Should Henrietta be Punished or Rewarded? The Effects of Name Desirability on Responsibility Attribution and Sanction Assignment

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Abstract

This study investigated effects of first name desirability on both attribution of responsibility (AR) and sanction assignment (AS) to assess the generality of name bias effects on the attribution process. Subjects (n = 112) were equally divided by sex, and randomly assigned to four groups which received stimulus stories with all male or all female actors. The stories represented three of Heider's levels with high magnitude positive or negative outcomes produced by male or female actors with desirable or undesirable first names.

Analysis of AR ratings revealed significant main effects for both Level (L) and Outcome (O) as well as a significant L x O interaction; no significant main effects or interactions involving subjects' sex or actor's sex (A) or name (Na) were revealed, although there was an L x Na trend ($p = .07$). For AS, significant main effects were found for L, O, and name desirability (Na). Significant two- (S x A, L x O), and (L x Na) and three-way (L x O x S and L x O x Na) interactions were found. Evidence of the effect of name desirability on AS is provided by the significant main effects for name desirability and by the L x Na interaction and by the L x O x Na interaction. Punishment ratings exceeded reward ratings, and significantly less reward was assigned to male actors with undesirable names and significantly less punishment was assigned to female actors with undesirable names, implying that perhaps a cognitive factor is involved, generating a type of gender appropriate leniency effect. These data also indicate that the impact of name desirability is limited primarily to subjective judgmental areas and can be weakened by focusing upon objective features of causal evidence and target's behavior.

Doit-on punir ou récompenser Henrietta? Les effets du caractère désirable d'un nom sur l'attribution de responsabilité et l'assignation de sanction

Cette étude examine les effets du caractère désirable ou indésirable d'un prénom sur l'attribution de responsabilité (AR) et l'assignation de sanction (AS) pour évaluer la généralité des effets de préjugé sur le processus d'attribution. Des histoires représentant trois niveaux de Heider ont été présentées à 112 sujets, repartis au hasard et en nombre égal selon leur sexe en quatre groupes. Les personnages des histoires, tous masculins ou tous féminins selon le groupe, portant des noms désirables ou indésirables, aboutirent à des fins de magnitudes fort positives ou fort negatives.

L'analyse des classements (AR) faits par les sujets révèle un effet principal de niveau (L-level) et

un autre de fin (O-Outcome), aussi bien qu'un interaction significative entre L et O; aucun effet entre le sexe du sujet et le sexe du personnage (A) ou le nom du personnage (N) n'atteint le seuil de signification, bien qu'il existe une tendance L x N (P = .07). Quant à AS, des effets principaux significatifs existent pour L, O et le caractère désirable ou indésirable du nom (N). Des interactions (S x A, L x O, et L x N) et (L x O x S et L x O x N) atteignent le seuil de signification. De l'évidence au sujet de l'effet du nom (N) sur AS est fournie par l'effet principal significatif (N) et part l'interaction L x N et l'interaction L x O x N. Pour les personnages masculins aux noms indésirables, les jugements de punition excedènt les jugements de récompensées. Significativement moins de jugements récompensées ont été accordés aux personnages masculins aux noms désirables et significativement moins jugements de punition ont été accordés aux personnages féminins aux noms indesirables. Les résultats impliquent qu'un facteur cognitif joue, qui produit un effet de clémence selon le sexe du personnage. Ces données impliquent aussi que l'appui du caractère désirable ou indésirable du nom se limite surtout aux domaines de jugements subjectifs et peut être diminué en soulignant l'évidence causale et le comportement objectif du personnage.

A considerable body of research evidence now exists to support the view that first names, just like physical attraction, skin color, and other human characteristics, are attribute variables. That is, first names have affective or emotional value not only for the person bearing a particular name but also for others who are engaged in some form of interaction with that individual. Furthermore, positively evaluated first names (i.e., attractive or popular ones) are preferred over negatively evaluated first names (Duffy & Ridinger, 1981; Garwood, 1976; Garwood, Baer, Levine, Carroll, & O'Neal, 1981; Garwood, Cox, Kaplan, Wasserman, & Sulzer, 1980; Harari & McDavid, 1973; Lawson, 1971; McDavid & Harari, 1966; Rickel & Anderson, 1981). In other words, first names are capable of conveying stereotypes which generate expectancies about the named person, and thus affect interactions with, and judgments made about that person.

