

Teachers' Expectations of Middle School Students

By,
Melissa S. Harris

A decorative graphic consisting of several horizontal lines of varying lengths and colors (teal, light blue, white) extending from the right side of the page towards the center.

Significance

- **Teachers' role in achievement is vital**
- **By the 6th year of schooling, there are considerable differences between white and black students (Osborne, 2007)**
- **Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) found that teacher's positive expectations of students led to greater academic performance**

Research Question

At Thurwood Magnet Middle School, how do teacher expectations of their students differ based on the race of the students?

Methods

Selection of School

- **Diverse school body**
 - **Hispanic 37%**
 - **Black 34%**
 - **White 26%**
 - **Asian 2%**

Participants

- Teachers taught academic subjects (not music; art; gym)
- Contact teacher introduced me to teachers who would be interested

Measure

- **Original measure**
- **6 hypothetical students**
- **Long-term/short-term expectations**

Results

Teachers' Expectations Do Not Vary Widely

- Teachers generally migrated towards same responses for each hypothetical student
- Examples:
 - Dropping Out of High School (Somewhat Unlikely)
 - Graduate 4 Year College (Somewhat Likely)
 - Perform at Proficient Level on CMT (Somewhat Likely)

Female Teachers had Higher Expectations for Students than Male Teachers

Sex of Teacher	Shanice	Tyrone	Sally	John	Maria	Jose
Female	3.13	3.60	3.34	3.43	3.41	2.99
Male	2.88	3.09	3.08	3.13	3.22	3.08

White Teachers had Higher Expectations for Students than Non-White Teachers

Race of Teacher	Shanice	Tyrone	Sally	John	Maria	Jose
White	3.08	3.49	3.19	3.39	3.46	3.13
Non-White	3.09	3.45	3.79	3.25	2.92	2.46

Teachers with less than ten years of experience have higher expectations for students

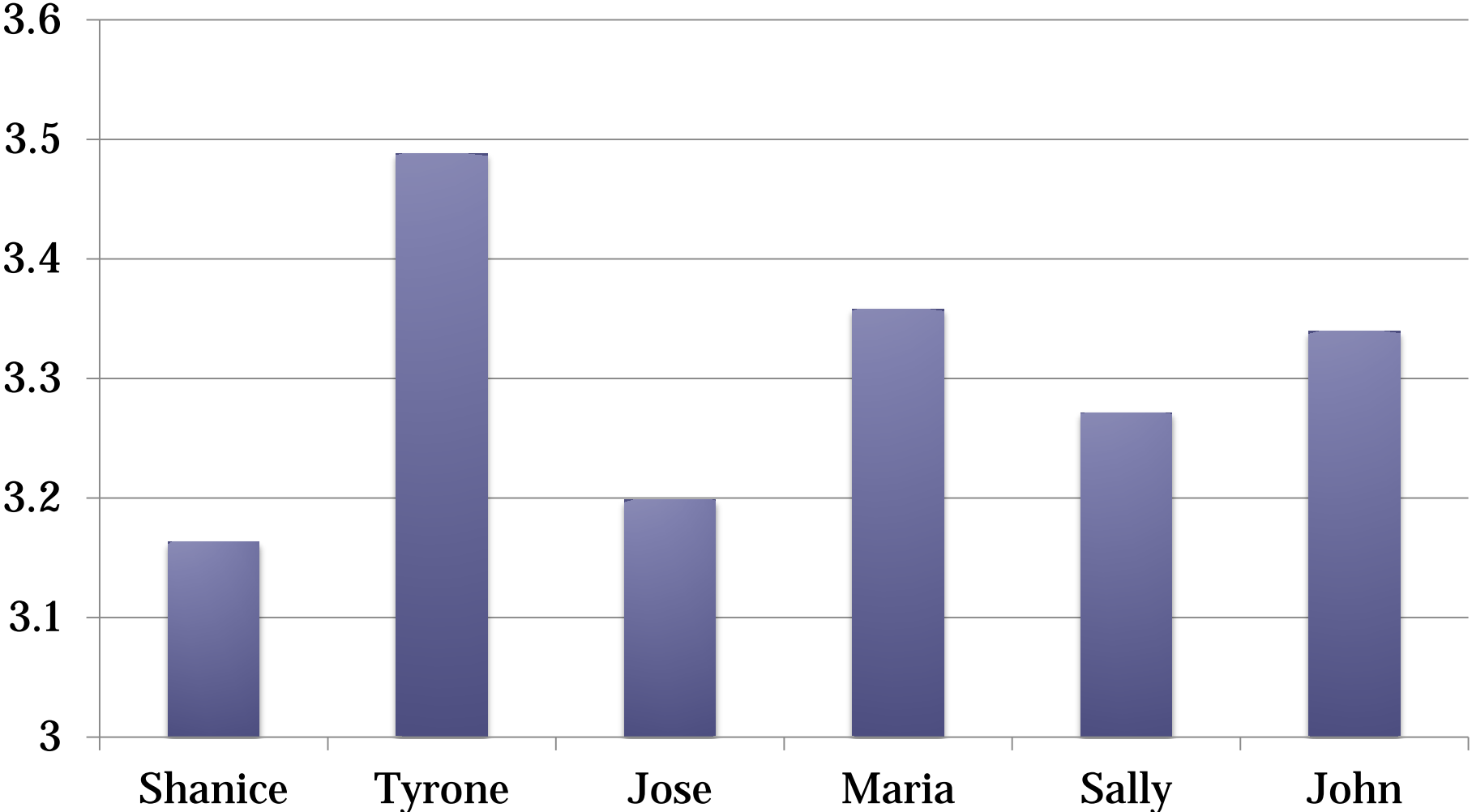
# Years	Shanice	Tyrone	Sally	John	Maria	Jose
1-9	3.23	3.50	3.28	3.42	3.31	3.08
10 +	2.79	3.48	3.31	3.27	3.44	2.80

