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Social Psychology: Classics,
Critical and Replication

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An independent academic psychologist, based in England, who has written extensively on different areas of psychology with an emphasis on the critical stance towards traditional ideas.

A complete listing of his writings at <http://psychologywritings.synthasite.com/>. See also material at <https://archive.org/details/orsett-psych>.

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1. CLASSIC SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

A. 1960s

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References

A. 1960s

1. DABBS AND JANIS (1965)

The "eating-while-reading" effect is where "recipients of a persuasive message will show increased acceptance if given desirable food while reading the communication" (Dabbs and Janis 1965 p133). Razran (1940) was the first to report this idea in research, and Janis et al (1965) showed experimentally that it was important that "the donor of the food was not the source of the communication and did not express any endorsement of the communication" (p133). Janis et al (1965) suggested a Behaviourist explanation of the findings, suggesting that the food reinforced the attitude change presented in the persuasive message.

Dabbs and Janis (1965) performed a further experiment to test: (i) the impact on opinion change of food during or before exposure to the persuasive message, and (ii) the donor of the food expressing an opinion about the message.

Two hypotheses were framed:

a) Significantly more acceptance of the persuasive message when the food accompanies rather than precedes the message.

b) Significantly more acceptance of the message when the experimenter (donor of the food) agrees than disagrees beforehand with the message.

The participants were thirty-nine students at Yale University in the USA recruited from the introductory psychology classes, who experienced one of four conditions (independent groups design) based on the two independent variables (timing of the food, and opinion of the experimenter) (table 1.1).

- I - Food with message/Experimenter pro-message
- II - Food with message/Experimenter anti-message
- III - Food before message/Experimenter pro-message
- IV - Food before message/Experimenter anti-message

Table 1.1 - Four conditions of Dabbs and Janis's (1965) experiment.

The food involved soft drinks and snacks. The 325-word communications covered two topics - (i) Hollywood is improving the quality of its films, and (ii) juvenile delinquents should receive severe punishment. The participants' attitudes on the two subjects were measured before the experiment (baseline) and after reading the communications (post-communication). There was a period of filler tasks for thirty minutes in between the baseline measurement and reading the messages.

The largest change in attitude in favour of the communications was in Group I. Otherwise, the timing of the food had no impact on attitude change. The attitude change was larger for the second communication. Hypothesis (b) above was supported then.

Key limitations of the methodology:

1. Sample - size small; Yale University psychology students (so probably White, and male); no details given on gender, ethnicity etc. A non-representative sample limits the generalisability of the findings.

2. Materials - persuasive communication was brief; the use of the same questions before and after the communication could lead to the participants guessing the purpose of the experiment, and so the risk of "demand characteristics".

3. Validity - The experiment is an artificial situation, so limited external and ecological validity.

2. WALSTER (1965)

Walster (1965) investigated self-esteem and romantic liking, and predicted that "when a person's self-esteem was low he would be more receptive to (better like) a person offering affection than when his self-esteem was high" (p184).

Walster (1965) performed an experiment that manipulated the self-esteem of thirty-two female students in the USA, and introduced them to an "affectionate male" (confederate).

The participants went to a room individually where unexpectedly they met the confederate ("GD") who was "slightly older... and quite handsome" (p187). He talked to the participant for fifteen minutes and at the end asked her on a date. Subsequently, the participants completed a questionnaire which included rating their liking for GD.

Before completing the questionnaire, and after meeting GD, the self-esteem was manipulated (figure 1.1).

1. Complete personality test (a few weeks earlier)
2. Arrive at experiment and left in room with "GD" for 15 minutes
3. Give false feedback on personality test which manipulated self-esteem
Independent variable = lowered or enhanced self-esteem
Independent groups design
4. Completed questionnaire which included rating liking of "GD"
Dependent variable = rating of "GD"
5. Debriefing

Figure 1.1 - Stages of the experiment.

This was done by telling them the results of a previously completed personality questionnaire (a few weeks earlier). The participants were chosen at random to receive results suggesting "immaturity" and a "weak

personality, anti-social motives, lack of originality and flexibility, and lack of capacity for successful leadership" (p188) (low self-esteem condition) or the opposite in the high self-esteem condition.

At the end of the experiment there was a debriefing (for about 45 minutes) to make sure the participant was "in no way disturbed by the false personality report or the 'broken' date" (p190).

It was found that "women whose self-esteem has been temporarily lowered like GD significantly better than do women whose self-esteem has been temporarily raised" (Walster 1965 p191) (figure 1.2). The hypothesis was supported.

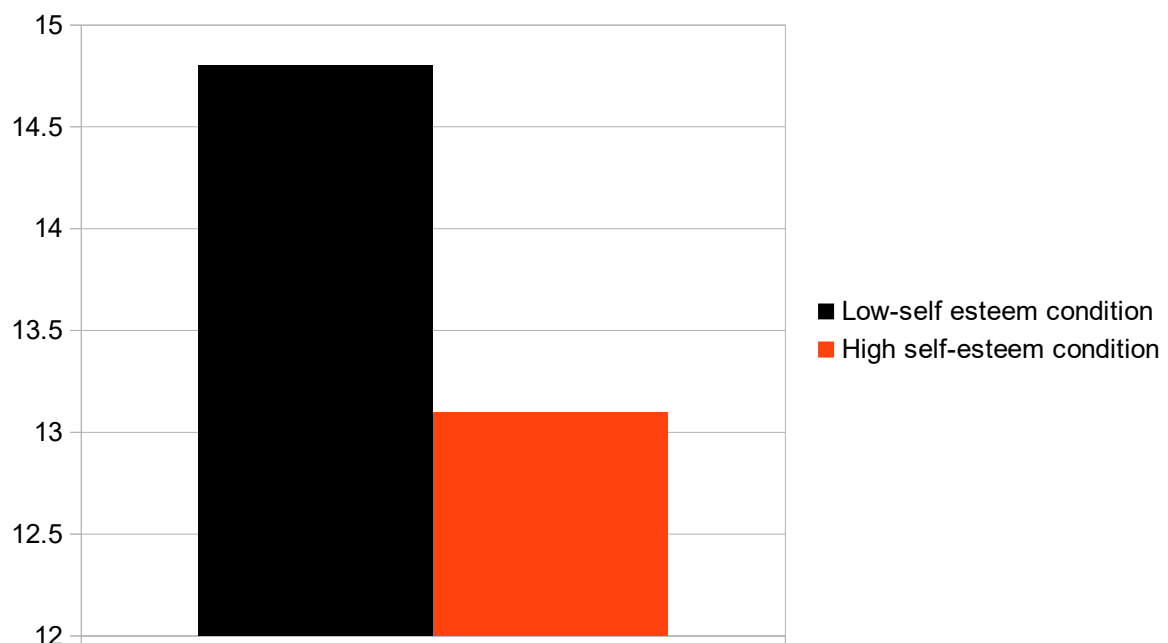


Figure 1.2 - Mean rating of liking of "GD" (where a higher score is greater liking).

Key methodological issues:

1. Controlled experiment, but an artificial and contrived situation. A long cover story was created to explain how "GD" was in the room, and how he could talk to the participant undisturbed for fifteen minutes.

2. There was no control group (ie: no self-esteem manipulation), nor baseline (pre-manipulation) measure of liking for confederate.

3. A small sample of "18 or 19 year old" (p187) female students, mostly attending Stanford University, and an introductory psychology course there.

4. The ethics of deceiving the participants in both the personality test report and the interaction with the confederate. The participants were given a detailed debriefing, but it is still possible that their self-esteem was impacted in the longer term.

Aronson (1999) asserted: "The experimenter must take steps to ensure that participants leave the experimental situation in a frame of mind that is at least as sound as it was when they entered".

3. INSKO ET AL (1965)

Aim: To investigate if fear-arousing messages produce a change in attitude towards cigarette smoking in non-smokers.

Participants: 144 adolescents (12-13 years-old) at a school in Honolulu, Hawaii, USA.

Design: Independent groups (or between-participants).

Procedure: Participants heard a talk about the negative health impact of smoking accompanied by large colour slides of cancerous body parts (high fear-arousing condition) or small black and white slides (low fear-arousing condition). Participants completed a questionnaire about attitude towards smoking five weeks before the experiment (baseline measure), immediately after hearing the message, and one week later.

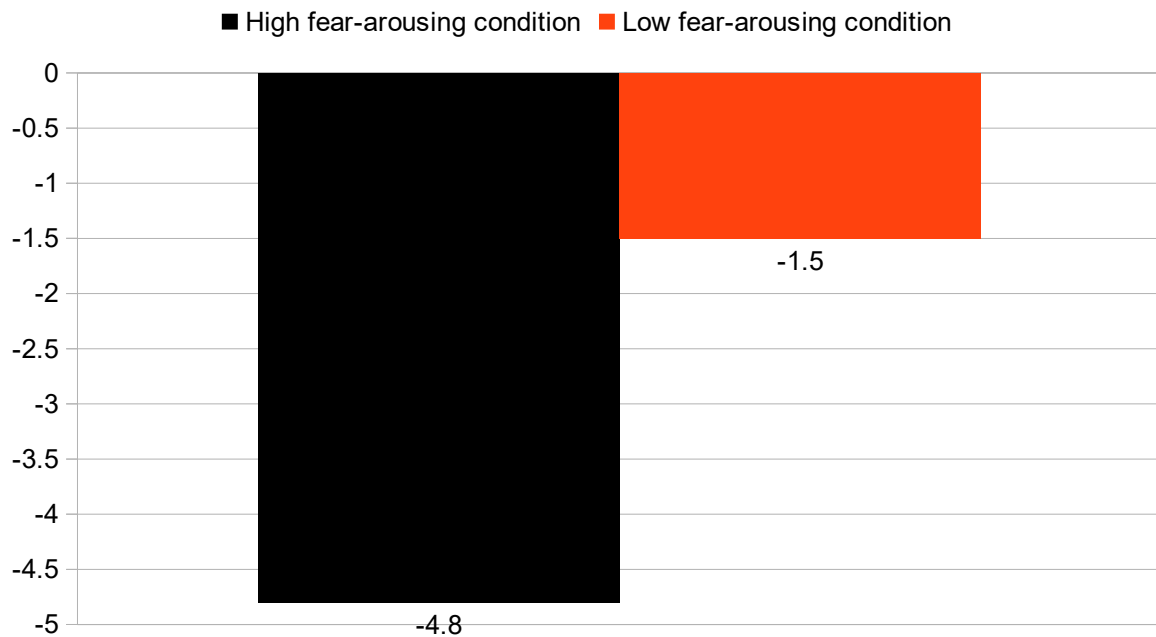
Independent Variable: Level of fear-arousing message.