The influence of names on others' behavior has been studied repeatedly. Harari and McDavid (1973), for example, found that students with positively evaluated first names were judged more competent by elementary school teachers. These teachers assigned significantly higher grades to essays purportedly written by students with desirable names than they did to the same essays believed to be written by students bearing negatively evaluated names. Garwood (1976) has reported parallel data: students whose names were positively evaluated by teachers had higher standardized achievement and self-concept scores than did students with negatively evaluated first names.

Garwood has also examined the influence of physical attractiveness and first names on perceivers' behavior. In one study, teachers were found to be more punitive (i.e., took away more pennies) toward a child

who was judged to be either physically unattractive or bore an undesirable first name but not both (Garwood and Habif, Reference Note 1). In a second study, when physical attraction was held constant, college students significantly more often voted for beauty queens bearing positively evaluated first names than they did for beauty queens bearing negatively evaluated first names (Garwood, Cox, Kaplan, Wasserman & Sulzer, 1980). The fact that positively evaluated first names are associated with traditional sexrole stereotypes may also contribute to this outcome (Garwood, Baer, Levine, Carroll, & O'Neal, 1981). Finally, Leirer, DePetris, Speciale, and Jansen (Reference Note 2) have provided evidence that perceivers hold implicit personality theories about certain categories of names which result in the perceiver applying differential expectations to the behaviors of individuals who fall into these various name categories. Thus, name desirability seems to create subtle positive or negative perceptual sets which influence evaluation of the bearer.

Heider (1958), a prominent American social psychology theorist, has identified a number of variables that influence the degree to which one person (the observer) holds another (the actor) responsible for some act of behavior. He has identified five levels of *responsibility attribution* (AR) which describe different stages of development of sophistication in the process of determining personal causality for the occurrence of some act. These levels are: I: *Association* (being held responsible for any effect with which one is associated); II: *Causality* (being held responsible for any effect produced by one's actions even though the consequences were unforeseeable); III: *Foreseeability* (being held responsible for any foreseeable effect even though this effect was unintended); IV: *Intention* (being held responsible for any action whose effects were foreseeable and intended); and V: *Justifiability* (being held only partly responsible for an action whose effects were intended and justified by environmental circumstances).

A related process is *assignment of sanctions* (AS) or determining how much punishment or reward to assign to the individual believed to be responsible for some act. Although some psychologists have treated AR and AS processes as equivalent, there is reason on both empirical and rationale grounds to regard them as distinct and different. An analog is the bifurcated legal process of (1) determining guilt and (2) setting an appropriate penalty. Attribution of responsibility and the determination of guilt is primarily based on an analysis of the causal structure (what the actor did to cause the act to occur) and involves consideration of the causal variables mentioned above (association, causality, etc.). To the extent that an analysis of the causal evidence indicates that a person intentionally pro-

duced a foreseeable and unjustified negative outcome he is regarded as responsible by an adult attributor. Lacking complete evidence the decision may be made with less confidence on the basis of less decisive causal factors such as foreseeability. In deciding upon guilt or responsibility the magnitude of the outcome is not explicitly considered although it may provide some bias via emotional arousal. However, in setting an appropriate punishment (or reward) outcome intensity (the degree to which an outcome is positive or negative) is the major factor once the person is judged to be personally responsible for producing the outcome. Responsibility attribution is more objective and cognitive; sanction assignment is more subjective and involves a balancing of perceived outcome intensity with magnitude of sanction assigned.

