

Can music change ethnic attitudes among children?

Psychology of Music

Psychology of Music

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Society for Education, Music
and Psychology Research

vol 33(3): 304–316 [0305-7356
(200507) 33:3: 304–316]

10.1177/0305735605053735
www.sagepublications.com

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ABSTRACT The study assessed the effectiveness of a musical programme at reducing anti-dark-skinned stereotyping among light-skinned Portuguese children aged 7–10 years, as measured through the Preschool Racial Attitude Measure II (Williams et al., 1975). The programme consisted of introducing a sub-series of Cape Verdean songs into the series of regular Portuguese songs studied and learned by the pupils during school music courses. At the beginning of the study, all children showed a moderate mean level of pro-white-skinned/anti-dark-skinned stereotyping. At the end of the study, the level of stereotyping among the control group of pupils who were not exposed to Cape Verdean songs ($N = 97$) was not altered, but the level of stereotyping among the pupils exposed to the programme ($N = 96$) was significantly reduced. Strong differences as a function of age were evidenced: among participants aged 7–8 years, there was practically no change in stereotyping; in contrast, there was a dramatic change among 9- to 10-year-olds.

KEYWORDS: *African music, Cape Verde, evaluation, Portugal, stereotype change*

Changing stereotypes is difficult because they fulfil important cognitive and sociological functions. At the cognitive level, stereotypes help organize the world around us by making immediate sense of the many inputs the organism receives from other persons, directly (e.g. by close contact) or indirectly (e.g. through the media). At the sociological level, stereotypes also help organize the world around us by making sense of the many differences and inequalities that surround us (e.g. the lower economic status of some minorities).

As a result, few studies on stereotype change conducted in real-life, applied settings have, as far as we know, been published. Hewstone et al. (1994) assessed the effectiveness of a programme of workshops aimed at improving interprofessional cooperation between social workers and doctors (the

Shared Learning Programme). One of the tasks involved in these workshops was to work with each other on case studies to collectively find acceptable solutions for each case. Hewstone et al. (1994) showed that this programme was effective in that it allowed participants from each professional group (a) to know the other professional group better and (b) to understand more clearly and recognize more easily the intragroup and intergroup relative competencies (superiorities and inferiorities) in different aspects of practice. Hewstone et al. (1994) attributed the programme's success partly to the fact that it was presented together by a social worker and a doctor who were willing to express the equality of their status.

Hill and Agoustinis (2001) assessed, among other things, the effectiveness of an in-house education programme aimed at reducing negative stereotyping of aboriginal Australians (the Cross Cultural Awareness Programme). Participants were employees of a large public service organization. Hill and Agoustinis (2001) found that the programme had a strong positive effect immediately after completion; there was, notably, a significant decrease in stereotyping. Three months later, however, the level of stereotyping was found not to differ from the level assessed before the programme; that is, the stereotyping was not durably affected by the programme. Hill and Agoustinis (2001) attributed the programme's mixed success to the fact that it was presented by an aboriginal Australian who was not judged by the participants to be a 'typical' member of this group.

Several other studies aimed at reducing stereotypes have been conducted, but the results have been even more disappointing than those of Hill and Agoustinis (2001) (see Hewstone et al., 1992; Hopkins, 1994; Hopkins et al., 1992; Neville and Furlong, 1994). In Hewstone and Hopkins's studies, the relative failure of the different programmes to reduce stereotyping of the police was attributed to the fact that the police officers participating in it were not perceived as 'normal' police officers.

Reducing anti-dark skinned stereotyping

The present study, like that of Hill and Agoustinis (2001), was aimed at reducing ethnic stereotyping. More precisely, it was aimed at reducing anti-dark-skinned stereotyping among Portuguese light-skinned children.

Pro-light-skinned/anti-dark-skinned bias is usually found among American preschool children of European and African ancestry (Williams and Morland, 1976), where it is often given a racial interpretation, i.e. it is assumed to reflect the children's learning experiences in a multiracial society where light-skinned persons generally enjoy a more privileged position, and where prejudice against dark-skinned persons is often encountered.

