

THE EFFECT OF RACE, INDUCED EXPECTANCY, AND
INDIVIDUAL PRESENTERS, ON WHITE RATERS USING
GRAPHIC RATING SCALES TO RECORD THEIR JUDGMENT DECISIONS

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Experimenter and rater bias have been subjects for study for many years in the field of psychology. Various types of rater biases and their effects on experimental outcomes are well documented. Guilford (1954) pointed out that the most commonly noted forms of rater bias are errors of leniency, central tendency, and halo effect. Ghiselli and Brown (1955) discussed some additional forms of bias which are often difficult to identify and measure, since they are individually learned characteristics instead of observable experimental effects.

Bias in ratings, such as the types discussed by Guilford (1954), have for the most part been identified in laboratory settings. As the field of psychology has grown and become more diversified, the areas in which biased ratings could be identified have grown. Studies in applied settings have been concerned with additional forms of bias which were not noted in the laboratory. The most common areas in which biased ratings were considered critical were performance appraisals, selection practices, and clinical and industrial assessment (Taft, 1959).

Research in the industrial area has been concerned with many additional variables which might influence the validity of rater's ratings. Among the variables considered were the subject's physical appearance, and the amount and type of information given to a rater prior to an employment interview. Carlson (1967) has shown that in employment interviews, the rater was more strongly affected by written information than the physical appearance of subjects. Miller and Rowe (1967) extended the information known about written descriptions by

studying the differential effects that positive and negative adjectives, included in written descriptions, had on raters. They found that negative adjectives, even when fewer in number, carried more weight than positive adjectives.

Bolster and Springbelt (1961) and Anderson and Barrios (1961) have shown that even the order of presentation of positive and negative statements within a written description have differential effects on raters' rating behavior. These studies concluded that information presented first, in interviews, carried more weight than information which is presented last (i.e., a primacy effect). More recently, Blakney and Mac Naughton (1971) were able to demonstrate that negative information presented through audio tapes created the same effects that had been found earlier with written information. They determined that when a tape-recorded interview was presented to subjects, negative material presented in the first third of the interview created the lowest ratings, and that negative material presented in the last third of the interview had the least effect on raters' ratings.

Since studies of this type have been well-documented, current research in this area has turned more toward studying the effects of positive and negative information, when comparisons between people are being made. Rowe (1967) demonstrated that the principles which apply to the order of statements within a description also applied when comparisons between written descriptions were being made. Using written descriptions of people, containing varying levels of positive and negative adjectives, Rowe (1967) determined that when an unfavorable description of another person preceded a favorable description of

