

SCLOA possible questions

Culture

Discuss one example of a potential influence of culture on one behaviour or cognition.

“the set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors shared by a group of people, but different for each individual, communicated from one generation to the next”

Study to use:

Berry

Asch (1951, 1955 and 1956) investigated the extent to which pressure from a majority could convince a single participant to conform in a situation where the decision of the majority was unambiguously wrong. He did this using a line judgement task, where he placed one naïve participant in a room with seven to nine confederates (actors), who had agreed their answers in advance. In turn, each person had to say out loud which line (A, B or C) was most like the target line in length. The correct answer was always clear.

Each participant completed 18 trials and the confederates gave the same incorrect answer on 12 trials, called critical trials. Asch wanted to see if the naïve participant would conform to the majority view, even when the answer was clearly incorrect. Asch found that on average, the naïve participants conformed to the incorrect answers on 32% of the critical trials.

Nearly 40 years later, Smith and Bond (1996) conducted a meta-analysis of the results of 133 studies that had used Asch’s line-judging task in 17 different countries. While Asch had manipulated variables like group size, number of confederates and the position in the room in which the naïve participant sat, he had not looked at how culture might affect conformity.

Smith and Bond found that generally speaking people from more individualist cultures (usually Western) conformed less often than those from more collectivist cultures (usually Eastern, Asian cultures).

While this takes a very broad view and ignores the fact that some Eastern cultures are more individualist than others, and some Western ones more collective than others, a trend was discernible. The conformity identified by Asch and investigated cross-culturally is normative conformity. This is when a person conforms to the group norms in order not to be isolated.

However, more modern research has called into question the idea of associating individualist cultures with Western societies and collectivist cultures with Asian societies, and also criticised

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- Social categorization
- Social comparison
- The tendency for people to use group membership as a source of self- esteem.

Social identity theory is based on the cognitive process of **social categorization**. Social categorization is the process of classifying people into groups based on similar characteristics and traits. This categorization gives rise to **in-groups (us)** and **out-groups (them)**. Tajfel argues that even when people are randomly assigned to a group, they automatically think of that group as their in-group (us) and all others as an out-group (them).

Tajfel found that when people are randomly assigned to a group, they see themselves as being similar in attitude and behaviour, and this is apparently enough for a bond to be formed among group members.

In the famous Kandinsky versus Klee experiment, Tajfel et al. (1971) observed that boys who were assigned randomly to a group, based on their supposed preference for the art of either Kandinsky or Klee, were more likely to identify with the boys in their group, and were willing to give higher awards to members of their own group. This is what Tajfel referred to as **in-group favouritism**.

1. Tajfel et al (1970)

Carried out a study to see how one's social identity may affect behaviour. You can use this study for the following learning objectives:

Evaluate social identity theory, making reference to relevant studies.

Discuss research methods used in the sociocultural approach.

Explain the formation of stereotypes and their effect on behaviour.

Procedure

Social Identity Theory is based on the assumption that the most important feature of people's attempt to make sense of the social world is in the classification of groups as 'us' and 'them'. Psychologically, this means making a distinction between in-groups - that is, groups that we belong to - and out-groups - groups that we do not belong to. According to Tajfel people develop norms of behaviour towards in-groups and out-groups.

The **aim** of Tajfel's research was to investigate if intergroup discrimination would take place based on being put into different groups. Tajfel hypothesized that categorization and discrimination operate automatically, even when there is not necessarily any prior prejudice.

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Hypotheses: Four hypotheses were tested:

- Children observing aggression modelled by an adult will imitate the behaviour, even if the model was no longer present.
- Non-aggressive models will result in an aggression-inhibiting behaviour (self-control).
- Children will imitate the behaviour of the same sex model more than that of a model of the opposite sex.
- Boys will show more aggressive behaviour than girls, with highest aggression being demonstrated by boys exposed to a male model.

Method: This was a laboratory experiment. Bandura worked with Stanford University and drew his sample from the university's nursery school. All the participants were in the age group of three years to six years, with the average age being four years and four months. It was a mixed gender group of 36 girls and 36 boys. The children were divided into groups.

The groups were matched with regard to aggression based on an evaluation by their parents and teachers. One group was exposed to adult models who showed aggression by either bashing an inflatable "Bobo" doll or using verbal aggression toward the Bobo; a second group observed a non-aggressive adult who assembled toys for 10 minutes, and a third group served as a control and did not see any model. The first and second groups, were further subdivided into male and female subjects. Half the subjects in the experimental conditions observed same sex models, while the remaining subjects in each group viewed models of the opposite sex. (Attention and retention).

All the children were then taken individually to play in a room full of toys. After a short while the child was told that the toys were for other children. This caused all of the children to feel frustrated.

Then the child was then taken to a room filled with aggressive and non-aggressive toys, including a Bobo doll. (Motivation).

The child was allowed to play in this room for 20 minutes while the researchers observed her/him from behind a one-way mirror. Measures were taken of physical and verbal aggression that imitated the earlier model. (Reproduction). Researchers also measured the child's non-imitative aggressive behaviour.

Results: Children exposed to aggressive behaviour imitated the same aggression physically and verbally. This indicated the role of observational learning. Children exposed to the

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also told that whoever of the pair responded faster would deliver a blast of white noise to the slower partner. Noise intensity and duration levels were used as the measure of aggression.

Participants in the stereotype threat condition were significantly more aggressive than participants in the cognitive reappraisal condition. Therefore, negative stereotypes about women's maths ability affected behaviour unrelated to the stereotyped domain of maths testing. Moreover, participants in the stereotype threat condition actually performed worse on the maths test than those in the cognitive reappraisal condition. This study shows that stereotype threat, if not mediated cognitively, leads to poor performance directly (as Steele and Aronson suggested), and spills over into other, unrelated, tasks.

Discuss ethical considerations in the study of the individual and the group.

Study: Sheriff

Ethical considerations: informed consent, withdrawal, could have long term negative impacts (self harm?), lack of debriefing

1. Informed consent: they were children they didn't know what they were getting themselves into so they were not aware nor were they directly asked whether they could participate - parents did not know either
2. Withdrawal: they were not given the option of withdraw
3. LT negative impacts: because they were young the implication in the summer camp and the 'games' they played could have caused long term trauma
4. They were not debriefed at any point

Discuss the use of one research method in the study of the individual and the group.

Much of the research into relationships between the individual and the group uses the lab experiment method. This method involves the manipulation of an independent variable (IV), the measurement of the effects of this manipulation on the dependent variable (DV), and the controlling of extraneous variables that might otherwise become confounding variables and affect the DV. Allocation to groups or conditions is random or by matched pairs and, because researchers from the sociocultural approach wish to be able to generalise the results of these experiments to real-life situations, as much as possible the tasks undertaken by the participants possess mundane realism, and so at least partially reduce any questions regarding the ecological validity of the results.