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Unfortunate First Names: Effects of Name-Based Relational Devaluation and Interpersonal Neglect

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Abstract

Can negative first names cause interpersonal neglect? Study 1 ($N = 968$) compared extremely negatively named online-daters with extremely positively named online-daters. Study 2 ($N = 4,070$) compared less extreme groups—namely, online-daters with somewhat unattractive versus somewhat attractive first names. Study 3 ($N = 6,775$) compared online-daters with currently popular versus currently less popular first names, while controlling for name-popularity at birth. Across all studies, negatively named individuals were more neglected by other online-daters, as indicated by fewer first visits to their dating profiles. This form of neglect arguably mirrors a name-based life history of neglect, discrimination, prejudice, or even ostracism. Supporting this argument, neglect mediated the relation between negative names and lower self-esteem, more frequent smoking, and less education. These results are consistent with the name-based interpersonal neglect hypothesis: Negative names evoke negative interpersonal reactions, which in turn influence people's life outcomes for the worse.

Keywords

name-valence, interpersonal neglect, social belonging, self-esteem, smoking, education

> "I have a horrible, horrible name . . .
> this name has been holding me back my entire life.
> It's probably why kids picked on me in school
> and why I never do well with women."

> "A person's first name may be a determining factor
> in his development of personality, acquisition of friends,
> and in all probability, in his success or failure in life."

Being valued and accepted is a primary determinant of adaptation. Being devalued and rejected is a major cause of personal suffering and antisocial behavior (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Richman & Leary, 2009; Williams, 2009). People are devalued and rejected for many reasons. Sometimes people are rejected for their wrongdoings and this probably constitutes rejection's evolutionary function (Baumeister, 2005). However, people are also rejected for reasons that are not their fault. Our focus lies on a subtle reason of this sort: some people may be rejected, neglected, or avoided merely because they possess an unfortunate first name. Lay people and psychologists alike have speculated about this possibility: The first introductory quote stems from Chandler Bing, a character from the sitcom *Friends* (Bright, 2003). The second quote stems from William Walton, a psychologist and cofounder of name research (Walton, 1937). Considering the sources' differences, the quotes' similarities are remarkable. Hence, in choosing our first names, did our parents lay the groundwork for how we get treated by others? And does such interpersonal treatment in turn affect our life outcomes? We examine this *name-based interpersonal neglect hypothesis*. The hypothesis stipulates that negative names evoke negative interpersonal reactions, which in turn influence people's life outcomes for the worse.

Name-Based Interpersonal Neglect

It may appear hard to believe that something as mundane as a negative first name can evoke neglect, discrimination, prejudice, or even ostracism. Yet, when getting to know a person, the person's name is among the first information received (Twenge & Manis, 1998), and the halo effect (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977) may lead people to generalize name-valence to broader inferences about the individual. In line with this possibility, a negative first name translates into a general negative impression (Erwin, 1993). Further, initial impressions build a strong basis for processing subsequent information about the person (Kruglanski & Ajzen, 1983; Nisbett & Ross, 1980).

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Overall then, negative name-based first impressions may invite neglect, discrimination, prejudice, or even ostracism. Indirect evidence is consistent with this hypothesis. Busse and Seraydarian (1979) found that negatively named students were less popular among their class mates, and Harari and McDavid (1973) found that essays of negatively named students were graded less fairly by teachers—an instantiation of prejudice.

Furthermore, considering that disinterest, neglect, or rejection can cause negative long-term psychological and social outcomes (Williams, 2009), name-based interpersonal neglect should also lead to negative life outcomes. We focus specifically on the negative effects on self-esteem, smoking, and education. Research on relational devaluation and rejection in general informed our choice: perceiving that one is relationally devalued or rejected can lower self-esteem (Leary, 2006; Leary & Baumeister, 2000), promote smoking (Borrell et al., 2010; DeWall & Pond, 2011), and lower educational outcomes (Cohen & Garcia, in press; Cutrona, Cole, Colangelo, Assouline, & Russell, 1994).

Thus, negative names should evoke lower self-esteem, more smoking, and less education. Again, indirect evidence is available. Twenge and Manis (1998) found lower self-esteem among negatively named individuals, and Savage and Wells (1948) found higher university dropout among unpopularly named students. Yet, these results did not always replicate (Fryer & Leavitt, 2004; Skinner, 1984), and authors called for evidence that interpersonal neglect plays a role (Savage & Wells, 1948; Twenge & Manis, 1998). To this end, we test the effects of negative first names on interpersonal neglect and life outcomes in three large-scale studies.

