Many people deserve the credit for ten significant years of growth for MSERA. Certainly much recognition should go to those educators vitally interested in research and its impact upon education who conceived the birth of MSERA and had the initiative to start this organization. Recognition should also go to all who have supported the development of the organization through this first decade: officers, researchers who have presented quality research papers, committees who have arranged good conference accommodations and programs, persons who have been responsible for preparing the publications (Researcher, the programs, etc.) and all members who have been a part of the dynamic interactions of our conferences. I know that all of us pass the word of THANKS to everyone who has helped to bring MSERA where it is today.

This year we have the opportunity to help MSERA grow in both quantity and quality. We can inform other institutions of higher education and school districts which are not currently involved with MSERA of the many significant opportunities and contributions afforded through membership and participation. Please help the organization in this effort. Growth in quantity is important. In addition, each of us can and should strive - individually - to improve on the quality of our research efforts. We have come a long way in both quantity and quality of research efforts. We still have room for improvement, and I challenge us as an organization and as individual researchers to strive to make this year our best ever. Your board members and officers solicit your suggestions and recommendations in their efforts to lead MSERA through 1981 in the most productive way possible.

The Board of MSERA will address the continuing operations and functions of the association. Standing committees will concern themselves with planning and coordinating the next annual meeting in Lexington. Special Committees will study and make recommendations related to services and activities of MSERA in terms of quantity and quality.
My special thanks go to Dr. John Thornell who has agreed to continue as Editor of the Researcher. John does an excellent job. Again, many credits go to Harry Bowman (President, 1980) and the many committees, board members, and officers who served so well with Harry.

Remember, this is your association. It will be as good and as strong as the commitment, time and service that each of us gives. Your contributions and help can make this the best year ever.

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AERA TO BE HELD IN LOS ANGELES, APRIL 13-17, 1981

The largest AERA Annual Meeting ever will be held April 13-17, 1981, in Los Angeles. Walt Mathews informs us that 825 sessions are scheduled. The Consortium of State and Regional Research Associations, of which MSERA is a member, will sponsor two sessions. On April 14, 8:15 - 10:15 a.m., the Consortium will sponsor a symposium entitled "Critical Issues in the Operation of State and Regional Research Associations." Our own Bob Rasmussen will be on the program. The "Distinguished Papers" series will be held April 15, 4:05 - 6:05 p.m. Ruth Bragman, recipient of the MSERA Outstanding Paper Award, will present her paper entitled "Deaf Children's Performance on Pattern Recognition Tasks: Effects of Different Methods of Conveying Test Directions On Performance." Walt Mathews, SIG Chairperson, extends a special invitation to the MSERA membership to attend both sessions.

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REMINDEERS

The spring meeting of the MSERA Board of Directors will be held March 20, 1981, in Memphis. Members are invited to submit issues and concerns for inclusion on the agenda to Neil Amos, Head, Curriculum and Instruction, Drawer ED, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, MS 39759. (601-325-3747)

The Annual Meeting of MSERA will be held November 11-13, 1981, in Lexington, KY. The "Call for Papers" will appear in the April issue of the Researcher. Make plans now to submit a paper for consideration.

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THANK YOU!

Special thanks go to the College of Education, Louisiana State University, and the Louisiana Education Research Association for their financial gifts to MSERA. The funds will be used to promote quality research in the field of education in our region.

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GROUP TRAVEL TO LEXINGTON

Now is the time to think about travel plans to Lexington in November. Delta Airlines offers a 30% discount on air fares for groups of 10 or more. Your editor is interested in getting a group together to fly out of Memphis. For those interested, identify someone to poll your campus and let me know the number willing to be included in the group. Arrival and departure would be based on group consensus.
Much of the evidence today indicates that lack of internal validity in research can often be attributed to various forms of bias (Rosenthal, 1966; Rosenthal and Rosnow, 1969; Weber and Cook, 1972). This research suggests that variations in cues and information supplied directly and/or indirectly to the subjects participating in an experiment may often bias and hence invalidate data obtained from an attitudinal scale in a classroom setting. The data from studies are inflated or deflated (changed) by a lack of control or lack of consistency in control of extraneous variables. Related to the historical problem of experimenter bias and experimenter expectancy is the pressure currently placed on experimenters to provide as much information as possible to research subjects concerning the purpose and intended outcome of the research. Although APA (1973) guidelines do not explicitly state that subjects must be provided with the research hypotheses, many institutional review committees are in fact requiring this information.

Previous studies appear to indicate that, when information about the purpose of research is provided to the subjects, the data are biased. This bias has been manifested in different ways in different studies. The research of Resnick and Schwartz (1973) indicated that the more information given to subjects, the more negative the results. Dolly (1978) found that subjects acted in accordance with the information they were provided. Dolly, Meredith, and Scott (1977) found no significant differences among groups provided with different information.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether differences in responses to an attitudinal scale or questionnaire were related to overt research purpose information on subject responses in a classroom setting. Most of the data collected in the area of interpersonal expectancy has dealt with what might be classified as covert cues. Although the information was provided it was up to the subjects to determine, on their own, what the expectation was concerning the hypotheses of the research study. In this particular study, subjects were given what might be called an overt cue concerning the intended outcome of the research. Differences in outcomes (responses to the attitudinal scale) would indicate that the validity of the scale used as a response variable might be compromised by the instructions given to subjects in an experiment who must respond to the scale.

