Thematic Education's

IB Psychology

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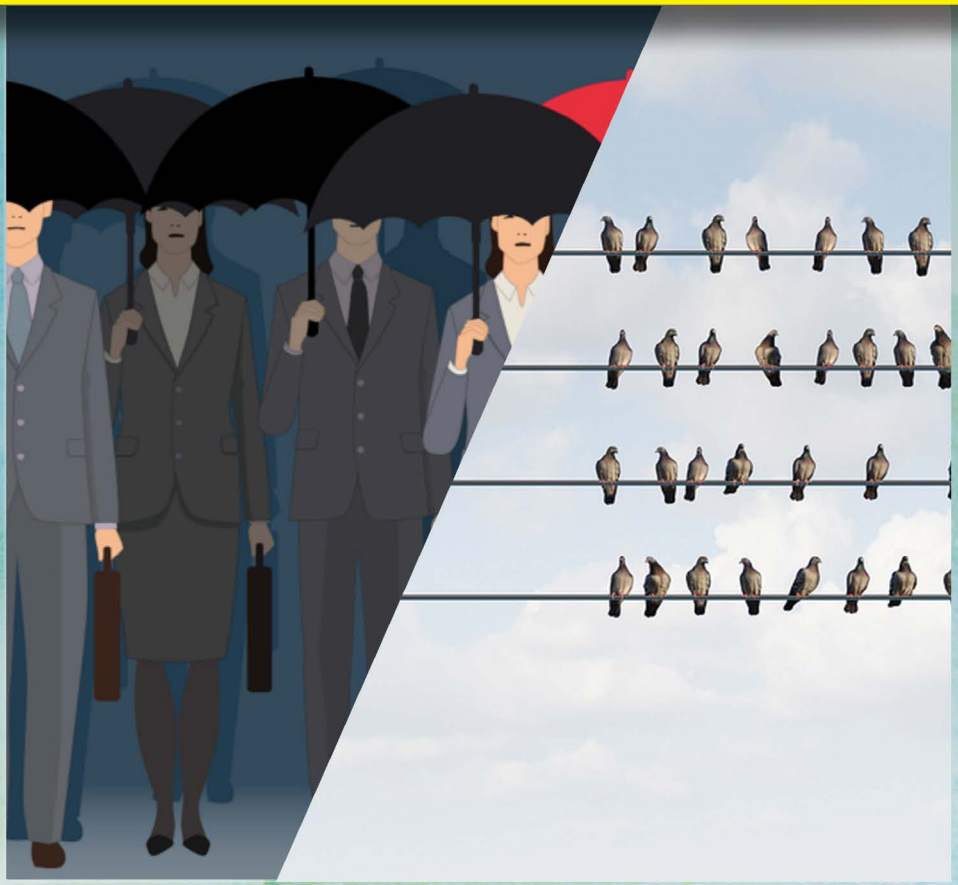
PREVIEW



Social Influence

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Social Influence

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Introduction

In the middle of the night on Friday the 13th of March, 1964, Catherine "Kitty" Genovese was coming home from work in the suburb of Queens, New York City. But she never made it home. Waiting in the dark was Winston Moseley, the man who would murder her. Genovese's murder was reported in a local newspaper, but it wasn't much of a headline as murders were pretty common in NYC at this time. However, one aspect of the story grabbed the attention of a reporter at *The New York Times*, who wrote an article called "37 who saw murder and didn't call the police" (Gainsberg, 1964). This later story *did* get national attention as people were outraged that so many witnesses could stand by and allow an innocent young woman to be murdered.

Many reported details of the story have since been questioned, but its impact remains: after the reporting of Genovese's murder and the witnesses who let it happen by failing to help, social psychologists Bibb Latane and John Darley began devising theories and conducting research into why people might not have helped Genovese. The phenomenon of people not acting in situations requiring attention has come to be known as the bystander effect. One reason why people may not help is because they're influenced by the actions, or inaction, of others. Even having other people present may make someone less likely to help. Bystanderism is just one example of how social influence can affect our behaviour.

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Humans are naturally social animals. In fact, it is our social nature and ability to work in groups that helped our ancestors rise to the top of the food chain. It's not surprising then that we are susceptible to being influenced in many ways by the people around us: this influence of our social and cultural environment is one of the primary themes of this chapter.

Belonging to a group can have many positive effects, like providing us with a sense of who we are, a social identity. It can also raise our self-esteem. But at what cost? You'll learn in this chapter how belonging to a group may naturally lead us towards behaving negatively towards others in the form of stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination.

You might be able to make connections to what you're learning about social psychology to other subjects, such as the study of history or literature. History is filled with stories of inter-group conflict and many novels focus on characters' struggles in and against cultural and societal influences. But as with all explanations of behaviour, we need to broaden our perspective and consider alternative explanations. Thus, the role of biology and cognition is not ignored in the topics within this chapter.

The fact that you are often able to see many real life examples of the phenomena you're learning about is one of most interesting and enjoyable facets of social psychology. While you're learning about things like bystanderism, inter-group conflict, and conformity, try to connect these concepts and the relevant research to your own experiences. Making these connections regularly is sure to develop your interest and deepen your understanding of psychology.

