The Nonverbal Mediation of Self-Fulfilling Prophecies in Interracial Interaction

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Two experiments were designed to demonstrate the existence of a self-fulfilling prophecy mediated by nonverbal behavior in an interracial interaction. The results of Experiment 1, which employed naive, white job interviewers and trained white and black job applicants, demonstrated that black applicants received (a) less immediacy, (b) higher rates of speech errors, and (c) shorter amounts of interview time. Experiment 2 employed naive, white applicants and trained white interviewers. In this experiment subject-applicants received behaviors that approximated those given either the black or white applicants in Experiment 1. The main results indicated that subjects treated like the blacks in Experiment 1 were judged to perform less adequately and to be more nervous in the interview situation than subjects treated like the whites. The former subjects also reciprocated with less proximate positions and rated the interviewers as being less adequate and friendly. The implications of these findings for black unemployment were discussed.

Sociologist Robert Merton (1957), by suggesting that an originally false definition of a situation can influence the believer to act in such a way as to bring about that situation, is generally credited with focusing attention on the phenomenon of the self-fulfilling prophecy. The present investigation is concerned with such a phenomenon in face-to-face, dyadic interactions. In this context it is hypothesized that one person's attitudes and expectations about the other person may influence the believer's actions, which in turn, may induce the other person to behave in a way that confirms the original false definition. Interpersonally, this phenomenon has been documented in schools, with teachers' expectations influencing students' performances, and in psychology laboratories, with experimenters' expectations influencing subjects' responses (cf. Rosenthal, 1971).

In the present study attention will be directed toward (1) possible nonverbal mediators of the effect, and (2) the reciprocal performances of the interactants. The focus, in addition, will be on the interaction of black and white Americans with a view toward examining the employment outcomes of job applicants interviewed by whites.

Attitudes and Immediacy

Mehrabian (1968) has recently reported a series of studies linking attitudes toward a target person and the concomitant nonverbal behavior directed toward that person. The results of these studies
have consistently found that closer interpersonal distances, more eye contact, more direct shoulder orientation, and more forward lean are a consequence of more positive attitudes toward an addressee. Mehrabian (1969) has considered such nonverbal behaviors in terms of "immediacy" and has defined immediacy as "the extent to which communication behaviors enhance closeness to and nonverbal interaction with another... greater immediacy is due to increasing degrees of physical proximity and/or increasing perceptual availability of the communicator to the addressee" (p. 203).

A related series of studies has been conducted by Kleck and his associates (Kleck, 1968; Kleck et al., 1968; Kleck, Ono, & Hastorf, 1966) pursuing Goffman's (1963) observation that normals tend to avoid stigmatized persons. They have begun to document what might be called a nonverbal stigma effect. For example, normal interactants were found to terminate interviews sooner (Kleck et al., 1966) and to exhibit greater motoric inhibition (Kleck, 1968) with a handicapped person (i.e., leg amputee), and to employ greater interaction distances with an epileptic stranger (Kleck et al., 1968). This set of studies, then, also suggests that those persons who possess a personal characteristic which is discrediting in the eyes of others are treated with less immediate behaviors. In addition to such discrediting characteristics as a physical disability or a criminal record, Goffman (1963) includes blackness in a white society as a stigmatizing trait.

Thus, a body of data suggests that (1) attitudes toward an individual are linked with nonverbal behavior emitted toward that individual, and (2) positive attitudes lead to more immediate nonverbal behaviors. Two questions that now arise are concerned with whether such behaviors are (1) decoded or understood by the target and (2) reciprocated.

Decoding and Reciprocating Immediacy

Recent studies suggest that such evaluative, nonverbal behaviors are both decoded and reciprocated. Mehrabian (1967) found friendliness ratings of an interviewer varied as a function of the physical interaction distance, and the immediacy of head and body positions given subjects. Eye contact has been extensively investigated. Both Kleck and Nueske (1968) and R. E. Jones and Cooper (1971) found that a high degree of eye contact produced higher evaluations of the communicator and produced more positive evaluations on the part of the subjects than did low eye contact. Since individuals apparently are able to decode affective components of communications from variations in immediacy behavior, it seems reasonable to expect they would reciprocate such variations. This proposition also has received support. Rosenfeld (1967), for example, found that subjects treated to more smiles and positive head nods did reciprocate with more of each.

