

CHAPTER 5

General DiscussionAveraging Hypothesis

The studies reviewed in Chapter 1 suggested two possible ways in which information about context and content factor can be integrated in determining job satisfaction. Three studies suggested the possibility of an additive rule (Graen, 1966, 1968; Singh, 1975). One study, on the contrary, suggested a nonadditive rule. Findings of the present set of three experiments indicate that both additive and non-additive rules are equally frequent ways of coordinating different pieces of information about a job. The earlier work employed only the conventional method of data analysis, i.e., overall analysis of variance at the group level. It was, therefore, natural to support either additive or non-additive rule in all these works. The present attempt to analyse the data of each subject separately discloses that subjects adopt both kinds of strategies equally often. Accordingly, any one rule for handling the job evaluation task is not sufficient to account for all the existing data.

Both additive and nonadditive patterns in the data appear to be caused by an averaging rule. Critical tests between adding and averaging ruled out adding and

ruled in averaging. Similarly, critical tests between multiplying and differential-weight averaging rejected the former, and supported the latter. An averaging rule can, therefore, account for most of the data reported in the present work.

This outcome is not surprising for the averaging model. It has received strong support with a wide variety of judgmental tasks as well as with a wide variety of subject populations as mentioned in Chapter 1. It should be emphasized that such an impressive success of averaging hypothesis in integration of information about the context and content factors of a job is attributable to its two-component conceptualization of stimulus. As mentioned in Chapter 1, a stimulus, within the present formulation, has two parameters \underline{s} and \underline{w} . The \underline{w} parameter is fairly context-dependent, and, therefore, allows to account for a number of variations in the results. That the parameter of \underline{w} is important in describing the process of information integration suggests that the weight is necessary and by no means less important than the parameter of \underline{s} . From this angle, the weighted-average rule emerges as a general principle of information integration, and the judgment of expected job attractiveness and satisfaction can very well be considered as information integration.

Single-Subject Versus Group Analysis

In addition to the advantage described above, the method of single-subject analysis has three other important virtues.

a. Model Testing.- Much of the work on model testing has relied on the results of group analysis (Anderson, In early stage, group analysis may be practical and desirable. But the real success of any model can be judged from its capability to describe the judgment of individual subject. Findings of the present set of 3 experiments illustrate, that data of each subject can be treated separately and his exact integration strategy can be described. Perhaps it would be more informative to test the model at the group level and at the same time to show to what extent the main results replicate with individual subjects. This approach will provide a check on the generalizability of the main results.

b. Modeling Task versus Modeling People.- Judgment of every stimulus depends upon its characteristics as well as upon the characteristics of the judges. Singh (Note 5) suggests that the group analysis and single-subject analysis accomplish two distinct goals. The group analysis models task at the cost of genuine individual differences that the subject brings to the experimental

task. On the contrary, the single-subject analysis reflects on the individual strategies under the constraints imposed by the judgmental task. In this way, the group analysis and single-subject analysis model task and people, respectively. This virtue of the present approach had added significance because it combines the nomothetic and idiographic approaches to the study of personality.

The need for a method to model task as well as people has recently been emphasized by Edward (1971), who notes:

Fame awaits the mathematical psychologist who can figure out a satisfactory way to partition the predictive success of a model between its task-describing components and its man-describing components. My own guess is that most successful models now available are successful exactly because of their success in describing tasks, not people (p. 640).

Findings of the present research suggest that the group and single-subject analysis have the promise to model task as well as people. Accordingly, Norman H. Anderson deserves the credit for his methodological contribution to this important problem.

c. Implications for Vocational Guidance and Counseling .-

Because the single-subject analysis allowed to examine the data of each prospective job seeker separately, it opens a new avenue for vocational guidance and counseling. The most important problem for those involved in the work of vocational guidance and counseling concerns matching a

man to a suitable job. This philosophy of each according to his ability has led to the construction of numerous psychological tests but the predictive validity of those tests still remains in doubt. A somewhat different approach has, therefore, been suggested in recent years (Mitchell, Note 4). The emphasis is now on the choice process itself: 'How do people choose an occupation?' The central concern is, thus, with the individual's subjective perception of the outcome from a particular job and the subjective importance that he assigns to those outcomes. To study occupational choice and the subjective utility of the job outcomes of each job seeker, the method of information integration theory is ideally suited (see Table 14) as illustrated in the present work.

Further Work

Further work on expected job attractiveness and satisfaction should address to the question of how different pieces of information coming at different serial positions are integrated. Such an analysis would be useful in two ways. First, it would allow to structure the step-by-step course of integration and build-up of response. Second, it would facilitate estimation of the importance of information appearing at different serial positions. One important use of weight is in deriving serial position

curve (Anderson & Farkas, 1973; Shanteau, 1972; Weiss & Anderson, 1969), having primacy and recency effects. Preliminary data gathered by the present investigator suggest that the job evaluation task can be considered analogous to a verbal learning task. More work is, therefore, needed on this problem.

Process Generality versus Outcome Generality

Two distinct goals can be performed in psychological research. They are process generality and outcome generality.

Outcome generality refers to direct generalization of results at a more or less empirical level. Predictability of outcome is sought as a function of various stimulus determinants. Outcome generality is a primary goal in studies that aim at social relevance. Process generality refers to generalization of underlying process at a theoretical level. The actual outcome need not have any intrinsic interest, as long as it provides clues to understanding the process and structure that produced the outcome (Anderson, Note 2, p. 4).

Much of the work in organizational psychology has concerned with outcome generality, probably because of a strong emphasis on relevance and application. However, the main emphasis in the present research was on process analysis and understanding. If more factors are included in the job evaluation task, some of the findings may not hold true. Nevertheless, the process of integrating information about different job factors will remain the

same. Because of the concern for the process of job evaluation, the averaging model, it should be emphasised, has proven to be useful in testing and developing the present framework for the study of expected job attractiveness and satisfaction.