

NAME STEREOTYPES AND TEACHERS' EXPECTATIONS

HERBERT HARARI¹

California State University, San Diego

JOHN W. McDAVID

Georgia State University

Acknowledging effects of implicit biases in teachers' expectations upon the educational process, it was conjectured that teachers' evaluations of children's performance may be systematically associated with stereotyped perceptions of first names. Short essays actually written by fifth-grade students were presented for evaluation to teachers and college sophomores. Authorship of the essays was randomly linked with boys and girls with common, popular, and attractive names, as well as with rare, unpopular, and unattractive names. As expected, the attributed quality of each essay was higher when essays were authored by names associated with positive stereotypes. This stereotype bias was more pronounced for experienced teachers than for inexperienced college sophomores, and the effect was clearer for boys' names than for girls' names.

Several investigations have documented the significance of first names as bases of popular stereotypes. Individuals often evolve rather strong affect about their own names, and this in turn affects their own personal adjustment (Eagleson, 1946; Ellis & Beechley, 1954; Plottke, 1950; Schoenfeld, 1942; Strunk, 1958). Furthermore, there is evidence that interpersonal relations are also considerably influenced by stereotypes associated with names (Allen, Brown, Dickinson, & Pratt, 1941; Buchanan & Bruning, 1971; Lawson, 1971). Even sociometric popularity status is related to the social desirability of one's name (McDavid & Harari, 1966). Thus, people, like inanimate objects, are often "judged by their labels."

The important effects of teacher expectations upon the process of education and the child's adjustment to and performance in the school situation have been demonstrated (Bandura & Walters, 1963; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). In the provocative *Pygmalion in the Classroom*, Rosenthal and Jacobson have described the self-fulfilling prophecies generated through the subtle pervasion of expectations into differential

treatment of pupils within the classroom—lower expectations engender poorer performance, while more challenging ones engender better performance. While other authors have questioned the extent of these effects (e.g., Elashoff & Snow, 1970), they nevertheless do occur.

In general, evidence suggests that the frequency or rarity of occurrence of a name in general usage is related to the content and desirability of stereotypes associated with that name. That is, more common names are regarded as generally more attractive, and they connote more favorable stereotypes. In contrast, the rare and unusual names are deemed less socially attractive and they connote negative stereotypes (McDavid & Harari, 1966).

Out of these observations, it may be conjectured that teachers' expectations are likely to be systematically associated with implicit stereotyped perceptions of names, and these stereotypical expectations may in turn be reflected in teachers' subjective evaluation of student products and performance. The studies described here were executed to explore and verify this conjecture. It was anticipated that teachers would tend to make more favorable or positive evaluative judgments of work samples linked with students bearing common or

¹ Requests for reprints should be sent to Herbert Harari, Department of Psychology, California State University, San Diego, California 92115.

frequent first names and less favorable evaluations of products associated with unusual names. Furthermore, on the assumption that name stereotypes evolve cumulatively with extended teaching experience, it was expected that this stereotypical influence upon evaluations should be more pronounced for experienced teachers than for college freshmen participating in a hypothetical and novel evaluative judgment exercise.

METHOD

Subjects

Subjects employed in this study were 80 female elementary school teachers employed in urban public schools and 80 female freshman and sophomore students enrolled in psychology courses at a major university. The teachers were estimated to range in age from about 20 to about 45, with a median age of approximately 30. The median of their reported accumulated teaching experience was 10 years. The undergraduate students ranged in age from 17 to 22, with a median age of approximately 20 years.

Procedure

The experimental procedure required the subjects to evaluate a set of brief written essays, purportedly the products of 10-year-old pupils identified only by first names. To ascertain whether actual teaching experience enhanced or reduced such stereotyping effects, the same experimental procedures were replicated with a sample of experienced teachers and with a sample of nonteacher undergraduate students, the latter being asked to judge the quality of the brief essays "as though they were public school teachers."

The pupil products to be judged included eight brief essays actually written by 10-year-old students in response to a request to prepare extemporaneously a short paragraph describing "What I Did Last Sunday." From a large sample of essays, four authored by girls and four authored by boys were selected as representative of the entire set—neither exceptionally poor nor exceptionally good and relatively free of gross errors or nonsense statements.