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3.1 Conformity

Why do people go along with the group?

(a) Normative Social Influence

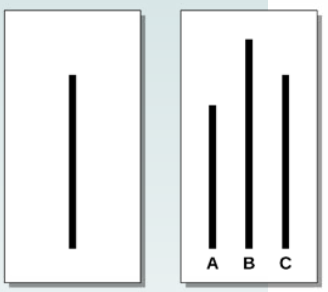
Conformity may be one of the most interesting and popular phenomena to study. To conform means you are behaving in a way that is socially acceptable; you're following the norms and standards of your social environment. For many teenagers, peer pressure is often a source of social influence that is used to pressure them into doing something that they're not sure about. The social influence of having friends pressure you into doing something could cause conformity to the norms of your social group.

Normative social influence involves two concepts: pressure from others and this pressure results in changing one's behaviour to fit in with the social norms.

People often change their behaviour in order to fit in with the norms of their social environment through a fear of being ostracized - left out of the group. Social psychologists call this normative social influence. A social norm is what is "normal" in a particular social situation - it's an expected way to think, act or behave. It's important to remember also that the term social can mean many things. It's an umbrella term that means anything to do with other people or society.

For example, normative social influence might occur if you were at a party and someone hands you a beer to drink, but you don't like the taste of beer and you don't want to drink; you're quite happy with water. You look around and see your friends talking and laughing but they suddenly stop and notice you looking at your beer with a blank look on your face. At this moment you may be feeling some indirect social influence from your friends: you may be thinking, "…they're judging me and might not think I'm cool if I don't drink." The social norm in this case is that you drink beer because you're at a party and that's just what happens at parties: it's how you're expected to act. By having others present and indirectly putting pressure on you to conform to this social norm, you are experiencing normative social influence.

A confederate is someone who is working alongside the researcher. In other words, they're an "actor."



Would you be able to give the right answer if the rest of the group said "A"?

The effects of normative social influence on behaviour was famously demonstrated in a series of studies by Asch in the 1950s. Asch developed what is known as the Asch Paradigm, which is an experimental procedure that has been replicated in hundreds of studies around the world. The experiments were first conducted in the US on male college students. The procedure involves one subject being in a group of around 6 - 8 confederates and there's a researcher at the front of the room. The researcher explains that the study is about visual perception, gives the instructions on what to do, and then the tests begin. The confederates and the subject sit in a row and view two cards that the researcher holds up. They have to match one line, the target line, with one of the other three lines. This happens around 15 times.

In his early experiments, Asch wanted to see if he could put pressure on the subject to offer the wrong answer by having the confederates deliberately give the wrong answer, even though the correct answer is obvious.

The control for the experiment was that one group of subjects were asked to do this alone. Asch found that when alone they could get the right answer over 99% of

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the time. This demonstrates that the task itself is easy and that if subjects can resist the influence of the group, they will be also be able to get the right answer.

Do you think we could expect the same results in today's modern society?

In one series of experiments, Asch (1955) found that 74% of the subjects conformed at least once, which means that only 26% of the subjects were able to resist the normative social influence of the group and provide the correct responses in every test. On average, the subject conformed to the group norm and gave the incorrect response on 36.8% of the critical trials.

After the study Asch interviewed the people who conformed to the groups' incorrect answers and asked them why they did this. Some gave reasons like "I didn't want to spoil your results." Others were quick to draw the conclusion that they must be wrong and the group must be right, so they would trust the group's answer.

Asch replicated the same design in later experiments but he varied the size of the group. When there was just two people in the trial, one confederate who contradicted the subject's answers, it didn't have much of an effect. However, when there were two confederates in opposition to one subject, the subject gave in around 13% of the time. When there were three confederates, all in agreement with one another about the correct answer, the incorrect answers from the subject jumped to over 30%. The change in the size of the group may have increased the social influence the subject was feeling, leading them to change their answer.

Interestingly, the rates of conformity did not continue to increase as the group grew in size and began to decrease at around seven confederates.

By comparing the accuracy in the control condition of the original experiment with the effects of the group pressure in Asch's studies, the effects of normative social influence can be observed. Another variation had one confederate that broke the unanimity of the group. If all the confederates weren't in agreement and gave different answers, the normative social influence is reduced because there is no norm established, so the conformity decreases. When the normative social influence is restored by having a majority putting pressure on the minority, conformity rises again.

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Guiding Question:

How does Asch's study demonstrate the effects of normative social influence on behaviour?

Abstraction Extension:

Tolerating Uncertainty: From studies like Asch's, many students are quick to make judgements such as "group pressure increases conformity." It's really important that you can learn to look *beyond* the immediate and obvious conclusions that you are being led to form about these studies. Asch's study does suggest normative social influence can affect conformity. But if you look more closely at the results you should see that they do not "prove" that group pressure will cause conformity to social norms. How can the results of Asch's study be interpreted in a way that suggests group pressure might *not* cause conformity?