Study 1: "Kevinism"

German-speaking media has coined the term "Kevinism" to refer to discrimination against people who have culturally devalued first names. In Austria, Germany, and Switzerland "Kevin" and "Chantal" are examples of "Kevinism" names. Building on the "Kevinism" phenomenon, Kube (2009) examined teachers' name-based stereotypes. She identified culturally devalued first names and pitted them against culturally valued first names. Study 1 used this list, allowing us to compare level of positive attention received by people with maximally positive and negative first names.

Method

Participants

Data were obtained from the eDarling data set (Gebauer, Sedikides, & Neberich, 2012). This data set contains data from 47,610 German-speaking online-dating participants (17,109 Austrians; 19,318 Germans; 11,183 Swiss), 968 of which had first names from the Kube-list. Hence, Study 1 contained data from 968 participants (sex: 46% female, age: M [SD] = 31.28 [12.07]; ethnicity: 96% White)[1].

Procedure and Measures

Participants consented to the use of their data for scientific research. Relevant data were gathered via two procedures. First, participants completed questionnaires in the process of setting-up online-dating profiles at *eDarling*. This provided information about participants' first name, self-esteem, smoking, and education. Second, immediately after set-up we started tracking the attention that participants received by fellow online-daters as a function of their first names.

Name-valence. The Kube-list (2009) was devised in the year 2008 and contains 24 first names alongside the percentage of teachers (of the 500), who stereotyped individuals with these first names as quarrelsome. Percentages served as continuous variables with high scores reflecting negative name-valence. Kube preselected extremely positive and negative names for her list. Mean name-valence in this study was 23.46 (SD = 23.51). The high SD/M ratio (1.00) reflects the extreme name-valence range of the Kube-list.

Self-esteem. The State Self-Esteem Scale (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991) contains three correlated subscales that assess social, performance, and appearance state self-esteem. The eDarling data set contains a 12-item (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*) trait adaptation, including a 4-item social factor (How skilled do you perceive yourself in… … social situations, … making new friends, … socializing, It is easy for me to engage in conversations with people I have just met; α = .76), a 4-item performance factor (I am proud of my educational background, I catch on to things quickly, I can handle a lot of information, and I am good at analyzing problems; α = .70), and a 4-item appearance factor (I am satisfied with my physical appearance, How well does the following describe your physical appearance: … … stylish, … attractive, and … sexy; α = .83). Internal consistency of the 12-item scale was excellent (α = .83). Additionally, an online validation study in German language (N = 347) showed that our measure was strongly interrelated (α = .77) with the German version of the State Self-Esteem Scale (Rudolph, Schröder-Abé, & Schütz, 2009).

Smoking. Participants responded to the question "How often do you smoke?" choosing: 1 = *never*, 2 = *a few times per year*, 3 = *about once per week*, 4 = *a few times per week*, or 5 = *several times a day*.

Education. Participants responded to the question "What is your highest degree?" choosing: 1 = *no degree*, 2 = *elementary school degree*, 3 = *secondary school degree*, 4 = *high school degree*, 5 = *bachelor degree*, 6 = *master degree*, or 7 = *doctoral degree*.

Interpersonal neglect. At *eDarling*, individuals receive e-mails with several partner suggestions every few days. These suggestions contain only the first name (not alphabetized), age, and geographical area of residence of each potential partner. Based on this information, online-daters either show interest in the potential partner (by pressing a link to the full profile) or neglect

the potential partner (by ignoring the link). Hence, interpersonally neglected individuals are those online-daters whose profile received only a small number of *first* visits, relative to the number of times they were suggested as potential partners to different individuals. In mathematical terms, interpersonal neglect was operationalized as [number of first visits]/[number of times suggested as potential partner to different individuals].

This behavioral measure has a major advantage. Specifically, we can say with high certainty that neglect is based solely on participants' first names. This is the case because the only available additional information that could have influenced neglect was the person's age and geographical area of residence. Put differently, in contrast to past research on online-dating (Hitsch, Hortaçsu, & Ariely, 2010), the people who neglected our participants had no information about participants' physical, psychological, and social standing (including self-esteem, smoking habits, and education). Furthermore, due to our design, age and geographical area of residence are unlikely causes of neglect. This is the case because partner suggestions from *eDarling* are the sole basis for acceptance and neglect. At the same time, partner suggestions are restricted. Specifically, users of *eDarling* receive suggestions only regarding potential partners who meet one's partner criteria in terms of age and area of residence (among other criteria that are assessed during set-up of one's online-dating profile).