Dependent Variable: Change in attitude towards smoking as measured by questions like, "Will you ever try smoking cigarettes?"; answered on a nine-point scale, ranging from "definitely and absolutely not" to "definitely and absolutely yes".

Findings: "The high fear-arousing communication was more persuasive than the low fear-arousing communication" (Insko et al 1965 p261). This means that the high fear-arousing condition group changed their attitude against

smoking between the pre- and post-message measures significantly more than the low fear-arousing group (figure 1.3).

It was noted that higher aptitude participants responded more than lower aptitude ones, and that overall the impact of the communication decreased by one week post-experiment.



(My calculation of approximate overall mean from data in table 4 p262 Insko et al 1965)

Figure 1.3 - Mean change in attitude against smoking between pre- and post-message measures based on level of fear-arousing communication.

Evaluation: The study measured opinions about future smoking behaviour and not actual smoking behaviour. "While opinion may be a determiner of behaviour it is certainly not the only determiner" (Insko et al 1965 p265).

Conclusion: The researchers stated that "among non-smoking adolescents high fear-arousing communications originating from authoritative sources are initially more effective than low fear-arousing communications in producing opinion change about future smoking behaviour" (Insko et al 1965 p266).

4. ZAJONC AND SALES (1966)

Social facilitation is where the presence of others enhances or inhibits performance of a behaviour as compared to performing alone.

Zajonc and Sales (1996) wanted to explain why some behaviours improve and others deteriorate before an audience. Their theoretical explanation was that dominant responses (eg: well-learned skills) improve, but subordinate responses (eg: new behaviours) decline before an audience. Their experiment tested this idea.

Participants: Thirty-nine male students (aged 18-24 years old) from the University of Michigan "subject pool".

Design: Independent groups.

Procedure: Participants were presented with seven-letter nonsense words to learn before a recognition test in the experimental condition (dominant response), or no training in the control condition (subordinate response). The recognition test was done twice - once by the participant alone in a cubicle and communicating with the experimenter via intercom, and in the presence of two observers in the cubicle.

Independent Variable: The learning of the words or not.

Dependent Variable: Accuracy of recognition of words.

Findings: The performance of participants in the experimental condition was better in front of an audience than alone, and the opposite for the control condition.

Conclusion: Social facilitation improves performance of learned tasks and inhibits performance of untrained tasks.

Evaluation: The laboratory experiment was an artificial situation, though it did allow the experimenter to control the variables and the research environment. The recognition test, for instance, involved words presented for a duration of 0.1 seconds on a screen.

The participants were male students only from one US

university.

5. ZIMBARDO (1965)

This research investigated self-persuasion and effort in two experiments.

The research prediction in the words of the researcher: "The major hypothesis to be tested is that the greater the physical effort required in publicly reading and understanding a communication discrepant from one's own attitude, the greater will be the resulting dissonance and consequent attitude change in the direction advocated by the role performance" (Zimbardo 1965 p106).

In Experiment 1, twenty psychology students at a New York university were asked to read aloud in front of a small audience a prepared speech about a particular topic (eg: establishing a free university in the city). The amount of effort involved in reading the speech was varied by delaying the auditory feedback (ie: the speaker hearing themselves). In the high effort condition, the delay was 0.3 seconds, which produces interference and requires greater concentration to achieve the reading competently. The delay was 0.01 seconds in the low effort condition. As well as participation in one of the conditions, the participants listened to other speakers.

Attitudes measures on the three topics of the readings were taken prior to the experiment (as part of a general survey), and post-reading. There was no significant difference in attitude change on the topics between the two effort conditions.

The procedure was varied slightly in Experiment 2, which involved eighty more students. The high and low effort conditions were supplemented by reading a prepared speech or improvising from provided notes. A control condition was added which involved listening passively to a persuasive communication. The topic was the admission of China into the United Nations (which was the case at the time) (table 1.2).

All four active conditions had a significant attitude change compared to the control condition. Greater attitude change occurred in the high than low effort conditions (figure 1.4).

The important point from the experiments was that individuals who had to present arguments counter to their opinion (ie: self-persuasion) were more persuaded if more effort was expending in presenting those arguments.

The effort was varied by delaying the auditory

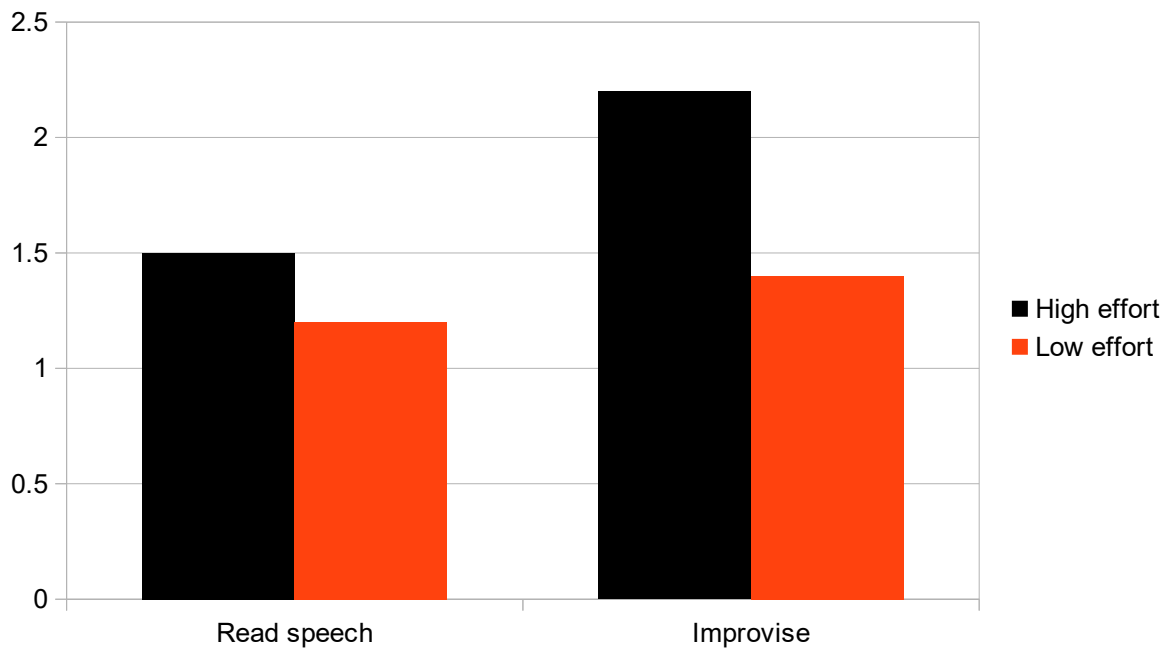
feedback, which is not common in everyday life, and so it
Experiment 1

- Two-condition independent groups design
- Control group - no
- Independent variable - amount of effort
- Dependent variable - attitude change

Experiment 2

- Five-condition independent groups design
- Control group - yes
- Independent variables - (i) amount of effort and (ii) reading or improvising speech
- Dependent variable - attitude change

Table 1.2 - Methodological details of the experiments.



(Attitude measured on seven-point scale before and after experiment, and difference calculated. A plus number showed a change in the direction of the persuasive communication)

(Data from table 2 p114 Zimbardo 1965)

Figure 1.4 - Mean attitude change in direction of persuasive communication in Experiment 2.

makes the experimental situation artificial. The topics chosen for the experiment may have had some relevance to Psychology Miscellany No. 171; September 2022; ISSN: 1754-2200; Kevin Brewer

the students.

The participants were deceived in believing that reading the speech aloud was part of an aptitude test. Zimbardo (1965) admitted: "To the inevitable inquiry of how well they had done on the test, all Ss [subjects = participants] were told they did quite well. The true purpose and deceptions were not revealed to the Ss in order to maintain the validity of our procedures in a school without an honour system" (p111).

The participants were mostly male (around three-quarters in Experiment 2). Zimbardo (1965) stated that this sex ratio was representative of the college as a whole.

In terms of the experimental design in Experiment 2, Zimbardo (1965) admitted: "A better procedure would be to match Ss and then have one member of a pair improvise a speech while the second member reads a written version of this improvised speech, thereby controlling exactly for content and varying only improvisation" (p110).

B. 1970s

1. LAYTON AND TURNBULL (1975)

Layton and Turnbull (1975) reported experimental work on extra-sensory perception (ESP), which an editor's note described as "the unusual nature of the research" (p166). Parapsychology (or psi research) was a marginalised subject area for psychologists at this time.

In fact, this research is not about ESP as a true phenomenon or not as much as about attitudes and beliefs about ESP.

The participants were 179 students in the USA who met an experimenter purporting to believe in ESP or not. "Subjects in the Sheep conditions were told that previous research had demonstrated the existence of ESP. Furthermore, they were informed that the experimenter was personally convinced both that ESP existed generally and that it would be demonstrated in the matching task. Subjects in the Goat conditions heard opposite instructions that stressed the non-existence of ESP" (Layton and Turnbull 1975 p170). There was also a control group who did not have any such information. The participants then rated their beliefs about ESP generally (eg: "some people have ESP ability") and their likely success rate before the matching task, which involved predicting the next randomly generated number (between 1 and 5).

Participants in the Sheep conditions believed that they would be more likely to demonstrate in the matching task than participants in the Goat conditions, but actual ESP performance did not vary between the conditions. there were gender differences, however: "males in the Goat conditions and females in the Sheep conditions have ESP scores greater than the mean chance expectation of zero, while males in the Sheep conditions and females in the Goat conditions have scores less than the mean chance expectation" (Layton and Turnbull 1975 p173).

This experiment showed "subjects' belief and evaluation of ESP influenced their performance on the ESP task" (Layton and Turnbull 1975 p174).

The gender differences in the findings were a challenge to the researchers, who replicated the experiment with 235 more US students from the same university. Experiment II failed to replicate Experiment I.