If you're interested…

There are many different sources of information about Asch's study, all with slightly different information because there are so many articles about this research. The above material comes from a very interesting article written by Asch and the language is accessible for high school students. It's called "Opinions and Social Pressure." There are also numerous clips online of replications of Asch's studies. It's easier to understand the study by viewing it than by reading descriptions of it.

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(b) Cultural Dimensions

When asked about how cultural dimensions affect behaviour, you should really be explaining how the cultural values associated with that dimension may affect behaviour.

One major limitation of Asch's research is that its population validity and generalizability are questionable. The study took place on college campuses, in the United States, and all participants were males and it happened in the 1950s. Would different gender, age, ethnic, racial or cultural groups display the same levels of conformity? There has been a lot of research conducted in this area, particularly in regards to the differences in conformity rates across cultures. This will be explored in the next section. Before you begin discussing cultural influences on conformity, it's important to become familiar with a very influential concept in cross-cultural research - cultural dimensions.

Geert Hofstede is an organizational psychologist who conducted his early research when he was working for IBM between the late 60s and early 70s. Hofstede was investigating how values in the workplace are influenced by culture and to do this he gathered data from IBM employees from more than 70 countries. What came out of this cross-cultural research was his description of different cultural dimensions. A cultural dimension is a set of cultural values that are held by a particular cultural group. A value is something that is believed to be important, so a cultural value is a common belief about the value of something that is shared by members of a cultural group. In other words, what that culture thinks is important.

In total, Hofstede described six different cultural dimensions that describe a range of cultural values. We will focus on only one of these as it has become the most influential in cross-cultural research. This cultural dimension is known as Individualism – Collectivism.

According to Hofstede, individualistic cultures *tend* to place higher value on independence and stress the importance of individuals taking care of themselves and their immediate family. Individuals are viewed as unique and competitiveness is important. Moreover, having the power to make your own decisions (individual autonomy) and self-expression are highly valued. There is more focus on the "I", the individual, in individualistic cultures.

While generalizations are important, it's imperative that you recognize that they are generalizations.

Collectivist cultures are on the other end of the continuum from individualistic cultures. They value close-knit family and social groups and place more value on identifying with the group than individual achievements. A person in a collectivist culture is more defined by their relationships and their obligations than they are by their personal achievements. Individual autonomy and self-expression may not be encouraged and group harmony is more important than individual achievement. Individuals in collectivist cultures can expect their relatives or in-group members to look after them in exchange for loyalty to the group. A society's point on this continuum is reflected in what has more emphasis – "I" or "We" (geert-hofstede.com; Buss, 1989).

Recent research carried out in China has tested a theory that differences in values of collectivism versus individualism may be a result of agriculture. Generally speaking, Western countries tend to be more individualistic, while Asian cultures tend to be more collectivist. Growing rice requires a lot of cooperation from a whole village as water networks need to be shared and planting and harvesting are labour intensive. This would result in collectivist attitudes being more beneficial and may explain why Asian cultures tend to be more collectivist. Growing wheat, on the other hand, doesn't rely on as much interdependence between societal group members and might encourage more individualistic values (Talhelm et al., 2014).

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Characteristics of Individualism	*Characteristics of Collectivism*
• Focus on the "I". • Have an identity that comes from their individuality. • Loose ties between individuals - look after yourself and your immediate family • Competition exists between individuals and is encouraged. • When carrying out a task, the task comes first, the relationship may come afterwards. • Confrontations are OK and can sometimes be healthy.	• Focus on the "we". • Identity is defined by relationships with others and belonging to various groups. • Form strong in-groups. This could be the immediate family, extended family, tribe, village or whole community. • Competition is between whole groups. • When carrying out a task, relationships come first, task comes second. • Value harmony in the in-group, even if some members disagree. The group harmony is important.

Here are some scores on the individualism-collectivism scale (clearlycultural.com). Note that the top score is 120 and the lowest is 0.

United States = 91 (most individualistic), Australia = 90, Spain = 51, Japan = 46, Malaysia = 26, China = 20, Guatemala = 6 (most collectivist).

It's really important point to note that countries are ranked on a continuum – they are not divided in black-and-white terms and labelled as individualistic or collectivist. Many students oversimplify this idea and discuss all cultures as being at one end of the continuum or the other, and this leads to erroneous and oversimplified explanations. While it does make it easier to discuss this dimension in terms of individualism or collectivism, it is really important to remember that countries are not categorized into one of two dimensions – they are scored along a continuum.

Also remember that just because a person comes from a culture with a particular rating on the individualism scale, doesn't necessarily mean that person will share those same values. For example, when you talk about the United States you are referring to around 400 million people in a *very* multi-cultural society. To make an overly simplified statement like "Americans focus on their own achievements and don't worry about the concerns of others", would be highly inaccurate, not to mention possibly very offensive.

In order to draw any conclusions regarding cultural influences on behaviour, it is inevitable that cross-cultural research will make some generalizations. It is imperative that you recognize these are generalizations that are prone to exceptions.