Results

In this study, and the two subsequent studies, we tested all hypotheses using multiple regression (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). In all analyses, we simultaneously controlled for the influence of two potential third variables: age (see Kasof, 1993) and socioeconomic status (operationalized as income). All results were identical without these controls.

A linear regression analysis with name-valence as predictor and interpersonal neglect as criterion revealed that negatively named individuals were particularly strongly neglected by potential partners, $\beta = .20$, $t(1,924) = 6.14$, $p < .001$. As a point in case, participants with the most positive name (i.e., Alexander) received 102% more first visits on their dating profile (relative to opportunity) than participants with the most negative name (i.e., Kevin). Additionally, relatively negative names predicted lower self-esteem, $\beta = -.10$, $t(1,924) = -3.16$, $p = .002$, (marginally) more smoking, $\beta = .06$, $t(1,924) = 1.88$, $p = .061$, and less education, $\beta = -.14$, $t(1,924) = -4.52$, $p = .001$.[2] Interpersonal neglect also predicted lower self-esteem, $\beta = -.13$, $t(1,924) = -4.12$, $p < .001$, more smoking, $\beta = .11$, $t(1,924) = 3.23$, $p = .001$, and less education, $\beta = -.16$, $t(1,924) = -5.40$, $p < .001$. Finally, interpersonal neglect mediated the link between name-valence and all three life outcomes: we obtained significant indirect paths from negative names via interpersonal neglect on lower self-esteem, $z = -3.09$, $SE = .0003$, $p = .002$, more smoking, $z = 2.65$, $SE = .0006$, $p = .008$, and less education, $z = -3.73$, $SE = .0005$, $p < .001$ (Preacher & Hayes, 2004).[3]

Discussion

Results supported the name-based interpersonal neglect hypothesis. Compared to other name-based research (Pelham, Carvallo, & Jones, 2005), the name-effects were strong. German-speaking singles apparently prefer to remain single (and continue paying for online-dating) than to consider potential partners with "Kevinism" names.

Apparent name-effects on life outcomes may be due to a shared determinant, such as parental factors (genes, upbringing). However, this alternative can hardly explain name-effects on our interpersonal neglect measure. This is the case because people rejecting our participants had information only about participants' first names, ages, and geographical areas of residence. Thus, age and geographical area are the only third variables that may spuriously cause apparent name-based neglect. Yet, such spuriousness is unlikely because age and geographical area of residence possess little relation to parental factors. Additionally, our analyses controlled for age and income. Finally, our participants were rejected only by people who were otherwise satisfied with the participants' age and geographical area of residence (see description of the interpersonal neglect measure).

We have assumed that interpersonal neglect on the online-dating site can be understood as mirroring a life history of interpersonal neglect in the real world. In line with this interpretation, the relation between interpersonal neglect on the online-dating site and real-life outcomes mirrored past evidence for an effect of interpersonal neglect in general on these life outcomes (Cohen & Garcia, in press; DeWall & Pond, 2011; Leary, 2006). Hence, it is telling that interpersonal neglect mediated name-effects on life outcomes. Next, we attempted to replicate these results using names that differed more subtly from each other.

Study 2: Name-Attractiveness

Rudolph, Böhm, and Lummer (2007) collected valence-norms of German first names in 2006. Compared to the Kube-list, the Rudolph-list includes more names, is better validated, and includes more common names that differ less in valence. Hence, Study 1 results should replicate, yielding somewhat smaller effects due to range restrictions in name-valence.

Method

4,070 participants (sex: 41% female, age: $M[SD] = 37.68$ [11.11]; ethnicity: 97% White[1]) from the German eDarling data set had first names matching the Rudolph-list. Procedure and measures (self-esteem: $\alpha = .84$) were identical to Study 1's.

Name-valence. The Rudolph-list (Rudolph, et al., 2007) contains 60 first names along with name-attractiveness ratings (1 = *not at all attractive*, 7 = *very attractive*), as rated by 149 Germans in 2006. Mean name-valence in this study was 3.71 ($SD = .36$). Thus, the SD/M ratio in this study (.01) was

considerably smaller than in Study 1 (1.00), reflecting the Rudolph-list's more limited name-valence range.

