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An Exploratory Study of the Effect of Feeling and Behavior Upon Judgment

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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE
EFFECT OF FEELING AND BEHAVIOR
UPON JUDGMENT

by

Wayne Van Zomeren

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Faculty of the School of Graduate
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of the
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Wayne Van Zomeren

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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE
EFFECT OF FEELING AND BEHAVIOR
UPON JUDGMENT

For several years there has been a good deal of emphasis on the study of prejudice. Many of these studies have been concerned with the variables that affect the person who shows or tends to show prejudice. Some of the variables which have been related to prejudice are ethnocentrism, (Marchionne & Marcuse, 1955) evaluation of the situation, (Bettelheim & Janowitz, 1950) perception, (Riddleberger & Motz, 1957) threat, (Feshbach & Singer, 1957) and the authoritarian personality (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950). The emphasis of this study is not on the person who is prejudiced but rather on the perceptual cues that are used when someone makes the judgment that another is or is not prejudiced. It was assumed that differences in the degree of prejudice of the subjects would randomize out across groups.

Heider emphasizes the "intuitive" knowledge of man in the psychological area. According to Heider (1958, p.2)

...the ordinary person has a great and profound understanding of himself and of other people which, though unformulated or only vaguely conceived, enables him to interact with others in more or less adaptive ways.

Many judgments that are made about others would fall

into the category of "intuitive" knowledge of man. There is no doubt that people make judgments about others. But on what basis does a person make a judgment about another? Do certain types of statements carry more weight than others?

Suppose we know two facts about a person, one dealing with how he feels and the other with how he behaves. If these statements do not agree with each other, will it make a difference which is positive and which is negative? For example: A heard B say that he doesn't like a minority group. Later A sees B do something which is contrary to B's first statement. Will A's judgment of B's degree of prejudice change? Will A rely more upon the feeling of B or will he rely more upon the behavior B shows when A makes his judgment that B is or is not prejudiced?

The type of situation that everyone comes across now and then was chosen to explore this area. A person has said that he is unprejudiced. Later he is observed showing behavior that could be construed as being prejudiced. How does the observed behavior effect the judgment of the observer? Does he now say that the person is prejudiced or does he discount the behavior that he has observed? The present study is an attempt to determine whether affect or behavior influences the observer's judgment more. A statement of affect was defined as any

statement which expressed how the heroine felt. A statement of behavior was defined as any statement which described the actions of the heroine.

In this study a simple story was constructed about a girl in a library talking to some of her friends. This basic incident was followed by statements of affect and statements of behavior which could agree or disagree. e.g. the heroine could show positive affect and positive behavior or positive affect and negative behavior. Refer to Table 1 for the basic incident and the endings used. The affect statements had the heroine say that she either liked or didn't like Negroes. The statements of behavior had the heroine either show acceptance of the minority group member by having the heroine say "Hi" or by having the heroine reject the minority group member by turing on her chair.

The research presented in this paper was designed to test the hypothesis that there would be a significant difference between the effect that statements of affect and statements of behavior had on the judgments made by an observer concerning the degree of prejudice shown by the heroine.

Table 1

The basic incident with its
alternative endings

Mary was sitting in the library lounge with several of her friends. They had just come from the same class and now were enjoying a cigarette break. The conversation was about homecoming which was less than a week away. Mary noticed that Sue, her Negro lab partner, was headed straight for the group.

Alternative ending A
Affect positive, Behavior positive

Mary had said that she liked Negroes. She said "Hi" to Sue and introduced her to the group.

Alternative ending B
Affect positive, Behavior negative

Mary had said that she liked Negroes. She turned slightly on her chair so that she could not see Sue.

Alternative ending C
Affect negative, Behavior positive

Mary had said that she didn't like Negroes. She said "Hi" to Sue and introduced her to the group.

Alternative ending D
Affect negative, Behavior negative

Mary had said that she didn't like Negroes. She turned slightly on her chair so that she could not see Sue.

Method

Subjects. Two hundred and eighty-seven students from two general psychology classes at Western Michigan University were used as subjects. One hundred and four were used in the first study and one hundred and eighty-three were used in the second study. In both studies the subjects were randomly divided into four groups of about equal size. The random division of the subjects was accomplished by placing the four different questionnaires in a repeated sequential order. (A,B,C,D,A, etc.) Each subject took only one questionnaire as they were passed out in class. The questionnaire of any subject who failed to complete all items on the questionnaire was rejected. Only those subjects who indicated that they were Caucasian were used in either study.

Apparatus. The apparatus used was a dittoed questionnaire which consisted of a basic incident with four alternative endings followed by four rating scales. (see Table 1) All of the alternative endings were combinations of statements of affect with statements of behavior. Two of the endings consisted of a statement of positive affect (liked) followed by a statement of either positive behavior (hi) or negative behavior (turned). The other two endings to the incident consisted of a negative statement of affect (didn't like)

followed by either the positive or negative statement of behavior.