An exclusive reliance on such an interpretation has been challenged by the demonstration of pro-light-skinned/anti-dark-skinned bias among preschool children in France and Italy (Best et al., 1975), in Germany (Best et al.,

1976), in Japan (Iwawaki et al., 1978), and in Portugal (Neto and Williams, 1997). Since, at the time of the studies, young children in these countries had little contact with dark-skinned persons or with the concept of race as it relates to skin colour, the pro-light-skinned/anti-dark-skinned bias that they displayed had to be attributed to other sources, possibly to a general pro-light/anti-dark bias that is related to preferences for colours. A functional relationship between pro-light-skinned/anti-dark-skinned bias and colour preferences is supported by the positive correlations between the two factors among children in all countries studied (Williams and Morland, 1976). Neto and Williams (1997) showed that the bias was not affected by gender, but was higher among 8-year-olds than among 5-year-olds.

Neto and Paiva (1998) conducted a study with 8-year-old children of mixed black and white parentage, of solely black parentage, and of solely white parentage. In this study the same kind of bias was found, irrespective of the racial categories. This provided additional evidence that the pro-white and pro-light-skinned biases are pan-cultural tendencies. However, mean racial attitudes of white children were significantly different from those of black and biracial children. White children were more pro-white than black and biracial children.

The present study differed methodologically from the two studies reported earlier in two ways. First, the programme was directed at young children. As asserted by Cotton (1993), programmes aimed at reducing stereotyping must be part of the school curriculum in order to be truly effective. They have to be long-term programmes addressed to young pupils at the earliest age possible.

Second, and as a result of the choice of this sample, the programme was specifically designed to suit young children's sensibilities, as well as to be acceptable to parents, the other teachers, and the school and district administrations; that is, it was designed to be integrated easily into the school curriculum. It was essentially a musical programme, delivered through the ordinary music courses (the Gondomar Musical Programme). During these courses, pupils usually learn popular and modern songs. Our stereotyping reduction programme merely consisted of introducing a sub-series of Cape Verdean songs into the series of regular Portuguese songs to be studied and learned by the pupils. An example of a Cape Verdean song presented in the programme is shown in Appendix 1.

Relationships between Cape Verde culture and Portuguese culture

Cape Verde is an independent state located in western Africa, composed of a group of islands in the Gulf of Guinea (Neto and Ferreira, 2003). It is a former Portuguese colony, and currently many Cape Verdean people live and work in Portugal. The Cape Verdean community makes up the largest group of foreign immigrants in Portugal. The culture of Cape Verdean people

reflects a blending of the two influences, European and African, intermixed over five centuries of history.

In Cape Verde, Portuguese is used for formal communication in such fields as administration, teaching, literature, justice and mass media. Crioulo (Creole) is used for informal communication. Music and dance play an important role in Cape Verdean social activities. The roots of traditional music and dance come from several sources, ranging from 'Arabic lamentations' to African rhythms to music of European origins (Lopes Filho, 1981).

Hypothesis

Our hypothesis was that children exposed to the programme, that is, children who studied and learned Cape Verdean songs during regular classes, would show less evidence of pro-white-skinned/anti-dark-skinned stereotyping than children who only studied and learned Portuguese songs (the ordinary curriculum). In addition to this global hypothesis, we wondered whether the effect of the programme would be the same irrespective of the age of the participants. Who would benefit more from the programme, the younger or the older participants?

Method

PARTICIPANTS

The sample consisted of 193 children who were attending public schools near Porto (Gondomar), Portugal. As regards parental occupation and education, 86 of them were from blue-collar families, 67 were from white-collar families and 40 were from more affluent families. They were aged 7–10 years (mean age = 8.86, *SD* = 1.04).