Layton and Turnbull (1975) admitted that the "major and persistent criticism of psi research has been the lack of repeatability of results. The present investigation also failed the test of repeatability" (p177). So, the "apparent occurrence of psi effects in the first experiment is thus interpreted as a Type I error" (Layton and Turnbull 1975 p177) (ie: an apparent significant difference that is not a true difference). In experimental jargon, it is rejecting the null hypothesis when it is true. This could be because, for example, the commonly accepted significance level of $p \leq 0.05$ is too lax, and a more stringent one should be used, like $p \leq 0.01$ or $p \leq 0.001$.

The researchers considered the other possibility that ESP "did occur in the first study but not the second because the two experimental situations differed in important ways. For example, the experimenter's knowledge of the results of the first study, the increased fluidity of his presentation, or any changes in the subject population could all have contributed to the contradictory results. Of course, there are always differences between 'identical' studies, and the important issue is not whether differences existed, but whether these differences were critical" (Layton and Turnbull 1975 p178).

Greenwald's (1975) reanalysis of the data using other statistical techniques suggested no support for ESP (ie: the null hypothesis could not be rejected). Such negative findings "may often be very valuable in terms of advancing knowledge" (Greenwald 1975 p182).

2. EBBESEN ET AL (1975)

Dollard et al (1939) proposed a "cathartic" model of aggression which suggested that the release of anger or aggression reduced it in the future. The alternative view (eg: Bandura 1973) was that the expression of aggression increased its future use. Ebbesen et al (1975) designed their field study in this context.

The researchers made use of a situation in Southern California where a large company was forced to lay off staff unexpectedly, and this produced resentment (eg: stories in the local newspapers before staff informed).

One hundred and forty-eight members of staff were the participants, of which 100 were being laid off, and forty-eight were leaving for "other reasons". The former group were classed as "anger aroused", while those leaving for other reasons were classed as non-angry. Both groups were randomly assigned to one of four conditions at a personnel interview:

1. No-Verbal-Aggression (NVA) (control condition) - A series of non-related questions.

2. Aggression-Against-Company (AAC) - A series of questions that encouraged anger against the company (eg: "In what ways should the company share more in the responsibility for the layoffs that are presently being made?"; p196).

3. Aggression-Against-Supervisor (AAS) - Questions that encouraged anger towards supervisor (eg: "What action might your supervisor have taken to prevent you from being laid off?"; p196).

4. Aggression-Against-Self (AASF) - Questions that encouraged anger towards the self (eg: "Evaluating your skills and abilities within your department, what things about you may have made you more susceptible to layoffs than others in your group?"; p196).

This part of the study was the opportunity to release anger/verbal aggression. Then the participants completed a general questionnaire about the company, their supervisor, and themselves (figure 1.5). This was the outcome measure (dependent variable) of verbal aggression. the cathartic model predicts that the release of anger will lead to lower aggression scores on the final questionnaire, while the alternative is that the

release of anger will lead to higher aggression scores on the final questionnaire.

The independent variables were anger aroused or not, and type of interview.

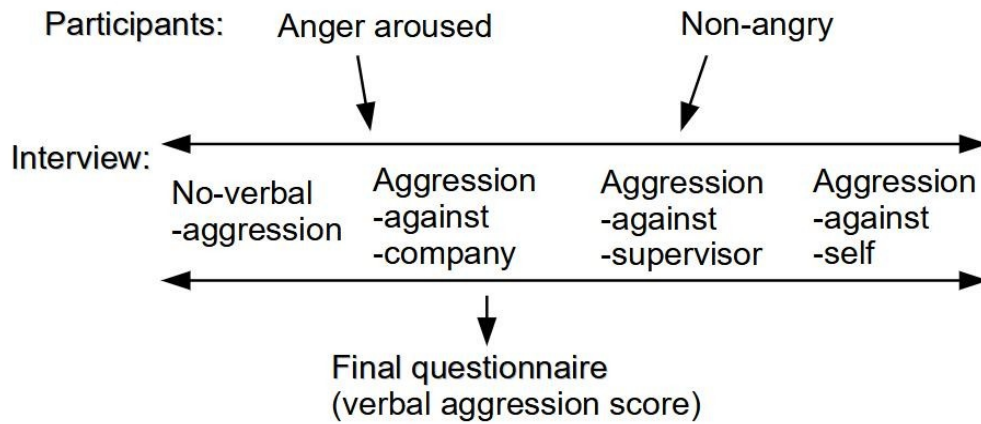
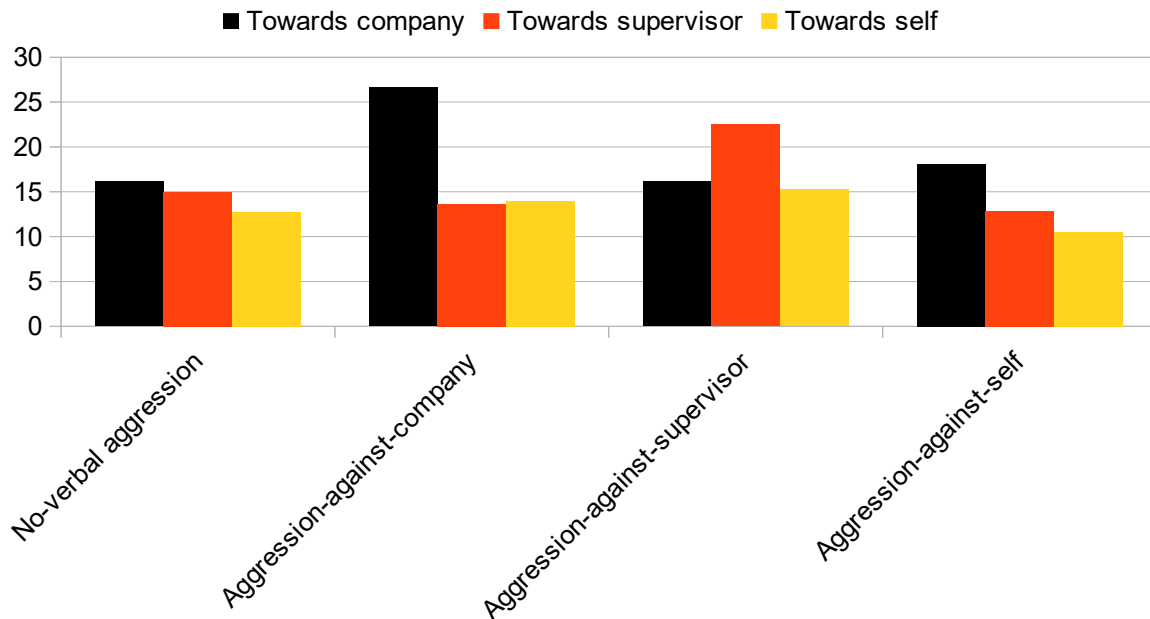


Figure 1.5 - Stages of the study.

Overall, angered participants' mean aggression scores were always higher than the non-angered participants' scores. Angered participants in the AAC condition had the highest aggression score against the company in the final questionnaire, and for the supervisor in the AAS condition. This suggested that "verbally expressing one's hostility towards a given entity enhances subsequent verbal aggression towards the same entity but has no effect on aggression directed at other targets" (Ebbesen et al 1975 pp198-199).

In the AASF condition, angered participants had the higher aggression score against the company (figure 1.6). The findings did not support the cathartic model as it appeared that "verbal hostility not only leads to more subsequent verbal aggression but also directs it towards a specific person or entity" (Ebbesen et al 1975 p201).

The participants were not randomly assigned to the angered or non-angered conditions. Technically, this makes this study a quasi-experiment rather than a true field experiment.



(Data from Ebbesen et al 1975 table 1 p198)

Figure 1.6 - Mean aggression scores of angered participants towards different targets in different conditions.

3. FINK ET AL (1975)

Aim: To investigate three factors (family occupational type, gender of donor, and appeal for donation style) and pro-social/altruistic behaviour (specifically, blood donation).

Method: Field experiment.

Participants: Sixty-three undergraduates at one US college who were asked to donate blood for the "campus blood drive" in April 1973.

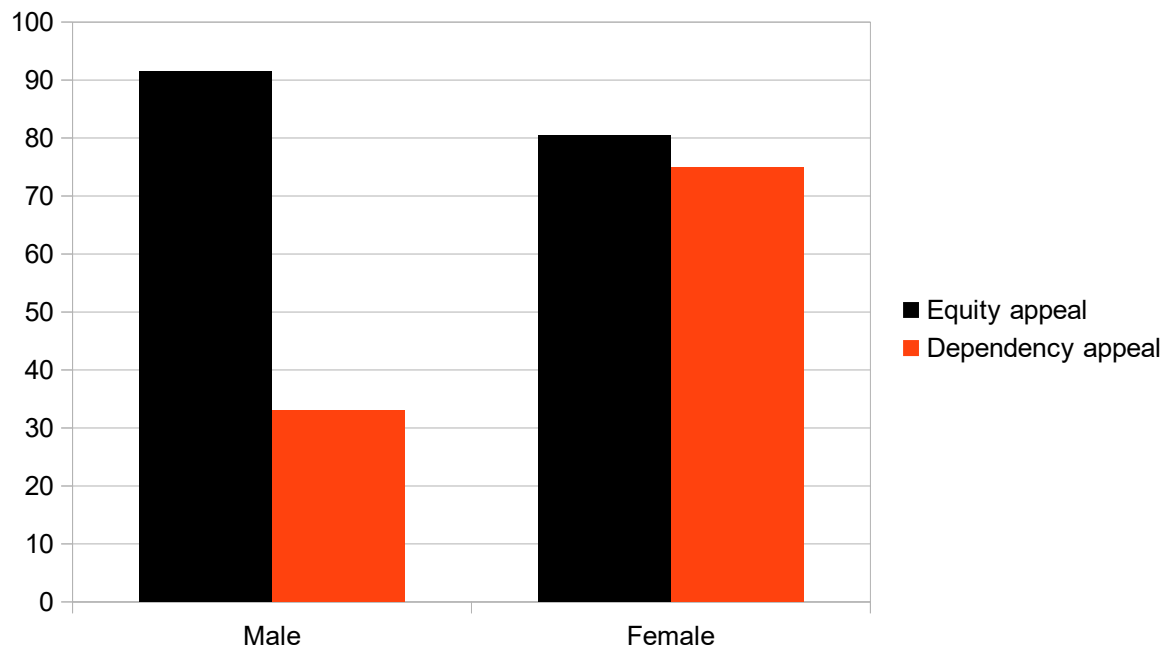
Procedure: Two trained students approached individuals on campus and asked them to donate blood using one of two randomly chosen appeal styles - equity or dependency. The dependency appeal emphasised that the provision of blood to sick or injured people depended on donors, while the equity condition talked of a "fair exchange" and "sound investment" ("your blood now, when you're healthy, in return for someone else's blood when you're sick or injured"; p47). Where participants volunteered immediately without having the scripted

appeal, they were placed in a residual condition. Information about the donors was subsequently collected in telephone interviews.