Thus individuals apparently decode less immediacy as indicating less friendly behavior and reciprocate with less friendly (i.e., less immediate) behavior of their own. Since individuals seldom are able to monitor their own nonverbal behaviors, they are more likely to attribute the reciprocated immediacy, not to their own, original nonverbal behavior, but instead to some disposition inherent in their cooperator (cf. E. E. Jones & Nisbett, 1971). With this nonverbal reciprocation, then, a self-fulfilling prophecy is born.

White–Black Interaction in a Job Setting

So far we have been concerned with describing possible mechanisms of interpersonal, self-fulfilling prophecies. The discussion now turns to consider such a process in black–white, dyadic interactions. It has been demonstrated time and again that white Americans have generalized, negative evaluations (e.g., stereotypes) of black Americans. This has been shown most recently in our own subject population by Darley, Lewis, and Glucksberg (1972). Such negative evaluations, of course, represent the kind of attitudes that can initiate an interpersonal, self-fulfilling prophecy. The general hypothesis that the present study sought to investigate, therefore, was that whites interacting with blacks will emit nonverbal behaviors corresponding to negative evaluations and that blacks, in turn, will reciprocate with less immediate behaviors. If the context in which the interaction occurs involves a job interview, with the white interviewing the black, such reciprocated behavior may be interpreted as less adequate perfor-
mance, thus confirming, in part, the interviewer’s original attitude.

These general expectations are operationalized by two subhypotheses: First, black, as compared to white, job applicants will receive less immediate nonverbal communications from white job interviewers; second, recipients of less immediate nonverbal communications, whether black or white, will reciprocate these communications and be judged to perform less adequately in the job interview situation than recipients of more positive nonverbal communications. The first hypothesis was tested in Experiment 1, which employed naive, white job interviewers and trained white and black job applicants; the second in Experiment 2, which used naive, white job applicants and trained white job interviewers who were instructed to emit either immediate or nonimmediate cues.

Experiment 1

Method

OVERVIEW

In the context of a study on group decision-making, white subjects, as representatives of a team in competition with other teams, interviewed both black and white job applicants. The applicants were trained to respond similarly in both the verbal and nonverbal channels. The interview situation itself was arranged to give the subject-interviewers the opportunity to treat their applicants differently without the knowledge (1) that their own behavior was being monitored, or (2) that race of the applicants was the experimental variable.

SUBJECTS (INTERVIEWERS) AND CONFEDERATES (APPLICANTS AND TEAM MEMBERS)

Subject-interviewers were 15 white, Princeton males recruited to participate in a study of group decision-making conducted by Career Services and the Psychology Department. They were informed that the study would last approximately one hour and a half and that they would be paid $2.00 and possibly $5.00 more. One of the subjects was eliminated when he indicated that he was aware of the purpose of the study before the debriefing period. No other subject volunteered this sort of information after intensive probing, leaving an n of 14.

Confederate-applicants were two black and three white high school student volunteers referred by their high counselor. Each was told that the study was concerned with cognitive functioning and that the experimenter was interested in finding how subjects made up their minds when forced to choose between nearly identical job applicants. All confederates in both experiments were naive with respect to the hypotheses. Intensive probing following the experiment indicated that they did not become aware. The three confederates who served as the subject’s “team members” and the experimenter were male Princeton volunteers.

PROCEDURE

Upon arrival the subjects entered a room containing two confederate team members, who introduced themselves and acted friendly. Another confederate entered and acted friendly, as well. Then the experimenter entered, handed out written instructions and answered any questions.

The instructions informed subjects that the four people in the room constituted a team; that they were to compete with four other teams in planning a marketing campaign; and that they needed to select another member from four high school applicants. In order to increase incentive and concern, an additional $5.00 was promised to the team which performed best in the competition. Using a supposedly random draw, the subject was chosen to interview the applicants. He was then handed a list of 15 questions which was to serve as the interview material, told he had 45 minutes to interview all four high school students and taken to the interview room where the first confederate-applicant was already seated.

