indicating either their gender or their ethnicity. Shih et al. found that their participants performed worse on a math test if their female identity was made accessible than if their Asian identity was made accessible prior to the test. This research suggests that it is the acute reminder of stereotyped group membership that drives stereotype threat and subsequent performance deficits. Research in the workplace has also shown acute effects of stereotype threat when female accountants were reminded of the low percentage of female partners in their firm (von Hippel, Walsh, & Zouroudis, 2011). Data such as these provide evidence that stereotype threat can be induced by reminders that people are likely to be the targets of demeaning stereotypes, but they do not indicate how transitory the feelings of stereotype threat are. Further research is needed to determine whether these acute manipulations induce lasting or only fleeting experiences of stereotype threat.

Although the laboratory approach to stereotype threat has largely treated it as an acute state, it seems likely that stereotype threat can become a chronic state as well. Many workplaces are replete with reminders that certain groups are devalued, such as a small proportion of minorities or women in the upper echelons of the organization. Workplaces that contain many such cues are likely to lead to chronic feelings of stereotype threat for employees who belong to devalued or minority groups. Under situations such as these, employees may experience stereotype threat from the moment they walk in the office door each morning until they leave at the end of the day. The end result would be the stringing together of a series of acute experiences into a chronic state.

Measurement of stereotype threat in organizations has tacitly endorsed such a possibility, with items such as, "Some of my colleagues feel I'm not as committed because of my age (gender)," that are intended to tap relatively chronic or at least recurrent feelings of stereotype threat in the workplace (e.g., von Hippel, Kalokerinos, &

Henry, 2013). Thus, although it may be relatively uncommon for employees to be confronted with the type of statements used in laboratory manipulations (e.g., "thank you for completing this test trying to understand why women do not perform as well as men"), there are likely to be subtle and frequent reminders in some workplaces that create a chronic state of stereotype threat for members of certain groups. It is also likely, however, that this awareness will fluctuate within people and over time, so that in any given moment people can experience a greater or lesser degree of stereotype threat. It is the average experience of stereotype threat over time that constitutes a person's chronic level of stereotype threat.

Consequences of Stereotype Threat at Work

In the original theoretical description of stereotype threat, Steele (1997) described two types of consequences. First, he proposed that acute experiences of stereotype threat would lead to performance deficits. This consequence is now well documented in the laboratory, but further work is necessary to establish its relevance in the field. In contrast, the other consequence proposed by Steele has received much less attention. Specifically, Steele (1997) also suggested that chronic experiences of stereotype threat should lead to disidentification or disengagement from the stereotyped domain over time. This possibility is of great potential importance for organizations, as disengagement from work is associated with a variety of negative job attitudes, such as lower job satisfaction and commitment (Riketta, 2008). Disengagement is also associated with increased turnover (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002), and thus it is possible that employees might leave organizations in which they experience stereotype threat. Although there is limited research examining the effects of stereotype threat on these organizational outcomes, the studies that do exist provide results consistent with Steele's theorizing.

In the following sections, we discuss the consequences of stereotype threat for intra- and interpersonal work outcomes as well as for employees' relationship with their employer and provide suggestions for future research.

Intrapersonal Effects

Job attitudes. Two lines of research have examined the relationship between stereotype threat and job attitudes. First, although numerous reviews have demonstrated that age is generally unrelated to job performance (e.g., Ng & Feldman, 2008), there are nevertheless "persistent negative perceptions" of older workers (Ostroff & Atwater, 2003, p. 729). Not only are older workers perceived to be less productive than their younger counterparts, they are also perceived to be less flexible, with reduced physical and mental capacities, and reduced willingness to learn new technologies (Van Dalen, Henkens, & Schippers, 2010). Beliefs such as these suggest that older workers are likely to experience stereotype threat in the workplace. In a recent test of this possibility (von Hippel et al., 2013), the relationship between stereotype threat and job attitudes was assessed among employees aged 50 and above in Australia and the United States. Across three diverse samples (i.e., traditional office environment, law enforcement, and a general Internet survey) older employees' chronic feelings of stereotype threat were negatively related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. These job attitudes, in turn, were related to an increased interest in resigning and possibly retiring.

Young adults might also feel age-based stereotype threat in the workplace, as younger workers are often perceived to be less reliable, less committed to the organization, and less socially skilled (Van Dalen et al., 2010). Yet young workers are also expected to climb the career ladder over the course of their career, and thus youth and inexperience naturally diminish with time, whereas age and encroaching retirement do

not. Thus, although younger adults might feel stereotyped about their youth and inexperience, they know this problem is surmountable and that they are also judged as having a great deal of potential. In support of this possibility, von Hippel et al. (2013) also found that younger workers' (age under 30) chronic feelings of stereotype threat were unrelated to their job satisfaction, commitment, or intentions to quit.

Secondly, stereotype threat may also be an explanation for why stereotypes concerning women can impact their ability to succeed in male-dominated fields (Roberson & Kulik, 2007). For example, women are less preferred as potential hires in traditionally masculine domains, are presented with fewer progression opportunities, and continue to earn less than their male counterparts in top executive roles (Catalyst, 2005; Steinpreis, Anders, & Ritzke, 1999). Similar to research with older workers, women working in the legal profession who experienced chronic stereotype threat in the workplace had more negative job attitudes and indicated increased intentions to quit their jobs (von Hippel, Issa, Ma, & Stokes, 2011).