Guiding Question:

How do the cultural values of individualism and collectivism differ?

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Abstraction Extension:
Hofstede's theory developed out of cross-cultural research from IBM employees. Can this sample provide generalizable descriptions of cultural values? IBM is a high-tech multi-national company and employees are presumably very well educated and they're all employed by a large multi-national company. Perhaps these characteristics might influence the extent to which these values are consistent across socioeconomic groups within each country. To what extent do you think the original sample of Hofstede's research influences the validity and/or value of his descriptions? Do these still exist today?

If you're interested…

You can check out geert-hofstede.com to find out more about cultural dimensions. Some of the others include "Masculinity-Femininity" and "Long-Term – Short-Term Orientation". There's a tool where you may be able to find your country and see your country's scores on the scales and compare it to other countries.

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(c) Culture and Conformity

Asch's early research into conformity raised a lot of questions and has inspired research in this area for the past 60 years. For instance, what personal differences, if any, exist between the 26% of people who could maintain their beliefs and voice their opinions in opposition to the group, compared to those who caved to the normative social influence? Could a person's cultural values influence their behaviour when put in such situations?

The influence of cultural values on behaviour is a common field of study and many studies compare countries with various scores on the individualism-collectivism scale. Conformity is one such behaviour that has been the subject of this type of research. It may not come as much of a surprise that the research suggests countries that have more collectivist values, also tend to demonstrate higher levels of conformity.

Early research in the 1950s and 60s in this area focused on comparing cultures with different types of food gathering practices. For example, they would compare a culture that focuses mainly on hunting, gathering and fishing compared with other cultures that rely on agriculture and farming. One study (Berry, 1967) compared a tribe in Africa (the Temne people of Sierra Leone) with the Inuit in Northern America (on Baffin Island). The results showed that the Temne people had higher rates of conformity than the Inuit. This is because, Berry argued, the Temne people were an agricultural society and so they needed higher rates of cooperation in order to survive. The Inuit, on the other hand, encourage more individualism as their method of gathering food doesn't require as much cooperation as agricultural societies (Berry, 1967 as referenced in Bond and Smith, 1997).

To conform means to act in a way that is socially acceptable and follows social norms.

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From this research we can see that the cultural and economic environment can influence how much people might value something like cooperation, and how this value can influence the extent to which they demonstrate conformity. But a critique of this research is that these cultures are very traditional and haven't been modernized. They also have little contact with outside influences, so could these results really be generalized to other cultural environments?

Here we see Mongolian hunters using eagles. Their method of acquiring food may influence their cultural values.

Addressing this issue was one aim of the meta-analysis carried out by Bond and Smith (1997). They used surveys to measure the relative individualism-collectivism rating of 17 different countries. They then gathered the results from 133 studies that had been conducted in those cultures using the Asch Paradigm. The results showed significant correlations between the cultural values of collectivism-individualism and rates of conformity. Individualistic cultures, such as the United States, UK and France demonstrated lower levels of conformity than countries such as Hong Kong and Brazil.

Collectivist values may influence an individual's thinking when put in situations like the Asch paradigm procedure. A person who has been raised to value thoughts and opinions of the group and to put group relations before their individual beliefs and opinions, may be reluctant to speak out against the group. People raised to have

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You can check out our blog to find more interesting findings from this meta-analysis, including how conformity has changed in America since Asch's first studies.

values more associated with individualism, on the other hand, may be less inclined to worry about what others might think of them if they were to voice their own opinion.

From the research explained in this section you can hopefully see that multiple cultural factors can influence conformity. These include economic and socio-political factors, as well as cultural values.

Guiding Question:

How might cultural values influence conformity?

Abstraction Extension:
The studies above provide possible explanations for the changing rates of conformity over time and across different cultures. Would you suspect higher, lower or similar rates of conformity as Asch found if you were to replicate his experiments using a similar sample in your city/country?

If you're interested…

You can watch a series of interviews with Geert Hofstede on the YouTube channel called "ten minutes with…" You can get explanations from the man himself about the cultural dimensions.

Relevant Topics

- Culture and its influence on behaviour and cognition
- Cultural dimensions

Practice Exam Questions

- Discuss how one or more cultural dimensions may influence behaviour.
- Discuss cultural influences on behaviour and cognition.
- Evaluate research related to cultural influences on behaviour.
- Outline one study related to cultural dimensions.

Research Methods

Asch's experiment is a good example of a laboratory, "true" experiment and the benefits of using this method in social psychology. There are numerous possible extraneous variables that might affect behaviour if we were to investigate social influences in real life situations, so being able to isolate the effects of particular variables on behaviour in a controlled environment can allow researchers to draw cause and effect relationships. In this instance Asch was able to manipulate variables such as group size and unanimity, which allowed him to draw conclusions regarding the influence of these variables on conformity.

Ethical Considerations

Studies involving conformity have numerous ethical considerations. Deception is a necessary component in these studies because if participants were aware of the aims of the experiment and that the others were actors the validity of the study would be jeopardized. For this reason, debriefing becomes essential.

