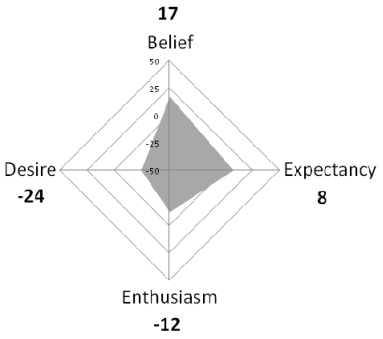

The graph on the left is an example of data collected using the pre-PEEAT. These data show an experimenter's attitudes toward a study which produced a negative finding. The negative values in the graph may indicate that this study result was due to a psi-missing effect.

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About the Windbridge Institute

The Windbridge Institute uses traditional scientific methods to study non-traditional topics. We investigate the capabilities of our bodies, minds, and spirits and attempt to determine how the resulting information can best serve all living things.

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RESEARCH BRIEF

Whose Psi Is It?

Determining the Impact of Psi Experimenter Effects

FACTS:

- Psi Experimenter Effects—involuntary psi associated with the experimenter's desires—act as a confounding factor in psi research, especially in studies where the source of the psi effect needs to be identified. These include investigations of animal psi, instrumental transcommunication, precognition, psychokinesis, and telepathy.

- Given the non-spatial, non-temporal nature of psi, it remains difficult to truly disentangle the experimenter from the experiment even if the same studies are conducted by different experimenters or by disinterested researchers.

Until we are able to clearly define the domain of Psi Experimenter Effects, progress in parapsychological research will be hindered.

Psi Experimenter Effects

Distinct from purely psychological experimenter effects (reviewed by White, 1977), Psi Experimenter Effects have been defined as involving "unintentional psi which affects experimental outcomes in ways that are directly related to the experimenter's needs, wishes, expectancies, or moods" (Kennedy & Taddonio, 1976, p. 5). These effects act as confounding factors in psi research (reviewed in Irwin & Watt, 2007, pp. 64-66).

The Pervasiveness of Psi

In a series of experiments designed to address these issues, we demonstrated that micropsychokinesis effects on a random event generator were still observable when: (a) the experimenter set a generalized intention that the experiment "be successful;" (b) an automated system was used for data collection; (c) the experimenter was blinded to experimental conditions, success criteria, and outcomes during each trial; and (d) those factors were each randomly and separately selected by software (Boccuzzi, 2011). Therefore, finding experimental methods that inhibit psi seems to be an impractical approach for limiting Psi Experimenter Effects.

Factors that Affect Psi Performance

The most common factors influencing general psi performance include belief, desire, expectancy, and enthusiasm (reviewed in Heath, 2011). These factors may also play a role in Psi Experimenter Effects and collecting empirical data about experimenters' beliefs, desires, expectancies, and enthusiasm regarding specific studies may allow for the development of a predictive model that addresses the role of Psi Experimenter Effects.

Psi Experimenter Effects Assessment Tool

We have developed two visual analog scale self-report instruments known collectively as the Psi Experimenter Effects Assessment Tool (PEEAT) to collect data about the experimenter (Boccuzzi, 2011).

The first (the pre measure) is completed before an experiment takes place and allows experimenters to rate themselves on Belief, Desire, Expectancy, and Enthusiasm as they relate to their attitudes toward a given experiment.

The second instrument (the post measure) allows experimenters to compare the actual outcome of experiments to their initial expectations and desires. In addition, data is collected about levels of enthusiasm for experimental replications.

Because Psi Experimenter Effects may be caused by the experimenter's unconscious attitudes, an expanded version of the PEEAT is being developed to incorporate not only self-reporting but also "360 reporting" where all study stakeholders report on each other. This approach may allow research colleagues to capture data about their peers which might not be consciously obvious to the peers themselves.

We intend to further develop the PEEAT by making the tool widely available to researchers and creating a web-based portal site where PEEAT users can upload their data into a centralized database for analysis.

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