MATERIALS

The materials used for testing ethnic attitudes consisted of the Portuguese translations of the standard instructions and stories for the Preschool Racial Attitude Measure II (PRAM II; Williams et al., 1975) together with the standard stimulus pictures. The PRAM II is a two-choice measure of ethnic attitudes that is designed for children aged 3–9 years. In its unabbreviated form, the PRAM II consists of 36 items: 24 ethnic attitude items and 12 sex-role stereotype items. Split-half reliabilities of the ethnic attitude total scores were approximately .80. In the present study, only 12 ethnic attitude items were used – those that form series A (a short form of the PRAM II). In previous studies (Neto and Paiva, 1998), the two series, A and B, correlated .71, and had virtually identical means ($A = 8.20$, $B = 8.24$) and standard deviations ($A = 2.74$, $B = 2.79$). The items used are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1 *Dates and content of the 18 sessions*

Session	Date	Content
1	7 February 2002	Traditional music in Cape Verde. The different cultures that created the present day culture in this country. Various popular songs from Cape Verde.
2	21 February 2002	Traditional Portuguese music and its influence on Cape Verdean music. Popular songs from the provinces of Minho and Douro, Portugal.
3	28 February 2002	The Cape Verdean society. Respecting other cultures. Audition and study of a <i>morna</i> : 'Cabo Verde Terra Minha' [Cape Verde my country].
4	8 March 2002	Popular songs and musical instruments from the province of Trás os Montes, Portugal.
5	15 March 2002	Origins of the <i>morna</i> . <i>Saudade</i> and <i>melancoly</i> . The minor mode. Popular songs from Santiago Island, and from the city of Praia, Cape Verde.
6	22 March 2002	Popular songs and musical instruments from the province of Beira Litoral, Portugal. The importance of José Alfonso in Portuguese traditional music.
7	19 April 2002	Cape Verde as a Portuguese colony before the revolution (25 April). Portuguese music of the time.
8	24 April 2002	The independence of Cape Verde. Songs of Portuguese authors of the time.
9	2 May 2002	<i>Morna</i> and its cradle: Brava Island, Cape Verde. Similarities between <i>morna</i> and <i>fado</i> .
10	7 May 2002	Popular songs and musical instruments from the provinces of Beira Alta and Beira Baixa, Portugal. The Portuguese guitar. Works by Lopes Graça and Giacometti.
11	9 May 2002	The importance of water in Cape Verde I. Audition and study of a song for children: 'Cond tchuva cai' [When the rain falls].
12	11 May 2002	Popular songs and musical instruments from the provinces of Estramadura and Ribatejo, Portugal. <i>Fado</i> and <i>sandango</i> .
13	13 May 2002	The importance of water in Cape Verde II. Audition and study of another song for children: 'Dia d'tchuva' [Rainy day].
14	15 May 2002	Popular songs and musical instruments from the provinces of Alentejo and Algarve, Portugal. The minor mode in Alentejo's songs and its influence on Cape Verdean songs.
15	17 May 2002	The Cape Verdean society. <i>Coladeira</i> as a musical form. Fogo Island and its <i>colareida</i> : 'San Filipe' [Saint Philip].
16	24 May 2002	Popular songs and musical instruments from the islands of Madeira and Açores, Portugal.
17	27 May 2002	Tabanca: Cradle of Cape Verdean culture. Cape Verdean songs.
18	29 May 2002	Cape Verde and Portugal: Close relationships between the two cultures. Cape Verdean and Portuguese songs.

PROCEDURE

Musical programme

For the first half of the sample, taken at random, the children followed the ordinary programme (the control group). For the remaining half of the sample, the children were exposed at school to 18 × 60-minute sessions of cross-cultural musical education. This programme included both Portuguese and Cape Verdean songs (see Table 1). One of these Portuguese songs is shown in Appendix 2 (Lopes-Graça, 1981) and one of the Cape Verdean songs in Appendix 1 (Sousa, 1973). All these songs were in Portuguese (the official language in both countries), and were adapted to the young public. For administrative reasons, (a) it was not possible to have a group of children exposed to Cape Verdean songs only, and (b) many sessions had to be scheduled for May. The children were not made aware of the purposes of the experiment. In fact, they were not aware that an experiment was taking place in their school. They were, however, told which song was a Cape Verdean one and which song was a Portuguese one. The song-texts had no picture (e.g. of dark-skinned or light-skinned persons) accompanying them.