Results

Repeating Study 1's analyses (including controls for age and income), individuals with negative names were particularly neglected by potential partners, $\beta = .19$, $t(1,4022) = 11.77$, $p < .001$. Negative names also predicted lower self-esteem, $\beta = -.09$, $t(1,4069) = -5.58$, $p < .001$, more smoking, $\beta = .10$, $t(1,4069) = 6.13$, $p < .001$, and less education, $\beta = -.10$, $t(1,4069) = -6.76$, $p < .001$. Interpersonal neglect also predicted lower self-esteem, $\beta = -.19$, $t(1,4022) = -11.79$, $p < .001$, more smoking, $\beta = .14$, $t(1,4022) = 8.83$, $p < .001$, and less education, $\beta = -.26$, $t(1,4022) = -18.19$, $p < .001$. Finally, interpersonal neglect again mediated the link between name-valence and all three life outcomes: we obtained significant indirect paths from negative names via interpersonal neglect on lower self-esteem, $z = -8.02$, $SE = .009$, $p < .001$, more smoking, $z = 6.54$, $SE = .018$, $p < .001$, and less education, $z = -9.72$, $SE = .017$, $p < .001$.

Discussion

The valences of the names used in Study 2 were more homogeneous than those in Study 1. Nonetheless, Study 2's results replicated Study 1's results. The name-based interpersonal neglect hypothesis was supported even when differences in name-valence were subtle. Study 3 complements Studies 1 and 2 by focusing on name-popularity during the most recent decade, while controlling for name-popularity during participants' idiosyncratic birth-decade. Including this control variable effectively controls for *parents' name choice*. Such control is important because careless parents may make careless name choices, which may spuriously link negative names and negative life outcomes (Twenge & Manis, 1998). To illustrate this, consider the following example.

Imagine we had a large group of 70-year-old German men, all named *Hans*; and another large group of 70-year-old German men all named *Eckehard*. Nowadays, both of these names are unappealing in Germany (Bielefeld, 2011). Imagine further that individuals from both groups were relatively interpersonally neglected and had relatively low self-esteem. The name-based neglect hypothesis stipulates that possessing these unappealing first names (Hans and Eckehard) constitutes one causal reason for why these individuals are neglected and possess low self-esteem. Alternatively, the link between these unappealing first names and interpersonal neglect/low self-esteem may solely date back to parental factors. That is, parents who care little about choosing an appealing first name for their children may also care little about their children's upbringing (Twenge & Manis, 1998). As a result, careless upbringing—but not their unappealing name—may be a causal reason for why Hans and Eckehard are interpersonally neglected and have low self-esteem (a similar rational applies to confounding genetic factors). Importantly, however, inspection of the name-popularity list from the birth-decade of our imagined 70-year-old individuals (i.e., lists from the 1940s) confirms that even in their birth-decade the name Eckehard was very unpopular, but that the name Hans was the most popular name at that time (Bielefeld, 2011). Hence, the parental-factor alternative to the name-based interpersonal neglect hypothesis may well apply to those 70-year-old German men called Eckehard, but should not apply to the 70-year-old German men called Hans. This example illustrates that name-popularity at birth, but not current name-popularity, is confounded with parental factors. Hence, controlling for name-popularity at birth, while examining effects of name-popularity over the last decade, provides a strong test of the name-based interpersonal neglect hypothesis, particularly if the findings replicate results of Studies 1 and 2.

Study 3: Name-Popularity

The frequency with which names are given to newborns reflects the popularity of the name. For Germany, lists of the popularity of first names are available for each decade since 1890 (Bielefeld, 2011). Using this information, Study 3 tested whether our prior results hold when name-valence is operationalized in terms of its popularity across the most recent decade, while controlling for name-popularity in participants' birth-decade. The Bielefeld-lists contain information about the 300 most popular first names for each decade. Hence, the name-valence range should again be smaller than in Study 1, potentially leading to smaller effect sizes.

Method

6,775 participants (sex: 32% female, age: $M[SD] = 31.81$ [10.16]; ethnicity: 96% White[1]) from the German eDarling data set had first names from the Bielefeld-list during their birth-decade as well as during the most recent Bielefeld-list decade. Again, procedure and measures (self-esteem: $\alpha = .83$) were identical to Study 1's.

Name-valence. The Bielefeld-list (2011) is a ranking of the 300 most popular first names (i.e., most frequently given names) for each decade from 1890 to 2010. Using the popularity-ratings from the 2000 to 2010 decade, mean name-valence in this study was 89.85 ($SD = 55.88$). Thus, the *SD/M* ratio in this study (.62) was again smaller than in Study 1 (1.00).

