

**Social Identity's
effects on Personality**

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the study:

Humans, as species, have unique abilities beyond the evolution and basic (life) instincts. One of them is the way they use their brain, the way they dream. With the help of their complex neural system, humans fantasize their future as utopias. Their desire to be whom they want to be is also a part of their utopias. When the fantasies come to an end, the joint life, which we define as reality, becomes the valid universe. In reality, people continue to identify themselves - consciously or unconsciously- but in a more logical sense. The purpose of the study is to determine whether this identification affect the person who they are going to be or not and how this relation emerges.

Research Question:

How does the social identity shape the personality of an individual?

Background information:

In order to understand the research question and continue furthermore two terms must be defined which are “the social identity” and “personality”.

Maslow’s pyramid of Hierarchy of Needs was put forward by Maslow (1943) and it is still an important phenomenon in world of psychology. According to Maslow, people possess a need for “a sense of belonging and acceptance among social groups” regardless the size of the group; and predicates this theory to humans’ desire to love and be loved, both in sexual and non-

sexual means. Years later in, Henri Tajfel and John Turner (1979) put forward the “Social Identity Theory” which includes the Self-categorization Theory and as a concept to explain intergroup behavior. According to McLeod; the process of Social Identification arises from the humans’ need for belongingness as previously stated by Maslow (1943). Social Identity Theory has three steps. Categorization, social identification and social comparison. Categorization is the process which individuals group people including themselves. According to McLeod (2019), after individual assign someone in a specific category; individual cannot function in normal manner (without using the category) towards someone. After the categorization social identification process comes to life. Social identification is not about individuals giving themselves descriptive identities but instead it is a process of emphasizing the norms of group which individual previously identified him/herself (McLeod, 2019). Last step, which is comparison, is individuals’ attitude towards different social groups. For example; there are two armies fighting each other. From an objective aspect what they are doing is the same. Any person who is in same group with the first army acclaim the first army as hero while the other one being barbarian. (individuals who are categorized in the same social group named as in-groups and for two individuals who are not placed in same group, individual for another individual is out-group. (McLeod, 2019))

It is possible to find many different definitions for personality. According to Freud (1989) personality related behaviors are being controlled by terms he named id, ego and superego. It is an attribute which comes from birth while ego and superego shapes throughout the time (Freud, 1989). Since the research does not have pre-acceptances of characteristic theories of Freud no further explanation is needed. According to Corr and Mathews (2009) personality is set of

behaviors, cognitions and emotional patterns that evolve from biological and environmental factors.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Inborn factors and environmental factors of personality construction is still being discussed. But throughout the days, while understanding on psychology increases, environmental factors' value is noticeable increases too. According to Briley and Tucker-Drob (2014), personality is more malleable by environmental factors than researchers believed.

A theory was formed which was named Group Socialization Theory (also known as Peer Groups Theory) by Judith Rich Harris (1995); postulated that individual's peer groups were the main influences of personality and adulthood behavior. In group socialization theory, Judith Rich Harris did not directly mention any social place that affects personality, but her study was precious, because it postulated that important portion of personality emerges by environmental factors.

As mentioned before, Corr and Matthews (2009) included the environmental factors as constructing personality to the one of the most recent and valid personality definitions they made.

According McLeod, it was possible to adopt the norms of the group that individuals emphasized themselves in but still did not make any clear claims on the emphasized social identity's influence on individuals' personality.

METHODS OF THE STUDY

Two questions asked in an experiment environment to the sample which is a group of individuals consists 5 people and has the attributes as follows: Individuals who have known each other for a long time (meanly since elementary school), had the opportunity to observe each other's personal development, at most one year apart (ages of 18-19), in same gender - male (due to avoid low-understanding of puberty process of each character).

In terms of experiment, all individuals were asked to answer two question for each individual except themselves (every individual answered 8 questions). Questionnaire prepared using Google Forms and a copy of questionnaire was attached to appendices. The questions were:

- 1.What is the Subject X's most outstanding social group (identity)?
- 2.Have you observed any impact or assimilation on Subject X related to emphasizing this identity?

Before the question was sent, brief explanation (similar to background information) was made to subjects.

