

Distrust and the positive test heuristic:

Dispositional and situated social distrust improves performance on the Wason rule discovery task

Supplementary online materials

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Study 1

Sample

Panel4all conducts online surveys of the Israeli population based on a random sample of panelists recruited for long-term participation. To be invited to this study, panel members had to be between the ages of 18 – 40, Hebrew speakers, and had to have a high school education or above.

Materials and measures

Trust scale (Yamagishi and Yamagishi's, 1994):

1. Most people are basically honest.
2. Most people are trustworthy.
3. Most people are basically good and kind.
4. Most people are trustful of others.
5. I am trustful.
6. Most people will respond in kind when they are trusted by others.

Instructions for Wason task. The Wason (1960) rule-discovery task was introduced with the following instructions: *“On the next screen you will find a series of three numbers. This series was created according to a rule. Your task is to discover this rule. To do this, write down the first rule that enters your mind. Then, write six series of numbers that you wish to test whether you have found the rule. In the next stage you will receive a feedback regarding the series you wrote. Next to a series that fits the rule it will be written “the series fits the rule” and next to a series that doesn’t fit the rule, it will be written “the series does not fit the rule.” Based on this feedback you will be asked to write the rule that you think the series was created according to.”*

Supplementary questions. In addition to reporting their number series and Wason rule hypotheses, participants responded to the following questions appearing one after the other:

1. Please rate your current mood between 1 (very bad) to 9 (very good).
2. What do you think is the aim of the current study? (open ended question)
3. When did you think of this aim – now or at the time of answering the questioner? (open ended question)
4. Are you familiar with the rule discovery task in this questionnaire? (Yes or No)
5. If yes – from where? (open ended question)
6. Do you think there is a trick in the series (something in the numbers chosen 2-4-6)? (Scale from 1=definitely no trick to 7= definitely there is a trick).
7. How sure were you about the first rule you suggested?)? (Scale from 1=not sure at all to 7= very sure).
8. How sure were you about the second rule you suggested?)? (Scale from 1=not sure at all to 7= very sure).

9. What factors do you think affected the way you tried to find the rule? (open ended question)
10. To move on to the next question please mark the forth option (This question was included in order to check that participants are reading the questions).
11. Age (open ended question)
12. Mother tongue (open ended question)
13. Gender (open ended question)
14. Where were you born (open ended question)
15. Did you complete this questionnaire alone? (yes/no)
16. Did you stop in the middle of this questionnaire? ((yes/no)

Additional analyses

One may have suggested that distrust leads to suspecting the experiment itself. However, no differences were found asking whether there was a trick in the 2-4-6 series (1=definitely no trick, 7=definitely there is a trick) between the four quartiles of trust (Quartile 1/lowest trust=3.33, Quartile 2=2.76, Quartile 3=2.79, Quartile 4/highest trust=3.09) ($F(3,343) = 1.62$; $p=0.18$). Throughout, suspicion of a trick was relatively low.

Study 2

Instructions for Wason task. The Wason (1960) rule-discovery task was introduced as an alleged filler task with the following instructions: *“Below you will find a series of three numbers. This series was created according to a rule. Your task is to discover this rule. To do this, write down the first rule that enters your mind. Then, write six series of numbers that you wish to test whether you have found the rule. In the next stage the experimenter will mark the series that fit the rule with a checkmark and those*

that don't fit with an "X." Using this feedback you will be asked to write down the rule that you think the series was based on."