

SOCIAL IMPACT THEORY

An explanation of the extent to which other people's real or imagined presence can alter the way an individual thinks, feels or acts. The impact is determined by strength, immediacy and numbers of sources during any interaction. (Bibb Latane, 1981). Latane argues that every person is potentially a source (influencer) or a target (person being influenced)

THREE LAWS OF BEHAVIOUR

- **Social effect** : Likelihood that a person will respond to social influence will increase with :
 - **Strength** (How important the influencing group are)
 - **Immediacy** (How close the group are)
 - **Number** (How many)
- **Psychosocial law** : As the number increases, so does the impact but at a decreasing rate
- **Divisions of impact** : The strength of the source is divided by the number of targets

If we have an increase in SIN, it increases the impact

EVALUATION

- Application of principles can be observed in everyday life
- Predicting behaviour in unusual circumstances is useful
- Growing research
- Social Impact pays a lot of attention to the characteristics of the person giving the orders but not much to the person receiving them. For example, there may be personality types that are particularly compliant (go along with anything) or rebellious.
- Treats people as passive
- Milgram is simplistic compared to SIT
- No discussion of moral strain
- Can be measured

EXAM QUESTIONS

- Compare the agency theory with the social impact theory as an explanation of obedience
- Evaluate Social Impact Theory
- Sakina has been told by her teacher that she should do her homework this week if she is to improve on her current grades. Using your knowledge of social impact theory, explain why Sakina is likely to follow her teacher's instructions.

FACTORS AFFECTING PREJUDICE

- **Situation** - Social norms, competition and resource stress.
- **Culture** - The norm of intolerance (to a point all cultures believe they're superior to others, prejudice exists in subtle ways like microaggressions), the norm of fairness

SOCIAL NORMS

- Unwritten rules about what is socially acceptable
- Part of social identity is that people follow the norms because violating may lead to rejection.

COMPETITION AND RESOURCE STRESS

- RCT highlighted the importance of competition (can lead to prejudice)
- Esses et al 2001 - The problem that occurs when believe believe resources like jobs and money are limited, prejudice occurs if an ingroup perceives themselves to be in direct competition for scarce resources
- Heightened if the situation is seen as "zero-sum" (immigrants seen to be getting things at the cost of natives)

SITUATION EVALUATION

- Akrami et al 2009 - experimentally manipulated social norms. Participants heard a moderate expression of sexism that anyone could agree with the statement "discrimination of women is no longer a problem in Sweden.". As a result, mean levels of sexism were significantly lower for a group who had heard the statement compared to a control group who hadn't heard the statement.
- Although mean levels of sexism differed between the groups, it was also reported that personality variables had an influence.
- Research provides evidence of how to combat prejudice
- Critical if we want to live in a harmonious society.

CULTURE EVALUATION

- Orpen 1971 botes F-scale scores were not significantly correlated with prejudice in groups of white South African participants. However measures of social conformity susceptibility to cultural pressure and adherence to culturally approved norms showed significant correlations with prejudice towards black South Africans. Conformity may be a critical determinant of intolerant attitudes towards specific outgroups.
- The participants were 16 year old school children who may want to fit in more