Independent Variable: Type of appeal for blood donors. The gender of donor and family occupational type were quasi-independent variables.

Dependent Variable: Donating blood.

Findings: Overall, more participants responded to the equity than dependency appeal, and this was especially so for male participants (figure 1.7). Family occupational type had no impact on donation.



(Data adapted from table I p48 Fink et al 1975; average of family occupational type categories)

Figure 1.7 - Percentage of participants donating blood based on appeal style and gender.

Conclusion: Males responded significantly more to the equity appeal, whereas women showed no difference in response to the equity or dependency appeals.

Strengths: (i) Made use of real situation ("campus blood drive").

(ii) Standardised scripted appeals used.

(iii) Male and female trained students made the appeal.

Weaknesses: (i) Opportunity sampling (ie: those passing by at the time of the experiment).

(ii) No control group which simply asked participants to donate blood.

(iii) No control over other factors that might influence donation (eg: forgetting; convenience of appointment).

4. LANGER ET AL (1975)

Aim: To compare two strategies for reducing stress prior to surgery.

Participants: Sixty adults undergoing elective operations at a hospital in the USA.

Design: A four-group independent designed field experiment: (1) "coping device" only, (2) "preparatory information" only, (3) both strategies, and (4) control (neither strategy).

Independent Variable: Type of strategy.

Dependent Variable: Nurse-rating of pre-operation anxiety on a seven-point scale, from (1) "extremely anxious" to (7) "not at all anxious". A post-operation measure of requests for pain relief was also used.

Procedure: Prior to the operation after arrival at the hospital, participants were approached by a psychologist who provided the strategy randomly chosen. The "coping device" strategy involved briefly teaching the participant to imagine positive aspects of the experience and outcomes, using techniques of distraction, and increasing perception of control. The "preparatory information" strategy involved general information about post-surgery effects (eg: probable pain around the incision area). The combination condition used both of these strategies, while the control condition included general neutral questions (eg: "Have you ever been to hospital before?").

Findings: The coping device groups showed a

significant improvement in pre-operative anxiety after the intervention as compared to the control group. The comparing device only group had the lowest mean number of post-operative pain relief requests (figure 1.8). The preparatory information was less helpful, but better than the control group.

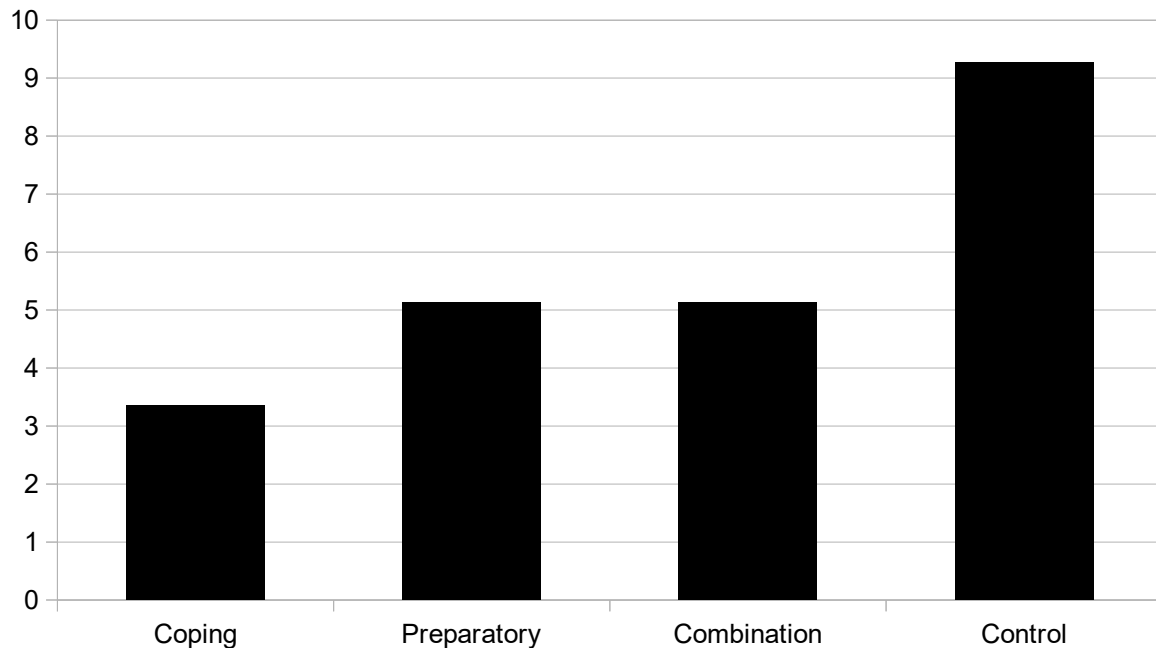


Figure 1.8 - Mean number of requests per patient for post-operative pain relief based on condition of experiment.

Conclusion: The participants in the coping device only condition showed immediately reductions in pre-operative anxiety, and required less post-operative pain relief.

Evaluation: A real-life study, but a limited sample in terms of a small range of operations in one US hospital. It was not clear which aspect of the "coping device" worked - distraction or the perception of control, or a combination of both.

C. 1980s

1. AXSOM AND COOPER (1985)

Background: Cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger Psychology Miscellany No. 171; September 2022; ISSN: 1754-2200; Kevin Brewer

1957) was developed to explain attitude change, particularly where it seems to be the opposite to expectations. For example, individuals who were members of a religious group that believed that the world would end on a certain day became more zealous about gaining new members after the date had passed (and the world did not end). This has been called "effort justification". Where individuals put in a lot of effort to achieve something, but the goal is disappointing (or not as expected), positive attitude towards the goal occurs.

Aronson and Mills (1959) showed this phenomenon in an experiment. Students had to undergo a difficult and embarrassing event in order to join what was presented as an exciting sexual discussion group. But the group was deliberately made to be boring. Participants expending effort to join reported enjoying the group discussion more than a control group who simply joined.

Axson and Cooper (1985) applied this idea to weight loss therapy: "It was predicted that subjects freely choosing to undergo highly effortful sessions would produce the greatest weight loss, relative to those in a lower effort therapy and a control group" (p151).

Participants: Fifty-two women in the Princeton, New Jersey, area of the USA, who responded to a newspaper advertisement for an "Experiment concerning possible methods of weight reduction", and who were 10-20% above "desirable body weight".

Procedure: Participants were randomly allocated to one of four experimental conditions (figure 1.9) based on two independent variables (choice and effort). The choice variable offered participants the choice to withdraw at the beginning after being told that "although the procedures you will follow are perfectly safe and harmless, they may also be effortful and anxiety producing" (p152) (high choice condition), or not (low choice condition).

The effort variable related to the task (or not) that the participants had to perform before being allowed to join the weight loss programme. The high effort condition involved a series of complex cognitive tasks for over one hour, while the low effort condition had no tasks. There was also a separate control group of ten participants who received no weight loss programme. The dependent variable was the loss of weight.

- A - High choice/high effort
- B - High choice/low effort
- C - Low choice/low effort
- D - Low choice/high effort
- Control

Figure 1.9 - Conditions in the experiment.

Findings: Participants in the high effort conditions had lost significantly more weight than participants in the low effort conditions and the control group at three weeks, six months, and one year later. The choice variable appeared to have no impact on weight loss.

Conclusion: Participants who had to put effort into gaining access to the weight loss programme lost more weight over time.

Limitations: The sample was volunteers, and because it was "overwhelmingly" women who volunteered, only women were studied.

2. PYSZCZYNSKI ET AL (1985)

Self-esteem (ie: the evaluation of the self's worth) is based on an objective comparison with others, according to Festinger's (1954) social comparison theory. Subsequent research has suggested that individuals "seek comparison with others who have performed worse than themselves and avoid comparison with others who have performed better than themselves" (Pyszczynski et al 1985 p196) in order to maintain a positive self-esteem. In other words, social comparison is a biased process.

Pyszczynski et al (1985) performed two experiments to explore this biased process. More specifically, individuals will behave differently in terms of social comparison after failure in order to find reasons to maintain a positive self-esteem, like situational causes for the failure.

Experiment 1

Hypothesis: After failure participants will show more interest in comparing themselves with others than after success.

Participants: 41 US undergraduates.

Procedure: Participants completed a bogus test on social sensitivity, and were randomly given feedback as high scorers (success) ¹ or low scorers (failure) ². Then they were shown the supposed scores of six other participants (either high or low scorers). Finally, participants were offered the opportunity to see up to another 50 scores.

Independent Variables: (i) Feedback of high or low score on test, and (ii) high or low scores of six others.

Dependent Variable: The number of extra scores (out of 50) that the participants asked to see.

Design: Independent groups (or between-participants) with four groups (table).

	Feedback failure (low score - 8/20)	Feedback success (high score - 16/20)
Low score others (mean = 8: 6, 8, 7, 16, 5, 6)	1	2
High score others (mean = 16: 18, 16, 17, 8, 19, 18)	3	4

Table 1.3 - Four conditions of Experiment 1.

