

Paper Selection

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Nisbett, R. E., & Wilson, T. D. (1977). The Halo Effect: Evidence for Unconscious Alteration of Judgments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 35(4), 250-256.

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Brief Summary of the Experiment

This experiment examines the halo effect, where overall impressions of a person influence evaluations of their specific attributes. In the study, 118 participants watched one of two videotaped interviews with the same instructor who spoke English with a European accent. The independent variable was the instructor's demeanor: in the warm condition, he appeared friendly, respectful, and flexible; in the cold condition, he seemed distant, distrustful, and rigid. The dependent variables included ratings of overall likability and evaluations of specific attributes—physical appearance, mannerisms, and accent.

Results showed a robust halo effect: participants who saw the warm instructor rated his appearance, mannerisms, and accent as significantly more appealing than those who saw the cold instructor, even though these attributes were objectively identical across conditions. Furthermore, participants were unaware of this bias; many believed their dislike of specific attributes caused their negative overall impression, when causality actually flowed in the opposite direction.

Initial Ideas for Technology Environment Adaptation

We propose adapting this experiment to a text-based chatbot interaction where participants converse with an AI assistant using different conversational tones (warm/friendly vs. cold/rigid) controlled through prompt engineering, then rate both overall satisfaction and specific interface features (response formatting, UI design, typing speed indicators) that remain constant across conditions.