

Information from Media and Social Preferences toward Minorities: Evidence from Laboratory Experiments Regarding Koreans in Japan

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Abstract

This paper is the first work for demonstrating how media accounts can change social preferences toward outgroup members using an experimental approach. The experiment was held in October 2015 with 121 Japanese and 58 Zainichi Korean students (born in Japan but studied or are studying at Korean schools in Japan), and participants played several interactive games following Charness and Rabin (2002). To uncover the effect of media on perceptions toward outgroup members, I randomly separated participants into three groups: a control group, first treatment group reading the article from *Asahi-Shinbun* (the largest liberal newspaper in Japan) which explained information on Korean schools *with* a reference, and second treatment group reading same article *without* the reference. The experiment's results show (1) media information cancels out outgroup bias for Japanese subjects in the games regarding good intentions (charity, reward, and group contributions), but (2) this cancellation is eliminated by revealing the reference. Combining data from a questionnaire, I found these effects are strong for subjects who have incomplete knowledge about Zainichi Koreans. In addition, result (1) was evident for both conservative and liberal subjects, but result (2) was significant only for those subjects who are conservative.