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Raw Data:

Subject 1: Two out of four participants identified Subject 1 as "Masculine" (Male) when asked for Subject 1's most outstanding social group. No common answer was found when participants asked for any impact on personality of Subject 1 due to this social identity. But one participant answered the question as: His ambition towards sports.

Social Identity

Subject 2: Two out of four participants identified Subject 2 as “Smart” when asked for Subject 2’s most outstanding social group. Same two participants said being smart impacted Subject 2’s personality as being Hard-Working. One out of remaining two identified Subject 1 as Hard-Working and claimed this impacted the personality of subject as him being sexually suppressed. The answer of “Hard-Working” received for both questions.

Subject 3: In both question no common answers were received but for the first question participants identified him as social/impervious/energetic while those adjectives were mostly used for personal attribute in daily life.

Subject 4: When participants asked to identify Subject 4; three out of four participants identified him as “tall”. For second question all participants said that they did not observed any impact except one; one participant said he is affected by being tall as being introvert and not accepting himself due to his appearance.

Subject 5: Subject 5 identified by all four other participants as being disabled. Also, all four participants agreed on answers of introvert shy or depressive. Due to strict identity and personality impacts, Subject 5 used as the control object of the group in terms of what Subjects consider as identity and personality.

Analysis and Conclusion:

When personality divided to two as inborn and adopted; the social identity of an individual is affected by inborn personality, which is not just behavioral but also psychical and mental, like born tall/smart/disabled guys placed in social groups with same attributes.

Social Identity

When the experiment considered; participants were able to list at least one impact on personality which caused by the social identity. Like appearance -introvert personality or disabled -depressive.

In some cases; participants use personal attributes as subjects' social identities Like hard-working, social, impervious, energetic. This suggested that previous personal attributes could become social identities and still affect personalities.

As conclusion; when three terms (inborn personality, adopted personality, social identity) considered, inborn personality affects social identification; this identification leads people to gain new characteristics (as personality) and their new personality also leads people to be categorized in various groups (social identities). (A causation graph is present in appendices.)

Recommendations

Social identity may be the thing which is observed by the other individuals but still individuals themselves are the ones that make the categorization and decide where to place themselves. As mentioned in introduction, individual needs to keep going on their fantasies and never lose the ability of fantasize because this unique ability of human brain – dreaming – is what makes a human, human. These fantasies could help the individuals to determine their social identities and as known from the experiment those identities can affect the personality in desired way. Also known from the experiment the new personal attributes can help people to have new identities.

Word Count: 1463

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

What is the **privacy** most outstanding social in-group (identity) and have you observed any impact or assimilation on **privacy** personality related to emphasizing of this identity?

Uzun yanıt metni

What is the **privacy** most outstanding social in-group (identity) and have you observed any impact or assimilation on **privacy** personality related to emphasizing of this identity?

