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The Name of the Game: Does a Person's Name Contribute to Socio-Economic Success?

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Humanities

Poster

Title: The Name of the Game: Does a Person's Name Contribute to Socio-Economic Success?

Presenter: Morford, Cameron

Faculty Sponsor: Corman, Rhonda

Abstract:

When a person is born, the first gift they receive is their name. Names are powerful. They represent family, culture, and personality. Names are as diverse and complex as the people who bear them. But do names really matter? Do different names establish a foundation for social and economic success in a child's future? Furthermore, do people who possess traditionally ethnic names experience more discrimination than those who don't? Academic literature identifies large amounts of discrimination against individuals who possess distinctively African-American or Hispanic names. However, this study tests the assumptions and behavioral economic theories associated with society's view of Asian Americans. There are many assumptions about the character, work ethic, and intellect of Asian Americans. But this study will strictly focus on the discrimination linked to a person's name. By comparing trends found in previous studies, we will draw conclusions about the perceived economic well-being of Asian Americans. For the purpose of this study, the following question will be addressed: Do others assume people with traditional American names are more successful than people with traditional Asian names? We will not determine if Asian Americans are more successful than other ethnic groups. Rather, this study is concerned with society's perception of Asian Americans and their economic success. The following hypothesis was developed as part of this investigation: Asians who possess traditional Asian names are viewed as more successful than people who possess traditional American names. Therefore, an ethnic child with a traditional Asian name has various perceived social and economic advantages over ethnic children with traditional American names. This particular research project is designed to help fill the gap in literature and answer important questions facing Asian Americans today.