Research on sanction assignment by Sulzer (1964) has shown that severity of punishment assigned generally varies directly with perceived outcome intensity. That it can be affected by the physical attractiveness of the perpetrator was demonstrated in studies by Landy and Aronson (1969) and Efran (1974) which showed greater leniency toward more attractive wrongdoers. In apparent contradiction to the distinction advanced above between AR and AS, Dion's (1972) results have been interpreted by Tedeschi and Lindskold (1976) as showing that attractive wrongdoers are punished less because they are judged to be less responsible for misbehavior. However, this is not fully warranted since Dion's subjects did not rate responsibility but how antisocial the perpetrator was or the likelihood of his misbehaving in the future. Seligman, Paschall, and Takata (1974) reported that attractive women were perceived as more responsible for positive outcomes and unattractive women more responsible for negative outcomes. This apparently represents the major evidence for the impact of physical attractiveness on AR and may reflect a general balance effect, i.e., good persons perform good acts; bad persons bad acts. Thus, these studies provide fairly clear support for the effects of attractiveness upon sanction assignment but, at best, weak indication of an overall influence on responsibility attribution.

In the present study, the effects of first name desirability upon both AR and AS were investigated to assess the generality of name bias effects on the attribution process and to provide some insight into the nature of the bias. Since it was assumed that AR is based primarily upon relatively objective analysis of causal factors, it was not expected to be greatly affected by differences in desirability of the actor's first name. However, name desirability was expected to influence the assignment of sanctions which involves a more subjective evaluation of the outcome and the actor who produced it. Both positive and negative outcomes were included to

evaluate whether name desirability effects follow a simple additive model or a more complex principle.

METHOD

Subjects. From introductory psychology classes, 112 students attending Tulane, a large private Southern university, were recruited. Tulane draws students from all over the world but primarily from the Northeast and the South. Twenty-eight were randomly assigned to each of four groups which received stimulus stories with all male or all female actors.

Stimulus Materials. Each of the two forms of stimulus materials (male or female actors) contained the same 12 stories representing three of Heider's levels with high magnitude positive or negative outcomes produced by an actor with (1) a desirable or (2) an undesirable first name. An additional four filler stories with mild outcomes and actors bearing neutral names were included to offer more variety in causal structure, outcome intensity, and name desirability, but were not considered part of the factorial design for analysis. Half of the stories were drawn from a set developed earlier by Shaw and Sulzer (1964) and half were composed for this project. Male and female forms were identical except for personal pronouns and the set of names used. Below are two representative stories; one contains the scale used to assign AR and AS values.

> As _____ was walking home some tourists stopped their car and asked him/her for directions to a campsite. _____ told them how to get to a pretty park in the woods. As the tourists were crossing a bridge into the park it broke and they fell into a flooded river and drowned.
>
> Is _____ responsible for the people getting drowned?
>
> Yes _____ No _____ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
>
> Should _____ be rewarded or punished for what happened?
>
> Rewarded: Yes Punished: Yes 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

> _____ was making telephone calls to ask people their opinions about television shows. When the phone rang in one house _____ called, it awakened a woman who was sleeping near a broken gas heater in a closed room. If she had not woke up the gas would have killed her.

Causal Structure and Outcome. Stories designed to reflect Heider's Lev-

els II, III, and V and positive and negative outcomes were included to provide information regarding interactions between these variables and name desirability. All outcomes involved serious consequences to persons: for negative outcomes, loss of life or serious injury, and prevention of such consequences for positive outcomes. The three levels represented situations in which: the actor unintentionally caused an unforeseeable outcome (Level II), unintentionally caused a foreseeable outcome (Level III), or intentionally caused a foreseeable outcome under justifying conditions of coercion or threat (Level V).