3.2 Enculturation

How can our cultural environment affect our behaviour?

(a) Enculturation: An Introduction

The normative effect of social influence shown in Asch's research is just one example of how social factors can affect our thinking and behaviour. As Bond and Smith showed, our cultural values may also play a role in behaviours like conformity. But how do we acquire cultural values in the first place? Addressing this question is the subject of this section.

There are multiple ways in which we learn from our cultural environment and this learning shapes our values. For example, our childhood experiences play a large part in shaping who we are. How we're raised and the values we're taught from a young age will probably have an effect on how we think and act throughout our lives. Bandura's early theories on social learning can also explain how we acquire values: we observe others and imitate their behaviour and learn to adopt their attitudes. Our friends and peers are also a source of information and influence. The media (e.g. TV, films, and the internet) may also affect our understanding of social and cultural norms.

A cultural norm is the same as a social norm, but applied to a cultural group. It is a belief shared by a cultural group about the appropriate ways to think and act.

By living in a particular cultural environment and belonging to various social groups we're constantly perceiving and learning about norms and appropriate ways to behave. In cross-cultural psychology this process is called enculturation. More specifically, enculturation describes of the process of being enveloped and surrounded by cultural influences that will enable us to understand the cultural norms and values of our primary ("home") culture. As you've seen, this can then affect how we behave in certain situations like conforming with the group even when we know they're wrong.

For this psychology course it's not necessary for you to distinguish between social and cultural norms, as these concepts are very similar.

Enculturation is a very broad term that includes "…all forms of cultural learning…" (Berry, 2002). Enculturation is an important process because it gives us the knowledge and skills we need to be a healthy and productive member of society. There are numerous ways that enculturation occurs and cultural learning is transmitted, including observing the common behaviour of others and learning about what counts as socially acceptable behaviour. Direct teaching of cultural norms from parents and in schools is another way that cultural learning happens.

Parenting practices (how we raise our children and the values we instill) is one way that cultural transmission (i.e. enculturation) occurs.

Another term used to describe the process of learning cultural norms is cultural transmission. The

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information is transmitted to us from various sources, including peers, parents, school and the media.

Social learning is one factor that may contribute to the process of cultural transmission and enculturation. In the following sections we'll look at how economics may influence what a particular culture values and how this is reflected in parenting and child raising practices. Whereas earlier we saw that cultural values can influence conformity, in the next section we'll look at some research that uncovers just where those cultural values come from in the first place.

Guiding Question:

How might enculturation influence our behaviour?

Abstraction Extension:
Area of Uncertainty: The IB Psychology course focuses on sociocultural influences on human behaviour. You have been introduced to the idea of a social norm and a cultural norm. What do you think distinguishes a social influence from a cultural influence?

If you're interested…

Margaret Mead was a famous anthropologist who studied people and cultures from all around the world. If you're interested in anthropology and cross-cultural studies, BBC Four has a three-part documentary series about her research called "Tales from the Jungle."

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(b) Economics and Cultural Values

In the previous section you were introduced to the concept of enculturation. This is a term used by anthropologists and cross-cultural psychologists to describe the process of learning the cultural norms and values of one's primary culture. There are multiple factors contributing to the process of enculturation, including how we're raised, our exposure to media, and what we learn in school and from our peers.

You've already read about early research by Barry that investigated different rates of conformity across cultures and provided possible explanations for these differences. Economic factors such as how a cultural group acquires food can influence values, which might affect behaviour. In this section we're going to look at where these differing values might come from in the first place.

Barry et al. (1959) used cross-cultural data to compare approaches to parenting. In this classic cross-cultural study they wanted to see if child training practices were correlated with economic factors in different cultural groups. Similar to Berry's research, at one end of the continuum they placed pastoralism (raising animals for food) and agriculture (raising crops for food). These were categorized as high food accumulation cultures because they rely on the gathering and storing of food over long periods of time.

Cultural values can be influenced by economic factors. Can you think of how economic factors may influence the cultural values of your home culture?

Barry et al. hypothesized that if a cultural group primarily relied on raising animals for meat and food then they would raise their children in a way that would increase their compliance - the following of established rules and norms. One reason for this is because there may be a risk in trying something new or being innovative because it could damage the health of the animals or the crops and this would jeopardize their food supply. Being obedient and compliant by following daily routines and established procedures would be preferable in these societies because this will ensure successful food production. If a method of growing corn, for instance, has shown to be successful, it would be risky to try a new strategy in case it didn't work and this could have damaging long-term consequences. Similarly, if a member of a pastoral society isn't dutiful and responsible in taking care of animals, the animals may get sick or even die. These practical considerations may be influential in the enculturation process as they would influence the types of characteristics that are encouraged and nourished in children by parents and other societal influences.

To accumulate means to gather an increasing amount over a long period of time.

At the other end of the economic scale is a subsistence economy, which means producing just enough to survive on a day-to-day basis and without being able to store food long-term. This is a low food accumulation culture. Groups that rely on hunting and fishing are subsistent and to procure food they may value initiative and innovation because they are not thinking about the long-term. Their daily catch is what is important and because they may not be able to store food, they rely more on their individual skills to get food on a daily basis.