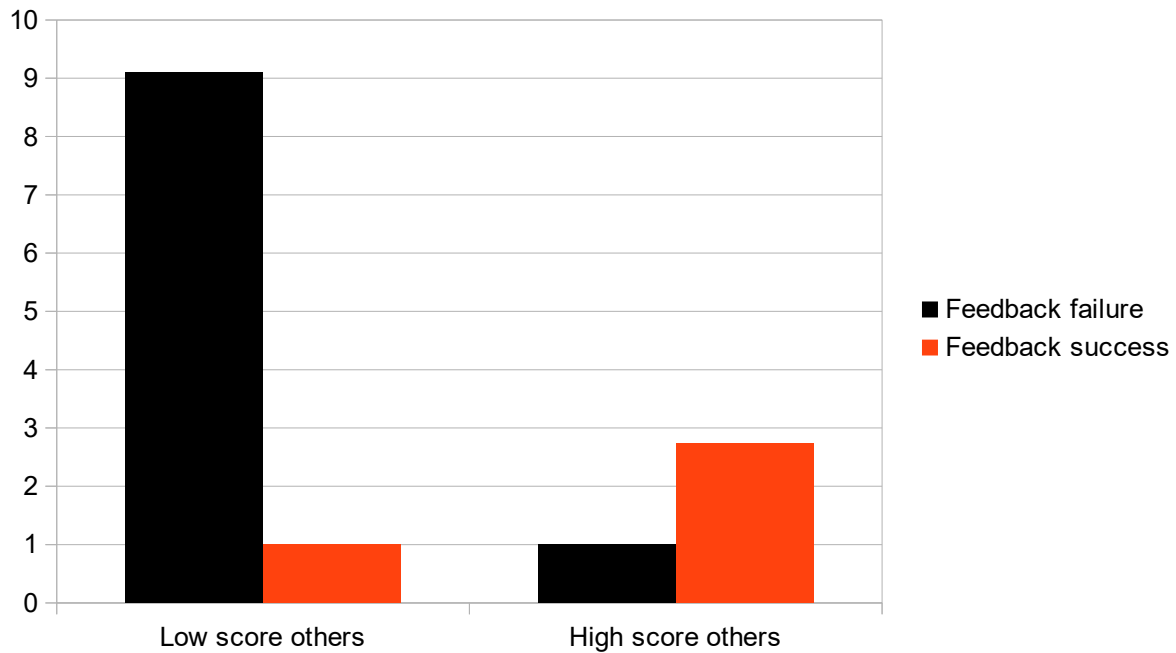
Findings: Participants in the failure-low score others (condition 1 in table 1.3) requested to see significantly more score than in the other three conditions (figure 1.10).

Conclusion: The hypothesis was supported. Participants who had failed sought more information about others, particularly when they believed that others had lower scores than themselves.

Evaluation: (i) Small sample of US undergraduates.
(ii) Deception of participants with a bogus test and false feedback, which could still have an impact,

¹ The experimenter said: "You got 16 out of 20 correct. That's a very high score. You must be good at this sort of thing" (p199).

² The experimenter said: "You got 8 out of 20 correct. That's not a very good score. You must not be very good at this sort of thing" (p199).



(Data from table 1 p201 Pyszczynski et al 1985)

Figure 1.10 - Mean number of extra scores requested in Experiment 1.

particularly for individuals told that they had failed, even after debriefing.

Experiment 2

This experiment was very similar to Experiment 1, but with two changes:

i) All participants received a score of 12 out of 20, but the experimenter randomly said that was a failure or a success.

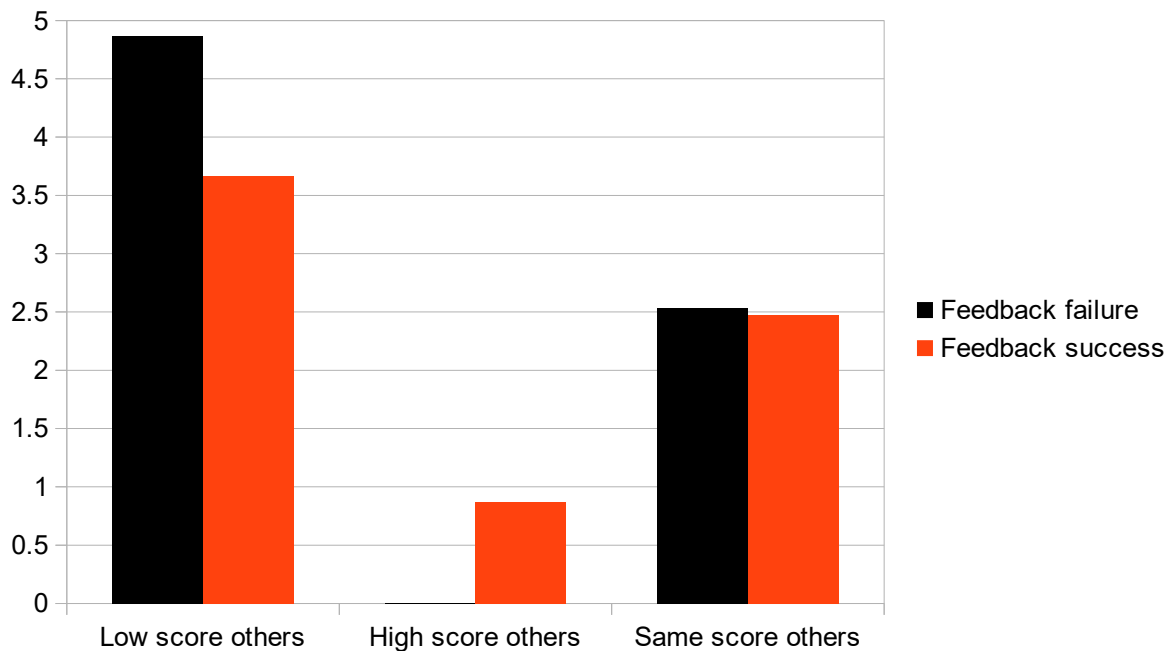
ii) Participants saw six other scores that either higher, lower, or the same as their own.

The experiment now had six independent groups (table 1.4), and the participants were 77 female and thirteen male US undergraduates.

Participants asked to see significantly more scores in the failure-lower score others condition again (figure 1.11).

	Feedback failure (low score - 8/20)	Feedback success (high score - 16/20)
Low score others (mean = 8: 6, 8, 7, 16, 5, 6)	1	2
High score others (mean = 16: 18, 16, 17, 8, 19, 18)	3	4
Same score others (all 12)	5	6

Table 1.4 - Six conditions of Experiment 2.



(Data from table 3 p205 Pyszczynski et al 1985)

Figure 1.11 - Mean number of extra scores requested in Experiment 2.

Overall, the researchers stated in summary: "The two studies provide clear support for the hypothesis that the search for social comparison information after performance outcomes is most vigorously pursued when it is expected that the available information will imply a favourable self-evaluation. In both studies failure subjects showed a high level of interest in acquiring additional information when they expected it to reveal that most other students performed poorly and very little Psychology Miscellany No. 171; September 2022; ISSN: 1754-2200; Kevin Brewer

interest in acquiring additional information when they expected it to reveal that most others performed well. Thus, after failure, subjects were consistently biased in their search for information relevant to an evaluation of their performance. Clearly, this bias can provide the individual with information useful in defusing the threat to self-esteem inherent in the failure" (Pyszczynski et al 1985 pp206-207).

3. JANOFF-BULMAN AND TIMKO (1985)

Background: The "hindsight effect" (or bias) is the tendency to use the knowledge of the outcome to view the outcome as predictable. This can lead to victim blaming. "If, with the benefit of hindsight, we unjustifiably perceive events as more predictable, then we assume that those who suffered as a result also should have known about the predictable sequence of events; thus they should have been able to do something to avoid or prevent the negative outcome" (Janoff-Bulman and Timko 1985 p163).

Janoff-Bulman and Timko (1985) performed three laboratory experiments to investigate this behaviour.

Experiment 1

Forty-eight psychology undergraduates at a US university read a brief story about a woman and a man going out on a date. For half the participants, the story ended with the woman saying: "The next thing I knew, he raped me" (p164). The other half had the ending: "The next thing I knew, he took me home" (p164). After the reading, the participants were asked to estimate the likelihood that an event would have occurred (4 events including the rape, and being taken home) on an eleven-point scale.

The participants rated the event that they had read about as significantly more likely to occur (figure 1.12). So, "outcome knowledge led to an exaggerated (biased) perception of how likely given events appeared" (Janoff-Bulman and Timko 1985 p165).

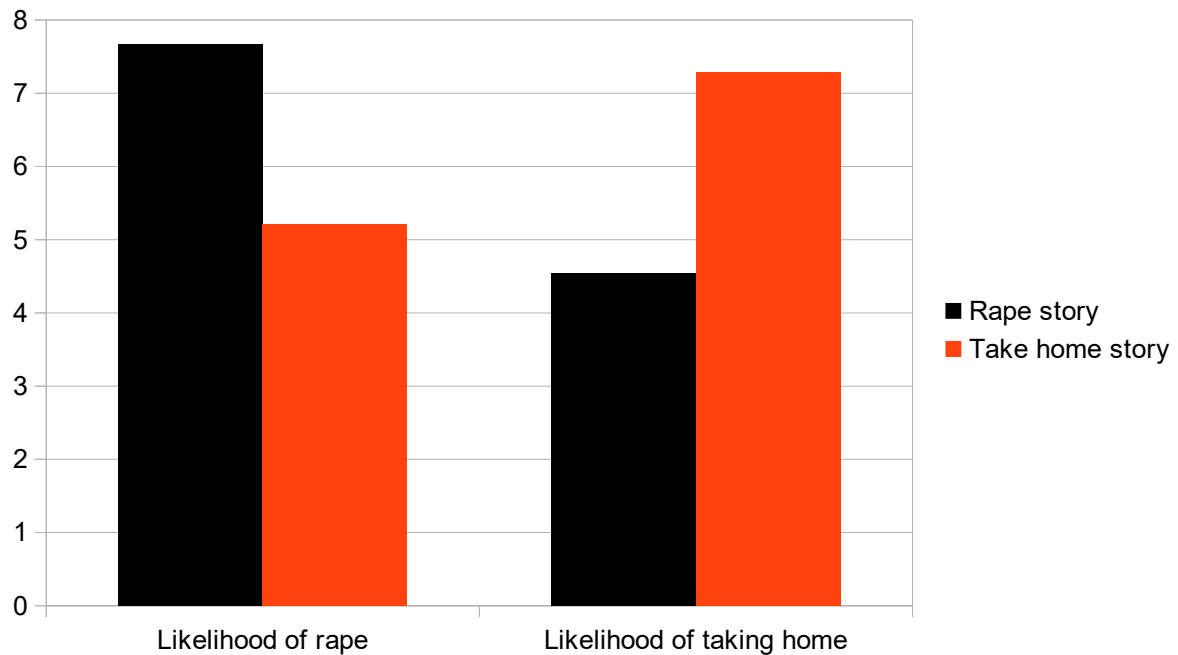


Figure 1.12 - The likelihood of an event occurring based on the story read (mean score out of 11 where a higher score is more likely).