These studies provide preliminary evidence that the chronic experience of stereotype threat is associated with unfavorable job attitudes among women in male-dominated fields and older adults in the workplace. A limitation of these studies is that they are based on cross-sectional data. To better establish causality, future research should use longitudinal or experimental designs to examine the effects of stereotype threat on job attitudes. Longitudinal research will also be essential in understanding how experiences of stereotype threat develop and change across time and across different positions and organizational contexts. Such research will be particularly important in understanding the developmental trajectory of age-based stereotype threat at work. Using longitudinal designs, research can establish at what point in workers' careers they become sensitive to age stereotypes, how that timing interacts with the type of position the

workers hold, and when the relationship between stereotype threat and negative job attitudes develops.

Professional identities. As noted earlier, stereotype threat is thought to lead to disidentification from domains in which people feel stereotyped (Steele, 1997). In contrast to the sense of engagement that arises when employees feel psychologically safe and secure at work (Kahn, 1990), employees who feel threatened at work by negative stereotypes are likely to disengage. Although such disengagement may be ego protective in the short term, it typically comes at a long-term cost because it is associated with reduced motivation and performance (Major & Schmader, 1998).

One form of disengagement that may emerge is related to employees' professional identities, as employees who perceive that their job requires characteristics that are inconsistent with their social identity may feel a need to separate their work self from their true self. For example, at work a senior manager might consider herself analytical, independent, and assertive, as these traits are associated with managerial success even though these are stereotypically masculine. When not at work, this same manager might consider herself gentle, warm, and tender—traits that are stereotypically feminine. This *identity separation* may be psychologically advantageous, as differentiating between “female” and “work” selves can help women emphasize their role as skilled employees in an organization even when such skills are counterstereotypic for women. Yet there are also negative mental health consequences for people who feel that their true identity cannot be expressed while enacting another identity (Settles, 2004; Settles, Sellers, & Damas, 2002), and thus identity separation might be potentially problematic for female employees.

Research among female lawyers, accountants, and managers demonstrates that both acute and chronic stereotype threat lead women to separate their female identity from their work identity (von

Hippel, Issa, et al., 2011; von Hippel, Walsh, et al., 2011). For example, women who experienced stereotype threat felt that their work self and feminine self were in conflict, and reported that they had to switch back and forth between these two selves while at work. These data suggest that some of the psychological costs that women encounter due to experiencing stereotype threat at work are associated with feelings of interference between different aspects of their identity and the need to separate these components from one another. Furthermore, to the degree that women experienced the need to separate their identities, they also experienced negative job attitudes (von Hippel, Issa, et al., 2011). Thus, although it might not seem very important to suppress some aspects of the self in service of others when at work, the data suggest that the chronic demand to do so may be costly. Indeed, other research has demonstrated that female science students who experienced interference between their female and science identities reported greater depression and lower life satisfaction and self-esteem than women who did not experience this interference (Settles, 2004).

In summary, some studies in work settings have already demonstrated that both acute and chronic stereotype threat can lead to altered professional identities. These changes may constitute a pathway that explains negative effects of stereotype threat on outcomes such as career satisfaction or work performance. Nevertheless, additional research is needed to gain a better understanding of the links between stereotype threat and changes in professional identities. Future research could identify the conditions under which identity separation induced by stereotype threat has long-term negative versus positive consequences. For example, identity separation may be relatively beneficial for employees who generally disidentify with their occupation or organization but are dependent on their job to have an income. In addition, some employees typically identify with just a few of their social groups whereas others feel that many of their group

memberships are important. It would be useful to know whether the number of social groups that employees belong to and the relative importance of different groups for their overarching social identity influence the effects of stereotype threat on work outcomes. In this vein, future research could also examine whether identifying more strongly with a nonstereotyped group at work may be protective against identity separation. Recall that Asian-American women performed better in mathematics when their Asian-American identity was activated than when their female identity was activated (Shih et al., 1999). This research suggests that shifting identification from a negatively stereotyped group to a positively stereotyped group may prove an effective strategy for people who experience stereotype threat at work based on some of their social identities, but this idea is yet to be tested.

Career aspirations and leadership. Disengagement may also be manifested in diminished career aspirations among employees from disadvantaged groups who experience stereotype threat. When people experience stereotype threat they are likely to feel that they have reduced prospects in the threatened domain (Steele, 1997). To persist in the face of challenges, people must believe they possess the abilities to achieve (Bandura, 1997). Yet individual ability is often not enough, as people must also believe they have the resources and opportunities to succeed (Steele, 1997). Employees who feel diminished prospects in the organization (e.g., reduced career advancement opportunities) may show concomitant decreases in their motivation to achieve (e.g., lowered career aspirations).

Given the existing “think manager—think male” stereotype (Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, & Ristikari, 2011), the potential consequences of stereotype threat may be particularly relevant in the domain of leadership. If stereotype threat results in diminished leadership aspirations among women, it may be a contributing factor to the underrepresentation of women in

high-ranking leadership roles. Several laboratory studies have examined the effects of acute stereotype threat on leadership identification and aspirations, although there is little research conducted in an organizational context. For example, invoking acute stereotype threat by exposing female university students to threatening gender stereotypes led them to avoid leadership roles (Davies, Spencer, & Steele, 2005). Encouragingly, this effect was eliminated by informing participants that the leadership task they were to undertake does not show gender differences. It seems that creating an “identity safe” environment allows women to maintain their leadership aspirations even in the face of stereotype threat. How organizations might foster such an environment is a topic to which we return later in this article.