In order to measure the physical distance that the interviewer placed himself from the applicant, the experimenter upon entering the interview room, feigned to discover that there was no chair for the interviewer. Subjects were then asked to wheel in a chair from an adjoining room.

Subjects were led to believe that there would be four interviews so that the race variable would be less apparent to them. In addition, to eliminate any special effect that might occur in the first and last interview, an a priori decision was made not to analyze the data from the first “warm-up” interview and not to have a fourth interview. The “warm-up” job candidate was always white. Half
the subjects then interviewed a black followed by a white applicant; the other half interviewed a white then a black candidate. After completion of the third interview, subjects were told that the fourth applicant had called to cancel his appointment. After the third interview, subjects were paid and debriefed.

APPLICANT PERFORMANCE

Confederate-applicants were trained to act in a standard way to all interviewers. First, they devised answers to the 15 questions such that their answers, though not identical, would represent equally qualifying answers. Confederates then rehearsed these answers until two judges rated their performances to be equal. Confederates were also trained to seat themselves, shoulders parallel to the backs of their chairs (10° from vertical) and to make eye contact with the interviewer 50% of the time. A code was devised to signal confederates during their interviews if they deviated from the pose or began to reciprocate the gestures or head nods given them.

DEPENDENT MEASURES

Immediacy Behaviors. Following Mehrabian (1968, 1969), four indices of psychological immediacy were assessed: (1) Physical Distance between interviewer and interviewee; measured in inches; (2) Forward Lean, scored in 10° units, with zero representing the vertical position and positive scores representing the torso leaning toward the confederate; (3) Eye Contact, defined as the proportion of time the subject looked directly at the confederate’s eyes; and (4) Shoulder Orientation, scored in units of 10° with zero representing the subject’s shoulders parallel to those of the confederate and positive scores indicating a shift in either direction. Two judges placed behind one-way mirrors, scored the immediacy behaviors.

More distance and shoulder angle represent less immediate behaviors while more forward lean and more eye contact represent more immediate behaviors. An index of total immediacy was constructed by summing the four measures, standardized, and weighted according to the regression equation beta weights established by Mehrabian (1969). Final scores of this index represent (.6) distance + (.3) forward lean + (.3) eye contact + (.1) shoulder orientation. Positive scores represent more immediate performances.

Related Behaviors. Two related behaviors, which indicate differential evaluations of the applicants (cf. Mehrabian, 1969), were also assessed: (1) interview length indicates the amount of time from the point the subject entered the interview room until he announced the interview was over, in minutes. This measure was taken by the experimenter. (2) Speech Error Rate, scored by two additional judges from audiotapes, represents the sum of (a) sentence changes, (b) repetitions, (c) stutters, (d) sentence incompleted, and (e) intruding, incoherent sounds divided by the length of the interview and averaged over the two judges. Higher scores reflect more speech errors per minute.

Results

RELIABILITIES AND ORDER EFFECTS

Reliabilities, obtained by correlating the judges’ ratings, ranged from .60 to .90 (see Table 12.1). Preliminary analyses also indicated that there were no effects for the order in which confederate-applicants appeared, so that the results are based on data collapsed across this variable.

IMMEDIACY BEHAVIORS

The results, presented in Table 12.1, indicate that, overall, black job candidates received less immediate behaviors than white applicants (t = 2.79; df = 13; p < .02). On the average, blacks received a negative total immediacy score; whites received a positive one. This overall difference is primarily due to the fact that the white interviewers physically placed themselves further from black than white applicants (t = 2.36; df = 13; p < .05). None of the other indices of immediacy showed reliable differences when considered separately.

