

Anchoring report on cognitive bias report

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



Background

Cases have been reported whereby people are seen to agree with the general thinking of the group they are in, for example when a propaganda starts out in a group it is accepted by everyone of the group even when basic logic shows that the basis of the ideology is misplaced or wrong. In addition there have been cases of people looking at their group as very superior to others in the same region while others are seen as being weakly and surviving at the mercies of their group. For example in periods when racism was very rampant, the whites used to look at themselves as being superior to other races. This is what is referred to as cognitive bias or simply known as anchoring in social science. Anchoring is a misconception in making judgment which originates from social attributions, errors of statistics or memory. These errors in making judgment are common to all people even the educated and experienced. Such biasness makes people to make decisions on the basis of common patterns of life. This has led to social scientists allocating large amounts of their time and resources to try and understand anchoring as part of the human mind.

Purpose of the experiment

The purpose of this experiment is to demonstrate how cognitive bias or illusion (anchoring) can have serious effects on how we make decisions or come up with judgment.

The experiment seeks to prove that anchoring affects majority of people and that some of the major decisions are reached at through illusions and not by careful analysis of facts found through objective research and investigation.

After this experiment therefore, the paper should be able to give a clear argument of how much anchoring affects decision makers and how it can be avoided so that decisions that are made are as a result of careful analysis of available information and not on the basis of illusions.

Hypothesis

- 1) People in a group are more likely to have a similar opinion (agree) given the same subject.
- 2) People accept more easily agree with new information that is related to their experiences and habit and seem to ignore information that contradicts their habits.
- 3) People are likely to behave and act along other members of their group.

Methodology

This is a simple experiment which involved twelve adult participants all of which are above eighteen years. These adults are grouped in groups of fours so that we have three groups with four members in every group. The participants in group one are asked to write a report on how long they think Mississippi River is. Participants in group two are to write a report on whether they think Mississippi river is greater than or less than 3000 miles. The third and final group is to report on whether River Mississippi is greater than or less than 2000 miles.

Table of results

GROUP

QUESTION

RESULT

How long is river Mississippi?

4000 miles

Is Mississippi river greater than or less than 3000 miles?

3500 miles

Is Mississippi river greater than or less than 2000 miles?

3000 miles

The results in the table are represented on the graph below;

Explanations of results

The results above are a result of cognitive bias (anchoring). The results reported are a consequence of social attribution and not statistical errors. Social attribution in this case refers to biasness in making judgment as a result of our habits. It is a judgment error based on our habits or behavior. The participants know one fact; that river Mississippi indeed is a very long. However, what they do not know is the exact length of the river. Since cognitive biasness help the mind process answers quickly, participants reach their judgment on the basis of their experiences and limited knowledge. This type of biasness is very misleading especially among people operating in a group (Robbins, 2001).

The results are also an influence of group consensus. The group did not report similar results because in as much as group members thought they

could agree on a similar subject, which in this case is the length of river Mississippi, the results is an evidence of the contrary. This is an indication that our reasoning is very different even when we are given a similar topic or situations. In sociology this is referred to as false consensus effect (Karim, 2006).

Finally confirmation anchoring is also evident in these reports. Participants in the experiments seemed to ignore the real length of the river and in fact did not make any effort to find out what it could be. Instead they made judgment on the basis of information they had heard in the past; that river Mississippi is a very long. This type of illusion makes people to agree with information that relates to what they belief in (Gallotti 2009).

These findings are not consistent with my expectations because I would have expected that the participants make an effort to find out the exact length in miles of river Mississippi. However as stated earlier, anchoring gives the mind faster answers and saves the brain the trouble of finding out the facts of subject being studied.

Conclusion

Anchoring is a serious mistake in decision making and many people have made wrong decisions on basis of illusions. Most of such decisions are made in ignorance of presence of anchoring and that is the reasons many people never realize this errors. It therefore imperative for decision makers to be very careful while making decisions especially those that affect other people so that the judgments they come up with are a consequence of critical analysis of available facts. By doing this, innocent people will not suffer the

consequence of reckless decisions made by people mandated with decision making responsibilities.

References

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