Name Desirability. To control for possible regional differences in name desirability the names used were selected from a list of male and female first names nominated and rated for desirability previously by several hundred students from this same college student population (See Garwood, Baer, Levine, Carroll, & O'Neal, 1981, for details of this procedure.) The desirable and undesirable names were chosen on the basis of high rater agreement and distinctiveness, and they were randomly assigned to the stories to provide the required combinations of desirable and undesirable names with positive and negative outcomes. Table 1 contains a list of the names used, the casual structure (Levels II, III, and V), and the outcome quality (+, −) assigned to each of the 12 critical stories which provided data for analysis. To provide a control for order and unique story effects, two forms of stories were used, the one shown in Table 1 and another with the names assigned to the stories in reverse order. Half the subjects in each group received each order.

Procedure. Subjects were assembled in classrooms in small groups. Two assistants distributed the stimulus materials prearranged to provide approximately equal numbers of each stimulus order and male or female actor form to male and female subjects. After distribution, subjects were told to read the instructions printed on the first page as an assistant read them aloud. These instructions provided participants with details on how to mark their judgments about the actor's responsibility for producing an outcome and the degree of that responsibility as well as how to mark their judgments about whether that actor deserved reward or punishment and if so, how much. This scale is illustrated in the first representative story described above. Participants were told there were no wrong or correct answers. Subjects were debriefed at the conclusion of the study but before the data were analyzed.

RESULTS

Analysis of data from the two orders of presentation of stories revealed no differences so these data were combined for subsequent analyses.

Table 1
Causal Structure, Level, Outcome Quality, and Desirable or Undesirable Names Combined for Each Stimulus Story in Male and Female Form 1*

			Male Form		Female Form	
Story	Level[a]	Outcome	Name	Category[b]	Name	Category[b]
2	III	+	Jason	D	Jennifer	D
3	II	−	Dick	U	Ethel	U
4	V	+	David	D	Cindy	D
6	III	−	Brad	D	Christine	D
7	II	+	Fred	U	Eleanore	U
8	V	−	Mark	D	Julie	D
10	III	+	Oscar	U	Gertrude	U
11	II	−	Michael	D	Cathy	D
12	V	+	Irving	U	Betty	U
14	III	−	Ralph	U	Henrietta	U
15	II	+	Stephen	D	Michelle	D
16	V	−	Harold	U	Harriet	U

**Note:* In Form 2 the names were assigned to stories in reverse order so that a different name-balance combination resulted. Stories 1, 5, 9, and 13 were filler items with Level II structure, minor outcomes, and actors with neutral names.

Legend
[a]Level II = Causality
[a]Level III = Foreseeability
[a]Level V = Justifiability

[b]D = Desirable first name
[a]U = Undesirable first name

For both AR and AS scale ratings, a 2 x 2 x 3 x 2 factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed. ANOVA is a procedure that enables researchers to identify, analyze, and determine the statistical significance of the different sources of variation contained within the dependent variables, AR and AS ratings; it attempts to identify the most important factors associated with an outcome. The between-subjects variables (those that occurred between the groups) were sex of subject (S) and sex of Actor (A). Within-subjects variables (those occurring among members within a group) were the three causal Levels (L), positive or negative Outcome Quality (O), and high or low Name Desirability (Na).

Analysis of AR ratings revealed significant main effects for both Level ($F = 365.3$, with 1/108 degrees of freedom (df), at a probability (p) $< .01$) and Outcome ($F = 10.4$, 1/108 df, $p < .01$) and also a significant L x O interaction ($F = 53.5$, 2/216 df, $p < .01$). No significant main effects or interactions involving subjects' Sex, Actors' Sex, or the Actors' Names