Method

Subjects
The subjects in the study were 87 undergraduates enrolled in three courses in the College of Education at the University of South Carolina. Students were randomly assigned to one of the three treatment groups by the researchers.

Instruments
Thirty-six items from the Dogmatism Scale (Rokeach, 1960) and a personal information questionnaire were administered. The items chosen from the Scale were those lacking in political content. Students were asked to rate each statement as "strongly agree" (+2), "agree" (+1), "disagree" (-1), or "strongly disagree" (-2). A total score was computed for each subject by adding the ratings for the items.

A high score on the Dogmatism Scale indicates a person who tends to accept the dictates of authority and tends to be unwilling to question those in positions of authority. The person with a high score tends to be submissive, conforming and respecting of established ideas. A low score tends to indicate a person who is open minded and tolerant of ambiguity in themselves and others.
The personal information questionnaire consisted of items regarding subjects' age, sex, and race. Additional items pertained to whether they had participated in similar studies, had tried their best on the scale, had found the task interesting, and had thought that their performance on the scale would affect their course grade.

**Procedure**

Each of the subjects was given a different set of verbal and written instructions by the experimenters, either positive, negative, or neutral information. The instructions given to the positive information group were as follows:

The faculty in the Educational Research program is collecting data for a research project. Prior studies have indicated that students who do well (or obtain "high" scores) on the Dogmatism Scale tend to be excellent teachers. The researchers would appreciate your assistance in helping to support these prior studies by completing the Dogmatism Scale and the attached questionnaire. All information will be collected anonymously.

The negative information group was told that students who did poorly, or obtained low scores, on the Dogmatism Scale tended to be excellent teachers. The neutral information group was told that the College of Education was considering the Dogmatism Scale for use in research and wanted to check its validity and reliability before using it.

**Results**

The means and standard deviations of each group related to scores earned on the Dogmatism Scale are presented in Table 1. The positive information group obtained the lowest mean score, followed by the negative group, with the neutral information group obtaining the highest mean. When a one-way analysis of variance was used, a significant difference was found among the mean total scores of the three groups on the Dogmatism Scale (F = 3.57; p < .0325) (Table 2). Scheffé post hoc comparisons revealed that the difference between the neutral and positive information groups was significant (p < .05). However, the comparisons between the neutral and negative and between the negative and positive groups were not statistically significant. No significant differences were found on subjects' responses to the questionnaire. Approximately 10% of the subjects in each of the three groups indicated that they did not believe the researchers and that the data collected would be used in assigning a final grade. These students tended to have higher mean scores across all three groups than the other subjects, but the differences were not significant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>43.69</td>
<td>47.48</td>
<td>49.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>9.19</td>
<td>6.41</td>
<td>7.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1**

Means and Standard Deviations of the Three Groups on the Dogmatism Scale
The group of subjects who had been told that high scores were "good" obtained the lowest mean score. The group that was given the neutral information obtained the highest mean score. Although similar to the finding of Resnick and Schwartz (1973), the results of this study are contrary to what most of the literature on interpersonal expectancy predicts (Rosenthal and Rubin, 1978). The subjects in the present study acted in opposition to what they were told. It appears that information given to subjects about the purpose of research can bias data, but the direction and magnitude of the bias may vary with the type of information given. The clear implication is that providing research purpose information, which may be required by institutional review boards, may lead to data bias. Researchers need to investigate what effect research purpose information has on different groups of subjects across a variety of dependent variables and on the validity of results obtained from the use of tests or scales. Specifically the data from this study suggests that information concerning interpersonal expectancies be incorporated and accompany the instructions provided for the administration of tests. This information could improve the validity and meaningfulness of the results provided.

REFERENCES


EXPANDING PARTICIPATION IN SYMPOSIA

Each year the call for papers requests proposals for symposia from the membership. Quite often the response is limited to groups of individuals from the same locale. Given a means of communication, it may be possible for members to plan symposia with participants from various schools.

If you know of a topic in which you would like to have a symposium, either as an organizer or participant, then send me the information (topic, name and address). Assuming space permits, I will publish the list in the April Researcher. If you find a topic that parallels your research interests, then contact the person(s) listed. You could then proceed cooperatively with the submission of a proposal. There is, of course, no assurance of acceptance.

In order to include a list of symposia interests in the April Researcher, I need the information by March 30, or call (601) 846-1512.

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NOTES

- According to the February 17th issue of The Chronicle, LSU is the recipient of oil and gas properties valued up to $100 million. The gift may be the largest ever made to a public university. The funds will be used to establish a medical research center. With that type of donation, I am sure that Bob Blackmon will get a big raise in 1981 and take us all out to eat in Lexington.

- Rumors are circulating around the Memphis State campus that Harry Bowman will take Spook Murphy's job as Athletic Director at MSU. If so, can he continue on the Board?

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