Interestingly, not all women find stereotype threat equally unnerving—high self-efficacy can buffer women against the pernicious effects of stereotype threat. Women who had greater leadership self-efficacy increased their identification with leadership after an event eliciting stereotype threat. More efficacious women also performed better on a simulated hiring committee and reported greater levels of well-being after exposure to acute stereotype threat compared to women lower in leadership efficacy (Hoyt, 2005; Hoyt & Blascovich, 2007, 2010). These findings indicate that stereotype threat can also cause some people to redouble their efforts.

Nevertheless, there appear to be important boundary conditions to these positive responses to stereotype threat. For example, women who were exposed to *either* acute stereotype threat or solo status (i.e., being the only member of one’s social group in a particular setting or position) reported greater leadership efficacy and performed better on a leadership task. But women who were exposed to *both* stereotype threat and solo status reported lower leadership efficacy and performed more poorly on the leadership task (Hoyt, Johnson, Murphy, & Skinnell, 2010). Given the paucity of female leaders, it is likely that many women in

leadership positions fall into this latter category of being simultaneously exposed to threatening negative stereotypes and being the only female leader in the group.

Stereotype threat has been shown to have a similar impact on entrepreneurial intentions. Entrepreneurship is a male-dominated field, with nearly twice as many men as women becoming entrepreneurs (Acs, Arenius, Hay, & Minniti, 2004). Stereotypes about entrepreneurs are consistent with traditionally "masculine" traits: Entrepreneurs are viewed as assertive, achievement-oriented, confident, and high in risk taking in social and organizational contexts (Baron, Markman, & Hirska, 2001). Hence, it is unsurprising that exposure to a news article designed to elicit acute stereotype threat led to a significant decrease in entrepreneurial intentions among female business students (Gupta & Bhawe, 2007).

These studies do not speak directly to the impact of stereotype threat on the career aspirations of those who are already entrenched in their career, however. Across two different samples of women in the legal profession, experiences of chronic stereotype threat did not impact career aspirations but were related to lowered confidence among women that they would ultimately reach their career goals (von Hippel, Issa, et al., 2011). This finding is consistent with laboratory-based research showing that acute stereotype threat diminishes self-confidence (Stangor, Carr, & Kiang, 1998) and increases self-doubt (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Diminished expectancies of reaching one's career aspirations can have considerable consequences for employees, as lowered expectations have been found to undermine performance by reducing motivation and effort (Schmitt, Gielnik, Zacher, & Klemann, 2013). If women's effort and motivation diminish, it may cause other employees to feel more confident in their original stereotypic assessment about women and their drive to succeed. In this manner, a self-fulfilling prophecy can develop into a downward spiral of behavior, interpretation, and expectation.

In summary, although stereotype threat may lead to lowered career aspirations under certain conditions, some women who experience stereotype threat are more motivated to pursue their careers. These inconsistent results may be due to differences in the types of samples used to test these hypotheses. Whereas efficacious university students seem to react against a single acute experience of stereotype threat by reporting more lofty aspirations (e.g., Hoyt, 2005), women who are already entrenched in their career have the same aspirations whether they report chronic feelings of stereotype threat or not. Importantly, however, working women who experience more chronic stereotype threat also report lowered confidence that they will reach their career goals (von Hippel, Issa, et al., 2011). Such diminished expectancies of reaching career aspirations can have considerable consequences for women in organizations, as lowered expectations have been found to undermine performance by reducing perseverance in the face of difficulties (Carver & Scheier, 2002).

It is particularly important to note that almost all of the research examining leadership and career aspirations has been conducted in the laboratory using acute manipulations of stereotype threat with student samples. Of the studies discussed above, only the studies by von Hippel, Issa, et al. (2011) were conducted in organizational contexts with working women. Given the potentially negative consequences that stereotype threat may have for women's leadership aspirations, beliefs, and intentions, it is important that this research is replicated and extended in organizational settings. Future research should also examine the boundary conditions and mechanisms of the negative and positive relationships between stereotype threat and career aspirations so appropriate interventions can be put into place. Longitudinal research could be particularly beneficial for understanding the differential relationships between stereotype threat and aspirations, expectations, and intentions across the career trajectory. A particularly promising

avenue for future research is the impact of stereotype threat on leadership emergence and success as well as entrepreneurship. For example, Burgess, Joseph, van Ryn, and Carnes (2012) recently suggested that stereotype threat may be a cause for the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in academic medicine. The outcomes of future research may not only help promote effective leadership and entrepreneurial behaviors, they could also help accelerate women's advancement into senior leadership positions.

Decision making. Laboratory studies have shown that stereotype threat can influence decision making, a finding that may be particularly important in the organizational context. Experiencing stereotype threat appears to deplete people's cognitive resources, which leads to a reliance on intuition and affect instead of a more deliberative processing style (Carr & Steele, 2010; Inzlicht & Kang, 2010). This reliance on intuition and affect can cause those experiencing stereotype threat to be more susceptible to heuristics and biases. Consistent with this possibility, Carr and Steele (2010) found that women who experienced acute stereotype threat in academic and business settings showed greater loss and risk aversions. In an organizational context, this could lead decision makers experiencing stereotype threat to avoid risky decisions that may be important. It could also discourage women and minorities from entering challenging or difficult roles in an effort to avoid risk.