RELATED BEHAVIORS

The results for interview length and speech error rate are also present in Table 12.1. Here it can be

1All judges employed in the present research were Princeton undergraduates. Each worked independently and was naive concerning the hypothesis under investigation. Intensive probing indicated that they did not become aware of the hypothesis.
seen that blacks also received less immediate behaviors. White interviewers spent 25% less time ($t = 3.22; df = 13; p < .01$) and had higher rates of speech errors ($t = 2.43; df = 13; p < .05$) with black as compared to white job candidates.

The results of the first experiment provide support for the hypothesis that black, as compared to white, job applicants receive less immediate nonverbal communications from white job interviewers. Indirectly the results also provide support for the conceptualization of blackness as a stigmatizing trait. The differences in time (evidenced by 12 of 14 interviewers), in total immediacy (evidenced by 10 of 14 interviewers), and in speech error rate (evidenced by 11 of 14 interviewers) argues for an extension of the stigma effect obtained by Kleck and his associates to include black Americans.

**Experiment 2**

**Method**

**OVERVIEW**

A second experiment was conducted to ascertain what effect the differences black and white applicants received in Experiment 1 would have on an applicant's job interview performance. In the context of training job interviewers, subject-applicants were interviewed by confederate-interviewers under one of two conditions. In the immediate condition, as compared to the Nonimmediate condition, interviewers (1) sat closer to the applicant, (2) made fewer speech errors per minute, and (3) actually took longer to give their interviews. The main dependent measures were concerned with the interview performance of the applicant, both in terms of its judged adequacy for obtaining the job and in terms of its reciprocation of immediacy behaviors.

**SUBJECTS (JOB APPLICANTS) AND CONFEDERATES (INTERVIEWERS)**

Thirty white male Princeton University students were recruited ostensibly to help Career Services train interviewers for an upcoming summer job operation. No subjects were eliminated from the study, leaving an $n$ of 15 in each condition. The two confederate-interviewers were also white male Princeton students.

**PROCEDURE**

Upon arrival each subject was given an instruction sheet which informed him that Career Services had contracted with the Psychology Department to train Princeton juniors and seniors in the techniques of job interviewing and that one of the techniques chosen included videotaping interviewers with job applicants for feedback purposes. The subject was then asked to simulate a job applicant, to be honest, and to really compete for the job, so as to give the interviewer real, lifelike practice. To make the simulation more meaningful, subjects were also informed that the applicant chosen from five interviewed that evening would receive an additional $1.50.

### Table 12.1. Mean Interviewer Behavior as a Function of Race of Job Applicant; Experiment 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th>Blacks</th>
<th>Whites</th>
<th>$t^2$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total immediacy</td>
<td>$-.11$</td>
<td>62.29</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>&lt;.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>inches</td>
<td>inches</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forward lean</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>$-8.75$</td>
<td>$-6.12$</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>degrees</td>
<td>degrees</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoulder orientation</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>62.71%</td>
<td>61.46%</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related behaviors</td>
<td></td>
<td>22.46</td>
<td>23.08</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview length</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.42 min</td>
<td>12.77 min</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech error rate</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$See text for weighting formula, from Mehrabian (1960).

$t$ test for correlated samples was employed.
Subjects were taken to the interview room and asked to be seated in a large swivel chair, while the Experimenter turned on the camera. The confederate-interviewer then entered, and assumed either an immediate or nonimmediate position which will be described in more detail below. Exactly five minutes into the interviewing in both conditions, a guise was developed whose result was that the experimenter had to reclaim the chair in which the subject was sitting. The subject was then asked to take a folding chair leaning against the wall and to continue the interview. The distance from the interviewer which the subject placed his new chair was one of the study's dependent measures designed to assess reciprocated immediacy.

When the interview ended, the experimenter took the subject to another room where a second investigator, blind as to the condition of the subject, administered self-report scales and answered any questions. Subject was then paid and debriefed.