were revealed, but interactions between Levels and Names revealed a trend towards statistical significance ($F = 2.72$, $p = .068$). Figure 1A displays the average AR values for each of the three causal levels for positive and negative outcomes. At Level II, where the actor unintentionally produced an unforeseeable event as a consequence of some other intended act, AR significance was very low when the act caused harm to others but was moderately high when others were saved from death or serious harm. This may reflect differences in the perceived directness of the causal link. For example, in one story the actor tells some tourists how to get to a scenic park where, upon their arrival, they fall from a damaged bridge to their death, while in another the actor's telephone call causes someone to wake just in time to escape death from leaking gas in the room. A full discussion of this difference is beyond the scope of this report; however, these results underline the value and the difficulty of controlling causal structure in stimulus stories. At Level III, where the actor harms or benefits another "carelessly" while trying to accomplish some other end, mean AR was greater for negative outcomes. Although it is possible that subtle differences in causal structure may account for this, it seems likely that the actor was held more responsible for apparent failure to consider the serious consequences of his/her act for others (as in manslaughter or negligent homicide). No outcome differences in mean AR appear at Level V, where the actor produced an event under threat or coercion. Generally, these results are consistent with those from other studies which indicate that the causal structure variables are the major determinant of responsibility attribution. They also demonstrate that name desirability has a very limited effect upon this process.

Table 2 provides a summary of the significant results from the ANOVA conducted on the assignment of sanctions (AS) ratings. Significant main effects were found for Level (L), Outcome (O), and Name desirability (Na). Significant two-way interactions were found between sex of Subject (S) and sex of Actor (A), L x O, and L x Na, and a significant three-way interaction was found for L x O x S.

The main effects and interaction of Levels and Outcomes were expected on the basis of theoretical analysis and are consistent with other studies by Shaw and Sulzer and their associates incorporating these variables (e.g. Shaw, Briscoe, & Garcia-Esteve, 1968; Sulzer & Burglass, 1967). A comparison of the L x O interaction for AS and AR is provided in Figure 1. An examination of these two graphs strongly indicates that these are different processes: where a person is not held responsible he is apparently not regarded as open to legitimate sanction (Level II negative outcomes), but even when AR was similarly high, as at

Table 2
Statistically Significant Results for the Analysis of
Variance of the Assignment of Sanction Ratings

Source	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Subjects	112			
Sex (S) x Actor (A)	1	141.44	7.27	.008
Error	108	19.49		
Within Subjects				
Levels (L)	2	1367.20	163.14	.000
Error	216	8.38		
Outcomes (O)	1	264.30	23.87	.000
Error	108	11.07		
L x O	2	782.97	93.21	.000
L x O x S	2	45.00	5.36	.005
Error	216	8.40		
Name (Na)	1	33.44	5.10	.026
Error	108	6.56		
L x Na	2	28.34	4.20	.016
Error	216	6.74		

