

PSY234 SUMMARIES

INTRODUCTION

Both personality and social psych concern science of how we think, feel and relate to others

Personality	Distinctive and relatively enduring patterns of thought, feeling, motivation and behaviour expressed in different circumstances
Social psychology	Scientific investigation of how thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of individuals are influenced by actual, imagined, or implied presence of others

Actual others – people who are physically present e.g. *Asch's* line judgement experiment

Imagined others – e.g. *Ingham, 1974*: blindfolded subjects played tug of war 'w other people' (actually alone); subjects pulled 18% less when they thought playing in group v alone → social loafing

Implied others – e.g. *Rigdon, et al. (2009)*: implied presence of others (three dots in a "watching-eyes" configuration) increases giving behaviour

COMMON-SENSE VS SCIENCE

All have common-sense views of personality + social psych	Based on personal experience BUT sometimes right/ sometimes wrong
Hindsight bias	Overestimate ability to have predicted an outcome that could not possibly have been predicted

Empirical research/ scientific approach = key!

- Often don't have any insight into why we act way we do
 - Carefully crafted psych experiments can isolate true causes of behaviour
- Scientific theories are falsifiable: can be tested by publicly verifiable observations

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH

WHY BOTHER WITH RESEARCH?

- Over rely on shortcuts/ heuristics in making judgements e.g. stereotyping
- Insight into reasons for our own/ others behaviour often limited
- Surprising findings – intuition is not adequate in explaining such phenomena... need theory and research to provide answers:
 - E.g. *Milgram's (1960)* obedience studies: people thought only 1% would go to xxx but actually 62%
 - E.g. *Festinger & Carlsmith (1957)* insufficient justification effect: group given \$1 for lying rated task as being a lot more fun than \$20 group → attempts to explain how individuals deal w cognitive dissonance

Where do research questions come from?

- Testing a theory:

Theory	General principle/ set of principles that accounts for a group of empirical findings Differ in levels of complexity Used to derive hypotheses
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Hypotheses	Empirically testable predictions about what co-occurs with what, or what causes what
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- Curiosity
- Testing techniques e.g. cyberball v ball toss
- Demonstrating a phenomenon

Steps in research process

1. Research question
2. Generate hypotheses (specific, directional predictions)
3. Operationalise
 - Measure: What? How? (e.g., how would you operationalise superstition) Who? (representative sample, generalisation)
4. Design experiment/ correlational study
5. Collect data
6. Analyse data
7. Draw appropriate conclusions

EXPERIMENTAL APPROACH

- Experimental designs typically involve comparison of treatment and control group
- Random allocation allows us to impute causality: make inferences re causal directions of effect

Between subject design	Each participant partakes in one and only one group Randomly assigned to either control or treatment → can make inference that manipulation of IV is affecting DV
Within subject design	Participants exposed to all conditions in an experiment Aka repeated measures: every participant serves in control and treatment condition +ve: everyone acts as their own control i.e. bring along their own error variance/ personalities etc. → don't need as many participants -ve: in certain experiments, 1 st condition may affect 2 nd condition e.g. retesting IQ
Factorial design	Involves manipulating 2 or more variables +ves: can investigate separate/ conjoined effects of IVs Can be btwn subjects' factors (treatment v control), within subjects' factors (same participants tested on 2 or more occasions), or mixed (i.e. 1 IV btwn-subjects and other within)
Quasi-experimental design	Investigate naturally occurring characteristics that could not be induced in lab (e.g. gender, depression) No random assignment: difficult to impute causality (correlation not causation)

CORRELATIONAL APPROACH

Correlational design	Determines if a relationship exists btwn 2 or more continuous variables, and if so, to what degree the relationship occurs No random allocation to treatment/ control groups Can never impute causality +ves: explore qus difficult/ impossible to explore w experimental designs i.e. more 'ecologically valid' variables (occur more often in real life)
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Note:

Conditions to establish causality	1. Relationship btwn variables [correlation] 2. Invariant time sequence – B always follows A 3. Able to eliminate alternative explanations i.e. non-spurious
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INTRODUCTION TO PERSONALITY

INTRO TO PERSONALITY THEORY

Definitions

- Each theoretical perspective defines personality in its own characteristic ways
- Word *personality* originates from Latin word, *persona* i.e. mask worn by character? Character beneath mask?
- Some definitions describe personality in terms of behaviour; others define personality as cause that leads to our behaviour → tension btwn theories
- Definitions vary but have a common interest in human nature & the 'person'

Personality theories: common factors

1. Tend to address both:

Human nature	General factors: commonalities shared btwn all humans
Individuality	What makes one person different from another

2. *Allport* introduced distinction btwn idiographic and nomothetic approaches to personality

Idiographic approach	Assess individual's unique characteristics (more clinical approach: subjective) E.g. observations, case studies
Nomothetic approach	Attempts to establish generalizations/ common laws about people Test large amounts of people, compare individual score w group average (where score lies on continuum) Objective knowledge through scientific methods

3. Describing/ explaining human behaviour
 - Aims to understand 'whole' person
 - 'Personality' theory aims to be a synthesis of other areas of psych
4. Understanding *psychopathology*
 - Personality research emerged out of 'Abnormal Psychology' = deals w psychopathology and abnormal behaviour, often in clinical context
 - Use personality theories to understand how personalities break down e.g. personality disorders
 - Help understand 'normal' mentally healthy functioning
 - Help understand what is *necessary* for mental health e.g. needs

CONCEPTUAL ISSUES – causes of personality

Nature v Nurture

Nature	What we are like by <i>nature</i> – prior to environmental influences E.g. genetics, biological needs
Nurture	How environment <i>nurtures</i> us e.g. cultural factors, social modelling

- Qus: Personality differences? Violence and aggression? Psychopathology? → significant implications for child-rearing, psychotherapy, social planning
- Blur of where nature and nurture begin/ end