Results

A name-valence index was created reflecting the valence of first names during the most recent decade, while controlling for name-valence at birth-decade by saving the standardized residual of the 2000–2010 popularity-index when regressed on the popularity-index during participants' birth-decade (again, age and income were entered as controls). Repeating Study 1's analyses, individuals with less popular names were more neglected by potential partners than those with more popular names, $\beta = .08$, $t(1,6650) = 6.40$, $p < .001$. Unpopular names

also predicted lower self-esteem, $\beta = -.06$, $t(1,6774) = -5.16$, $p < .001$, more smoking, $\beta = .04$, $t(1,6774) = 3.60$, $p < .001$, and less education, $\beta = -.08$, $t(1,6774) = -6.95$, $p < .001$. Interpersonal neglect also predicted lower self-esteem, $\beta = -.20$, $t(1,6650) = -16.46$, $p < .001$, more smoking, $\beta = .18$, $t(1, 6650) = 15.20$, $p < .001$, and less education, $\beta = -.39$, $t(1,6650) = -34.87$, $p < .001$. Finally, interpersonal neglect once more mediated the link between name-valence and all three life outcomes: we obtained significant indirect paths from negative names via interpersonal neglect on lower self-esteem, $z = -3.36$, $SE = .0001$, $p < .001$, more smoking, $z = 5.88$, $SE = .004$, $p < .001$, and less education, $z = -6.29$, $SE = .006$, $p < .001$.

Discussion

The results of Study 3 once again showed a relationship between people's names and the degree to which others sought information about them as dating partners. However, effect sizes were somewhat lower than in Study 2, possibly because name-popularity is an indirect indicator of name-valence. Although name-popularity is an expression of name-valence, the rarity of a name sometimes renders a name appealing (Twenge, Abebe, & Campbell, 2010). Yet, divergence between name-popularity and name-valence is of little concern here, because Study 3 results were highly consistent with our prior results. Furthermore, using name-popularity as a proxy for name-valence allowed us to test current name-valence effects while holding constant name-valence at participants' birth. The Hans-and-Eckehard example used earlier illustrates that holding name-valence at participants' birth constant can address concerns that apparent name-effects on life outcomes date back to shared parental influences. This is the case, because parental influences are associated with name-giving, that is name-valence at participants' birth, but not with current name-valence.

General Discussion

Do negative first names evoke interpersonal neglect and negative life outcomes? This classic question (Walton, 1937) has received attention from researchers (Twenge & Manis, 1998) as well as from the public (Bright, 2003). Three studies examined the impact of people's first names on the degree to which other members of an online-dating site sought information about them. Furthermore, we traced possible downstream effects of this attention versus neglect on self-esteem, smoking, and education. Individuals with extremely negative names (Study 1), moderately unattractive names (Study 2), and currently unpopular names (irrespective of name-popularity at birth; Study 3) were neglected by potential partners more than those with more positive, attractive, and popular names. In essence, some participants were neglected and discriminated against on the basis of their first names. In addition, name-based interpersonal neglect on the online-dating site mediated the link between negative names and lower self-esteem, increased smoking, and less education. Overall, these results provide the firmest conclusions to date for the name-based interpersonal neglect hypothesis: negative names evoke negative interpersonal reactions, which in turn influence life outcomes for the worse.

The precise processes by which a person's name influences others' reactions are open to future investigation. Among other processes, the popularity of celebrities may translate into increased popularity of their first names, and this effect may be due to automatic processes (Strack & Deutsch, 2004). For example, the names Heidi and Claudia may profit from their spontaneous association with the super models Heidi Klum and Claudia Schiffer. On the negative side, similar processes may render those names unpopular that are typical among members of stigmatized racial groups. As a point in case, Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004) examined the effect of White- versus African American-sounding names in the United States. Specifically, do otherwise identical job applications lead to more job interviews for applicants with White-sounding names (e.g., Greg) than for applicants with African American-sounding names (e.g., Jamal)? Results were dramatic: applicants with White-sounding names received 50% more invitations for job interviews than applicants with African American-sounding names.

