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SEEING THE FOREST THROUGH THE TREES: AN UPDATED META-ANALYSIS OF EXPECTATION STATES RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

We present the results of a new meta-analysis that examines data from 28 distinct studies to determine how various factors affect two important parameters in the expectation states tradition: the parameters m and q. Specifically, we ask how factors such as variations in protocol - the Basic setting developed by Berger and associates, a Video setting, and a computerized setting developed by Foschi and associates (1990) - systematically affect data and results. We also examine how study specific factors such as the number of trials, sample size and exclusion rates affect results. Our findings suggest that exclusion rates and protocol variations have a substantial effect on findings in expectation states studies.

INTRODUCTION

The expectations states research program is a leading explanation of social influence and has produced a tremendous body of work in sociological social psychology (Berger et al. 1977; Berger and Webster 2006). The theory centers on the concept of *performance expectations*, defined as non-conscious and taken-for-granted beliefs about how likely it is that member of a small group will contribute to success at a valued task. The theory has been successfully used to understand the relation between expectations and status, rewards, justice, and double standards. Much attention has been given to methodological tools and procedures that surround the program (Berger 2007; Foschi 2007), and that is our primary focus here. Webster (2003) identifies three main settings that have been used in the lion's share of research on the standardized experimental program: the Basic setting developed by Berger and associates, a Video setting in which participants introduce themselves to one another and receive task instructions via a closed-circuit television system (Video), and a computerized setting developed by Foschi and associates (Foschi et al. 1990).

In 2006 Kalkhoff and Thye published a meta-analysis that compared the basic findings across those three distinct settings (see Kalkhoff and Thye 2006 for details). For that analysis the authors used Webster's (2003) "Database of Status Experiments" as a listing of prospective studies to be included in the analysis and provided a clear set of eight inclusion criteria. Foschi (2007) points out that there are at least ten additional studies not listed by Kalkhoff and Thye (2006) that may also satisfy those inclusion criteria. Furthermore, Foschi (2007) also recognizes that many of the studies in the Kalkhoff-Thye (2006) meta-analysis vary widely in terms of the number of participants excluded from the analysis (from 3% to 50%). At issue here is how those studies originally not included, and perhaps some that should be removed because of exceptionally high exclusion rates, might impact Kalkhoff and Thye's (2006) results. We also take this opportunity to ask how varying exclusion rates across studies might impact those results.
The goal of the current project is twofold. First, we report an updated database consisting of 28 experiments, complete with information on the participant exclusion rates for each study when available. Second, using this updated database we conduct a meta-analysis to determine if exclusion rates across studies have any systematic impact on participants' baseline tendency to reject influence (denoted m) and the effect of expectations on influence (denoted q). Finally, we take this as an opportunity to explore and clarify why a number of popular studies in this tradition cannot be included.

STUDY INCLUSION CRITERIA AND META-ANALYSIS

Kalkhoff and Thye (2006) present 8 inclusion criteria for their analysis, and because these determine what can be included in the current article, we review these here. Kalkhoff and Thye (2006) selected for those studies in which the authors (*i*) presented the number or the proportion of stay responses; (*ii*) presented the standard deviation or variance for the number/proportion of stay responses; (*iii*) examined sources of performance expectations that can be modeled with the graph-theoretic tools of SCT, and thus allow calculation of expectation advantage; (*iv*) randomly manipulated the sources of performance expectations as delineated in criterion three; (*v*) reported the number of participants per condition; (*vi*) used one of the three major variants of the SES described above (Basic, Video, or the Foschi et al. Computer setting); (*vii*) used contrast sensitivity, relational ability, spatial judgment ability, or meaning insight as the binary-choice decision-making task; and (*viii*) reported both the total number of trials for the task and the number of "critical trials" (i.e., the number of trials where influence can occur).