In another study, undergraduate women who experienced acute stereotype threat showed an increase in inflexible perseverance—they were more likely to use strategies that were previously successful but were no longer efficient or correct (Carr & Steele, 2009). Flexible responding to a changing environment is important for decision making, which raises the possibility that inflexibility may be another route by which stereotype threat could reduce optimal decision making. This research is yet to be extended into organizations, but

given the costs of inflexibility, it is important to know if stereotype threat influences managerial decisions, such as those made under time pressure or in teams with multiple stakeholders. Future research could also focus on decision making in specific organizational settings such as the medical or financial sectors, with a view to developing applied interventions. If stereotype threat influences decision making in the workplace, the downstream consequences of such effects should also be investigated. For example, members of disadvantaged groups may be less likely to join decision-making teams. The end result of this process might be a greater likelihood of disengagement and the various consequences of stereotype threat discussed earlier.

Interpersonal Processes

The extant research has largely focused on *intrapersonal* consequences of stereotype threat, but there is some research that also speaks to potential *interpersonal* implications of stereotype threat. Interpersonal outcomes may arise when employees experience stereotype threat caused by interactions with other people who are internal and external to the organization, such as members of their work group or customers (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007). The research in this area suggests that stereotype threat may affect group processes such as feedback seeking, negotiation, and communication in organizations.

Feedback seeking and communication. Research has demonstrated the value of feedback seeking in the workplace to aid performance (Ashford & Cummings, 1983). Yet a study by Roberson, Deitch, Brief, and Block (2003) found that African Americans who were the solo in their department reported higher levels of chronic stereotype threat, which was in turn related to greater monitoring of feedback from coworkers and supervisors. This greater monitoring might seem beneficial, but chronic stereotype threat was also related to feedback discounting, including dismissal of feedback,

doubting its accuracy, and questioning the motives of the source. These findings raise the specter of problems in the performance appraisal process, as it is important for employees from stereotyped groups to trust the feedback they receive and adapt their behaviors accordingly.

Interpersonal consequences of stereotype threat can also manifest in the manner in which people make requests in the workplace. Because female leaders are not considered to be as effective communicators as male leaders (Still, 2006), women's communication styles may reinforce the stereotype that they are less competent than men. Women seem sensitive to this possibility; women in the stereotype threat condition, who were reminded of the stereotype that men are better leaders, adopted a more masculine communication style (i.e., they were more direct and assertive while using fewer hedges and hesitations) compared to women in the control condition who were not reminded of this stereotype (von Hippel, Wiryakusuma, Bowden, & Shochet, 2011). It is not clear, however, whether adopting a more direct and assertive communication style is effective for female employees. Women who adopt masculine tendencies often face repercussions for violating prescriptive gender norms (Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins, 2004). Inherent in the stereotyped prescriptions of how men and women should behave are expectations of how members of each gender should *not* behave. The stereotype that women should display communal and warm behaviors also specifies that women should not show agentic qualities, such as assertiveness, independence, or dominance (Heilman, 2001). Women engaging in counterstereotypic behaviors may be perceived as more competent than stereotypically feminine women, but they are subject to social penalties (Heilman, 2001). Therefore, women who react to gender-based stereotypes of leadership by adopting a more masculine communication style may run the risk of being less effective interpersonally, less likeable, and less likely to exert influence.

Consistent with this possibility, when evaluators rated the requests that women made in the communication experiment described above (von Hippel, Wiryakusuma, et al., 2011), women who reacted to stereotype threat by adopting a more masculine communication style were seen as less warm and likable. People also indicated that they were less willing to comply with the requests made by these women. Furthermore, this masculine style did not result in women being viewed as more competent, suggesting that reacting to stereotype threat in such a manner may result in social penalties with few if any gains.

Negotiation. Negotiation skills, which are regarded as essential for success in various organizational settings (Bazerman & Moore, 2008), are also influenced by stereotype threat. For example, women are commonly viewed as cooperative and collaborative whereas men are seen as assertive and demanding. Research has demonstrated that women tend to fare less well than their male counterparts at the bargaining table, where men's competitive behavior results in greater negotiation success (Stuhlmacher & Walters, 1999; Walters, Stuhlmacher, & Meyer, 1998). Given the widespread stereotypes about men and women's negotiation skills, researchers have examined how stereotype threat impacts negotiation strategies. Across several experiments, Kray and her colleagues have demonstrated that acute stereotype threat causes female MBA students to change their negotiating tactics at the bargaining table (Kray, Galinsky, & Thompson, 2002; Kray, Reb, Galinsky, & Thompson, 2004; Kray & Thompson, 2005; Kray, Thompson, & Galinsky, 2001). The bottom line from these studies is that when women experience stereotype threat at the negotiating table they open the negotiation with more extreme offers. This strategy results in greater negotiation success for these women, as their partners respond to these extreme offers by giving more ground to reach a consensus. Although these

women achieved better outcomes when they reacted to stereotype threat, these studies did not examine the potential interpersonal costs for women who adopted a more masculine negotiation strategy. Given the social penalties women experienced by adopting a more masculine communication style in response to stereotype threat (von Hippel, Wiryakusuma, et al., 2011), it seems possible that the strategy adopted by women in these negotiation studies may not be as beneficial as it appears. For example, such women may pay long-term costs if they have repeated interactions with their negotiation partners. It is also important to note that this research is lab based. Although it has clear implications for women in the workplace, future research needs to replicate and extend these findings in organizational contexts. In determining whether these positive benefits to negotiations replicate in organizations, future research can also determine if there are unintended consequences of these negotiation strategies for the women who engage in them.

