

Goldberg Revisited: What's in an Author's Name¹

Michele A. Paludi²

Kent State University

William D. Bauer

University of Rochester

The present research was a replication and extension of Goldberg's 1968 study of performance evaluation. 360 college students (180 male; 180 female) were asked to evaluate an academic article in the fields of politics, psychology of women or education (judged masculine, feminine, and neutral, respectively) that was written either by a male, female, or an author whose name was initialized. Results indicated that the articles were differentially perceived and evaluated according to the name of the author. An article written by a male was evaluated more favorably than if the author was not male. Subjects' bias against women was stronger when they believed the author with the initialized name was female.

Congruent with stereotypes, men and women have been found to value the professional work of a male more highly than that of a female. For example, Goldberg's (1968) women subjects evaluated (in terms of persuasiveness, writing style, intellectual depth of article, competence of author) supposedly published journal articles on linguistics, law, art history, education, dietetics, and city planning. For each article, half of the women saw a male author's name (John T. McKay) and half saw a female's (Joan T. McKay). Results indicated that women rated the articles (even ones in fields considered sex appropriate for women) more favorably when they were attributed to a male rather than a female author. Goldberg concluded that sensitivity to the author's name served to distort the women's judgment and prejudiced them against the work of other women.

Although provocative for both the popular and professional audience, the conclusions drawn from Goldberg's results are limited by the weakness of his

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² Correspondence should be sent to Michele A. Paludi, Department of Psychology, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio 44242.

design. For example, Goldberg never examined the evaluations of (a) men and (b) articles written by an author with a sexually ambiguous name. In the present study, 360 college students (180 male, 180 female) were asked to evaluate an article (abridged to 1,500 words) in the field of politics, the psychology of women, or education (judged masculine, feminine, and neutral, respectively, by 28 men and women in a pilot study) that was written either by John T., Joan T., or J. T. McKay. Twenty subjects of each sex were administered one of the 18 possible author/article combinations. Subjects were asked to rate the article from 1 (highly favorable) to 5 (highly unfavorable) in each of the following areas: value of article, persuasiveness of article, intellectual depth and insight of article, writing style of author, professional status of author, ability of article to sway reader's opinion, knowledge of the field as expressed in this article, quality of article.

The mean evaluation scores given by the men and women to the articles are presented in Table I. A 2 (sex) \times 3 (author) \times 3 (field of article) analysis of variance of the data of Table I revealed that men and women did not differ significantly from each other in terms of their overall evaluation ($p > .05$); and there were no overall differences in the evaluations of the three authors ($p > .05$). In general, the "masculine" article (\bar{X} rating score = 2.12) was preferred to the "feminine" article (\bar{X} rating score = 3.0) and "neutral" article (\bar{X} rating score = 2.6), $F(2, 342) = 50.21, p < .001$. In addition, there were significant interactions between the gender of the subjects and author of the article, $F(2, 342) = 12.98, p < .001$; between gender and field of article, $F(2, 342) = 5.09, p < .01$; and

Table I. Mean Evaluation Scores of Men and Women

	Author of article			Mean
	John T.	Joan T.	J. T.	
Masculine article				
Men	1.9	2.9	2.5	2.4
Women	2.3	3.3	2.6	2.7
Mean	2.1	3.1	2.6	
Feminine article				
Men	1.8	3.7	2.9	2.8
Women	2.1	2.4	2.6	2.4
Mean	2.0	3.0	2.8	
Neutral article				
Men	2.0	2.4	2.7	2.4
Women	2.6	3.3	2.5	2.8
Mean	2.3	2.9	2.6	
Mean of combined articles				
Men	1.9	3.0	2.7	
Women	2.3	3.0	2.6	

between author and field, $F(4, 342) = 3.92, p < .05$. The gender \times author \times field interaction was also significant ($F(4, 342) = 5.64, p < .001$).

The nature of the interaction between gender and author can be seen in Table I by comparing the mean evaluation scores of men and women for each author. Men preferred the article written by John T., followed by the articles written by J. T. and Joan T., respectively. Women's evaluations were similar.

The relations between gender and field of article can be observed in Table I by comparing the mean evaluation scores for each sex within each of the three fields. Men rated the masculine and neutral articles more favorably than the feminine one. Women, on the other hand, rated the feminine article more favorably than the other two articles.

The nature of the interaction between author and field can be seen in Table I by comparing the mean evaluations for each author within each of the three fields. Evaluations for masculine, feminine, and neutral articles differed across authors. The masculine, neutral, and feminine article were rated more favorably when supposedly written by a male rather than by the other two authors. Each of the three articles was rated least favorably when it was supposedly written by a female author. Finally, men rating the male author gave the highest evaluation of all. In addition, men assigned the feminine article the least favorable rating when it was supposedly written by a female.

The results of the present investigation are only partially consistent with those based on Goldberg's findings. As was the case in the Goldberg (1968) study, women in the present investigation overall valued articles written by John T. McKay more favorably than those by Joan T. McKay. Contrary to the earlier findings, however, women did not prefer the masculine to the feminine article. Instead, they evaluated the feminine article more favorably than the masculine one. Perhaps, this can be explained by the nature of the article (psychology of women) and women's increased interest in such literature since the late 1960s.

Men in the present investigation also preferred the male author and masculine article. Such findings bear some relation to results reported by Deaux and Taynor (1973) and Feldman-Summers and Kiesler (1974), who observed that men evaluated a male more highly than a female when the characters were applicants for a study-abroad program and a medical career.

Thus, results from the present study suggest that ratings of articles in sex-linked fields were differentially perceived and evaluated according to the sex of the author. An author identified as a male was more attractive; subsequently, his article was valued more positively than if the author was female. In addition, an article in a traditionally masculine field was rated more favorably by men than one in a feminine field. The reverse held true for women.

It is interesting that the author with the sexually ambiguous name was preferred over the female, but not over the male, author. Subjects also treated "J. T." as more similar to "Joan" than to "John." The possibility that the use

of initials is seen as characteristic of women more than men needs to be investigated.

Subjects who were administered an article written by "J. T." were instructed after they completed their evaluations to indicate (a) whether they believed the author of the article was male or female, and (b) the reasons for their choice. Ninety-five percent of the men and 90% of the women attributed the masculine article to a male author; 85% of both sexes attributed the feminine article to a female author; and 50% of the men and 60% of the women indicated that the neutral article was written by a male. The main reason offered for their choice centered on the content of the article: "Politics is a man's occupation;" "Women know more about sex roles than men do." It is also interesting that a significant point-biserial correlation coefficient ($r_{pb} = .75, p < .0001$) was obtained between subjects' expected sex of J. T. with their article ratings. Apparently, subjects' bias against women was stronger when they believed J. T. was female.

To date, the literature on sex differences in performance evaluation makes it difficult to draw conclusions because of (a) differences in instruments (articles, taped interviews, scenarios) employed, (b) lack of replicability between college- and noncollege-age samples, and (c) constraints in designing repeated-measures studies. The findings presented here provide additional information about men and women's bias against the work of women. Evident is the need (a) to replicate the earlier studies on performance evaluation of men and women (e.g., Feldman-Summers & Kiesler, 1974; Pheterson, Kiesler, & Goldberg, 1971; Taynor & Deaux, 1973) taking into account a sexually ambiguous author's name, and (b) performing a multitrait-multimethod (Campbell & Fiske, 1959) validity study.

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