Overall, Kalkhoff and Thye (2006) focus on studies that systematically manipulate phenomena that can be modeled using the 1977 graph theoretic procedures, such as diffuse status characteristics, rewards, and performance evaluations. This is because a meta-analysis of expectation states parameters *requires* that the expectation advantage ($e_p - e_o$) can be computed (see Kalkhoff and Thye 2006 for formulae). Excluded are other phenomena related to status and influence processes, such as the activation of double standards (Foschi and Freeman 1991; Foschi, Warriner and Hart 1985; Foschi and Buchan 1990), the role of accountability (Foschi 1996 study 2) the exercise of power as producing influence (Lovaglia 1995), and the role of demeanor (Tuzlac and Moore 1984). The Appendix contains a list of representative studies in this tradition and explanations for why they are excluded from the analyses reported below. [1]

AN UPDATED DATASET AND SOME NEW RESULTS

Based on the above criteria, and with the helpful suggestion of a number of colleagues, we present an updated table with 28 expectation states studies on which we and others may perform analyses. For all studies, when the data are available in the original publication, we have calculated and added the overall participant exclusion rate for each study. This allows us to determine if the participation exclusion rate has any impact on the parameters m and q, as suggested by Foschi (2007).

Table 1. Experimental Studies of Expectation Advantage Effects on P(S)

	Study	**SES**	**Trials**	**N**	***q***	***m***	**Exclusion Rate**
1.	Moore (1968) [a]	Basic	44	85	.0557	.6547	.1500
2.	Berger & Conner (1969)	Basic	25	120	.0953	.6385	.2590
3.	Berger & Fisek (1970)	Basic	25	76	.0968	.6715	.1650
4.	Berger, Cohen, & Zelditch (1972)	Basic	40	180	.0602	.7894	.0000
5.	Freese & Cohen (1973)	Basic	40	120	.1314	.6467	.1750
6.	Webster & Sobieszek (1974)	Basic	25	254	.0921	.6272	.0755
7.	Berger, Fisek, & Freese (1976)	Basic	25	85	.1592	.6638	.1830
8.	Freese (1976)	Basic	24	88	.0790	.6675	.1200
9.	Parcel & Cook (1977) [b]	Basic	25	98	.0904	.6593	.1480
10.	Webster (1977)	Basic	25	171	.0953	.5814	----
11.	Webster & Driskell (1978)	Video	23	63	.1533	.6212	.1215
12.	Harrod (1980)	Video	42	34	.1427	.6150	.5000
13.	Zelditch, Lauderdale, & Stublarec (1980)	Basic	25	124	.1432	.5958	.1140
14.	Hembroff (1982) [c]	Video	40	325	.0979	.6215	.2990
15.	Wagner & Berger (1982)	Basic	25	99	.1150	.5929	.2020
16.	Riordan (1983)	Basic	24	56	.0758	.6735	.1250
17.	Markovsky, Smith, & Berger (1984) [d]	Video	25	81	.2201	.5755	.1730
18.	Martin & Sell (1985) [†]	Basic	62	71	.1025	.7086	.0760
19.	Moore (1985) [†]	Basic	25	54	.0699	.7091	----
20.	Wagner, Ford, & Ford (1986)	Video	25	123	.1139	.5985	.1908
21.	Ilardi & McMahon (1988)	Basic	24	278	.0576	.6455	----
22.	Stewart (1988) [†]	Basic	25	161	.0753	.6794	.1240
23.	Stewart & Moore (1992)	Basic	25	57	.1339	.6661	.1550
24.	Foschi (1996)	Foschi et al.	25	129	.0441	.5436	.1083
25.	Lovaglia & Houser (1996) [e]	Foschi et al.	25	50	.0574	.5500	.0566
26.	Driskell & Webster (1997) [f]	Video	25	114	.1518	.6293	.0000
27.	Foschi, Enns, & Lapointe (2001)[†]	Foschi et al.	25	92	.0760	.5001	.1090
28.	Foschi & Lapointe (2002) [†]	Foschi et al.	25	43	.0052	.5410	.1250