Living in a community that requires high food accumulation may influence the types of values that parents try to instill in their children. This could influence thinking and behaviour.

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Barry et al. argue that in these cultures, initiative may be encouraged because if a hunter/fisherman tries out a new technique or method to get food and it doesn't work, they can still revert back to the old system without having lost much. But if it does work, they would benefit from being able to use this new tool or technique. For example, a hunter may walk a great distance on a hunch that they can find new and better hunting grounds. If they don't find anything one day, they can simply return to the old hunting grounds the next. Or a fisherman might try to improve his hooks or nets with a new design. If it works he can catch more fish. If it doesn't, he's still got the old tools that he knows will work.

In summary rying new ideas may not be valued as much in a pastoral or agricultural society, because if something new is tried their sole source of food (their animals or crops) may die or produce poor harvests. This wouldn't just have consequences for one day, but would have long-term consequences (like having less food for the coming weeks and months).

The results of Barry et al's research will be discussed in the next section. For now it's hoped that you can see how economic factors can play a role in the types of characteristics that particular cultures value in an individual.

Guiding Question:

How might economic factors influence cultural values?

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Abstraction Extension:

Alternative Explanations: This section only provided you with two extremes of economic structures in different cultures. But the world is not black and white like this. In their original article, Barry et al identified possible exceptions to these extremes of food production. Can you think of how some cultures may fall in the middle of these two categories? For instance, how might a subsistence culture have aspects of a high food accumulation culture?

If you're interested…

Anthropology and sociology are closely related to psychology and these may be particular areas of interest for you. There are numerous documentaries you can watch online. One good documentary about early human history, evolution and different ways of living across the world is called "Great Human Odyssey" and is available online.

(c) Parenting and Enculturation

The previous section elaborated on the idea that economic factors can affect the extent to which a particular culture may place emphasis on certain traits and values. This might explain why some cultures place value on traits like compliance and responsibility, while others value initiative and innovation. Growing up in cultural environments that encourage or discourage particular traits and values could explain differing levels of conformity across cultures. But a question still remains regarding precisely how these cultural values are transmitted from one generation to the next.

Based on their hypotheses, Barry et al. wanted to see if there was a correlation between economic systems and child training practices. They identified different types of child training practices for kids from around 5 years old until adolescence. Their categories were based on the values and characteristics that were the focus of child training. They measured a range of areas related to child training, including obedience, responsibility, self-reliance, achievement and independence. In other words, they wanted to know if there was a relationship between a culture's primary economic system (pastoral, fishing, etc.,) and how they raised their children.

Child training is a broad term that covers any type of practice that ensures cultural transmission of cultural norms (Berry et al., 2002). An example would be direct instruction from a parent, or what is taught in schools.

The practices were measured across 46 societies from around the world. They used existing data to categorize societies as high food accumulating (pastoral or agricultural) or low food accumulating (hunting and fishing).

When correlating child training with food accumulation, their results showed a positive correlation for high food accumulation cultures and child training practices related to responsibility training and obedience training. If a culture requires adults who are going to be responsible in taking care of crops and animals, they need to teach these values from a young age. Similarly, obedience may be a valued quality because it will ensure that an individual follows the rules and can maintain the practices that will ensure healthy animals and crops.

Explaining how enculturation may affect conformity is similar to explaining how cultural values affect behaviour; you simply need to begin by explaining where those cultural values come from in the first place.

On the other hand, low food accumulating societies showed a greater emphasis on child training related to independence, achievement and self-reliance. As hunting and fishing are largely independent activities that rely on individual skill and achievement, cultures may raise their kids in a way that gives them these values and qualities.

Barry et al.'s study provides plausible explanations for how economic factors may influence cultural transmission: child rearing is an important way in which cultural values are transmitted from one generation to the next. The process of enculturation is influenced by child raising practices, including how kids are taught at school and at home. The focus on particular values may differ across cultures to reflect the skills and attitudes that are necessary for the individual and the cultural group to survive and thrive in that

Child training practices in low food accumulating societies may be more likely to encourage self-reliance and independence, as these are important attributes for success in such a culture. This may explain Berry's early findings on different levels of conformity between different cultural groups (e.g. Inuit and Temne).

Preview

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particular cultural and economic environment. As you've already seen, the values that are a product of our childhood experiences and how we're raised may influence other behaviours, such as independence or conformity.

In summary, enculturation through parenting and other child raising practices can influence an individual's values. Those values could be the result of enculturation processes that help prepare an individual to be a productive member of a particular cultural group.

Guiding Question:

How might enculturation influence behaviour? Use evidence to support your answer.

Abstraction Extension:
Generalizability: This study was conducted in 1959. Are these results applicable to today's societies? To what extent can we generalize these findings to modern societies? Consider the factors that may be different in industrialized and modern societies that could be different from the cultures that Barry et al. studied.