It is evident from the negotiation research that there may be costs and benefits to the experience of stereotype threat, and so it is important that future research investigates the divergent consequences of stereotype threat. Longitudinal research would also be beneficial in this arena. It is likely that stereotype threat in organizations may lead to a self-perpetuating cycle: Women change their communication and negotiation styles in response to stereotype threat and then are likely to face more stereotype threat as a result of this adaptation. Understanding the complex coping mechanisms that may arise to deal with this cycle would be helpful in developing interventions.

Perceived Relationship With the Organization

The relationship that employees have with their employing organization (i.e., the psychological contract) has an impact on job attitudes, work motivation, well-being, and performance (Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2005; Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau,

1994). We suggest that stereotype threat might have a negative influence on psychological contracts, particularly in the presence of organizational initiatives targeted at women and minority or non-traditional employees. Affirmative action and other equal opportunity programs are designed to help address the disadvantages faced by certain groups in the workplace, yet these policies and programs may engender feelings of stereotype threat among potential recipients.

By providing some form of assistance to members of certain groups, equal opportunity policies and programs highlight the possibility that these groups may need extra help in order to advance their careers. Indeed, targets of these programs may question their own abilities, as the presence of these programs suggests that their group needs additional help in order to succeed (Kimura, 1997). In addition, recipients of these programs are often evaluated more negatively by others, even when the recipients have objectively strong qualifications (Heilman, Block, & Stathatos, 1997; Williams, Blair-Loy, & Berdahl, 2013). Such psychological responses to equal opportunity programs suggest that these programs are likely to contribute to feelings of stereotype threat among intended recipients, as the mere presence of these policies brings issues such as race and gender to the forefront of employees' minds.

Family-friendly policies are likely to have similar unintended consequences for potential recipients. Family-friendly policies are often directed at women (Sabattini & Crosby, 2009), as mothers are more likely than fathers to reduce their work hours and change their work schedule because of childcare concerns (Coltrane, 2000). The existence of family-friendly policies may serve to encourage and reinforce stereotypes of women as caregivers (Eagly & Karau, 2002), which is particularly problematic in organizations, where caregiving is seen as incongruent with leadership roles (Liff & Ward, 2001). In line with this suggestion, women who choose to work flexibly face stigmatizing treatment (P. Stone

& Hernandez, 2013). Hence, it is likely that the provision of family-friendly policies could lead to stereotype threat, which in turn could lead women to view these policies more negatively. Indeed, working women believe that using family-friendly policies will hurt them professionally (Finkel, Olswang, & She, 1994). Stereotype threat may help to explain why women perceive negative consequences to these ostensibly beneficial programs. Such a possibility would be ironic given that these policies exist specifically to reduce the gap between men and women in the workplace.

Research has not directly examined the relationship between stereotype threat and reactions to affirmative action and family-friendly policies, but the related research outlined above suggests that this is an important area for future studies. If these policies designed to help disadvantaged groups lead to stereotype threat, understanding the boundaries of this effect will be necessary. These programs can be important for addressing disadvantage in the workplace, and we are not suggesting that they should be eliminated. Rather, there may be ways in which the framing and promotion of these policies could be conducted to reduce the potential for stereotype threat.

In summary, further research on stereotype threat and different aspects of employees' perceptions of their relationship with their employer is needed. For example, research could examine how stereotype threat impacts employees' perceptions of organizational support and fulfillment versus violation of psychological contracts (Robinson et al., 1994). Employees who experience stereotype threat may not only disengage from their work tasks and their immediate social environment but may also feel that their organization does not value their contribution or has breached the psychological contract. Possible reactions of employees to these perceptions may range from different types of withdrawal (e.g., lateness, absenteeism) to counterproductive behaviors directed at the organization.

Antecedents of Stereotype Threat at Work

Given the potential consequences of stereotype threat in the workplace, it is important to consider factors that might cause stereotype threat in the first place. Practitioners who are aware of these antecedents could then design work processes to minimize the likelihood that stereotype threat will arise. In Steele's original theorizing on stereotype threat, he and his colleagues (Steele, 1997; Steele et al., 2002) outlined several factors that are likely to lead to stereotype threat, including perceptions of poor prospects and a lack of feeling of belonging. As noted, however, most research has taken place in the laboratory where stereotype threat effects are brought about artificially. As a consequence, it is unclear which factors are likely to precipitate feelings of stereotype threat at work. Although it is unlikely for employees to experience exactly the same kind of blatant stereotype threat that is induced in the laboratory, there may be more subtle events and experiences in the workplace that can lead people to worry about being evaluated on the basis of their group membership. For example, the proportion of other women in a setting has been shown to affect feelings of stereotype threat (Inzlicht & Ben-Zeev, 2000; Sekaquaptewa & Thompson, 2003), and thus the underrepresentation of women in different settings might lead women to feel that they do not belong in that context. Alternatively, because women who work in male-dominated fields are well aware of the gender imbalance, they might be unperturbed in settings that would lead to stereotype threat in the artificial and short-term environment of the laboratory.

