

The spotlight effect in social judgment

Psychology



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The spotlight effect in social judgement is an article combined by three scholars focusing on an egocentric bias in estimates of the salience of one's own actions and appearance. The three scholars include Thomas Gilovich, Victoria Medvec, and Kenneth Savitsky. The authors argue that people tend to overestimate the extent to which their actions and appearance are noted by others a phenomenon they dubbed spotlight effect. Their research involved 5 studies[Tho00]. Their first study included participants wearing T-shirts about a local musician who is not famous. It was expected that the participants would overestimate how they feel either embarrassed or unhappy while putting on such clothing. The second study involved whether the same effect could be felt in non-embarrassing situations. Same conclusion was however arrived at. In the third study the aim was to investigate the spotlight effect on behavior. Through group discussions it was also concluded that most people expressed the spotlight effect on their behavior.

The three authors conducted an experimental research in Cornell University. Total of 109 students were chose of which other participants were observers who also made a big impact in determining the result of the study. The method of study was a mixed design in which both the participants and the observers were located within the study.

The claim made by the authors in all the three studies were frequencies which was predicted that most of the people tend to overestimate what other people see about them.

In study 1 the dependent variables included the observers while the independent variable included the participant who would wear a T-Shirt with a local musician who is not so famous. In study 2 the dependent variable was <https://assignbuster.com/the-spotlight-effect-in-social-judgment/>

the observers while the independent variable was the participant who wore the T-shirt. In study 3 the dependent variable was each student who moved to different group while the independent variable included the observers who observed the participant make their presentations.

The main method of data collection in all the three studies included use of questionnaires.

From these studies we can identify the spotlight effect by the fact that an average person's actions command less attention from others than he or she suspects and the social spotlight may shine less brightly than he/she expects. When all the participants from the three different studies were asked questions about their final response, they cited alternative values which were much higher than values which were lower. This led to the authors same conclusion that we normally overestimate our perceptions than what people see in us.

This study enjoys strengths such as being reliable and valid in terms of its conclusion. However, the study has some weaknesses in terms of bias which might also lead to wrong results and conclusion. To some extent the study was not able to judge individual perceptions which are also a weakness of the study. On the other hand the study conducted 5 separate studies which showed a high degree of correlation something that makes this study more reliable.

References

Tho00: , (Thomas Gilovich, 2000),