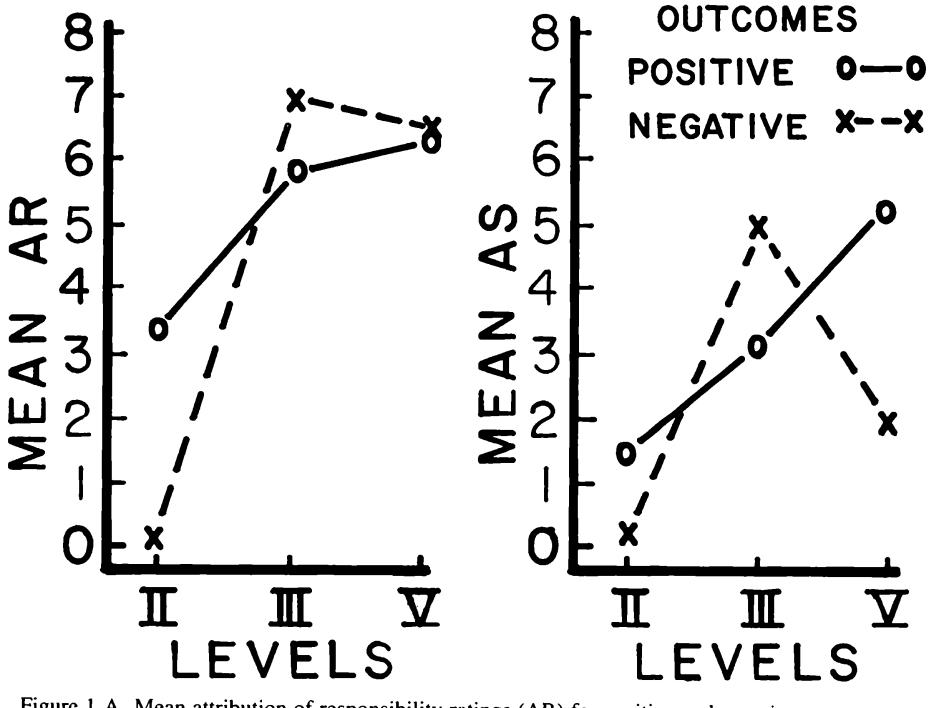

Figure 1.A. Mean attribution of responsibility ratings (AR) for positive and negative outcomes at each of Heider's three levels.

Figure 1.B. Mean assignment of sanctions ratings (AS) for positive and negative outcomes at three of Heider's levels. (The key in Figure 1.B. applies to both figures.)

Levels III and V, the amount of sanction assigned differed significantly. Clearly AS was influenced more by outcome quality. For positive events, AS increased progressively linearly over the three levels. In contrast, sanctioning for negative events was minimal at Levels II and V, where the outcome was produced without foreseeability or under coercion, but was relatively high at Level III where the actor caused serious harm to others carelessly. Apparently, the subjects were reluctant to punish the actors for so seriously harming others even when they held them responsible, if the causal structure provided evidence of coercion or lack of intent.

Table 3
Mean Assignment of Sanction Ratings by Male and Female Subjects to Male and Female Actors

	Male Subjects	Female Subjects
Male Actors	2.96	2.53
Female Actors	2.37	3.24

The results for AR showed no significant sex differences, but AS was apparently more sensitive to this variable. Table 3 contains means for the significant Subject Sex by Actor Sex (S x A) interaction: male subjects assigned greater sanctions to male than to female actors while female subjects assigned greater sanctions to actors of their own sex than to males. The interaction of Sex of Subject with Levels and Outcomes (L x O x S) is shown in Figure 2A and reveals minimal sex differences in AS at Levels II and V for both positive and negative events, whereas AS at Level III shows fairly strong subject sex differences. Males were much more willing to punish than to reward for carelessly produced outcomes whereas females punished less and rewarded more.

The major purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of name desirability on sanction assignment. Some evidence of the impact of this variable is provided by the significant main effect for name desirability and the L x Na interaction. Generally, AS was greater for actors with desirable names than with undesirable names (See Figure 2B). The only significant difference in AS, however, was produced at Level III where the actor "carelessly" caused unintended benefit or harm to others. Although this is evidence that sanctioning is susceptible to some name bias, it is ambiguous with respect to the nature of the bias because it does not reveal whether actors with desirable first names were punished or rewarded more. However, a subsequent analysis, using transformed scale