The evaluative judgment task was presented to both teachers and undergraduates as a preliminary step in an exploration of student composition skills and the problems of evaluating compositional ability in elementary school students. Subjects were asked to read the essays presented to them in a stapled booklet, each essay identified only by a signed first name and a randomly selected initial (of an implied surname) below each paragraph. They were requested to grade the paragraphs on a numerical scale from 50 to 100, with 90-100 in-

terpreted as superior achievement (equivalent to an A), 80-89 as good achievement (equivalent to a B), 70-79 as average achievement (equivalent to a C), 60-69 as below average achievement (equivalent to a D), and 50-59 as poor achievement (equivalent to an F).

The names used to identify each essay's purported author were selected on three criteria: (a) desirability ratings by children, (b) desirability ratings by teachers, and (c) frequency of occurrence among the over 200 pupils who prepared the sample of essays used in the study. Among girls, the names Karen and Lisa occurred frequently, were regarded as socially desirable and attractive by other fifth graders, and were rated by teachers as "positive" or desirable. Similarly, the two masculine names David and Michael were selected as popular, frequent, and desirable. In contrast, the names Bertha and Adelle (for girls) occurred rarely, were not liked by fifth graders and were judged as "negative" or undesirable by teachers. For boys, the names Elmer and Hubert were selected as unpopular, rare, and undesirable.

A set of Greco-Latin square designs was employed to randomize the association between authors' names and essay content, as well as the sequence of presentation of the four stories to be evaluated. Essays actually written by boys were always associated with masculine names, and essays actually written by girls were associated with feminine names. The materials were presented randomly so that each essay appeared equally often in each of the eight ordinal positions of presentation for evaluation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Numerical grades assigned by each teacher judge to each essay-name combination in the Greco-Latin square designs were treated as scores subjected to analyses of variance. (The order of presentation of Greco-Latin squares showed no significant effect on the dependent variables, thus assuring that the design protected against contamination of these variables). Data for boys' names and essays were analyzed separately from that for girls' names and essays. Also, data for experienced teachers were analyzed as a group separately from the data for college undergraduates, the latter being treated as a replication of the former.

For teachers, the effect of the author's name upon the score assigned the essay was significant for both boys ($F = 2.89$, $df = 3/111$, $p < .05$) and girls ($F = 3.03$, $df = 3/111$, $p < .05$). As can be seen in Table 1, for boys the name David was associated

TABLE 1
MEAN NUMERICAL SCORE RATINGS BY TEACHERS

Name	Score	Essay content	Score	Presentation sequence	Score
Boys					
David	83.55*	The store	81.02	First	79.95
Michael	80.02	Tarzan	79.70	Second	80.47
Elmer	78.17	The anniversary	79.57	Third	81.25
Hubert	77.97	Kites	78.92	Fourth	81.25
Girls					
Adelle	86.62*	Shopping	85.37*	First	79.55
Lisa	81.95*	Walking the dog	81.90	Second	83.95*
Karen	80.95	Playing dolls	81.32	Third	84.02*
Bertha	78.35	Planting seeds	79.47	Fourth	80.55

* $p < .05$.

with a strongly favorable systematic bias in grading. The name Michael also showed a similar favorable bias, although not statistically significant. For girls, the essays attributed to Lisa received more favorable evaluations than those attributed to Bertha; the name Karen was also associated with favorable bias, although this was not statistically significant.

Contrary to expectations, the unusual name Adelle was associated with more favorable evaluations than any of the other three feminine names. It would appear that the specific stereotype content associated with Adelle may be somewhat "academic" or "scholarly," yielding a positive systematic bias in this case despite its rarity of occurrence. (It might also be possible that the particular name Adelle was associated at the particular time of execution of this study with a specific real woman, Adelle Davis, who has earned distinction and visibility as a famous "health-food" nutritionist.)

Another possible factor contributing to these differences in results for males and females is the likelihood of genuine sex differences in the content of masculine and feminine stereotypes. The unpopular male may be more likely to handle his social rejection through "acting out" and expression of hostility and rebellion, generating behavior that is troublesome and unattrac-

tive for teachers. The socially unpopular female, however, may be more inclined to handle her rejection through "withdrawal," generating behavior that is less troublesome for teachers.

