

Known Social and Cognitive Biases

Human brains are hardwired to take shortcuts when processing information to make decisions, resulting in "systematic thinking errors," or cognitive biases.

Social Biases

Implicit Bias / Stereotype: Tendency to categorize and perceive others according to attitudes and expectations (stereotypes) about a group. Activated very quickly, and guide:



- What we notice about others.



- How we weigh the importance of what we notice.



- How we interpret people's behavior – and the attributions we create about what is causing their behavior.



- What we remember about people and what we communicate about them to others.



- Feelings about/emotions towards others.

- Non-verbal behavior.



- Affinity bias: Tendency to prefer and evaluate others more positively when they are similar to us.

Similar to:

Ingroup bias: Tendency to favor one's own group, its members, its characteristics, and its products, particularly in reference to other groups. The favoring of the ingroup is stronger than the rejection of the outgroup.

Known Cognitive Biases

Decision-Making Biases

Anchoring bias: Tendency to lock onto one aspect early and fail to adjust this initial impression in the light of later information.

Availability bias: Tendency to judge things as being more likely, or frequently occurring if they readily come to mind.

Confirmation bias: Tendency to look for confirming evidence and disregard disconfirming evidence. Common characteristics of confirmation bias include:

- Discounting the validity of evidence that defies the person's previously held beliefs.
- Placing greater weight or emphasis on the value of "facts" that appeal to the person's underlying assumptions, to the exclusion of contradictory evidence.
- Actively seeking out information that "proves" the person's point.
- Selectively (and sometimes incorrectly) recalling information.

Overconfidence bias: Tendency to believe we know more than we do. Too much faith is placed in opinion instead of carefully gathered evidence.

Similar to:

The Dunning-Kruger Effect: The less we know about something the simpler we think it is.

Status quo bias: Tendency to like things to stay relatively the same. Tendency to prefer things the way they are rather than having to face the uncertainty of less familiar options. In part, this is because we usually experience losses more intensely than rewards, so we tend to focus on how a proposed change could make things worse rather than better.

Illusion of transparency: A cognitive bias that causes people to overestimate the degree to which their thoughts, emotions, and intentions are apparent to others.

Fundamental attribution error: Tendency to think what others do is due to dispositional causes rather than examine the circumstances and situational factors that might have been responsible.