IMMEDIACY MANIPULATION

As in the Kleck and Nuesl (1968) and the R. E. Jones and Cooper (1971) studies, systematic nonverbal variations were introduced by specifically training confederates. Two confederate-interviewers alternated in the two conditions. In the immediate condition, confederates sat at a chair on the side of a table. In the Nonimmediate condition, confederates sat fully behind the table. The difference in distance from the subject's chair was about four inches, representing the mean difference in distance white interviewers gave black and white applicants in Experiment 1.2

In addition, the confederate-interviewers in the Immediate condition were trained to behave as precisely as possible like the subject-interviewer in Experiment 1 had acted toward white applicants. In the Nonimmediate condition, interviewers were trained to act as subject-interviewers had acted toward Blacks in Experiment 1. The factors used to simulate the immediacy behaviors found in the first experiment were speech error rate, length of interview and, as has been previously mentioned, physical distance. Eye contact, shoulder orientation and forward lean did not show significant differences in Experiment 1 and thus were held constant in Experiment 2 (with levels set at 50% eye contact, 0° shoulder orientation and 20° forward lean).

DEPENDENT MEASURES

Three classes of dependent measures were collected: (1) judges' ratings of interview performance; (2) judges' ratings of reciprocated immediacy behaviors; and (3) subjects' ratings of their post-interview mood state and attitudes toward the interviewer.

Applicant Performance. Applicant interview performance and demeanor were rated by a panel of two judges from videotapes of the interviews. The videotapes were recorded at such an angle that judges viewed only the applicant, not the confederate-interviewer. The judges were merely instructed about the type of job subjects were applying for, and were asked to rate (1) the overall adequacy of each subject's performance and (2) each subject's composure on five (0–4) point scales. High scores, averaged over the judges, represent more adequate and more calm, relaxed performances, respectively.

Reciprocal Immediacy Behaviors. Two additional judges, placed behind one-way mirrors as in Experiment 1, recorded subjects' forward lean, eye contact, and shoulder orientation in accordance with the procedures established by Mehrabian (1969). Distance was directly measured after each interview, and represents the distance, in inches, from the middle of the interviewer-confederate's chair to the middle of the subject's chair, after the interruption. Speech errors were scored by another panel of two judges from audiotapes of the interviews, also according to Mehrabian's (1969) procedures. High scores represent more speech errors per minute.

Applicant Mood and Attitude Toward the Interviewer. After the interview, subjects filled out a series of questionnaires designed to assess their mood state and their attitudes toward the interviewer. Following R. E. Jones and Cooper (1971), subjects' moods were expected to vary as a function of immediacy conditions. The mood scale adapted from that study was employed. It consisted of six polar adjectives (e.g., happy—sad) separated by seven-point scales. Subjects were asked to respond to each pair according to "the way you feel about yourself."

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2By having the interviewer sit either behind or at the side of the table, the impact of the four inch difference in distance was intentionally maximized in terms of psychological immediacy.
Two measures of subjects’ attitudes toward the interviewer were collected. First, subjects were asked to rate the friendliness of the interviewer on an 11-point scale, with zero representing an “unfriendly” and 10 representing a “friendly” interviewer, respectively. Second, in order to assess subjects’ attitudes concerning the adequacy of the interviewer as an individual, they were asked to check the six adjectives best describing their interviewer from a list of 16 drawn from Gough’s Adjective Checklist. Final scores represent the number of positive adjectives chosen minus the number of negative adjectives checked.

Results

RELIABILITIES AND INTERVIEWER EFFECTS

Reliabilities, obtained by correlating judges’ ratings, ranged from .66 to .86 (see Table 12.2). Preliminary analyses also indicated that there were no effects for interviewers, so that the results presented are based on data collapsed across this variable.

APPLICANT PERFORMANCE

It was predicted from an analysis of the communicative functions of nonimmediacy that applicants would be adversely affected by the receipt of nonimmediate communications. Those effects were expected to manifest themselves in less adequate job-interview performances.

Subjects in the two conditions were rated by two judges from videotapes. The main dependent measure, applicant adequacy for the job, showed striking differences as a function of immediacy conditions (see Table 12.2). Subjects in the Nonimmediate condition were judged significantly less adequate for the job ($F = 7.96; df = 1/28; p < .01$). Subjects in the Nonimmediate condition were also judged to be reliably less calm and composed ($F = 16.98; df = 1/28; p < .001$).