To assess whether gender imbalance had an impact on women working in male-dominated fields, in the context of a survey of female accountants, von Hippel, Walsh, and colleagues (2011) highlighted (or did not highlight) the gender imbalance at the top levels of the organizational structure. Results of the survey indicated that women who were reminded of the low

percentage of female partners in the firm experienced greater stereotype threat than women who were not given this reminder (von Hippel, Walsh, et al., 2011). This effect emerged despite the fact that the female accountants were well aware of the gender ratio of partners at their firm prior to the reminder. Thus, it seems that simply working in an organization where there is a significant imbalance in group representation in the upper echelons may lead to stereotype threat for employees whose group is not well represented, particularly when this imbalance is brought to their attention. In light of this finding, and for many other reasons, it is important for organizations to work toward greater representation of disadvantaged groups in upper management. It is unlikely, however, that organizations will be able to bring about immediate change in the group composition in the upper levels of the organization. To address stereotype threat as they work toward this goal, organizations could instead promote increases in the numbers of women or minority groups in higher-level positions and avoid situations in which skewed gender or race representations in higher status roles would become obvious to their employees.

In addition to such situational cues, Steele et al. (2002) argue that individual perceptions may influence feelings of stereotype threat. For example, stigma consciousness (Pinel, 1999), or the degree to which people expect to be the victim of prejudice or discrimination, may be one individual difference that could influence perceptions of stereotype threat. Consistent with the idea that individual perceptions may influence the experience of stereotype threat, women who expect gender prejudice exhibit heightened vigilance toward potential discriminatory cues (Kaiser, Vick, & Major, 2006). This research suggests that in the workplace, some people who experience stereotype threat may benefit more from interventions than others. Interestingly, research on individual differences

has suggested that people with a high internal locus of control and a highly proactive personality may react more strongly to cues in the environment that suggest stereotype threat (Cadinu, Maass, Lombardo, & Frigerio, 2006; Gupta & Bhawe, 2007). Although these individual differences typically yield positive and resilient outcomes in work settings (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Ng, Sorensen, & Eby, 2006), they seem to exacerbate the effects of stereotype threat.

The social comparisons employees make are related to chronic experiences of stereotype threat (von Hippel, Issa, et al., 2011). Social comparison theory is founded on the idea that the skills and attributes of others may be used as an aid to gain a more accurate understanding of the self. That is, individuals engage in social comparison as a means of evaluating their own standing on various dimensions relative to others (Festinger, 1954). Consistent with this theorizing, working women use social comparisons to gain self-knowledge and to define themselves relative to others (Isobe & Ura, 2006). Given that men typically earn more than women, are promoted faster, and are given work that is of greater value to the organization (Heilman, 2001), it is likely to be problematic for women to compare themselves with their male colleagues. That is, by engaging in social comparisons with male colleagues, it may become salient to women that they are paid less, that they are climbing the corporate ladder at a slower rate, and that they are being assigned less visible projects.

Social comparisons with those who perform well can be threatening to self-evaluations (Wills, 1981), and social comparisons with the higher powered group might also lead to stereotype threat, as differences between groups might be perceived as intrinsically linked to stereotypes. In support of this possibility, female lawyers who engaged in social comparisons with their male colleagues when evaluating their career progression and developmental opportunities experienced greater chronic stereotype threat (von Hippel, Issa, et al., 2011). Importantly, not all comparisons

are equally unnerving, as women who engaged in these same comparisons with their female colleagues did not experience stereotype threat. Perhaps comparing oneself to another woman who excels in the stereotyped area can serve as evidence that the stereotype is irrelevant or can be overcome, but at the very least it does not appear to induce stereotype threat. Future research in this area should aim to understand more clearly the mechanisms of this effect and what kind of processes working women engage in when making these social comparisons. With a better understanding of the nature of the comparisons being made, it will be easier to directly address these issues by developing interventions.

It is also likely that the behavior of some colleagues induces more stereotype threat than the behavior of others. Consistent with this possibility, Logel et al. (2009) found that female engineering students who experienced acute stereotype threat in the form of conversations with sexist male colleagues showed performance decrements across several different tasks. Another laboratory test of this idea demonstrated that exposure to an acute stereotype threat in the form of sexism (i.e., by leading participants to believe the experimenter is sexist) resulted in lower performance and a reduced sense of comfort and belonging for women. Men, in contrast, perform better when they believe the experimenter is sexist (Adams, Garcia, Purdie-Vaughns, & Steele, 2006). This research has not yet been extended to the workplace, but it is easy to imagine that interaction with colleagues who hold more sexist or racist attitudes could lead to heightened experiences of stereotype threat for employees from disadvantaged groups.

Although research on the antecedents of stereotype threat in the workplace is still in its infancy, the studies reviewed above suggest that the demographic makeup of teams, social comparisons with coworkers, and individual differences in sensitivity to stereotype threat are important factors that determine levels of stereotype threat. Thus, there are links to the work group diversity literature (van Knippenberg & Schippers,

2007); however, this literature has so far largely ignored the topic of stereotype threat. Future research could additionally examine the factors that make employees resilient to the experience of stereotype threat. For example, it may be possible that awareness of research on stereotype threat may buffer its deleterious consequences (cf. Johns, Schmader, & Martens, 2005).