The purpose of this study was to determine if either affect or behavior had a greater effect upon the observer's judgment of the heroine's degree of prejudice. Therefore, the results of this study could be swayed one way or the other by having either stronger statements of affect than statements of behavior or stronger statements of behavior than statements of affect.

One problem that had to be solved was the equating of the positive statements and the equating of the negative statements for degrees of prejudice. If the negative affect statement were more prejudiced than the negative behavioral statement, there would be a bias in favor of the behavioral statement. To eliminate any bias toward one of the factors, eleven judges were used to rank twenty-six statements of varying degrees of prejudice. (see Appendix A) The judges were graduate students at Western Michigan University.

The statements of affect and the statements of behavior were mixed in the same list and ranked at the same time on the same five point scale. The judges were asked to place the statements on a continuum which had "unprejudiced" at one end and "strongly prejudiced" at the other end. They were instructed to consider each

of the statements as an ending to the basic incident that later was used in the questionnaire.

A mean ranking was determined for each statement by weighting each response according to the positions at which it occurred on the continuum and dividing the sum of the weightings by the number of judges. The statements of affect that were used in the final questionnaire were: Mary had said that she liked Negroes, and, Mary had said that she didn't like Negroes. They received mean rankings of 1.3 and 3.6 respectively. The statements of behavior: Mary said "Hi" to Sue and introduced her to the group, and, Mary turned slightly on her chair so that she could not see Sue, received mean rankings of 1.6 and 3.7 respectively. The two positive statements, one of affect and one of behavior, were considered to be of about the same degree of prejudice. The two negative statements, one of affect and one of behavior, were also considered to be of about the same degree of prejudice. The statements of behavior tended to be a little more toward the strongly prejudiced end of the continuum than their similar statement of affect.

Two slightly different scales were used to measure the subjects response to the questionnaire. In the first study three point scales were used. The three point scales resulted in a heavy piling of responses at the middle of each scale. Because of this piling the exper-

imenter thought that any possible results were lost.

The number of responses at the ends of the scales were so small that tests of significance tended to be less reliable. To eliminate this difficulty the second study used a four position scale which had no middle position.

The first study used a three position scale of prejudice. The three positions on the scale were 1) strongly prejudiced, 2) mildly prejudiced, 3) unprejudiced.

Because of the exploratory nature of this study a degree of liking scale was included. The experimenter thought that the liking scale might be more sensitive than the prejudice scale to differences in the subjects' judgments. The liking scale also had three positions: 1) like, 2) feel indifferent to, 3) dislike. Both of the above scales were followed by a scale of the degree of certainty of the above judgment. The subject was to indicate how certain he was about the judgment that he had just made. This scale was included in both studies to see if any differences between groups were caused by different degrees of certainty of judgment. The three positions on this scale were: 1) very certain, 2) fairly certain, 3) uncertain.

The second study used a four position scale to force the subjects to choose one side of the scale or the other. The negative end of the prejudice scale was changed from strongly prejudiced to prejudiced to encourage a wider spread of the responses. The prejudice scale in the

second study had unprejudiced and prejudiced at its extremes. The liking scale extended from liking to disliking. The certainty of judgment scale was changed from a three position scale to a simple dicotomy of certain or uncertain in the second study.

Procedure. The questionnaires were distributed in two large general psychology classes at the beginning of a regular class period. The questionnaires were systematically arranged in an A,B,C,D,A,B,C, etc. order and placed in piles according to the number of seats in the rows. The first questionnaire of each pile was also arranged in an A,B,C,D,A,B, etc. order to insure that there would be no systematic error due to empty seats.

The subjects were instructed to take the top questionnaire from the pile and to pass the remainder to the person on his right. Each subject took only one questionnaire which he completed by underlining the choices he felt were correct. The subjects were instructed to read the directions and to complete the questionnaire to the best of their ability with the information that was given. They were assured that their questionnaires would remain anonymous. In both studies all the subjects of that study were together at the same time. This controlled for any difference in verbal directions and for variation in the testing situation. (see Appendix B for complete instructions)

Results

The response frequencies for the prejudice and liking scales are presented in Tables 2 and 3. The experimenter felt that if either behavior or affect were the stronger influence on the subject's judgments, there would be a significant swing toward the extremes of the scale. Groups B and C were used to test if there were a significant difference between the effect of the statements of affect and the effect of the statements of behavior. If there were a significant difference here it would be possible to see by inspection if the statements of affect or those of behavior caused the significant difference. e.g. if the behavior were positive and the affect negative and there were a significant swing toward the positive end of the continuum, this would indicate that behavior influences the subject's judgment more than affect.

