

20.4: Teacher Ratings

Learning Objectives

- Teacher Ratings

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Overview

How powerful are rumors? Frequently, students ask friends and/or look at instructor evaluations to decide if a class is worth taking. Kelley (1950) found that instructor reputation has a profound impact on actual teaching ratings, and Towler and Dipboye (1998) replicated and extended this study.

Subjects were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. Before viewing the lecture, students were given a summary of the instructors' prior teaching evaluations. There were two conditions: Charismatic instructor and Punitive instructor.

Then all subjects watched the **same** twenty-minute lecture given by the exact same lecturer. Following the lecture, subjects answered three questions about the leadership qualities of the lecturer. A summary rating score was computed and used as the variable "rating" here.

Questions to Answer

Does an instructor's prior reputation affect student ratings?

Design Issues

The data presented here are part of a larger study. See the references below to learn more.

Descriptions of Variables

Table 20.4.1: Description of Variables

Variable	Description
Condition	this represents the content of the description that the students were given about the professor (1 = charismatic, 2 = punitive)
Rating	how favorably the subjects rated the professor after hearing the lecture (higher ratings are more favorable)

Data files

Ratings.xls

References

- Kelley, H. H.(1950). The warm-cold variable in first impression of persons. *Journal of Personality*, 18, 431-439.
- Towler, A., & Dipboye, R. L. (1998). The effect of instructor reputation and need for cognition on student behavior (poster presented at American Psychological Society conference, May 1998).

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