

Abstract

The compensation effect is a bias in interpersonal perception where the perceiver judges targets known to be high/low in a certain desirable trait to be low/high in another desirable trait. Extending on past research that suggest compensation effects only occur between traits that are stereotypically perceived to be negatively related to each other, the current research explores the existence of compensation effects using a novel pair of traits: academic competence and athletic competence. It is also hypothesized that more egalitarian individuals would show more compensation effects since it help depict a world where desirable attributes are more balanced. The pilot test confirms that university students in Hong Kong perceive academic competence and athletic competence to be stereotypically negatively related. Experiments 1 and 2 manipulate the academic or athletic competence of targets and investigate whether this affects participants' ratings of the un-manipulated dimension and a control dimension. Results did not find compensation effects between the two dimensions but found evidence of halo effects instead. Interaction between egalitarianism and biases in judgment was not consistently found.

Keywords: social judgment, stereotypes, person perception, compensation, egalitarianism