Experiment 2

This study was a replication of Experiment 1 with eighty more undergraduates, but with different questions after reading the story. The questions related to blaming the victim for the rape (eg: "she should not have let him kiss her"). "Subjects who read the scenario which concluded with rape were more likely to blame the woman narrator than were participants who read that the woman was taken home and not victimised" (Janoff-Bulman and Timko 1985 p167).

Experiment 3

The participants were 172 more students who read one of the two stories as before. But then they were asked to think about an alternative ending. However, this did not reduce the victim blaming.

Overall, the three experiments showed that the "hindsight effect" (Experiment 1) and victim blaming (Experiment 2) occurred in response to a specific scenario of a rape, and that these cognitive biases were

difficult to overturn (Experiment 3).

Table 1.5 summarises the key methodological aspects of the experiments.

	Experiment 1	Experiment 2	Experiment 3
Independent variable	Ending of story	Ending of story	Ending of story
Dependent variable	Rating of likelihood of an event being predictable	Rating of blame of victim of rape	Rating of blame of victim of rape
Participants' gender	24 male 24 female	40 male 40 female	65 male 107 female

Table 1.5 - Key methodological aspects of Janoff-Bulman and Timko's (1985) three experiments.

Evaluation:

i) Sample - US undergraduates on an introductory psychology course at a large state university, so limited generalisability (-). Total sample 300 students, which is quite large for such studies of the time (+). Different students were involved in each experiment (+).

ii) Ethical issues:

a) Simple deception about the purpose of the study ("a study of person perception"; p164).

b) The topic (rape) may have been distressing to participants, particularly female ones. No details are given as to whether this was checked beforehand, and it has to be assumed that a debriefing occurred as this was not mentioned. Did the debriefing check about the distress or just give factual information about the experiment?

c) Were the participants compelled to participate as part of the course? No information provided.

iii) Artificial situation - The story was around 500 words in length which did not give many details compared to the evaluation of a real event. However, newspaper reports of such events are similar.

The rating of likelihood and blame used numerical scales (quantitative data) with no exploration of the decision-making of the participants (qualitative data).

iv) Independent groups design (or between-participants) which meant participants saw only one version of the story, and this avoided "order effects" (+).

v) Strengths of experiment - eg: control of variables.

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2. A REPLICATION

Social norms influence behaviour, but, according to the "focus theory of normative conduct" (FTNC) (Cialdini et al 1990), the norm needs to be "activated" (ie: made salient) to have an influence.

Cialdini et al (1990) tested the FTNC with littering, and showed that people were more likely to litter in an already littered than clean environment. In other words, seeing litter already there, activates the social norm that littering is the usual behaviour.

There has been debate about the "single piece of litter effect" where Cialdini et al (1990) showed that one piece of litter was enough to reduce littering compared to a clean environment. This is counter-intuitive, but the single piece of litter activates the non-littering social norm, according to the FTNC (Bergquist et al 2021).

Bergquist et al (2021) reported a replication of Cialdini et al (1990). Cialdini et al (1990) had placed fliers in the dormitory hall pigeon-holes of female students to see if the fliers would be dropped on the floor. The environment was manipulated to be clean (n fliers on the floor), littered, or a single piece of litter (a watermelon rind).

In their first study, Bergquist et al (2021) placed fliers on the windscreens of cars parked at a shopping centre in Sweden. The outcome measure (dependent variable) was the dropping of the flier on the floor. Three conditions were created (independent variable) - clean (no litter), littered (eg: cigarette butts, other fliers), and a single piece of litter (a watermelon rind). Over five hundred visitors were scored.

In the littered environment, 27% of visitors discarded the flier on the floor, 22% in the clean environment, and 26% in the single piece of litter condition. These differences were not statistically significant. Bergquist et al's (2021) Study 1, then, did not replicate Cialdini et al's (1990) single piece of litter condition.

Study 2 by Bergquist et al (2021) took place in a supermarket in Sweden. As 747 visitors picked up a basket, it contained a flier. The three conditions of the environment were created again. The flier was dropped on the floor (ie: littering) by 13% of participants in the fully littered condition, 7% in the clean environment condition, and 13% in the single piece of litter

condition. No statistically significant differences, and no replication of Cialdini et al (1990).

Bergquist et al's (2021) Study 3 was online and used photographs of different environments and litter. This study asked participants about their thoughts and motivations in relation to littering. The photographs included the environments used by Bergquist et al's (2021) previous studies and Cialdini et al (1990). The perception of littering as a social norm varied between environments. It appeared that participants expected litter in some environments and not others, and this influenced behaviour more.

There were also methodological issues to consider, including:

i) Field experiments were used, and these "do not allow the same level of control of extraneous variables as laboratory experiments, which might bias the results" (Bergquist et al 2021 p9).

ii) Different cultures between Bergquist et al (2021) (Sweden) and Bergquist et al (2021) (USA), and different times (2020 vs 1990 respectively). For example, Swedes are more concerned about pro-environmental values than Americans (Bergquist et al 2021).

iii) The role of ingroup and outgroup norms was not controlled by Bergquist et al (2021). For example, a smoker seeing discarded cigarette butts (ingroup) may behave differently to a non-smoker seeing the butts (outgroup).

Generally, Bergquist et al (2021) confirmed that individuals drop litter more in littered than clean environments, so social norms are important here. But the "single piece of litter effect" did not activate non-litter social norms.

A Response

Cialdini and Jacobson (2021) responded and noted specific factors in Bergquist et al's (2021) field study that may explain any difference in findings. Participants in Study 1 were in "an open-sided parking structure, returning to their vehicles while carrying bags containing the purchases of a supermarket shopping task,

in February in Gothenburg, Sweden, where the daily average temperatures that month... were below freezing. Perhaps it's not surprising then that, as the data suggest, they noticed the single visible piece of litter but did not possess the inclination nor capacity to scan the entire environment to register it as the lone piece of litter" (Cialdini and Jacobson 2021 p2).

While Study 2 took place in April 2020 during the covid-19 pandemic. "What's more, this was not any country; it was Sweden, whose national healthcare officials had decided – virtually alone in this regard in the world – to allow the potentially deadly virus to run its course in the population as a way to create herd immunity" (Cialdini and Jacobson 2021 p2).

Cialdini and Jacobson (2021) argued that high levels of arousal in both studies led to "perceptual narrowing" and "heuristic processing". In the former case, "in which people attend and respond to a restricted rather than full range (often a single cue) of cues in an environment –takes place under conditions of high emotional arousal (eg: anxiety or stress...), bodily arousal (eg: elevated physical activity...), or even as a result of extreme weather conditions" (Cialdini and Jacobson 2021 p2). Heuristic processing happens when "people attend and respond to a limited sub-set of relevant information in a decision-making situation - [and] occurs when, in addition to arousal, people are rushing, preoccupied, cognitively overloaded, or fatigued" (Cialdini and Jacobson 2021 p2).

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3. LOSS OF CONFIDENCE

- 3.1. Loss-of-confidence project
- 3.2. Fabrication
- 3.3. Appendix 3A - General science
- 3.4. Appendix 3B - Learned ignorance
- 3.5. References

3.1. LOSS-OF-CONFIDENCE PROJECT

Rohrer et al (2021) began with a sanguine reflection: "Science is often hailed as a self-correcting enterprise (appendix 3A). In the popular perception, scientific knowledge is cumulative and progressively approximates truth more accurately over time... However, the degree to which science is genuinely self-correcting is a matter of considerable debate. The truth may or may not be revealed eventually, but errors can persist for decades, corrections sometimes reflect lucky accidents rather than systematic investigation and can themselves be erroneous, and initial mistakes might give rise to subsequent errors before they get caught" (p1255)³. This led these authors to consider genuine self-correction - ie: a situation in which "researchers publicly point out errors in their own studies and question conclusions they have drawn before" (Rohrer et al 2021 p1256) (appendix 3B).

The "Loss-of-Confidence Project" was set up to encourage self-correction, especially where researchers no longer believe in their previously reported findings. Between December 2017 and July 2018, psychology researchers who felt this way were asked to submit comments.

Thirteen "loss-of-confidence" statements were received. Here are two examples:

1. Original research: Fisher et al (2015) - "women's preferences for wearing make-up that was rated by other people as being particularly attractive were stronger in test sessions in which salivary testosterone was high than in test sessions in which salivary testosterone was relatively low" (Rohrer et al 2021 p1259).

The researchers now accepted that they had not controlled for all potential confounders in their analysis, for example.

³ Serra-Garcia's (2021) study of psychology and economics journals found that non-replicable studies were cited more than replicable ones (Oreskes 2021).

2. Original research: Silberzahn and Uhlmann (2013)
- A person's name impacts their career choice. Using archival data of German surnames, it was found that "noble" names like "Konig" (which means "king") were more common among professionals than "common" names like "Bauer" ("farmer").

Subsequent re-analysis found no relationship - ie: "Germans with noble and non-noble names are equally well represented in managerial positions" (Rohrer et al 2021 p1260).

Rohrer et al (2021) summarised the reasons for loss of confidence as methodological error, invalid inference, and "p-hacking" (statistical analysis to find any significant difference in the data).

Rohrer et al (2021) suggested that in the "current research environment, self-correction, or even just critical reconsideration of one's past work, is often disincentivised professionally. The opportunity costs of a self-correction are high; time spent on correcting past mistakes and missteps is time that cannot be spent on new research efforts, and the resulting self-correction is less likely to be judged a genuine scientific contribution. Moreover, researchers may worry about self-correction potentially backfiring. Corrections that focus on specific elements from an earlier study might be perceived as undermining the value of the study as a whole, including parts that are in fact unaffected by the error. Researchers might also fear that a self-correction that exposes flaws in their work will damage their reputation and perhaps even undermine the credibility of their research record as a whole" (p1265).

The solution, argued Rohrer et al (2021), is for professional organisations and scientific societies to encourage self-correction, and emphasise its positive aspects. Cynically, however, this reminds me of "whistle-blowers" in society generally. While whistle-blowing is lauded as desirable by society, many individuals who do so experience negative consequences, including not being employed in their industry again. Furthermore, academic tenure and actual jobs depend on publication and reputation, and self-correction potentially threatens these. Nevertheless, Rohrer et al (2021) was positive about the whole exercise.