Testing sessions

There were two testing sessions: one in January 2002, before the beginning of musical education; and the other in June 2002, just after the completion of the programme. Each child was tested individually by a light-skinned Portuguese woman. For all the children, the short form of the PRAM II was administered according to standard procedures. After a child was brought to the testing room, the examiner read the following PRAM instructions in the appropriate language: 'What I have here are some pictures I'd like to show you and some stories that go with each one. I want you to help me by pointing to the person in each picture that the story is about. Here, I'll show you what I mean . . .' The PRAM stories and pictures were then presented to the child and his or her responses were recorded.

An example of a story is the following: 'A little boy is known for being very friendly. Which of these two boys might it be?' After reading the story, two pictures were presented, one showing a dark-skinned child and the other a light-skinned child. The participant was instructed to choose the picture that best corresponded to this short verbal description.

Upon completion of the test, these final instructions were given: 'Thank you for playing these games with me (us) and I'd (we'd) appreciate it if you wouldn't talk to the other children about the games we've played here, so the games will be new to them, too.' The child was then returned to his or her classroom.

Results

The data for each child were scored in standard way by counting one point for the selection of a light-skinned child in response to a positive adjective and

one point for the selection of a dark-skinned child in response to a negative adjective. This resulted in scores which could range from 0 to 12, categorized as follows: 0–3, pro-dark-skinned/anti-light-skinned bias; 4–8, no strong bias; 9–12, pro-light-skinned/anti-dark-skinned bias.

The top panel in Figure 1 shows the group \times time interaction. In the control group there are no differences between pre-test and post-test values. In the experimental group, post-test values are notably lower than pre-test values. An ANOVA with a time \times age \times gender \times socioeconomic level, $2 \times 2 \times$

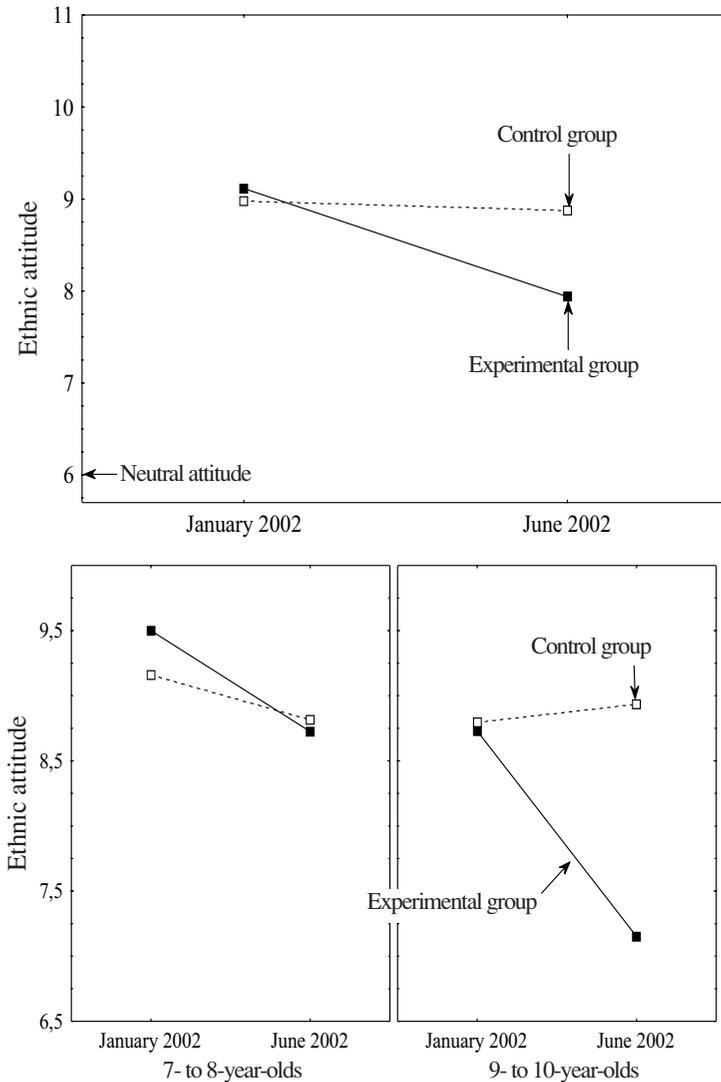


FIGURE 1 Mean scores on the PRAM II Scale as a function of exposure to the programme (control group versus experimental group), time (June versus January), and age.

