

Social Influence

Applications - changing attitudes:

Minority influence

- Small groups of people can change the opinion and beliefs of larger groups.
- Campaigning to reduce stigma and discrimination associated with mental health. Act as role models.
- For minority influence to work:
 - Message must be consistent
 - Must show commitment to the cause
 - Argument must be persuasive

Majority influence

- National campaigns to reduce stigma and discrimination associated with mental health. Aim to change attitudes.

Core Theory #2 Criticisms:

- Reductionist as it ignores the influence of situational factors.
- People's locus of control can shift depending on the situation they are in.
- Authoritarian personality does not take into account differences in parenting.

Core Theory #2: Dispositional Factors

Dispositional Factors - how internal influences, such as personality, affect our behaviour.

1. **Effect of self-esteem on conformity.**

- Self-esteem - how we perceive ourselves.
- Someone with low self esteem is more likely to conform due to a lack of belief in their own ability.
- People with low self esteem tend to look to others to behave in the 'correct' manner.

2. **Effect of locus of control on collective and crowd behaviour**

- Locus of control - how much control a person feels they have over their own life.
- Internal locus of control - feel they have the ability to control their decisions and are more confident.
- External locus of control - feel like they have no control over their own decisions and that other people have the control.

3. **Effect of morality on pro- and anti-social behaviour**

- Morality - understanding what is right and wrong.
- Kohlberg's stage theory of moral development
 - Preconventional - focused on punishment and consequences
 - Conventional - focused on approval from others and obeying authority
 - Post-conventional - focused on society's influence, justice and ethics

4. **Effect of the authoritarian personality on obedience**

- A personality type that is very obedient to authority.
- Tend to see the world in 'black and white' and offer blind obedience to those they see as being of a higher authority to themselves.

5. **Influence of the brain**

- People with low self-esteem tend to have reduced grey matter in the hippocampus. They are less able to control stress levels and emotions.
- People with damage to the pre-frontal cortex are less able to understand right from wrong. Similar to psychopaths in personality.

Core Study #2: NatCen/Morrell et al. (2011):

- **Aim:** to investigate what triggered the Tottenham riots in 2011.
- **Report** prepared using 36 **interviews** of varied age, ethnicity, gender and work status.
- Data gathered 5 weeks after the riots took place. Incident between the police and a girl was the trigger for a peaceful protest becoming violent.
- **Findings:**
 - Key motivation for involvement: benefitting from exciting experience, opportunity to loot, getting back at police.
 - Nudge (encouraged) e.g. poor job prospects, and tug (discouraged) e.g. getting caught, factors influenced people.
- **Conclusion:** behaviour is influenced by both situational and dispositional factors.

Core Study #2 Criticisms:

- Memories aren't always reliable
- Relied on self-report data
- Social desirability bias

Research Methods

Populations and sampling

- **Sample** = a group selected from a larger population
- **Target population** = entire set of people psychologists want to research
- **Representative** = accurate reflection of a larger group
- **Generalisability** = ability to draw conclusions that apply to a larger

Sampling Methods

- **Random sampling** - using chance
- **Opportunity sampling** - using convenience
- **Self-selected sample** - using volunteers

Types of data

- **Quantitative data** = data involving numbers
- **Qualitative data** = descriptive data involving words
- **Primary data** = information collected first hand
- **Secondary data** = information used but collected by another researcher

Ethical issues/guidelines

- **Ethics** - what is morally right or wrong
- **Protection from psychological harm** - participants should not be caused distress, discomfort or embarrassment.
- **Deception** - psychologists should not unnecessarily deceive participants by misleading them.
- **Informed consent** - participants should be informed about the study so they can make a choice about taking part.
- **Debriefing** - dealing with ethical issues by informing them of the aim at the end of the study to fully understand what has taken place. Counselling may be offered in some cases.
- **Right to withdraw** - participants can leave at any point or have their data removed from the study.
- **Confidentiality** - making sure participants are kept anonymous and unidentifiable.

Reliability, validity and bias

- **Reliability** = how consistent or replicable something is (can it be repeated to get the same results?)
 - Internal reliability = making sure the measure is consistent within itself
 - External reliability = making sure it is consistent across situations
 - Inter-rater reliability = where two or more researchers agree on a set of results
- **Validity** = how true or accurate something is
 - Ecological validity = how far it can be generalised to real life
 - Construct validity = how far a variable is measured in relation to the whole concept
 - Population validity = how far the sample represents the target population
- **Bias** = when a study is influenced by the experimenter or the participants
 - Demand characteristics = cues from the study that give away the aim of the experiment, which causes the participants to behave differently to try to help the researcher.
 - Observer effect = participants acting differently because they know they are being observed
 - Social desirability bias = pressure to respond in a way they think is expected or acceptable
 - Gender bias = favours one gender over another
 - Cultural bias = favours particular cultures over others
 - Age bias = favours certain age groups over others
 - Experimenter bias = favours one psychological theory over another
 - Questioning bias = phrasing questions to favour one view over others

Evaluating Studies Evaluating theories

G **Generalisability** - can we generalise the results of this study to the target population? How big was the sample, was it representative?

R **Reliability** - Can this study be replicated? Would we get the same results again? How good are the controls?

A **Application** - Do the findings of this study suggest any practical applications? Is it relevant to any real-life situations?

V **Validity** - Is this study measuring what it says it is measuring? Are the tasks given to the participants natural? Is the setting natural?

E **Ethics** - Has this study breached any of the ethical guidelines? Were participants at risk, their privacy invaded, their rights violated? Were they lied to?



D **DETERMINISM**
Is there a choice in people's behaviour or not? What factors determine their behaviour?

R **REDUCTIONISM**
Does it over simplify behaviour? Or does it take lots of factors into account (holism)

U **USEFULNESS**
Where can it help us in real life?



M **METHODOLOGY**
What methods does it use - good or bad?

S **SUBJECTIVE**
Is it based on opinion or fact? The more scientific something is the more **objective** it is, the less scientific it is, often the more **subjective** it is.

Analysing data

Descriptive Statistics

- **Measures of central tendency** = an average taken from a data set (mode, median, mean)
- **Measures of dispersion** = how spread out the scores are (range)
- **Standard form** = a way of writing very large or small numbers using the digits 1-9.
- **Significant figures** = the amount of digits that carry meaning (how accurate it is)
- **Normal distribution** = where data follows a "bell shaped" curve
- **Skewed distribution** - where data has an asymmetric curve to one side

Tables, charts and graphs

- **Frequency table/tally chart** = records how often different measures occur
- **Bar chart** = presents data to represent frequencies of different categories
- **Pie chart** = presents data using proportions
- **Line graph** = presents data using a line to show changes in frequency
- **Histogram** = presents data to show changes in frequencies or sets of scores
- **Scatter diagram** = presents data by plotting scores to see if there is a relationship between two variables