RECIPROCATED IMMEDIACY BEHAVIORS

Following Rosenfeld (1987), among others, it was expected that subjects encountering less immediate communications would reciprocate with less immediate behaviors of their own. This expectation was supported by both the measures of physical distance and speech error rate (see Table 12.2).

Subjects in the Immediate condition, on the average, placed their chairs eight inches closer to the interviewer after their initial chair was removed; subjects in the Nonimmediate conditions placed their chairs four inches further away from their interviewer. The mean difference between the two groups was highly significant ($F = 9.19; df = 1/28; p < .01$).

As in Experiment 1 mean comparisons for the forward lean, eye contact, and shoulder orientation measures of immediacy did not reach significance. The combination of these measures, using the weighting formula devised by Mehrabian (1969), however, was reliably different (means of -.29 and .29 in the Nonimmediate and Immediate conditions, respectively; $F = 5.44; df = 1/28; p < .05$).

The rate at which subjects made speech errors also tended to be reciprocated with subjects in the Nonimmediate condition exhibiting a higher rate than subjects in the Immediate condition ($F = 3.40; df = 1/28; p < .10$).

APPLICANT MOOD AND ATTITUDE TOWARD THE INTERVIEWER

It was expected that subjects receiving less immediate (i.e., less positive) communication would (1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th>Nonimmediate</th>
<th>Immediate</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applicant performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rated performance</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>7.96</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rated demeanor</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>16.46</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediacy behaviors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance</td>
<td></td>
<td>72.78 inches</td>
<td>56.98 inches</td>
<td>9.19</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech error rate</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>5.01 errors/min</td>
<td>3.33 errors/min</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>&lt;.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reported mood and attitudes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mood</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer friendliness</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>6.60</td>
<td>22.91</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer adequacy</td>
<td></td>
<td>-1.07</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>8.64</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
feel less positively after their interviews, and (2) hold less positive attitudes toward the interviewer himself. These expectations were only partially supported (see Table 12.2). Although subjects in the Nonimmediate condition reported less positive moods than subjects in the Immediate condition, this difference was not statistically reliable.

Subjects in the less immediate condition did, however, rate their interviewers to be less friendly ($F = 22.91; df = 1/28; p < .001$) and less adequate overall ($F = 8.64; df = 1/28; p < .01$) than subjects in the more immediate condition.

Discussion

Results from the two experiments provide clear support for the two hypotheses, and offer inferential evidence for the general notion that self-fulfilling prophecies can and do occur in interracial interactions.

The results of Experiment 1 indicated that black applicants were, in fact, treated to less immediacy than their white counterparts. Goffman's (1963) conception of blackness as a stigmatizing trait in Anglo-American society is, thus, given experimental support—insofar as that classification predicts avoidance behaviors in interactions with normals. These results may also be viewed as extending the stigma effect documented by Kleck and his associates with handicapped persons.

That the differential treatment black and white applicants received in Experiment 1 can influence the performance and attitudes of job candidates was clearly demonstrated in Experiment 2. In that experiment those applicants, treated similarly to the way Blacks were treated in Experiment 1, performed less well, reciprocated less immediacy, and found their interviewers to be less adequate. Taken together the two experiments provide evidence for the assertion that nonverbal, immediacy cues mediate, in part, the performance of an applicant in a job interview situation. Further, the experiments suggest that the model of a self-fulfilling prophecy, mediated by nonverbal cues, (1) is applicable to this setting, and (2) can account, in part, for the less adequate performances of black applicants (cf. Sattler, 1970).

Social scientists have often tended to focus their attention for such phenomena as unemployment in black communities on the dispositions of the dispossessed. Such an approach has been termed "victim analysis" for its preoccupation with the wounds, defects, and personalities of the victimized as an explanation for social problems (Ryan, 1971). The present results suggest that analyses of black-white interactions, particularly in the area of job-seeking Blacks in white society, might profit if it were assumed that the "problem" of black performance resides not entirely within the Blacks, but rather within the interaction setting itself.

REFERENCES