2 × 3 design was conducted on the raw data. The group × time interaction was significant, $F(1, 185) = 12.28, p < .001$.

The bottom panels in Figure 1 show the group × time interaction for each age group (less than 106 months *versus* more than 105 months). Among the younger participants, there was practically no group effect, and no apparent group × time interaction. Among the older participants, the group effect was strong, and the group × time interaction was also strong. The age × group × time interaction was significant, $F(1, 185) = 4.35, p < .04$. No other high-order interaction involving gender or sociocultural level was significant. The main effect of age was significant, $F(1, 185) = 4.47, p < .04$. Subsequent post-hoc *t*-tests showed that the time effect was significant only in the experimental group ($p < .01$).

Table 2 shows, for the experimental group, the number of younger and older participants' selections of light-skinned people in response to positive adjectives or dark-skinned people in response to negative adjectives. Among older participants, five significant changes were observed between January and June. They concerned adjectives referring to external or behavioural properties of persons: healthy, friendly, wonderful, ugly, wrong. For these adjectives, more than ten participants gave fewer pro-white and fewer anti-black responses in June (post-test) than in January (pre-test). Among younger participants, the only significant change was about the adjective wrong. As

TABLE 2 Number of participants selecting light-skinned people in response to positive adjectives or dark-skinned people in response to negative adjectives

Items	Younger Participants		Older Participants	
	January	June	January	June
Positive adjectives				
Healthy	33	30	42	27*
Friendly	28	31	42	30*
Wonderful	31	33	43	31*
Clean	38	31	44	35
Nice	34	30	40	36
Kind	32	32	38	34
Negative adjectives				
Wrong	36	26*	43	29*
Ugly	35	37	52	40*
Sad	21	18	39	31
Selfish	23	25	30	25
Bad	33	28	34	32
Stupid	36	28	40	48

Note: * = $p < .05$ (Chi² McNemar)

regards the remaining adjectives – most referring to more abstract, psychological aspects of persons (nice, kind, sad, selfish, bad and stupid) – no significant difference was observed.

Discussion

The aim of the present study was to assess the effectiveness of a musical programme in reducing anti-dark-skinned stereotyping among light-skinned children. The hypothesis was that children exposed to the programme would show less evidence of pro-white-skinned/anti-dark-skinned stereotyping than children who only studied the ordinary curriculum. This is what was found. At the beginning of the study, both groups of children showed a moderate mean level of pro-white-skinned/anti-dark-skinned stereotyping (roughly 9 out of 12). This result is consistent with findings by Williams and Morland (1976), Neto and Williams (1997) and Neto and Paiva (1998). At the end of the study, the level of pro-white-skinned/anti-dark-skinned stereotyping among the control group children was unchanged, but the level among pupils exposed to the programme was significantly reduced. This result is consistent with the findings of Hewstone et al. (1994), and Hill and Agoustinis (2001).

One reason for the change may be that most children liked the Cape Verdean songs they learned or were exposed to. As Russel (2000) points out: 'People's musical tastes may reflect a tendency to listen to, and to enjoy, the same music as is listened to by other people they like, or with whom they seek to identify' (p. 151). The reverse may also be true; that is, if you like the music produced by some people, you tend to recognize that you have something in common with these people. In a certain way, you are led, at least partly, to identify yourself emotionally with them. As a result, these people come to be considered as not so different from you after all; that is, they may no longer seem so wrong, so ugly, and so unfriendly (Lewis, 1992).

We also wondered whether the effect of the programme would be the same irrespective of the age of the participants. The response is clearly no. Among participants aged 7–8 years, there was practically no change in stereotyping. In contrast, change in stereotyping among 9- to 10-year-olds was dramatic. At the end of the study, their mean score was about 7; that is, in a range of values that do not allow us to speak in terms of stereotyping. The proposition by Cotton (1993) that a programme aimed at reducing stereotypes must be addressed to pupils at the earliest age possible is not fully supported by our findings. It may be that under 8 years of age, such a programme would not prove very effective; that is, it may be that under 8 years of age, the cross-cultural identification process that we described in the preceding section does not yet work. More research is needed on this point.