Table 1 Notes:

† Estimates exclude "no salient status information" conditions (see Balkwell 1991).

a. Variances are obtained from Moore's (1966) doctoral dissertation.

b. Estimates are for Study 1. Study 2 uses an unusual modification of the SES involving performance feedback at the end of each trial.

c. Includes three conditions from Hembroff, Martin, and Sell (1981). Unlike Balkwell (1991), we cannot include two conditions from Martin and Sell (1985) because the variances for P(S) are not reported therein.

d. Estimates are for Task A. We modeled "ability" as a relevant specific status characteristic (personal communication with Joseph Berger).

e. Estimates are for the baseline conditions only because Fisek and Berger (1998) demonstrate that these data cannot be fit with any existing graph-theoretic model of the effects of emotions on expectation advantage.

f. Estimates are for all conditions using Fisek and Berger's (1998) arguments concerning the constituent effects of emotions on expectation advantage.

Table 1 provides the updated database along with exclusion rates for each study. Note that exclusion rates are not available for three studies (Ilardi and McMahon 1988; Moore 1985; Webster 1977), which leaves 25 studies for analysis. [2] However, because of the exceptionally high exclusion rate (50 percent) found in Harrod (1980), we also exclude this study from the analyses (Foschi 2007). This yields a final total of 24 studies to be used in all analyses presented hereafter. [3]

Table 2. Meta-Analysis of Fixed and Random Effects on *m* and *q* (standard errors in parentheses)

Fixed Effect	*m*	*q*
Intercept (gamma 0)	$.6437^{***}$ (.0327)	$.1454^{***}$ (.0333)
Video (gamma 1)	$-.0442^{*}$ (.0190)	$.0408^{*}$ (.0194)
Foschi-Computer (gamma 2)	$-.1286^{***}$ (.0214)	$-.0544^{*}$ (.0195)
Trials (gamma 3)	.0016 .0008	-.0009 (.0009)
Sample Size (gamma 4)	.0001 (.0001)	-.0002 (.0001)
Exclusion Rate (gamma 5)	$-.2686^{*}$ (.1113)	.0096 (.1061)
Random Effect	$\hat{\tau} = .0010^{***}$ $\chi^2 = 145.31$ $df = 18$	$\hat{\tau} = .0006^{***}$ $\chi^2 = 59.60$ $df = 18$

Note: The basic standardized experimental setting is the omitted category.

$^{***}p < .001$, $^{*}p < .05$

Table 2 presents the results from meta-analyses of *m* and *q* using the variance-known procedure in HLM 6 (Raudenbush, Bryk, and Congdon 2005). In all analyses, the Basic setting is the omitted category. The first column of Table 2 presents the results for *m*, and the second column presents the results for *q*. Notice that the effect of exclusion rate on *m* is negative and statistically significant (gamma 5 = -.2686, $p < .05$). This indicates that as more participants are removed from the study or rejected from the analyses, the baseline propensity to reject influence declines. There are multiple ways one can interpret this result. First, one possibility is that participants who are excluded because they violate one or more scope conditions (e.g., task orientation or collective orientation) are less open to influence. A second possibility is that participants who are suspicious of the status manipulation (for whatever reason) are also less open to influence. These are only two possibilities, and of course, other interpretations are conceivable (see Dippong 2009). Compared to the findings originally reported in Kalkhoff and Thye (2006), the effect of trials on *m* is no longer significant (gamma 3 = .0016, n.s.), but the effect of sample size remains non-significant (gamma 4 = .0001, n.s.). Furthermore, and most importantly, our analysis does not produce substantively different conclusions concerning the effects of medium originally reported by Kalkhoff and Thye (2006). That is, compared to the omitted category (i.e., the Basic setting), the effect of the Video setting on *m* is still negative and significant (gamma 1 = -.0442, $p < .05$), and the impact of the Foschi et al. Computer setting on *m* is still negative and significant (gamma 2 = -.1286, $p < .001$), even when statistically controlling now for exclusion rates. That is to say, even when exclusion rates are taken into account, there are still substantial differences in the empirical effects of medium on *m* across studies. Specifically, compared to studies using the Basic setting, studies using the Video and Foschi et al. Computer versions tend to report significantly lower estimates for *m*. Finally, we note that our results are not conclusive regarding the potential differences across these studies insofar as they may impact *m*. The estimated variance of the true effect parameters remains significant ($\hat{\tau} = .0010$, $p < .001$), indicating that there are important sources of unmeasured variability across these studies, a point echoed by Foschi (2008).