The results of the tests of significance of both studies are presented in Table 4. Because of the piling of response in the middle of the scales in the first study, the chi square expected frequencies were so small that in all but one comparison the Fisher exact P test (Siegal, 1956) was used. The middle position of the scales in the first study were eliminated from the tests of significance. There was no significant difference

Table 2

The number of subjects falling
at each position on the scales
of the first study

N = 104

Degree of prejudice scale

Condition			Positions on the scale		
Group	Affect	Behavior	Unprejudiced	Mildly Prejudiced	Strongly Predudiced
A	+	+	16	9	0
B	+	-	4	19	5
C	-	+	2	24	1
D	-	-	0	12	12

Degree of liking scale

Condition			Positions on the scale		
Group	Affect	Behavior	Like	Feel Indifferent to	Dislike
A	+	+	15	10	0
B	+	-	11	12	5
C	-	+	11	14	2
D	-	-	5	11	8

Table 3

The number of subjects falling
at each position of the scales
of the second study

N = 183

Degree of prejudice scale

Group	Condition		Positions on the scale			
	Affect	Behavior	Unprejudiced		Prejudiced	
			1	2	3	4
A	+	+	19	25	2	1
B	+	-	2	20	14	6
C	-	+	3	19	16	6
D	-	-	1	11	25	13

Degree of liking scale

Group	Condition		Positions on the scale			
	Affect	Behavior	Liking		Disliking	
			1	2	3	4
A	+	+	21	25	1	0
B	+	-	1	21	18	2
C	-	+	3	17	19	4
D	-	-	0	11	28	11

Table 4

The tests of significance scores between
experimental groups A to D

Degree of prejudice scale				Liking scale
First study		Second study		First study
Between Groups	Fisher Exact P Scores	Chi Square Scores	Level of Confidence	Fisher Exact P Scores
A & B	.002	25.97	.001	.025
A & C	.16	24.92	.001	.21
B & C	---	.05	---	.15
B & D	.025	7.91	.01	--- ^a
C & D	.05	15.83	.01	.25

Note.--Yates' correction

between groups B and C in the first study. There was a significant difference between groups A and B at the 1% level of confidence and between groups B and D and groups C and D at the 5% level of confidence.

In the second study a two by four chi square test of significance was used. As in the first study there was no significant difference between groups B and C. There were significant differences between groups A and B and groups A and C at the .01% level of confidence and between groups B and D and groups C and D at the 1% level of confidence.

In the first study which used three position scales, a chi square test of significance indicated a significant difference at the 2% level between the liking and prejudice scales. Inspection indicated that there was a significant tendency for more subjects to choose the positive end of the liking scale than the positive end of the prejudice scale. A test by inspection in the second study indicated that there was no significant difference between the prejudice and liking scales. The experimenter believes that the difference found in the first study between the liking and prejudice scales is peculiar to a three position scale or was a chance variation. The second study with a larger number of subjects and a four position scale was assumed to be the more reliable study. Because there was no significant

difference in the second study between the liking and prejudice scales, they were assumed to measure essentially the same thing and the liking scale was dropped from further discussion.

The degree of certainty scale was included in both studies to see if any difference between groups were caused by different degrees of certainty of judgment. Refer to Appendix C for the response patterns of this scale. The first study had no significant differences between groups. A chi square test in the second study indicated no significant difference between the number of certain and uncertain judgments between groups where there was conflict between the statements of affect and behavior and groups where the statements of affect and behavior were in agreement. For all groups at the 1% level of confidence there were significantly more certain judgments at the extremes of the continuum than would be expected by chance.

Discussion

The results of this study reject the hypothesis that there is a significant difference between the effect of statements of feeling and statements of behavior upon the judgments made by the observer. If there had been a significant difference between groups B and C this would have indicated that either affect or behavior carries more weight in making judgments. Inspection of the data would have shown whether the judgment of the subject was influenced more by the behavior or the affect. There was no significant difference between these two groups. It can be concluded that statements of affect and statements of behavior influence the observer's judgment of another's degree of prejudice with about the same force.

The judgments of the subjects seem to vary with the weight of the positive and negative statements regardless if they were statements of affect or of behavior. There were significant differences between groups A and B which had a total of three positive and one negative statement and groups C and D which had a total of three negative statements and one positive statement. In general, if both statements were positive, there was a significant swing toward the positive end of the continuum and if both statements were negative

there was a significant swing toward the negative end of the continuum. When the statements of affect and behavior contradicted each other there was a significant tendency to take the middle of the continuum with about an equal number of subjects choosing the positive and negative ends of the continuum.

One factor may qualify these conclusions. As stated earlier it was necessary to rank the affective and behavioral statements to equate them for degree of prejudice. There were two possible ways of doing this, each with its problem. The statements of affect and behavior could have been ranked relative to only statements of affect or of behavior. This method would have left the difficulty of equating the two prejudice scales. The other method would be to rank all the statements on the same prejudice scale at the same time. The experimenter chose the second method.