3.2. FABRICATION

Cabanac et al (2021) coined the phrase "tortured

phrases" to describe strange terms found in journal articles that were trying to disguise plagiarism. For example, "counterfeit consciousness" instead of the commonly used "artificial intelligence", or "colossal information" for "big data" (Else 2021a).

Cabanac et al (2021) found more than 860 articles using "tortured phrases", probably the results of automated translation or software that rewrites existing text. Disturbingly, these could be signs of AI-generated papers (Else 2021a).

In reference to biology (but true to other fields of study), Nurse (2021) argued for more theory by quoting Darwin (1871): "False facts are highly injurious to the progress of science, for they often endure long; but false views, if supported by some evidence, do little harm, for everyone takes a salutary pleasure in proving their falseness; and when this is done, one path towards error is closed and the road to truth is often at the same time opened".

Nurse (2021) then stated: "False facts should not be tolerated, but journals and research funders should be open to reasonable new ideas and interpretations, particularly if they differ from the current consensus. Evaluation committees should be tolerant when some of the ideas of people they are considering for promotion or funding are shown to be incorrect" (p305).

In the first year of the National Board for Assessment of Research Misconduct (NPOF) in Sweden (2020), forty-six cases were referred (which was three times the number expected by officials) (Else 2021b) ⁴.

The forty-six cases covered fifty-six incidents of misconduct - ten alleged fabrication of data, 18 alleged forgery, eighteen of plagiarism, and ten other matters. The cases came from medicine, health and natural sciences (Else 2021b).

Fourteen cases had been concluded with four researchers found guilty of misconduct, but one of these subsequently won a court appeal (Else 2021b).

Eleven of the forty-six cases were judged to be outside the NPOF's remit (eg: personal disputes between PhD students and supervisors) (Else 2021b).

⁴ C.K.Gunsalus (research integrity specialist in the USA) saw the number of referrals as similar to the USA (Else 2021b).

3.3. APPENDIX 3A - GENERAL SCIENCE

Talking about the life sciences, Amaral and Neves (2021) observed that despite the amount of data that high impact academic science journals require, reproducibility (or replication) is difficult. For example, Errington et al (2014) successfully reproduced five of seventeen highly cited studies in cancer biology.

While Camerer et al (2018), for example, could only replicate around 60% of twenty-one social science experiments in the journals "Science" and "Nature" between 2010 and 2015. Amaral and Neves (2021) worried, however, that the solution of providing more data to journals would not increase reproducibility, only the workload of researchers. They suggested more collaboration between researchers and research teams: "Moving the burden of reproducibility from individual researchers to organised communities can ultimately raise the bar of what is considered scientific fact..." (Amaral and Neves 2021 p331).

In cancer biology, 46% of replications were classed as successful in an eight-year study (Errington et al 2021b) by the "Reproducibility Project: Cancer Biology" (RPCB) (Editorial 2021). Many of the original studies had not provided enough details to allow full replication. Only fifty experiments from twenty-three papers were thus possible, instead of the originally set 193 experiments from 53 papers (Mullard 2021).

Errington et al (2021a) described the problems encountered by the RPCB, which included one-third of the original authors being "not at all helpful" to requests for details (Mullard 2021).

3.4. APPENDIX 3B - LEARNED IGNORANCE

Franke (2015) began with this observation: "Although ignorance has often been considered to be merely negative and indeed the root of all vice, there is also a very long counter-tradition within Western intellectual and cultural history that reverses this valence and appreciates ignorance as the necessary ground for all genuine knowledge and even as the indispensable starting point for any meaningful and productive orientation to the world as a whole" (p26).

The "valorisation of ignorance" (p26) is associated with the "apophatic" tradition, and the "ultimate apophatic expression is silence - a silence that is

stretched tensely toward... what cannot be said. Only this negation of saying by silence 'says'... what cannot be said" (Franke 2015 p29). But, Franke (2015) emphasised, "apophaticism is not nihilism. Apophatic authors may sometimes embrace an agnosticism as to whether language has any meaning at all, but their apophaticism is not nihilistic..." (p33).

The historical origins can be found in Plato (Franke 2015).

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4. CRITICAL SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGIES

- 4.1. Introduction
- 4.2. Social Constructionism
- 4.3. Orthodox social psychology and Marxism
- 4.4. Feminist approaches
- 4.5. Queer Theory
- 4.6. Critical Race Psychology
- 4.7. Liberation Psychology
- 4.8. Intersectionality
- 4.9. References

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Critical social psychology (or psychologies) draws upon a variety of theories, including Feminist and Marxist ideas, Social Constructionism, and Queer Theory, among others. Altogether, they challenge "mainstream assumptions and practices" (Gough 2017 p4). In terms of methodology, there is an emphasis on qualitative ones, although "critical work can involve experiments, surveys and statistics" (Gough 2017 p6).

4.2. SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

Burr and Dick (2017) summed up the "core tenet" of a Social Constructionist approach as "how we understand and even perceive the world and the objects (including people) and events within it does not necessarily reflect the nature of that world but rather is a product of how the world is represented or produced through language" (p59).

Crucial to this approach is "discourse", which refers to "sets of ideas that are culturally significant or what could be called 'broad meaning systems' (Speer 2005) and that can be used to make sense of the world and events within it" (Burr and Dick 2017 p61).

Discourse has "predictive power", which means that "discourses do not simply describe the world, an event or a person, they actually influence what we do and how we act" (Burr and Dick 2017 p61).

Discourse also has "disciplinary effects" (eg: a role in establishing what is seen as normal or abnormal) (Burr and Dick 2017).

Other important aspects of a Social Constructionist Psychology Miscellany No. 171; September 2022; ISSN: 1754-2200; Kevin Brewer

approach include (Burr and Dick 2017):

a) Power relations - "how the positions occupied by people in society, such as occupations and class, allow some groups to have more authority (and therefore power) than others" (Burr and Dick 2017 p62). Power relations, however, are not fixed, and occur at both the social and individual level, as well as influence the production of discourse.

b) Relativism - The idea that there is no definite "truth", only a number of competing "truths".

All of these ideas critique mainstream social psychology with its pre-occupation with being a "science". This desire includes experiments that attempt to isolate a very specific aspect of behaviour to study. Such focus with its assumed individualism ignores the social context of behaviour. Social Constructionism argued that "the individualistic model of the person that psychology assumes is in fact a very local one, both historically and culturally. It is born out of specifically western ideologies that are rooted in styles of thinking that have emerged in Europe over the last few hundred years" (Burr and Dick 2017 pp67-68).

Social Constructionism also accuses mainstream psychology and social psychology of "a kind of hypocrisy. Like the natural sciences, psychology regards itself as free from vested interests and power relations, and as apolitical; it views its research activity as producing objective 'facts', and its objectivity is taken to mean that such facts therefore cannot, in themselves, advantage some groups of people over others. The claim that psychology is value-free becomes questionable when one examines the assumptions lying behind its research activities" (Burr and Dick 2017 pp68-69).

4.3. ORTHODOX SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND MARXISM

"Orthodox social psychology", from its inception in the early 20th century, has "striven to be an experimental social science" (Arfken 2017 p38). This means the application of the principles of "natural science" to the topics, which including disembedding behaviour from its social situation, and analysing the whole in terms of constituent elements. "Through this process, the social is redefined so that social reality becomes an aggregate of individuals. The result is that

'the norms of a certain kind of experimental practice were now equated with the essential structure of the social reality to be investigated' (Danziger 1992...). Here the attempt to fashion a science of the social on the mechanistic approach of seventeenth-century natural science contributes to a radical restructuring of the nature of social reality" (Arfken 2017 p39) ⁵.

Another feature of orthodox social psychology is that "an individual's interpretation of social reality is a process of active construction" (Arfken 2017 p40). This presents a cognitive framework "where activity is viewed first and foremost as a psychological process so that all social activities can in principle be traced to mental activities occurring in the minds of individual social actors" (Arfken 2017 p40).

Critical approaches challenge the universal nature of these ideas, and embed social psychology in its social historical cultural (SHC) context. For social constructionism, for instance, experimentation and social cognition are cultural constructions or discursive practices, while in Marxist social psychology "they are reflections of the social relations of production within a competitive market society" (Arfken 2017 p41).

Marx (1859) emphasised that individual's relation to production is key to their social being: "The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political, and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness" (quoted in Arfken 2017). Put very simply, in a capitalist system, the worker and the capital owner are different social beings because of their relation to the mode of production, and "social being is first and foremost social and economic and only derivatively psychological" (Arfken 2017 p42). Inherent to Marxism is "class" struggle.

"Under capitalism, labour is transformed into a commodity to be bought and sold within a competitive market. Workers not only supply the fuel for this economic system but also produce themselves as

⁵ LeDoux (2015) explained the differences in knowledge and disciplines: "Physicists, astronomers, and chemists don't need to take seriously common sense ideas about nature because people's beliefs and attitudes about the stars, matter and energy, and chemical elements don't affect the subject under investigation. The fact that we commonly say (and some may actually believe) that 'the sun rises in the east' does not have any scientific bearing on the fact that sunrise is an illusion. But psychologists do have to pay attention to folk psychology because people's common beliefs about the mind influence their thoughts and actions in daily life and are thus an important part of what psychology is all about. Folk psychology is a window into the things that interest people and affect their lives" (quoted in LeDoux 2021).

commodities" (Arfken 2017 p43). This "commodity fetishism" (Eagleton 1991) produces alienation for the worker.

The upshot is that a psychological event is not occurring in the mind, but is "a practical activity embedded in our engagement with the world" (Arfken 2017 p47).

Orthodox social psychology is, thus, unable to investigate psychological events because it reinforces and reproduces the status quo. Marxist social psychology is about changing the state of affairs, about "engaging in concrete political action and revolutionary struggle" (Arfken 2017 p47).

Arfken (2017) ended: "By placing Marx's critique of political economy at the foundation of Critical Social Psychology, it becomes possible to interrogate with renewed vigour many of the most pressing concerns of our age" (p54).

