

Discussion of keith payne's weapon bias: split-second decisions and unintended st...

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Bias in Decision Making: An Analysis Though prejudice and discrimination has reduced greatly in todays world, the stereotypes associated with such still play a critical role in the way people treat their employees, their bosses, customers or fellow countrymen. Payne (2006) conducted a study on the way police officers from the USA erred in making decisions about weapon possession. He prepared an essay which opened up the grounds for research on how bias contributes to poor decision making. The essay is a clear indication of the numerous errors that people make due to biases. It is the purpose of this paper to examine Payne's view and react to it (Payne, 2006). Payne argues that stereotypical bias affects the decisions and judgments people make. These errors are more pronounced if the time to make the decision is shortened. He gives an example where A Ghanaian was shot by Police officers in Bronx, on the suspicion that he was an armed robber. It was later discovered he did not have a gun with him, and the case dismissed as a mistaken identity. Stereotypes and semantic associations such as dread are some causes of such biases. By highlighting some experiments used to test weapon bias, Payne argues that automatic stereotyping and the failure of control contribute a lot in Weapon biases (Payne, 2006). He notes that these two are final outcomes of several underlying factors. Both automatic stereotyping and control can be used to examine these underlying factors. The conclusions drawn from such studies will then be important in reducing the weapon bias.

The strategies of reducing weapon bias would either of the two approaches suggested by Payne. On one hand, they would aim at changing automatic impulse, or on the other, aim at improving the level of control behavioral

reaction. He cites several studies one in which training and willful change of stereotypes reduced greatly the extent of race bias. In his conclusions, he states that bias is not caused by racial animus but by the stereotypes that affect responses when people are unable to control themselves fully. He notes that the sample of Police officers stretches to the greater population (Payne, 2006).

This paper is a suggestion of the inability of people to control some of their decisions. It is true that the shorter the time for decision making, the higher probability of error (Payne, 2006). Whether one is discriminative or not, the error biased decisions were more probable in split timings. This is a scenario observed in today's employment interviews. There are several cases where applicants have earned jobs due to their religious views or social orientations. An interviewer who has supervised employees whose good performance is based on their religious views is more likely to favor a similar group of applicants more than any other. The implication of this is that an employee may lack the essential skills required in the field, which on its part has its negative consequences on the company.

However, this does not imply that people should become automatons whose decisions rely only on their orientations. Rather, they ought to deliberately learn how to master their impulses and be in a position where they can make good decisions, regardless of the timing. Payne sites an example where police officers had gained enough training and experience that reduced their race bias. As Payne suggests, counter-stereotypes could be helpful in reducing bias. Nevertheless, this ought to be as a provisional basis as one stops the already existing bias. After that, he ought to adopt a more clear

mindful approach towards decision making. This suggestion will be applicable in all areas of decision making, from the simple impulsive buying habits as seen among shopaholics through the more superior decisions as relates relationships, marriage and even in managing and giant companies.

References

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