The method used may have eliminated any potential difference between the weight of the statements of affect and those of behavior. The statements of affect and behavior were ranked on the same prejudice scale at the same time. Since they were mixed together in the same list, the judges ranked the statements relative to the whole list. Because of this system an affect statement X which might have received a different ranking if ranked relative to only statements of affect, now re-

ceived the same ranking as behavioral statement Y. Both of these rankings might have been different if they had been ranked relative only to statements of affect or behavior. The original rankings by the judges were designed to equate the statements for degree of prejudice but not for the relative weight they might carry in the incident used. The results of the questionnaire had close to the same mean rankings as the original rankings by the judges. This suggests that the ranking system used equated statements for both degree of prejudice and relative strength.

The data from this study indicate that for a paper and pencil questionnaire, statements of affect and statements of behavior have about the same weight in determining the judgments made by a subject. This may not hold true for a real life situation. Perhaps an experimental design which would give the subject a greater degree of ego-involvement would be able to elicit a difference that this study was unable to find.

Summary

Two hundred and eighty-seven general psychology students were divided into four groups of about equal size. Each group received a questionnaire which had the same basic incident but different endings which varied statements of affect and behavior. The heroine would say that she felt one way and then show behavior that would either agree with how she said she felt or be contrary to how she said she felt.

It was hypothesized that there would be a significant difference between the effect that statements of affect and statements of behavior had on the judgments made by an observer concerning the degree of prejudice shown by the heroine. The hypothesis was not supported. The important factor seemed to be whether the statements agreed or disagreed with each other.

Appendix A

The mean ranking by judges of twenty-six statements
on a five point degree of prejudice scale

Mean Ranking	Statement
5.0	Mary said, "Get away from here, Nigger."
1.7	Mary introduced Sue to the group.
1.0	Mary gave Sue a warm "Hi" and introduced her to the group.
5.0	Mary had said that she hated those dirty Niggers.
4.2	Mary had said that she would rather not associate with Niggers.
3.2	Mary gave Sue a weak "Hi" and then ignored her.
4.0	Mary had said that she would rather not associate with Negroes.
1.5	Mary had said that she loved Negroes.
1.6	Mary said "Hi" to Sue and introduced her to the group.
3.4	Mary excused herself from the group as Sue approached.
3.5	Mary nodded to Sue but didn't speak.
3.6	Mary had said that she didn't like Negroes.
3.7	Mary left the group when Sue came.
1.3	Mary had said that she liked Negroes.
4.0	Although the other said "Hi" to Sue, Mary completely ignored her.
1.3	Mary liked Negroes and enjoyed their company.
4.8	Mary had said that she hated Niggers.
3.7	Mary stepped on her cigarette and left the group as Sue came near.
3.0	Mary said she had work to do and left the group.
1.4	Mary had said that she enjoyed the company of Negroes.
2.9	Mary said "Hi" to Sue and went on talking to the group.
3.0	Mary had said that she was indifferent to Negroes.
4.6	Mary gave Sue a dirty look and then ignored her.
3.7	Mary turned slightly on her chair so that she could not see Sue.
4.7	Mary had said that she didn't like those dirty Negroes.
5.0	Mary had said that she hated those dirty Negroes.

Appendix B

Instructions to the subject

Verbal instructions. We will soon give you a questionnaire which contains an incident which you are to read. You will be asked to make some judgments concerning it. Even though it may seem to you that not much information is given please answer the questions to the best of your ability. The piles of questionnaires will be started on the left side of the auditorium. Please take one questionnaire and pass the rest to the person on your right.

Thank you.

Instructions written on the questionnaire. This study is an attempt to determine some of the factors which we use to judge persons as being prejudiced or unprejudiced.

Please carefully read the following incident. You will be asked to make several judgments concerning it.

DO NOT sign your name since we want you to remain anonymous.

Appendix C

The number of subjects falling at each position
on the degree of certainty scale
which followed the prejudice scale

Degree of certainty					
First study			Second study		
N = 104			N = 183		
Group	Very Certain	Fairly Certain	Uncertain	Certain	Uncertain
A	6	18	2	16	31
B	5	19	4	18	24
C	2	20	4	16	28
D	6	11	7	24	26

Comparison of certainty of judgment for extremes and
middle of prejudice scale

First study					Second study			
N = 36					N = 183			
	Extremes		Middle		Extremes		Middle	
	Very		Very					
Group	Cer.	Uncer.	Cer.	Uncer.	Cer.	Uncer.	Cer.	Uncer.
A	4 ^a	2	2	0	9	11	7	20
B	1	3	4	1	7	1	11	23
C	1	0	1	4	11	3	13	23
D	4	2	2	5	6	3	10	25

Note.--^a each number represents the number of
subjects falling at that position.

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