

Primacy effect

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Primacy Effect is a cognitive bias that results from disproportionate salience of initial stimuli or observations. It is the tendency to remember well the first items, that will influence us more than the later information will. According to Solomon Asch (1946), “ a glance, a few spoken words are sufficient to tell us a story about a highly complex matter” (pg. 258). Therefore, we often make our judgment of the person right from the first impressions. For example, if someone makes a good first impression the moment they meet you, you will tend to dismiss negative attributes shown later in the person.

However, if someone were to make a bad first impression, they will have a hard time making a positive influence later on. In one study, the Asch had presented a list of six adjectives to a subject. It was revealed that subjects who had flattering descriptors were picked to be more likeable when their adjectives were in order from favorable to unfavorable. Therefore humans perceive the people around them by their independent trait. Humans often fill in the gaps of missing information. In another study that Asch (1946) conducted, the two different subjects were shown 2 lists A. bedient-weak-shallow-warm-unambitious-vain B. vain-shrewd- unscrupulous-warm-shallow- envious (pg. 267) results shows that the subjects were more influenced by the words that came before warm. They felt that in series A, the person was truly and genuinely a warm person. However, in series B the subjects felt that the warmth in the person lacks sincerity. (Asch, 1946, pg. 267). This clearly displays the primacy effect that humans different judgment of two different first impression, however with a similar central trait warm.

Therefore, we would perceive people with better physical appearances as more socially desirable and that the first impressions of them will be positive.

Even if there were to be signs of any negative characteristics, humans tend to allow these first impressions to become self-fulfilling prophecies and be naturally biased towards them. Reference: Asch, S. E. (1946). Forming impressions of personality. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 41(3), 258-290