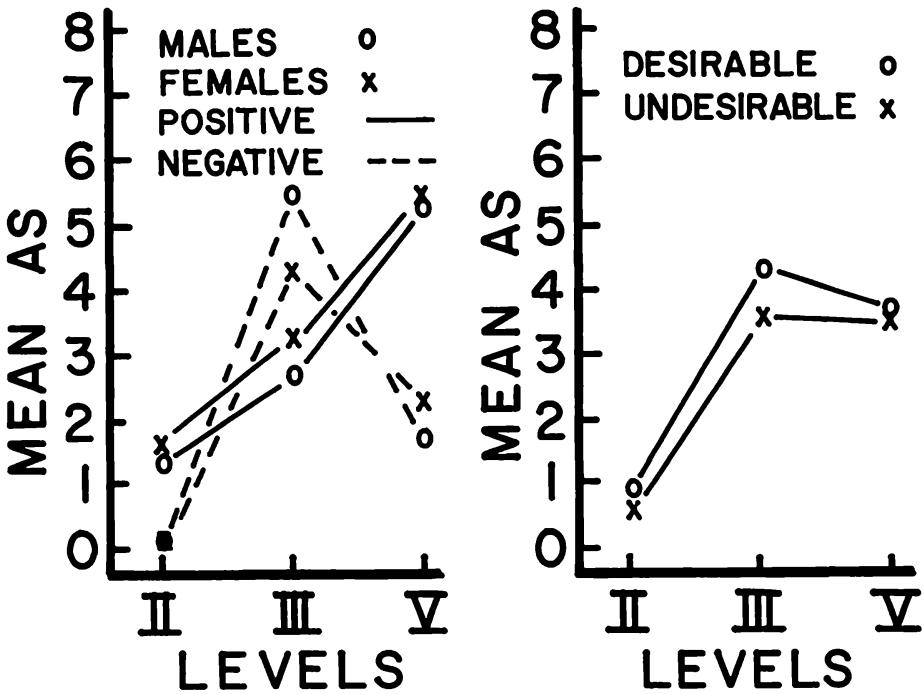

Figure 2.A. Mean assignment of sanction ratings by male and female subjects to positive and negative outcomes at three of Heider's levels.

Figure 2.B. Mean assignment of sanction ratings to actors with desirable and undesirable names at three of Heider's levels.

data, revealed two additional significant interactions: one between Actor sex and Name (F for A x Na = 5.47, probability (p) ‹ .05, on 1/108 degrees of freedom (df)) and an interaction between Levels, Outcome, and Name (F for L x O x Na = 3.04, p ‹ .05, on 2/216 df).

The L x O x Na interaction reflects the fact that the major effects of name desirability and outcome occurred at Level III: Foreseeability. Table 4 displays mean punishment and reward for those subjects who assigned sanctions at Level III to male and female actors with desirable and undesirable names. Punishment ratings (negative outcomes) were greater than reward ratings (positive outcomes). Significantly less reward was assigned to male actors with undesirable names and significantly less punishment was assigned to female actors with undesirable names. This appears to clarify the results examined earlier and to serve as the basis for the significant interaction between actor sex and name desirability.

Table 4
Mean Reward and Punishment Assigned at Level III to Male and Female Actors with Desirable and Undesirable Names

	Desirable Names				Undesirable Names			
	Male Actors		Female Actors		Male Actors		Female Actors	
*Sanction**	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
Punishment	7.03	38	6.82	45	6.90	39	5.33	43
Reward	5.05		4.97	35	3.47	34	4.68	31
No sanctions		32		29		37		36
Reversals		2		3		2		2
Total N		112		112		112		112

*Mean punishment and reward is based only upon those subjects who assigned sanctions. The number of cases is given for each mean and also for no sanction and "reversals" (e.g., punishment for a positive outcome).

DISCUSSION

Our major purpose was to assess whether name desirability influences the attribution process. Assuming these results are generalizable, first names appear to have minimal effect on responsibility attribution, a finding consistent with the view that AR in experimental settings is primarily influenced by objective evaluation of causal factors rather than subjective states. A reasonable conclusion is that AR is not influenced significantly by name desirability (nor other forms of target attractiveness) when the attributor focuses upon an anlysis of causal factors rather than an evaluation of the perpetrator. When the events to be judged are more causally ambiguous and the judgment more subjective, name and other attractiveness effects might be evident.

Results from this study did reveal significant effects of name desirability on sanctioning behavior in interaction with causal structure, outcome quality, and sex of the actor or target person. Differences in sanctioning by male and female subjects to like sex and opposite sex targets replicated results reported by Klinger, Albaum, and Hetherington (1964) but subject sex did not interact significantly with name desirability. Generally actors with desirable names were rewarded more than those with undesirable names. However, the results suggest that name desirability effects are largely confined to causal situations which are somewhat ambiguous with respect to the actors' intentions as exemplified by Heider's Level III. For negative outcomes it seems obvious that this could create a negative

subjective set in evaluating the actor or assigning punishment to him. The results of this study indicate that this led the subjects to assign greater negative sanctions to both male and female actors with desirable names and to male actors with undesirable names. The effects upon reward were weaker suggesting that carelessly produced positive events have minimal subjective impact on the attributor.

