

10 lessons from experimental psychology

framing

Imagine that the U.S. is preparing for the outbreak of an unusual Asian disease, which is expected to kill 600 people. Two alternative programs to combat the disease have been proposed. Assume that the exact scientific estimate of the consequences of the programs are as follows:

If **Program A** is adopted, 200 people will be saved.

If **Program B** is adopted, there is 1/3 probability that 600 people will be saved, and 2/3 probability that no people will be saved.

Which of the two programs would you favor?

framing

Imagine that the U.S. is preparing for the outbreak of an unusual Asian disease, which is expected to kill 600 people. Two alternative programs to combat the disease have been proposed. Assume that the exact scientific estimate of the consequences of the programs are as follows:

If **Program C** is adopted 400 people will die.

If **Program D** is adopted there is 1/3 probability that nobody will die, and 2/3 probability that 600 people will die.

Which of the two programs would you favor?

the halo effect

Perception of **one trait** (e.g. intelligence) is **influenced by** the perception of **another trait** (e.g. attractiveness)

[Wikipedia](#)

Nisbett & Wilson, 1977:

group 1 lecturer warm and friendly

group 2 lecturer cold and distant

results: group 2 thought worse of the lecturer and even believed that his individual characteristics influenced the global evaluation and denied any influence of global evaluation to the individual characteristics

[Nisbett & Wilson, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* \(1977\)](#)

cognitive dissonance

Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959

group 1 do a boring task, describe it as cool for \$1

group 2 do a boring task, describe it as cool for \$20

between -5 and +5, how much did you enjoy the task?

group 1 +1.35

group 2 -.05

false memories

People can sometimes remember things that never happened.

Loftus & Pickrell (1995):

participants read 4 narratives written by their relatives

1 narrative is plausible, but false (lost in the mall)

25% reported remembering the event

[Loftus & Pickrell, *Psychiatric Annals* \(1995\)](#)

task

In 5 minutes, come up with as many ways as possible to manipulate people using the effect we discussed so far:

framing wording makes a difference

halo effect pretty -> intelligent

cognitive dissonance change your beliefs to justify your actions

false memories implanting false memories

asch conformity experiment

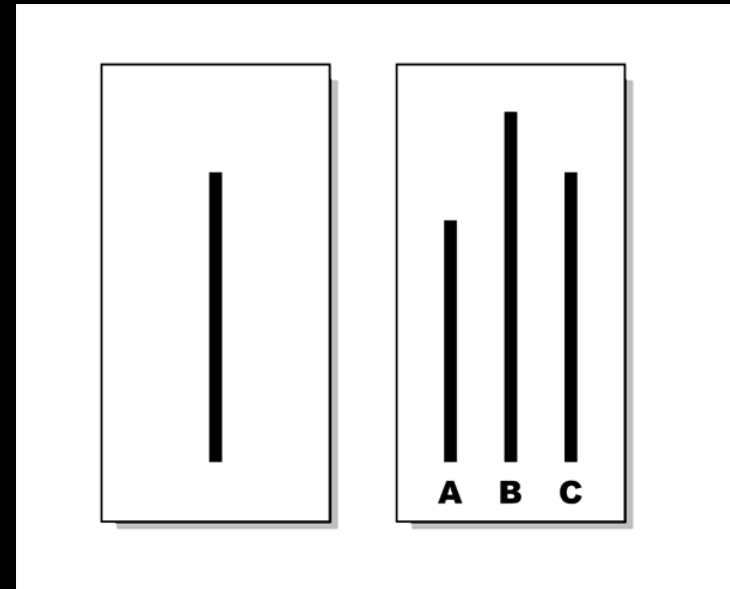
(solomon asch, 1951)

Which line is the of same length?

25% correct

33% more than half of the time erroneous majority

[Source; Asch \(1951\)](#)



[Wikimedia Commons](#)

bystander effect

People are not likely to help when there are others around

real life examples

milgram experiment

(stanley milgram, 1963)

excerpt from Milgram's movie on this experiment

teacher and student (actor)

teach by administering an electric shock ranging from
Slight Shock to Danger: Severe Shock

65% teachers went all the way

Milgram, *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* (1963)



the robbers cave experiment

(muzafer and carolyn sherif, 1954)

William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954)

group prejudice

24 (eleven or twelve)-year-old boys

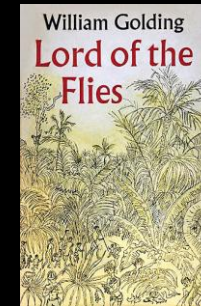
two groups

stages:

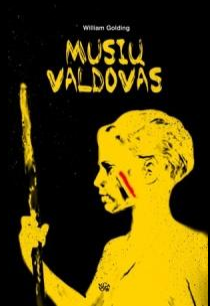
group formation

friction

integration



[Wikipedia](#)



[Bernardinai.lt](#)

stanford prison experiment

(philip zimbardo, 1971)

24 students: 12 guards, 12 prisoners

14 days in “prison”

5 prisoners released early

experiment halted after 6 days

[BBC's *The Stanford Experiment*](#)

learned helplessness

In difficult situations, people tend to lose *hope*.

demo

conclusions

So what does that teach us? There are no authorities.
Nobody can tell you what to do.

So... be yourself? You can only trust yourself? Critical thinking will save your day?

No! Not at all. The story is much more complex. We are not simple creatures. Emotions, thoughts, biases, desires -- all are mixed inside your body. Embrace it. Love it. Acknowledge your limitations and realize your mistakes by recognizing the same patterns as we talked in this lecture.

And then move on to developing responsibility for your own actions and for other. If it is not you who acts, then who? I want you to be the heroes of this world.