

Correspondence Bias in the Attribution of Political Attitudes

In understanding another person's behaviors, inferences are made as to what a person is and what motivates him or her to behave that way. These inferences can be arrived at either by explaining the behavior in terms of the person's disposition or the nature of the situation in which the behavior occurs (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 2013). In the current scenario of Philippine politics, however, it is a common observation (especially in social media and online forum sites) that agreement or disagreement on a certain political issue could easily lead to generalizations about one's personal dispositions, such as being prejudiced toward

condition; (b) choice – anti-RH Law condition; (c) no choice – pro-RH Law condition; and (d) no choice – anti-RH Law condition. The participants were randomly assigned to these four conditions by distributing the research materials in a randomly determined sequence. The dependent variable of the study is the participants' estimate of the essay-writer's true attitude toward the issue of RH Law.

were given different personal materials written by the same college student, such as an excerpt from the person's autobiographical essay, a short essay prepared for a creative writing course regarding conflicting values in contemporary society, and an essay from a political science assignment.

correlations were also computed to find out if there is a relationship between (a) the participants' own attitudes and the estimates of the essay-writer's true attitude and (b) the favorability of trait attribution and the estimates of the essay-writer's true attitude.

RESULTS

The participants' responses in the manipulation check indicated that they understood the instructions given to the essay-writer and that they thought this person was able to follow the instructions properly. The means and standard deviations of the participants' ratings of their own attitude, estimates of the essay-writer's true attitude, and trait attribution are shown in Table 1. The participant's own attitudes toward the RH Law are not significantly different across conditions ($F(3, 141) = 2.417, p = .069$). In general, the participants were in favor of the RH Law ($X = 46.641, SD = 8.119$; since the lowest possible score is 10 and the highest is 70, the midpoint is at 40). Likewise, there is no significant difference in the participants' favorability of trait attribution toward the essay-writer across conditions ($F(3, 141) = 1.596, p = .193$). Participants rated the essay-writer toward the more favorable traits ($X = 58.630, SD = 10.329$; since the lowest possible score is 12 and the highest possible score is 84, the midpoint is at 48). Significant, albeit weak, positive correlation was found between the participants' ratings of their own attitude and their estimates of the essay-writer's true attitude ($r = .171, p = .040$). However, no significant correlation was found between the favorability of trait attribution and estimates of the essay-writer's true attitude.

Table 1. Results of Descriptive Statistics

	<i>N</i>	<u>Own Attitude</u>		<u>Essay Writer' Attitude</u>		<u>Trait Attribution</u>	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Pro-Choice	38	49.421	8.179	53.974	8.849	57.553	10.944
Anti-Choice	36	44.694	8.779	33.306	11.326	59.976	7.970
Pro-No Choice	35	46.629	6.778	52.752	7.289	60.914	10.947
Anti-No Choice	36	45.667	8.096	31.500	11.428	56.199	10.862

The findings of 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA are shown in Table 2, and estimated marginal means are presented in Table 3. It was

Table 3. Estimated Marginal Means

Choice	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound

incomplete correction may have led to correspondence bias (Aronson et al., 2013; Gilbert & Malone, 1995).

Moreover, unlike behavioral constraints that affect the person's capacity to enact certain options regardless of his/her

would apply to other controversial political issues in the Philippines, and future studies should also consider including other variables such as cultural orientation, age of the participants, and strength of the arguments. Lastly, the present study involves college students, a population that was found to be highly vulnerable to correspondence bias (Bauman & Skitka, 2010). It is suggested that the study be replicated with the involvement of other populations as base rates, for correspondence bias might differ across different populations.

Notwithstanding its limitations, the study has some strengths. By replicating Jones and Harris's (1967) experiment, the study was somehow able to address the issue on the replicability of psychological concepts, and provided additional evidence on the applicability and generalizability of correspondence bias. This reinforces the importance and value of doing replication studies in psychological science. Furthermore, the study was able to provide support for a plausible explanation as to why Filipinos tend to prefer dispositional attribution of attitudes toward a political issue: correspondence bias.

REFERENCES

- Alicke, M. D., Zerbst, J. I., & LoSchiavo, F. M. (1996). Personal attitudes, constraint magnitude, and correspondence bias. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology, 18* (2), 211-228.
- Aronson, E., Wilson, T. D., & Akert, R. M. (2013). *Social psychology* (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bauman, C. W., & Skitka, L. J. (2010). Making attributions for behaviors: The prevalence of correspondence bias in the general population. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology, 32*, 269-277.
- Butuyan, J. R. (2016, September 12). "Dutertards" versus "Yellowtards." Retrieved from Inquirer.net:

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/opinion/content/279248/the-rh-bill-debate-and-responsible-participation/story/>.

- Fiore, R. A., & Lussier, R. N. (2015). Measuring and testing general fundamental attribution error in entrepreneurship effecting public policy. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Public Policy*, 4(2), 171-186.
- Gilbert, D. T., & Jones, E. E. (1986). Perceiver-induced constraint: Interpretations of self-generated reality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 50, 269-280.
- Gilbert, D. T., & Malone, P. S. (1995). The correspondence bias. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117, 21-38.
- Hopthrow, T., Hooper, N., Mahmood, L., Meier, B. P., & Weger, U. (2017). Mindfulness reduces the correspondence bias. *The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 70(3), 351-360.

processes in the formation of stereotypes about high and low status groups. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, 16(4), 476-487.

Ross, L. D., Amabile, T. M. & Steinmetz, J. L. (1977) Social roles, social control, and biases in social perception processes. *Journal of*