Turning now to the second column in Table 1, notice that the effect of exclusion rates on *q* is not significant. In other words, the rate at which studies exclude participants from analysis has no bearing on the parameter, *q*, representing the *effect* of expectations on influence. And compared to the findings originally reported in Kalkhoff and Thye (2006), the effect of trials on *q* remains non-significant (gamma 3 = -.0009, n.s.), while the effect of sample size is here no longer significant (gamma 4 = -.0002, n.s.). And once again, our analysis does not produce substantively different conclusions concerning the effects of medium originally reported by Kalkhoff and Thye (2006). That is, compared to the omitted category (i.e., the Basic setting), the effect of the Video setting on *q* is still positive and significant (gamma 1 = .0408, $p < .05$), and the impact of the Foschi et al. Computer setting on *q* is still negative and significant (gamma 2 = -.0544, $p < .05$), even when statistically controlling now for exclusion rates. As was also the case with *m*, even when exclusion rates are taken into account, there are still substantial differences in the empirical effects of medium on *q* across studies. Specifically, compared to studies using the Basic setting, studies using the Video setting tend to report significantly higher estimates for *q*, while studies using the Foschi et al. Computer setting tend to report significantly lower estimates for *q*. Finally, as above, we note again that our results are not conclusive regarding the potential differences across these studies. Where *q* is concerned, the estimated variance of the true effect parameters remains significant ($\hat{\tau} = .0006$, $p < .001$), indicating that there are important sources of unmeasured variability across these studies with respect to *q*.

DISCUSSION

Our goal in this paper is to replicate and extend some basic findings in the expectation states tradition reported by Kalkhoff and Thye (2006). Our primary finding is that the participant exclusion rates in any given study have a negative impact on the parameter *m*, and no impact on *q*. This suggests that participants who are likely to be rejected for one reason or another are less likely to be influenced in the traditional expectation states study. That participants who may be excluded because they do not believe the manipulation, are not task oriented, or are less collectively oriented do not take into consideration the suggestion of their partner is not that surprising. It is also important to note that the current analysis finds systematic differences across the Basic SES, the Video, and Foschi et al. Computer protocols used in this tradition. Compared to participants in studies that employ the Basic setting, we find that participants in studies incorporating video technology tend to exhibit a lower baseline propensity to reject influence even when rejection rates are controlled. Further, compared to participants in the Basic version of the SES, participants exposed to Foschi and colleagues' (1990) computerized protocol also tend to exhibit a lowered baseline tendency to reject influence, again, net of rejection rates. Both findings cohere with and replicate results reported by Kalkhoff and Thye (2006).

With respect to q, studies using the Video setting tend to report significantly higher estimates for q, while studies using the Foschi et al. Computer setting tend to report significantly lower estimates for q (i.e., compared to the Basic setting). These findings are consistent with and replicate results from Troyer (2001) and Kalkhoff and Thye (2006). The overall implication is that protocol variations have important effects on study parameters (see Kalkhoff and Thye for the appropriate correction methods).

Despite the fact that our models take into consideration the three different protocols, number of trials, sample size, and rates of exclusion across studies there is still substantial variation among the studies included in this analysis (i.e., the random effect is still significant). This suggests that there are important differences across these studies that are not accounted for by the aforementioned factors. The implication is that variations across these protocols can have important, but unintended effects.