Another result deserves comment. When examined on an item-by-item basis, the effect of the programme was shown to be stronger on some

adjectives than on others. The adjectives on which the effect was stronger all seemed to refer to external attributes of people (e.g. healthy, friendly, wonderful, ugly, wrong). The effect of the programme on more internal attributes of people appeared comparatively weaker (although in the expected direction). The question here is of a methodological kind. It may be a bad idea to study stereotyping reduction using too broadly defined measurements. There may be various dimensions of stereotyping: physical, psychological, economical, etc. It may happen that, in some circumstances, and for some groups, stereotyping is positive for some dimensions and negative for the other dimensions. In fact, we found in the present study that for one adjective – stupid – the observed change was opposite to what was expected; that is, the level of pro-white-skinned/anti-dark-skinned stereotyping among pupils who were exposed to the programme increased (though not significantly). It would be wise, in future research, systematically to check changes at the most fine-grained level possible.

LIMITATIONS

The main limitation of the study was the absence of follow-up. This was not possible due to the fact that at the end of June, all pupils left school for two and a half months of vacation. In September, the classes were recomposed in such a way that we quickly realized that contacting the pupils aged 9–10 years would not be feasible. In future studies of this kind, it would be wise to start the programme earlier in the year (and obtain the permission to do this from the school administration) in order to be able to assess again the level of stereotyping at least two months after the end of the programme.

Another limitation results from the way the sample was constituted. Participants were volunteers, and although we have no reason to suspect any major difference between these pupils and the rest of the pupils in the school or in the school district, we are unsure how representative our sample was. As a result, the value of the present study is not in estimating precisely the size of the programme's effect in reducing stereotyping, but in adding evidence on the way the reduction of stereotyping can be achieved.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was supported by the Centro de Psicologia da Cognição e da Afectividade (Universidade do Porto, Portugal), the Laboratoire Cognition et Décision (Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, France), and by the UMR Travail et Cognition (Université du Mirail, France). We are grateful to Eve and Paul Sorum for their thoughtful comments on an earlier draft of this article.

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Appendix 1: example of a Cape Verdean song used in the programme (Sousa, 1973)

Cabo Verde – Terra Minha

Cabo Verde – Terra Minha
Amo-te como ninguém
Quero-te assim pobrezinha
Terra mártir, minha mãe

Contigo eu choro, contigo eu canto
Porque te adoro e amo tanto
Tu és a luz dos olhos meus,
Sombra da cruz vinda dos céu

Teu nome é uma oração
Que dos meus lábios despon-ta
Subida de um coração
Só em ternura me envolve

Ca -- bo Ver -- de ter -- ra mi -- nha a - mo - te
Lam Rem

co -- mo nin -- guém Que -- ro - te - as - sim po -- bre -- zi -- nha
Lam Fa M MI 7

ter -- ra már - tir mi - nha Mãe.
Lam

Teu nome é u - ma o - ra -- ção Que dos meus
Sol 7 Dó M

lá -- bios des -- pon -- ta Su -- bi -- da dum co -- ra -
MI 7 LáM RéM

ção Só em ter -- nu - ra me en - vol -- ve Con - ti - go eu
Lám MI 7 LáM Sol 7

choro con - ti - go eu can - to por - que te a - do -- ro e te a
Do M MI 7

mo tan -- to Tu és a luz dos o -- lhos meus
Lam Rem Rall... LáM

som - bra da cruz vín - da dos céus.
MI 7 LáM

Appendix 2: example of a Portuguese song used in the programme (Lopes Graça, 1981)

Não se me dá que vindimem

Não se me dá que vindimem
 Vinhas que eu já vindimei,
 Não se me dá que os outros logrem,
 Ai, amores que eu já rejeitei

Eu fui um ano à vindima,
 Pagaram-me a tinta reis.
 Dei um vintém ao barqueiro,
 Fui p'ra casa com dez reis!

♩ = 120

Não se me dá que vin - di - mem Vi - nhas que eu já vin - di -
 me - i, Não se me dá que ou - tros lo - grem, Ai, A - mo -
 res que eu re - jei - tei, Não se me dá que ou - tros
 lo - grem Ai, a - mo - res que eu re - jei - tei.

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