Uzun yanıt metni

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Uzun yanıt metni

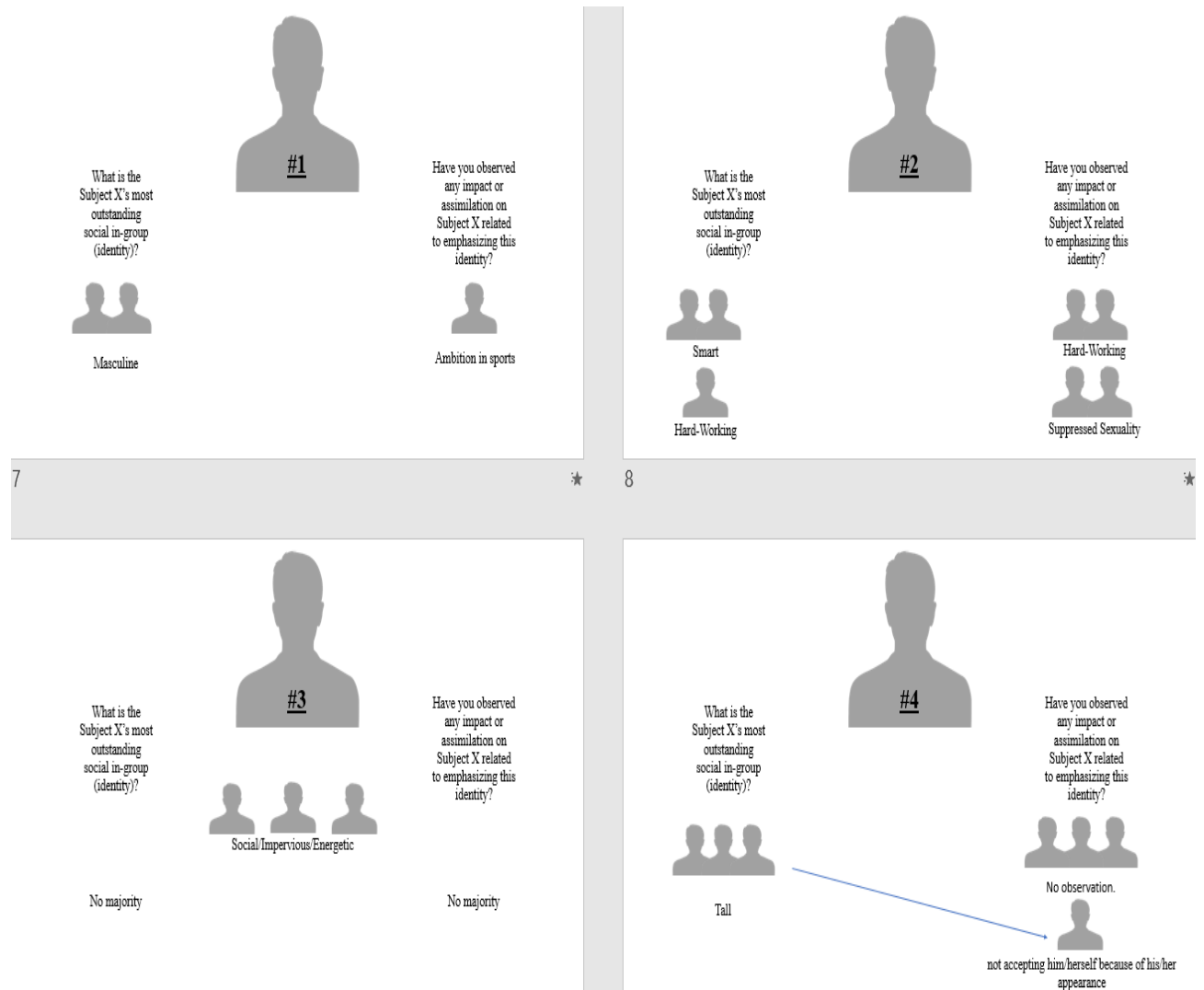
What is the **privacy** most outstanding social in-group (identity) and have you observed any impact or assimilation on **privacy** personality related to emphasizing of this identity?

Uzun yanıt metni

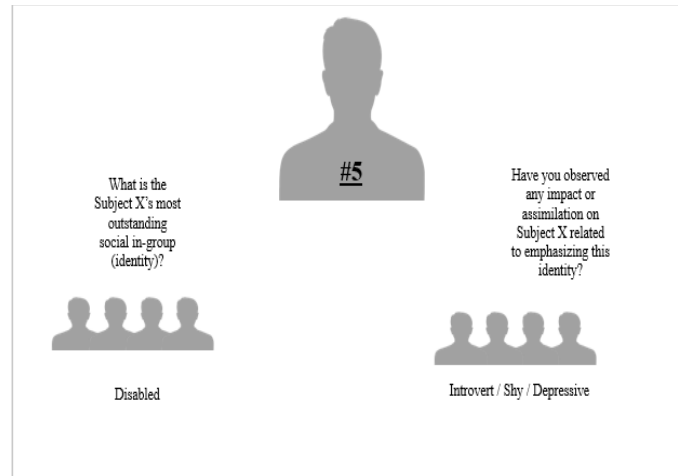
What is the **privacy** most outstanding social in-group (identity) and have you observed any impact or assimilation on **privacy** personality related to emphasizing of this identity?

Uzun yanıt metni

Appendix B



Continuation of Appendix B



Appendix C