In closing, we note that it is fortunate that there is a high degree of standardization in the expectation states tradition, and it is precisely this kind of standardization across settings that makes a meta-analysis of this kind possible (see Berke and Godschalk 2009). Our analysis suggests that any change to the protocol, instructions, measurement, media, and so forth may have some effect. As Hendrick (1990) notes, "Differential variation in instructions and or events constitutes 'manipulation of an independent variable'" (p. 44). It is only through work like ours, and systematic laboratory research, that such effects may be identified. Our study is not definitive in terms of identifying factors that vary across the research settings of the expectation states program, in spite of the level of standardization that does exist. Our key message is to proceed with caution and recognize that (*i*) variations do exist across research settings, and (*ii*) these differences can have non-trivial effects. To identify differences is not to suggest bias or blame. On the contrary, we must first understand how these differences produce empirical consequences (if they indeed do) before we can come to grips with their theoretical importance. That we are in a position to cope with such questions is a promising sign and a desirable feature of a fertile research program that has spawned a number of empirical testing grounds.

ENDNOTES

1. Although these studies are important for the advancement of the expectation state program, they simply cannot be included in the meta-analysis because there is no known way to estimate the expectation advantage using the graph theoretic procedure. Future developments in the graph-theoretic procedures (Berger et al. 1977) may allow for this, and this would represent a major development in the expectation states tradition.

2. The statistical software that we use to conduct the meta-analysis (HLM 6.0) cannot handle missing data at Level-2. Therefore, the three studies that do not provide information on the participant exclusion rate cannot be analyzed.

3. For details on the computation of *m*, *q*, and their variances, see Berger et al. (1977), Kalkhoff and Thye (2006), and Dippong (2009).

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APPENDIX: Why Studies Mentioned in Foschi (2007) Cannot be Included

1. Riches and Foddy (1989) – These authors used a unique computer that predated the Foschi and colleagues computer setting. Insofar as it is (or may be) the only one of its kind, we cannot include in any statistical analyses.

2. Foschi, Warriner, and Hart (1985) – The standards for ability and for lack of ability were manipulated and not held constant in 4 out of 5 experimental conditions. In the control condition (Condition 3), no information on standards is given; however, status is not manipulated either. In short, FWH (1985) introduce a second independent variable (standards) that may alter the way in which expectations translate into P(S). Needed are at least two conditions where performance expectations are manipulated and ability standards (or any other factor not amenable to graph modeling and expectation state computation) are not.

3. Lovaglia (1995) – Power was the independent variable in this study; status was not. Currently there is no means by which to graph-theoretically derive expectation states values based on power. This study violates our third criterion for inclusion.

4. Foschi and Freeman (1991) – Standards for ability and for lack of ability were manipulated and not held constant in all experimental conditions. This study was excluded for the same reason as FWH (1985).

5. Tuzlak and Moore (1984) – Levels of demeanor are manipulated across all study conditions. Needed are at least two conditions where performance expectations are randomly manipulated and levels of demeanor are not.

6. Foschi (1996; study 2) – Accountability is manipulated in this study. Further, we note that low accountability produces q values in the neighborhood of .30, which suggests that low accountability strongly alters the effect of expectations on P(S). We cannot model accountability in graph theoretic terms, so this study was excluded.

7. Foschi and Buchan (1990) – Given the conditions presented in Table 1, conditions 1 and 3 involve peer interaction, and participants in conditions 2 and 4 are always higher status relative to partner. One needs variability on status within a given study in order for it to be included in a meta-analysis.

8. Troyer (2001) - Could not be included because it uses a hybrid setting that is somewhat unique. It presents text instructions to the participants using the computer terminals instead of video.

9.Foddy and Smithson (1999) – Also use a unique computer program, so it could not be included.

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