Perhaps the most intriguing finding of this study is that less reward was assigned to male actors with undesirable names while less punishment was assigned to females with undesirable names. This is consistent with Rich's (1975) investigation of teacher's evaluations of attractive and unattractive boys and girls which produced evidence of greater leniency toward unattractive females in assigning blame and punishment. Drawing on speculations by Miller (1970), Rich suggested that this may reflect differences in perceived locus of control in which unattractive persons, and females in particular, might be seen as less internally controlled and therefore acting less out of their own volition than the attractive child. Supposedly this principle would have greater validity for females than for males because females are perceived as more submissive or passive. This implies that a cognitive process is involved in which the unattractive female is regarded as less deserving of punishment because she is regarded as less powerful and less responsible. Presumably she might be rewarded more for positive outcomes because their production required greater effort from her than from a male or a more powerful attractive female. Although the sanctioning results from this study are consistent with those reported by Rich, the lack of a name effect upon responsibility attribution does not support his speculations about the underlying process. The basis for the leniency effect in sanctioning females with undesirable names appears to be more affective than cognitive.

Perception of an unattractive other can evoke reactions of avoidance and personal relief, but, as with any form of affliction it can also arouse a sympathetic reaction (epitomized in the South by the phrase "poor little thing") which produces a tendency to "compensate" the unfortunate other by perceiving him or her as higher in such subjective attributes as virtue, kindness, and honesty (e.g., Miller, 1970) or in assigning reward or punishment. That this sympathetic reaction might be stronger for females is supported by Miller's (1970) observation that unattractive males are perceived as better able to compensate for their unattractiveness than are females and by demonstrations that unattractive females are more disadvantaged than males, e.g., Berscheid, Dion, Walster, and Walster (1971). With respect to sanctioning, a female stimulus person who is

physically unattractive or bears an unattractive name should thus be more likely to evoke a "poor little thing" sympathetic reaction which could motivate the perceiver to provide some compensation for her misfortune or to treat her less harshly for misbehavior.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has provided evidence that name desirability can affect the degree to which one person assigns reward or punishment to another person and this is especially true when the causal events surrounding the act are unclear. Furthermore, the underlying process associated with assignment of sanctions appears to be based more upon emotion and feeling than upon the kind of cognitive logical analysis that is involved in making causal attributions. Specifically, the data indicate that AS was greater for actors with desirable names than it was for actors with undesirable ones and this was particularly true when the stimulus stories reflected Heider's Level III, where an actor carelessly caused unintended benefit or harm to others. These data also indicate that punishment ratings were greater than reward ratings, and that male actors with undesirable names were assigned significantly less reward while female actors with desirable names were assigned significantly less punishment.

To the extent that one can generalize from these data, the following interpretation seems tenable. The impact of first name desirability upon evaluations of one person by another should be limited primarily to those judgmental areas which are most subjective and lacking in objective criteria, such as occurs in many legal proceedings, in many disciplinary situations, or in many teacher grading practices. This impact should be weakened by directing the evaluator to focus more upon objective features of the causal evidence and the target person's behavior. This interpretation is supported by both empirical evidence and by two recent American legal proceedings. In the first instance, McDavid and Garwood (1974) have reported evidence that teachers who choose to pursue graduate education were much less likely to be affected by name stereotypes than were teachers who did not continue on to graduate education courses. In the second instance, attorneys for an English "punk rock" musician, Sid Vicious, who was arrested in the United States for the murder of his girl friend, announced immediately after the arrest that their client would be referred to hereafter as John Townsend and not as Sid Vicious. Similarly, an American male, currently awaiting trial by jury, has requested that he be identified by any one of several acceptable names, e.g., Eleanor

Roosevelt, Harry Truman. His reason for this request is that he fears that knowledge of his real name will prejudice the jury against him. The two legal situations offer prima facie evidence of the lay person's recognition of name desirability effects and the empirical data described in this article support this interpretation.

*See "Biographical Sketches" for affiliations

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