Additional Considerations for Future Research

The existing research and theory described above suggest that stereotype threat may have important consequences for organizations. It is clear, however, that there is a dearth of research in this area. Although laboratory-based studies help inform future research, it is important that direct applied research is conducted in organizations. Although we have provided suggestions for future research directions throughout this article, there are broader issues that we think are particularly important to the study of stereotype threat in the workplace.

First, it is important that future research aims to understand the differences between the experiences of acute and chronic stereotype threat. Of the existing studies conducted in the workplace, some studies examine chronic experiences of stereotype threat using survey methodology (e.g., von Hippel et al., 2013), whereas others draw attention to existing discrepancies in the work environment to create a state of acute stereotype threat (e.g., von Hippel, Walsh, et al., 2011). The experience of chronic stereotype threat is not well understood, but it is likely to arise from a series of more acute stereotype threat experiences in the form of exposure to cues like status differences. Organizational research would benefit from understanding the development of chronic stereotype threat by examining employees over the course of their career. Future research could also aim to understand the longer term consequences of acute threat experiences, using experimental, longitudinal, and short-term experience sampling methodologies.

Second, research should attempt to understand how the experiences of stereotype threat differ across different disadvantaged groups in organizations. Currently, much of the research is conducted with women, with very little research examining other groups likely to be the target of negative stereotypes, and thus likely to experience stereotype threat, such as employees from stigmatized ethnic minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) employees; and older employees. The content of the stereotypes about each disadvantaged group is different, yet it is unclear whether the antecedents and consequences of stereotype threat experienced by these groups will also differ. It is important to examine the experiences of stereotype threat across different groups if organizations are to develop effective interventions. The industry itself is also likely to be an important contextual factor in determining when stereotype threat is experienced by members of different groups. For example, stereotypes of women as communal and warm suggest that they will be less likely to experience stereotype threat in an industry like childcare, although male employees may well feel threatened in this line of work.

Third, it is particularly important for future research to determine the causal nature of the relationship between stereotype threat and organizational variables. In work examining more chronic experiences of stereotype threat, it is not clear whether stereotype threat is always the causal variable. It seems likely that there is a feedback cycle: Employees experience stereotype threat and begin to have more negative attitudes, and these negative attitudes in turn lead them to interpret more situations through the lens of stereotype threat. Longitudinal research could tease apart such relationships and also identify points at which interventions might be maximally effective.

Implications for Organizations

Stereotypes about different groups (e.g., women in male-dominated fields, older employees) have persisted in spite of the

evidence that contradicts these stereotypes (e.g., Ng & Feldman, 2012) and increasing calls for diversity (Powell, Butterfield, & Parent, 2002). The existing laboratory research, as well as early research in organizations, suggests that employees who belong to stereotyped groups are likely to be vulnerable to stereotype threat. The evidence reviewed in the previous sections suggests that stereotype threat can have detrimental effects on intrapersonal and interpersonal processes, as well as employees' perceptions of their relationship with their organization. Given these negative consequences of stereotype threat, it is important to consider strategies to buffer employees who are susceptible to it. We recommend a three-pronged approach, analogous to strategies that can be found in the stress management literature (e.g., Israel, Baker, Goldenhar, & Heaney, 1996). First, organizations could aim to prevent stereotype threat from occurring (primary prevention). Second, organizations could find ways to diagnose and treat early stages of stereotype threat before it has long-term negative consequences (secondary prevention). Finally, organizations could try to undo the consequences among those who are experiencing the negative effects of stereotype threat (tertiary prevention).

Primary Prevention of Stereotype Threat

The finding that women who compare themselves to men experience stereotype threat (von Hippel, Issa, et al., 2011) suggests that there are good reasons to consider the distribution of employees in marginalized groups at different levels of the organization (see Brewer, von Hippel, & Gooden, 1999). When there is greater diversity at higher levels of organizations, members of marginalized groups may be able to engage in social comparisons to arrive at an accurate self-evaluation without having to compare themselves to the majority group, thereby minimizing experiences of stereotype threat. If senior positions filled by stigmatized group members are placed

primarily in stereotypical roles (e.g., women in human resources; Asian Americans in IT), this strategy may be ineffective (Brewer et al., 1999).

Research also points to the potential for role models to help alleviate stereotype threat (von Hippel, Walsh, et al., 2011). Building on laboratory demonstrations that comparison with successful women reduces stereotype threat (Marx & Roman, 2002), von Hippel, Walsh, et al. (2011) had female accountants read about either a successful male partner or a successful female partner in their firm. Those who read about the male partner experienced significantly higher levels of stereotype threat than women who read about a successful female partner. This study also included an examination of one possible reason why comparisons with successful women do not induce stereotype threat. On the one hand, successful women may communicate to other women that they too can succeed simply by virtue of their shared gender. Alternatively, it might be the case that successful women are nonthreatening because they often have stereotypically female characteristics, such as family responsibilities. To examine this possibility, female employees were presented with either a male or a female partner from their firm who either mentioned or did not mention family activities in his or her work profile. If successful women are not eliciting stereotype threat because they demonstrate that success is possible even for women who occupy stereotypically nurturing roles such as being a mother, then mention of family should have an impact on whether comparisons with women lead to stereotype threat. Alternatively, if female leaders are nonthreatening simply by virtue of their demonstration that women can succeed, then mention of family should be unnecessary for comparisons with successful women to be nonthreatening. The results of this study indicated that whether family and outside interests were mentioned did not influence stereotype threat effects; reading about a female partner did not induce stereotype threat even when she

did not mention her family and interests outside work. Furthermore, reading about a male partner induced stereotype threat even when he did mention his family and outside interests. Thus, it seems that successful women working in male-dominated fields serve as evidence that the organization is supportive to women and thereby lessen the threat of gender stereotypes for other women who are trying to climb the career ladder.