4.4. FEMINIST APPROACHES

Feminist approaches have four broad critiques of traditional social psychology (Magnusson and Marecek 2017):

i) Androcentrism - ie: "seeing and evaluating the world from the perspective of a man or of men as a collective. Androcentrism also means that this perspective is the self-evident or dominant perspective" (Magnusson and Marecek 2017 p22). This perspective can be even more narrow in terms of White, middle-class, and heterosexual.

ii) An individualistic focus that downplays social context - "The ideology of individualism holds the self as separate from others, society, culture, and nature. That is, although individuals are in dynamic interaction - like atoms or billiard balls - they are taken to be fundamentally independent" (Magnusson and Marecek 2017 p23).

Associated with this idea is "internalism" (ie: "the presumption that people's thoughts, actions, and feelings are based in or caused by factors that are internal to the person"; Magnusson and Marecek 2017 p24).

iii) A focus on universal explanations and theories as opposed to the contextual or situated nature of

knowledge.

iv) Male-female differences are assumed to be fixed and universal.

4.5. QUEER THEORY

Queer Theory (QT) in psychology is an "oppositional orientation" to "a particular set of norms, ones that privilege the idealised White, heterosexual, middle-class, young, normatively sized, and able body" (Riggs and Treharne 2017 p102). Judith Butler (eg: 1990), who is a key author here, talked of "matrices of intelligibility" that mean that social norms make certain "particular modes of being" as impossible and other as required (Riggs and Treharne 2017).

QT places a lot of emphasis on sex, gender, and sexuality, and within social psychology these are the areas of research. Riggs and Treharne (2017) described three examples of research that employed Butler's (1990) concept of "performativity" ("the doing of identity that is embedded in daily life that maintains the fantasy of achieving the normative (eg: being a good heterosexual) and simultaneously maintains the related norms (eg: heterosexuality)"; Riggs and Treharne 2017 p103) ⁶.

a) Eichler (2012) - An auto-ethnographic study of "coming out as a queer man [in the US]".

b) Hayfield et al (2013) - Semi-structured interviews to explore the visual identities of bisexual women, which were constructed "as in between, or a blend of, 'an implicitly excessive lesbian 'masculinity' and an equally exaggerated heterosexual 'femininity'"" (Riggs and Treharne 2017 p103).

c) Phoenix et al (2013) - Focus groups with young people on consumption.

Riggs and Treharne (2017) explained that "queer" can mean different things in different disciplines. Also, they said: "it is important to acknowledge that not all people who identify as 'queer' will do so through an orientation to a queer theoretical critique. Whilst many

⁶ Warner (2004) described gender identity as "based on public performances, not private parts" (quoted in Riggs and Treharne 2017). More formally, Butler (1993) stated that "performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate 'act', but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names" (quoted in Riggs and Treharne 2017). Psychology Miscellany No. 171; September 2022; ISSN: 1754-2200; Kevin Brewer

such people may well report an oppositional identification that is informed by queer theory, many people may use the identity category 'queer' as shorthand for 'non-heterosexual' or as a more general critique of normative gender binaries" (Riggs and Treharne 2017 p105).

Riggs and Treharne (2017) warned of "coercive queering", where "the label 'queer' is attributed to someone who does not personally identify as such. This commonly occurs in regard to people who are transgender or who identify as gender diverse" (p116).

An application of QT to methodology could be the sex/gender categories used in survey - traditionally, "male" and "female", but sometimes also "other", say. Riggs et al (2015) asked Australian transgender individuals to self-describe their gender identity, and found that nearly four-fifths chose "male" or "female", while the remainder used terms like "gender queer", "non-binary", "neutrois", "agender", and "gender fluid". For analysis purposes, the researchers grouped the these individuals as "gender diverse", and no statistically significant differences were found between the three groups of certain lifestyle variables. Riggs and Treharne (2017) explained that this example "highlights how the psychological search for differences creates the very differences it seeks to examine. In other words, by only seeing difference in terms of analysable variables, and when those variables rely on the narrowing of a broad range of experiences into relatively few categories, then what disappears are the shades of grey that we suggested above may be important for challenging normative categories" (p112).

The "shades of grey" can be seen in three individual's answers:

- "I am both male and female".
- "I identify sometimes as a woman but nearly never as a man".
- "I identify somewhere between femininely genderqueer and identifying wholeheartedly as a transgender woman. Slightly genderfluid but a definite lean to the feminine side" (quoted in Riggs and Treharne 2017).

QT tries to be aware of "race privilege" (eg: Barnard 2003), as "White people are continually treated

as the normative subject in queer theory and how this must continue to be examined if the critical potential of queer theory is to be realised" (Riggs and Treharne 2017 p116).

4.6. CRITICAL RACE PSYCHOLOGY

Critical Race Psychology (CRP) applies "critical race theory" to psychology, and "takes racial power as a conceptual lens through which to analyse all psychological phenomena and conduct psychological science itself" (Salter and Haugen 2017 p123).

Prejudice and discrimination have traditionally been viewed in psychology at the individual level of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours, whereas "critical race perspectives consider racism as fundamentally embedded in society; thus, racism is primarily located in the broader socio-cultural context" (Salter and Haugen 2017 p124).

Critical race theory originated in the 1980s in legal studies in the USA. Salter and Haugen (2017) outlined five core ideas:

i) Most importantly, racism is viewed as "a systemic force embedded in the structure of American society and other colonial contexts invested in White supremacy... It is not limited to isolated cases of bigotry but instead infuses everyday life in mainstream institutions" (Salter and Haugen 2017 p125).

ii) It is critical of ideas like meritocracy, individualism, and colour-blindness in society as masking racism, and they "launder or whitewash... inequality by making race-based outcomes appear to be the consequence of something other than racism" (Salter and Haugen 2017 p125).

iii) Support for racial equality by White individuals only occurs when it fits the interests White individuals.

iv) "White identity" is "a profitable possession – akin to rights in property... – that brings benefits to the bearer. As a consequence, White people invest in the defence of both White identity and the white-washed ecologies of reality that constitute racial privilege" (Salter and Haugen 2017 p125).

v) "Counter-storytelling" as a means to challenge the above mentioned points.

CRP includes approaches like "Black Psychology", "Liberation Psychology"⁷, "Multi-Cultural Counselling", "Indigenous psychologies", and "whiteness studies". All the different "types" of psychology are embedded in "identity-conscious knowledge" (Salter and Haugen 2017). In common with other critical approaches, there is rejection of science with its "assumptions of neutrality, an objective 'view from nowhere' (Nagel 1986), and the idea of a pure science abstracted from context" (Salter and Haugen 2017 p128).

For example, much of psychology is Eurocentric (or Western-biased), or what Henrich et al (2010) called "WEIRD" (ie: undertaken in "White, European⁸, Industrialised, Rich and Democratic" countries).

4.7. LIBERATION PSYCHOLOGY

The "Psychology of Liberation" or "Liberation Psychology" (LP) can be traced specifically to Ignacio Martin-Baro in 1986, and more generally to the "Liberation Paradigm" of the 1960s (eg: Liberation Theology in Latin America) (Montero 2017). The aim was social and political change, particularly in countries formerly colonies of the West.

The Liberation Paradigm has the following key features (Montero 2017):

i) Ontology - The constructed nature of knowledge and social reality. Practically, "the person 'researched' is not just a subject but an active human being. S(he) is not only reactive in relation to what the researcher is doing; they also construct reality" (Montero 2017 p151).

ii) Epistemology - Knowledge is constructed through interactions between individuals, and it is fluid. The expert on an individual and their experiences is that individual, and "official experts" should be facilitators of that knowledge. Montero (2017) explained: "As we work along with those living beyond the academic totality, it

⁷ Also described as "post-colonialism", which emphasises "the need for a psychological endeavour that (1) is oriented toward the needs of marginalised peoples, (2) uses methodologies and ways of knowing aligned with perspectives and social realities of the oppressed, and (3) is critically conscious of its own transformative power" (Salter and Haugen 2017 p127).

⁸ "European" here covers White North America, Australia and New Zealand with their European origins, for instance.

is necessary to join scientific knowledge with popular knowledge" (p152).

iii) Methodology - eg: participatory-action research; biographical methods.

iv) Ethics - There is a moral dimension to knowledge. "Respecting the Other is a basic mode of practising ethics, as also is the inclusion of diversity, opening towards new knowledge coming from others. Inclusion is another necessary ethical way; there cannot be participation if others are left out, and including the poor is a liberation task. Also it is necessary to create parallel situations producing equality of interests, as well as defending the right of liberty for any human being, and that leads to the freedom to create and to live" (Montero 2017 p153).

v) Politics - "Politics refers to public space and to how people relate with that. Politics in LP has to develop and strengthen citizenship and democracy" (Montero 2017 p153).

The upshot is an interest in minorities and marginalised groups in LP, and how imperialism, for instance, has impacted communities. For example, research with Mayan groups in Mexico and Guatemala, Indigenous Australians, and victims of political violence in Colombia (Montero 2017). The use of participatory-action research means the the research is not just interested in learning about the experiences of such groups, but about change for the better ("liberating practice"), while biographical methods capture the narratives of individuals in their own words.

Montero (2017) summed up: "LP is not a branch of psychology, it belongs to the Liberation paradigm as an ethical and political way to do psychology. At its beginning in the past Century, it was best seen as a politically oriented social psychology..., a characteristic that still is useful, but that does not cover all the possibilities of liberation in many other ways to do psychology. That means that LP still needs to work within other ways to do psychology, demonstrating its capacity to reach other problems, while not being exclusive of specific aspects" (p158).

4.8. INTERSECTIONALITY

"Intersectionality" is "not a theory in the tradition of many of the key theories with which students of social psychology may be familiar" (p513), but it is a way of "embracing the real-world complexities relevant to multiple interlocking social identities" (Bowleg 2017 p515).

Other theories accept that individuals have multiple social identities, but tend to see one aspect dominating at a time (eg: Social Identity Theory), whereas Intersectionality emphasises that identity is "multi-dimensional and interlocking" (Bowleg 2017 p516).

With the focus on one aspect of identity, like gender or ethnicity, "social class" has been neglected by social psychologists, but feminist psychologists, in particular, have tried to rectify this by examining the lived experiences of class (Day et al 2017).

Reay (2002), for example, has investigated "class transition" via interviews with working-class class higher education students. The research "uncovered struggles around feelings of belonging (eg: many of the participants said that they felt like an 'imposter'), identity and authenticity (ie: maintaining an authentic and coherent sense of self)" (Day et al 2017 p476).

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