

ATS1262 – Introduction to Social Behaviour

WEEK 1

Psychological study of social behaviour

- How and why individuals behave, think and feel in social situations
- Social psychology
- Thoughts, feelings and behaviours influenced by real or imagined presence of others?
- Deep personal experiences (happy or depressed) can be socially grounding (when people think that others have the expectation of them to be happy they are more likely to be sad more often and more intensely)

1978 Jonestown Massacre

- Jim Jones (leader of religious cult) went on a shooting massacre followed by mass suicide by poisoning his community.
- Many plausible explanations – hypnotised the public, attracted depressed people, powerful personality ∴ mentally healthy people followed him, those cut off from society most vulnerable to social influence.

Scientific methods to test assumptions

- Run studies to find evidence of explanations
- Empirical research – universal laws of human behaviour
- Must formulate hypothesis to create objective answers

Studies designed according to aims of research (broader research goal)

- DESCRIPTIVE → eg. “working conditions of female lawyers”
- EXPLORATORY → “psychological and social issues faced by refugees in Australia”
- EXPLANATORY → “are extraverts happier” – relationship between intro/extraverts
- PREDICTIVE → “does sleep deprivation cause lack of concentration”

Turning concepts into measurable variables

- Aspects we are interested in are turned into variables
- Measuring is transforming abstract into concrete and enables us to capture change between them

Association between variables

Correlational study design

- Assesses the degree of association between two variables
- Pos. and neg. correlations
- Correlation does not equal causation
- Eg. Level of chocolate consumption and facial blemishes

Experimental study design

- How one variable may affect the other
- Done by manipulating one variable to see the affect
- Independent Variable (IV) – manipulated (drugs, exercise, participation)
- Dependant Variable (DV) – measured. Used to asses the IV manipulations

Surveys and experiments

- EXPERIMENTS → Measures DV and manipulates IV (does X cause Y?)
- SURVEYS → Measures DV and IV (is X related to Y?)
- Experiments involve lab work and surveys require community participation