If you're interested…

You may wish to do some research into your own culture and its values. Could you think of some ways that the social, physical and/or economic environment of your local culture may influence enculturation processes? Think about the history of your culture as well; perhaps there are historical influences that may have encouraged the transmission of some values over others.

Preview

Relevant Topics

- Culture and its influence on behaviour and cognition
- Cultural dimensions
- Enculturation

Practice Exam Questions

- Explain the effect of enculturation on one behaviour.
- Discuss cultural influences on individual attitudes, identity and/or behaviour.

Research Methods

Barry et al.'s (1959) study demonstrates the value of the use of correlational studies in cross-cultural research. Cultural psychologists are interested in looking at how variables associated with culture can influence our thinking and behaviour. But these are incredibly difficult to create in a laboratory environment. For example, how would you design an experiment to create two different conditions of parenting styles? Cultural values and parenting practices are two examples of variables that would be difficult, if not impossible to manipulate in a laboratory but are still of interest to study. Correlational methods can provide insight into relationships between these variables and behaviours, like conformity.

Ethical Considerations

Whenever you are identifying potential ethical considerations in research it's important to think about the potential for the research to inflict psychological (or physical) harm. This is especially important when the nature of the subject matter in the research is extremely personal. Parenting practice is a very personal area of study, which means the "informed" part of informed consent becomes very important. In order to reduce the stress or anxiety for participants, the researchers may want to think about providing them with the full information as to why they are gathering data on their parenting practices. Whenever a researcher is providing information of the aims and subject matter of the research they should also consider how it might impact the validity of the research.

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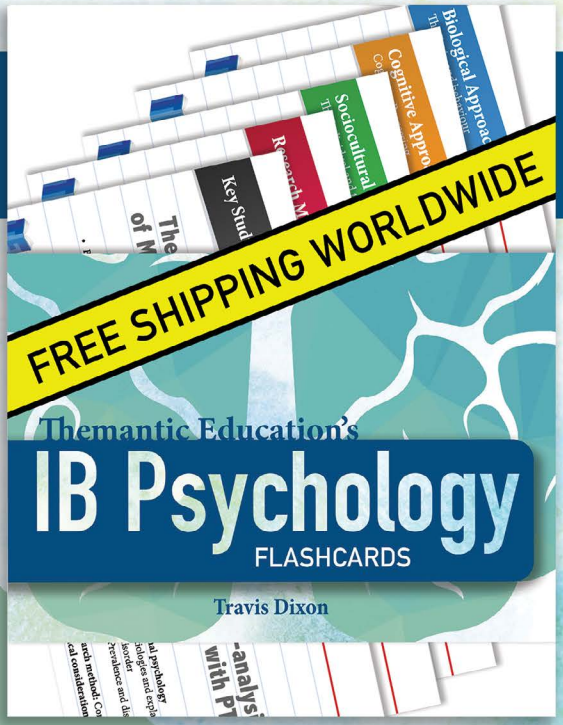

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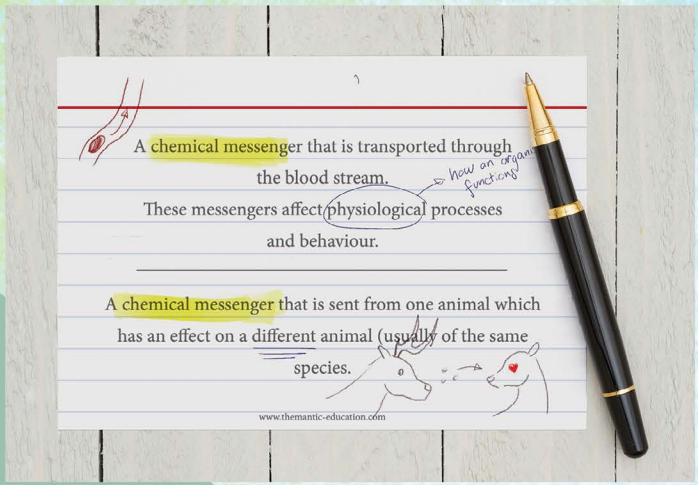

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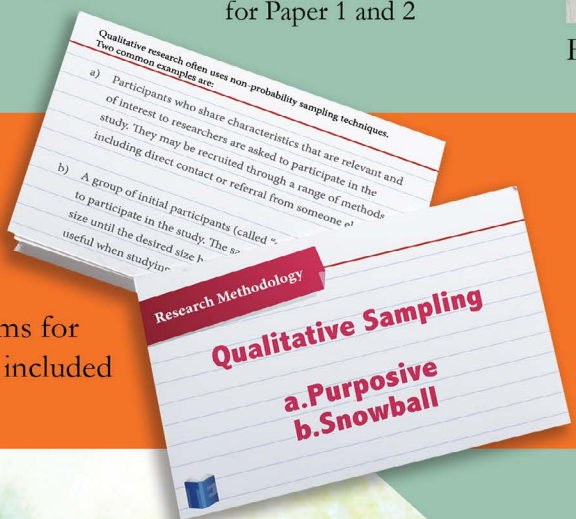
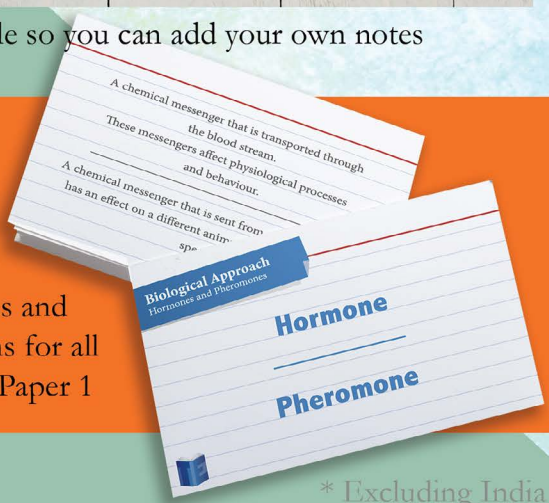