Bertrand and Mullainathan's (2004) finding begs the question whether our name-based interpersonal neglect effects are driven by ethnicity-signifying names. However, speaking against this possibility, names signifying stigmatized ethnic groups were extremely rare on our name-valence lists. In Germany, people with a Turkish heritage are probably the largest stigmatized ethnic group, yet there were no names signifying this ethnic group in the name-valence lists of Studies 1 and 2. This is because these name-valence lists' authors wanted to circumvent ethnic influences (Kube, 2009; Rudolph et al., 2007). In Study 3, we found only a single name signifying people with a Turkish heritage (i.e., Ali) and only three individuals had this name. Thus, our research demonstrates that name-based interpersonal neglect can take place independent of ethnic stereotypes. Nonetheless, future research could examine name-based interpersonal neglect and dating success among individuals with names typical for stigmatized ethnic groups.

The uncovered consequences of name-based interpersonal neglect resemble consequences of other instances of discrimination, rejection, and ostracism. For example, the findings support interpersonal theories of self-esteem, which trace low self-esteem back to low interpersonal acceptance (Leary, 2006; Leary & Baumeister, 2000). In addition, research has shown that people who feel rejected, isolated, or discriminated against tend to smoke at a higher rate (DeWall & Pond, 2011), and students who feel inadequately accepted have poorer educational outcomes (Cohen & Garcia, in press).

The present results complement research on people's subjective liking of their own names. Gebauer, Riketta, Broemer, and Maio (2008) have argued that high self-esteem individuals should project their positive self-evaluation onto their name, rendering name-liking a suitable implicit measure of self-esteem.

Empirical research has supported this rational (Cai et al., 2011; Haddock & Gebauer, 2011; Stieger, Voracek, & Formann, in press). The present results suggest that the link between name-liking and self-esteem may not exclusively be due to a projection effect of self-esteem on name-liking. Additionally, individuals with a highly esteemed name may come to like their own names more, while also gaining self-esteem benefits via name-based interpersonal acceptance.

Finally, the model reminds us that seemingly benign factors, such as first names, add up in real life, gaining considerable collective power in predicting feeling, thought, and behavior. The results also highlight the self-presentational value of first names (see Leary, 1995) and underscore the importance for parents to choose positively valenced first names for their children. From a dating perspective, it seems tempting to conclude that in Germany Kevin would gain from introducing himself as Alexander when meeting a potential partner. Yet, Oscar Wilde's play *The Importance of Being Ernest* poses a word of warning: In support of our model, Gwendolen falls in love with a man mainly because he calls himself Ernest. Yet, when she finds out that he lied about his name, she rejects him particularly harshly.

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Notes

1. The high percentage of White individuals is not surprising, because the names of all three studies' name-lists are typical for German-speaking cultures. Irrespective, ethnicity is a potential third variable that may explain the relation between name-valence and life outcomes (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004). To shield our interpretation against this alternative, we repeated all our analyses of each of the three studies, excluding (the small numbers of) non-White individuals. Exclusion of non-White individuals did not change any of the results.
2. Additionally, we examined gender as a potential moderator of our effects. In none of the Study 1 analyses did gender moderate any effect. The same was also true for Study 3. Solely in Study 2, we found that name-effects on interpersonal neglect, self-esteem, and smoking were moderated by gender. Overall then, gender played a nonreplicable role. Hence, we refrain from discussing it any further.
3. Name-negativity may be directly linked to lower self-esteem, more smoking, and less education and these negative life outcomes may in turn lead to more interpersonal neglect. This theoretical alternative cannot account for the effect of name-negativity on interpersonal neglect in our studies, because our interpersonal neglect measure cannot be a result of lower self-esteem, more smoking, and less education. This is the case, because the people neglecting our participants had no way of knowing about our participants' self-esteem, smoking habits, and educational level (see description of our interpersonal neglect measure). Nonetheless, we compared the hypothesized mediation model (name-negativity → interpersonal neglect → worse life outcomes) against the alternative model (name-negativity → worse life outcomes → interpersonal neglect). Because all three variables are interrelated (see results section), the alternative model may well be significant (Fiedler, Schott, & Meiser, 2011) and this was indeed true in most cases. Specifically, across all three studies eight of the nine alternative mediation models were significant. Importantly, however, each of these nine alternative models performed worse than their corresponding hypothesized model. Indeed, following comparison recommendations by Cumming and Finch (2005), the alternative mediation models were *significantly* outperformed by the hypothesized model in each and every case. Specifically, *SE*-intervals never overlapped and the gap between the intervals was always larger than the mean *SE* across both rivalry models (Cumming & Finch, 2005).

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