Analysis

- **Because all hypothetical students performed academically at the same level, it is no surprise that teachers generally have same expectations**
- **Teachers with less experience may be naïve and thus have higher expectations in general**

Examining Individual Students

Averages of Expectations



Highest and Lowest Expectations

Female

- Highest: Tyrone
- Lowest: Jose

Male

- Highest: Maria
- Lowest: Shanice

White

- Highest: Tyrone
- Lowest: Shanice

Nonwhite

- Highest: Sally
- Lowest: Jose

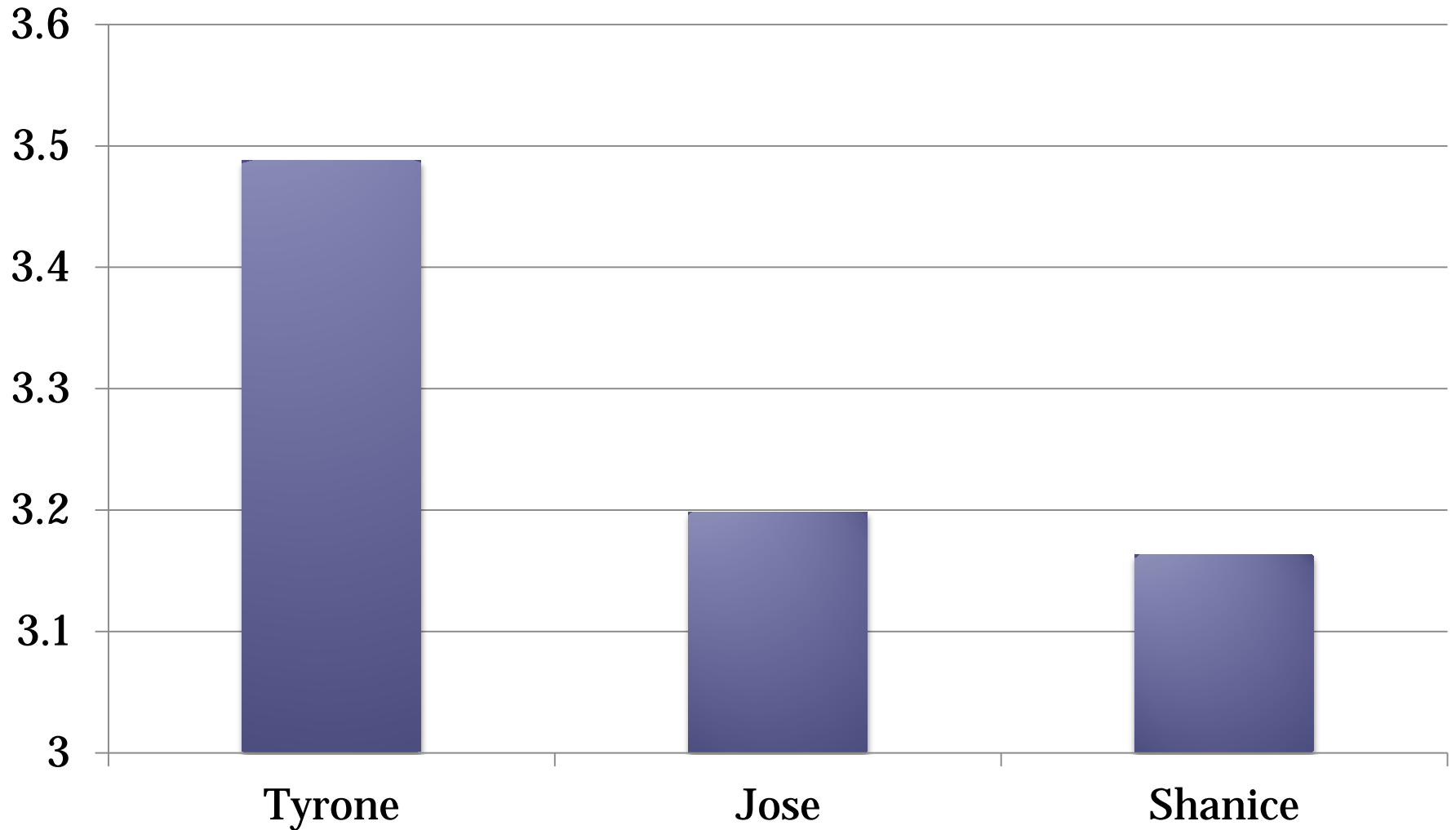
1-9 Years Experience

- Highest: Tyrone
- Lowest: Jose

10+ Years Experience

- Highest: Tyrone
- Lowest: Shanice, Jose

Averages of Expectations for Highest and Lowest Rankers



Implications

- It is clear that contrary to the research available, this study found that teachers had higher expectations for the Black male and lower expectations for the Hispanic and Black female
- Clear that some outside influences may have played a role

Limitations

- Hard to measure racial attitudes, thus need better way of measuring this
- Small, unbalanced sample size, thus not cannot be generalized
- Measure not validated nor reliable
- More research