

Brown Bag Lunchtime Seminar (Via Zoom)

Revisiting the Better-than-average Effect: Replication and Extension of Alicke (1985)

12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. | November 5, 2021 (Friday)



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Abstract

People seem to regard themselves as better than the average other. To revisit this phenomenon, we conducted a pre-registered replication and extension of Alicke's (1985) study on the effect of trait dimensions for self versus average other judgments, collecting data from American Amazon Mechanical Turk workers in two waves ($N = 670$; $N = 903$). For more effective analyses, we switched to a correlational design after pre-testing the data. We successfully replicated the effect of trait desirability for the self-ratings in relation to average other ratings, such that participants rated more desirable traits as more descriptive of themselves than of the average American (original: $\eta^2 = .78$, 95% CI [.73, .81]; replication: $sr^2 = .54$, 95% CI [.43, .65]). In line with the original findings, we found that the effect was stronger for traits of higher controllability (original: $\eta^2 = .21$, 95% CI [.12, .28]; replication: $sr^2 = .07$, 95% CI [.02, .12]). As an extension, we measured commonness, the degree to which a trait is frequently displayed among the average American. The extension revealed that more desirable traits were rated as more common ($sr^2 = .04$, 95% CI [-.01, .09]) and this held for the average American ($sr^2 = .41$, 95% CI [.31, .52]) but not the self ($sr^2 = .00$, 95% CI [-.01, .01]). Three decades after the original study, the better-than-average effect appears to remain robust. We discuss implications for future research.

About the speaker

Cora Mok graduated from the University of Hong Kong with a Master of Social Sciences in Psychology. Her master's thesis focused on replicating and extending the better-than-average effect, the tendency for people to perceive themselves as superior to the average person. Her paper was featured on Psychology Today and a revised version, in collaboration with other researchers, was published in Social Psychological and Personality Science.

Zoom

<https://hku.zoom.us/j/3951550048?pwd=SncvL3RYakEycUtpL29vdDJEdjEwdz09>

Meeting ID: 395 155 0048 | Password: psyc



~All are Welcome~

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