

Inferring traits from behaviors versus behaviors from traits: The induction–deduction asymmetry.

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**ABSTRACT**

1. It is argued that inductive inferences from behaviors to traits are performed more frequently than deductive inferences from traits to behaviors—a phenomenon referred to as the induction-deduction asymmetry (IDA). Two experiments are reported in which behavior-to-trait inferences and trait-to-behavior inferences were compared within the same paradigm: Participants learned a series of descriptions of a target person, half of which were presented in trait form, half in behavior form. A subsequent recognition task was constructed so that some of the items (traits and behaviors) had actually been seen, some were entirely new, and some were new but had been implied by the information given. The 2 experiments provide clear evidence for the hypothesis that traits implied by a behavior are frequently misidentified as already seen than behaviors implied by a trait. Response-time data in Experiment 2 further suggest that inferences from behaviors to traits are made on-line, whereas inferences from traits to behaviors appear to be memory based. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2012 APA, all rights reserved)