For boys' names and essays, no other effects were significantly related to evaluative scores. For girls, significance in essay content ($F = 4.37$, $df = 3/111$, $p < .05$) meant that one of the essays was rated significantly higher than the other three regardless of the source to which it was attributed (see Table 1). This essay dealt with shopping, and perhaps its content and style were simply more engaging than that of the other three. Since the essays were real ones, actually written by fifth graders, this variation is not surprising. But because essay content was randomly associated with the major variables under investigation in these studies, this effect does not alter interpretation of the effects of those other variables.

For girls' essays, scores assigned to the first story graded and the last story graded were significantly lower than those assigned to the two middle stories ($F = 3.82$, $df = 3/111$, $p < .05$, see Table 1). Whether this is some kind of "primacy-recency" effect is difficult to determine; possibly it is merely an artifact of shifting standards. Had the shift been systematically continuous in one direction from start

to end, it might have been interpreted as a shift from internalized (or preconceived) standards at the outset to externalized (or relative) standards later in the judging task, but the data are not congruent with such a pattern. As an intrusive contaminant of subjective evaluation and grading by public school teachers, this relationship is important enough to merit further attention. However, it is afield of the main focus of this investigation of teacher expectations and stereotypes.

Analyses of variance for the college undergraduate students showed no significant effects whatever. Apparently the exercise of judging these essays was so hypothetical and irrelevant to their own personal involvement and the content of the essays so homogeneous that their rating scores were essentially randomly distributed. But the fact that there was no evidence of stereotypical associations of names and evaluations is consistent with the expectation that experienced teachers accumulate these stereotypical expectations and biases over time with their training and experience as teachers. However, it should remain recognized that other factors probably contribute further to making the teachers' behavior more systematic than that of the undergraduates. For the teachers, this task was presumably more ego involving, more likely to be taken seriously, and less novel. Even so, what variance does occur among the undergraduates is parallel to that observed among teachers, but differences among the experimental conditions within the undergraduate sample simply fail to achieve statistical significance.

From these data, it is evident that teachers' evaluations of student products incorporate a great deal of extraneous variance above and beyond that attributable to differences in the quality of the product being

judged. Not only does this feedback reflect the teacher's approval of the individual student concerned (McDavid, 1959), but it further incorporates the teacher's evaluative stereotypes of the names associated with each student.

REFERENCES

- ALLEN, L., BROWN, V., DICKINSON, L., & PRATT, K. C. The relation of first name preferences to their frequency in the culture. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 1941, **14**, 279-293.
- BANDURA, A., & WALTERS, R. *Social learning and personality development*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1963.
- BUCHANAN, B., & BRUNING, J. L. Connotative meanings of names and nicknames on three dimensions. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 1971, **85**, 143-144.
- EAGLESON, O. W. Students' reactions to their given names. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 1946, **23**, 187-195.
- ELASHOFF, J. D., & SNOW, R. E. *A case study in statistical inference: Reconsideration of the Rosenthal-Jacobson data on teacher expectancy*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Center for Research and Development in Teaching, 1970.
- ELLIS, A., & BEECHLEY, R. M. Emotional disturbances in children with peculiar given names. *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 1954, **85**, 337-339.
- LAWSON, E. D. Semantic differential analysis of men's first names. *Journal of Psychology*, 1971, **78**, 229-240.
- MCDAVID, J. W. Some relationships between social reinforcement of scholastic achievement. *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, 1959, **23**, 151-154.
- MCDAVID, J. W., & HARARI, H. Stereotyping of names and popularity in grade school children. *Child Development*, 1966, **37**, 453-459.
- PLOTTKE, P. The child and his name. *Individual Psychology Bulletin*, 1950, **8**, 150-157.
- ROSENTHAL, R., & JACOBSON, L. *Pygmalion in the classroom: Teacher expectation and pupils' intellectual development*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1968.
- SCHOENFELD, N. An experimental study of some problems relating to stereotypes. *Archives of Psychology*, 1942, New York, No. 270.
- STRUNK, O. Attitudes toward one's name and one's self. *Journal of Individual Psychology*, 1958, **14**, 54-67.

(Received June 29, 1972)