Nevertheless, laboratory research also suggests that role models may be less effective in reducing stereotype threat for some women. For example, among women exposed to an acute stereotype threat, those with low levels of leadership self-efficacy were less inspired by successful role models and showed less identification with leadership, lowered leadership aspirations, and poorer leadership performance after exposure to a successful female role model (Hoyt, 2013). Another study found that women who believe that leaders are born rather than made were less likely to show the positive benefits of a female role model in buffering an acute experience of stereotype threat (Hoyt, Burnette, & Innella, 2012). These data suggest that the effectiveness of female leaders as role models would be enhanced by concurrently emphasizing to employees that they can develop leadership skills themselves.

Secondary and Tertiary Prevention of Stereotype Threat

We discuss strategies for secondary and tertiary prevention of stereotype threat together, given that both types of prevention strategies address broader negative responses to the stressor (in this case, stereotype threat). Stereotype threat can be stressful (Blascovich, Spencer, Quinn, & Steele, 2001), but social support buffers the negative consequences of stress. Social support can increase people's optimism (Brisette, Scheier, & Carver, 2002) and reduce depression (Mickelson, 2001) and illness (Seeman, 1996). Although there is little research directly examining the role of

social support as a buffer to the deleterious consequences of stereotype threat, the research that does exist suggests that social support is beneficial (Cole, Matheson, & Anisman, 2007). This research, coupled with the fact that there is unequivocal support for the benefits of social support in the workplace (e.g., see Ng & Sorensen, 2008, for a meta-analysis), suggests that social support is likely to be beneficial for employees experiencing stereotype threat.

Given the potential stress brought about by stereotype threat, the utility of different coping mechanisms should also be examined. For example, women who are threatened with the stereotype that they are poor at math do not show typical performance deficits if they are high in coping sense of humor (Ford, Ferguson, Brooks, & Hagadone, 2004). These data suggest that one manner of coping with stereotype threat is by using humor to reinterpret the situation as a challenge rather than a threat (see Kuiper, Martin, & Olinger, 1993).

Self-affirmation has also been shown to reduce the negative consequences of stereotype threat. Self-affirmation theory proposes that one of our primary social motivations as individuals is to achieve and maintain self-integrity and a sense of self-worth (Sherman & Cohen, 2006; Steele, 1988). According to this theory, individuals can overcome threats to their self-integrity by affirming other positive aspects of their self-worth (Sherman & Cohen, 2006). Stereotype threat is a threat to one's self-integrity, and research has demonstrated that allowing individuals who experience stereotype threat to self-affirm can reduce its impact. For example, African-American students who affirmed their values at the beginning of the school semester reduced the "achievement gap" with White students by 40% compared to African-American students in a control condition (Cohen, Garcia, Apfel, & Master, 2006; Cohen, Garcia, Purdie-Vaughns, Apfel, & Brzustoski, 2009; see also Martens, Johns, Greenberg, & Schimel, 2006, for similar effects among women in math). Similarly, in the communication research

described earlier, self-affirmation was effective for reducing the consequences of stereotype threat. Women who were threatened by the stereotype that men are better leaders, but who subsequently had the opportunity to self-affirm, did not adopt a more masculine communication style (von Hippel, Wiryakusuma, et al., 2011). Other research has successfully reduced stereotype threat effects through the blurring of intergroup boundaries, by having women focus on the characteristics that they share with men (Rosenthal & Crisp, 2006). Interventions such as these could be readily extended to an organizational context.

Conclusion

Most jobs involve being judged by peers, supervisors, or customers, yet employees from negatively stereotyped groups have the added concern of being judged on the basis of their group membership. It is the awareness that others may evaluate one through the lens of negative stereotypes that triggers stereotype threat, regardless of whether the target believes the stereotype to be true for themselves (Steele, 1997). Given the prevalence of negative stereotypes (e.g., regarding female abilities in the workplace, older employees, LGBT employees), it is likely that many employees will experience stereotype threat at least occasionally. Thus, although it is commonplace to experience evaluation apprehension when being judged, stereotype threat can result in additional concerns for certain groups in the workplace. In this focal article, we have reviewed the growing literature on the antecedents and consequences of stereotype threat and proposed several directions for future research. The existing research has important implications for the workplace but is often conducted in laboratory settings with student samples. It is important that stereotype threat research is extended into organizational settings, as the existing data suggest that stereotype threat is a concern for organizations who desire to retain their talent and help them reach their potential. We hope that this focal article

stimulates further research and constructive discussions on stereotype threat in the workplace and that the emerging evidence on the deleterious consequences of stereotype threat motivates organizational practitioners to address this important phenomenon.

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