Key terms for Paper 3 included



Key terms and definitions for all topics in Paper 1

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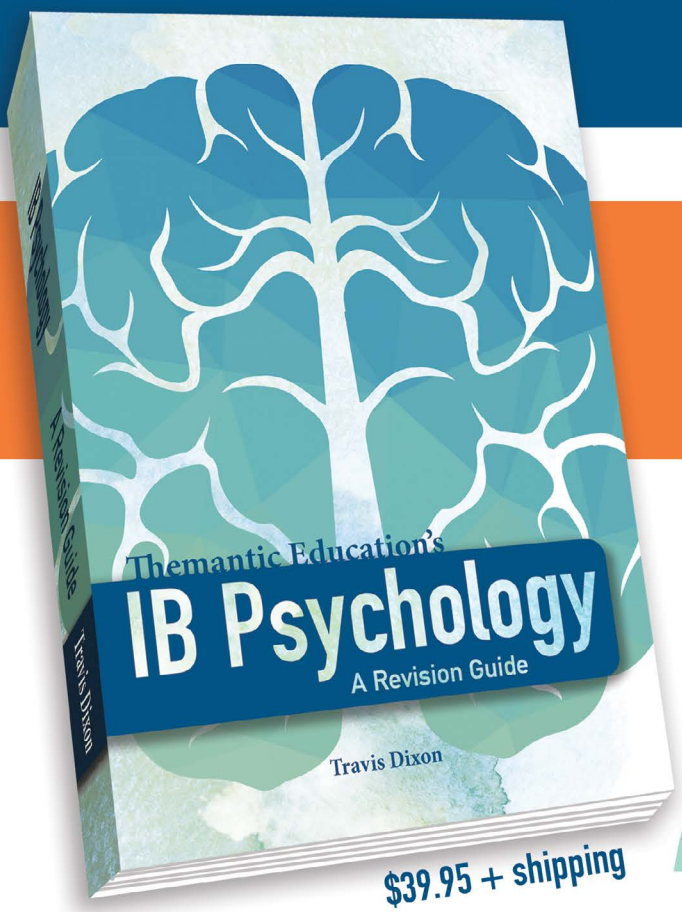

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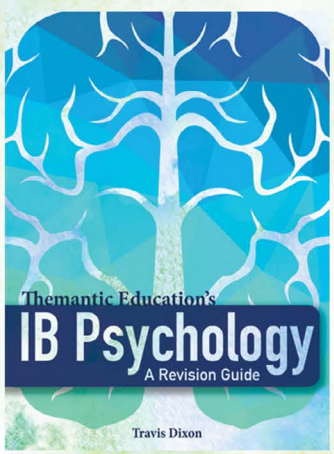

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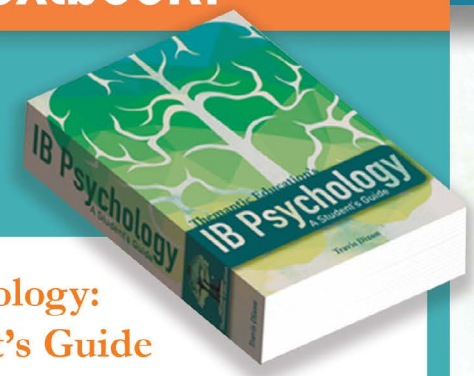

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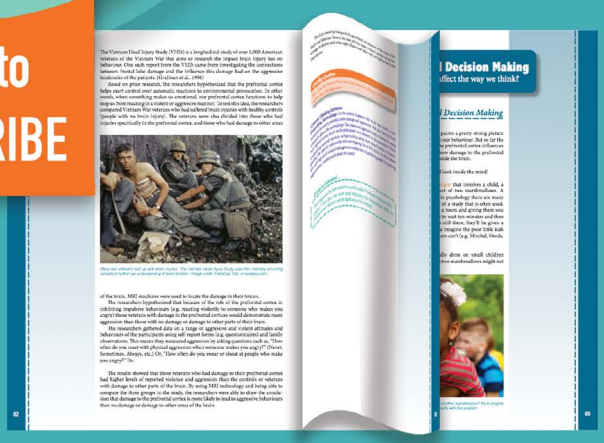

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