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4. Human relationships / 4.1 Group behaviour



(https://intercom.help/kognity)



The big picture

Section

Student... (0/0)



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? Subtopic question(s)



Notebook



Glossary

Reading
assistance

During this subtopic, you will be working towards answering the following subtopic question:

- Are we in control of our own thoughts and behaviour?

The guiding questions in each section help to guide you towards answering the subtopic question(s) at the end of the subtopic. The subtopic questions require you to pull together your knowledge and skills from different sections, to see the bigger picture and to build your conceptual understanding.

Reflect on your time in school. This could be at the beginning of a new academic year or from when you were younger (**Figure 1**). Reflect on the following questions:

- Were there any motivating factors that led you to connect with someone or become part of a friendship group?
- Was there any organisation to your social groups?
- Have you ever experienced conflict in your social groups?



Figure 1. How did you meet your closest friends?

Credit: kali9, Getty Images

Beyond your immediate family, the friendships and social groups that you formed during your earliest years of school were likely some of your first social relationships.

Humans are social creatures with an innate need to belong. Therefore, psychologists are immensely interested in studying and understanding human relationships. Some big questions psychologists seek to understand through the study of human relationships are:



- What is the impact of culture (values, norms, traditions, institutions, language) on human behaviour?
- How do social groups impact human behaviour?
- Which behaviours and mindsets can increase the quality of human relationships?
- Which behaviours and mindsets may be detrimental to healthy human relationships?
- What is the impact of the social environment on individual cognition?

The last two questions, in particular, might be something that a psychologist would be interested in researching through the study of group behaviour.

Perspective lens

Sociocultural approach

The sociocultural approach assumes that our social and cultural environment influences our attitudes, values and behaviours. Sociocultural psychologists investigate how the groups we belong to shape how we act and who we learn from. This means researching our social identities, in other words:

- How we learn from our role models.
- The ways we learn the values of our culture (enculturation).
- The ways we interact with cultures that are different from our own (acculturation).
- The reasons for conforming and complying with others (conformity and compliance).

Researchers can take an etic approach, by using criteria to compare behaviour in different cultures. Or they can investigate behaviour from within a culture using an emic approach.

Reflection questions

1. If psychologists were only to investigate how our social and cultural environment influences group behaviour, is that a problem or could it be beneficial?
2. What alternative factors from biological or cognitive approaches could be relevant in understanding group behaviour?
3. What is unique about humans that makes it important to investigate behaviour from different perspectives?

We may think of ourselves as independent beings who pursue our own needs and desires. However, we are also members of many groups, with friends, family, other students at school and more.

Typically, psychologists investigating groups are interested in their formation and how we behave, as well as factors that can lead to conflict within and between groups. Furthermore, aspects such as our culture are believed to play a significant role in group behaviour.

Making connections

Humans are social beings. Human connection is innate and has a biological basis. The environment also plays a significant role in how we behave in relationships, including our culture and socialisation.

In this subtopic, you will explore three concepts in human behaviour: causality, perspectives, and measurement.

3 section questions ^



Which term refers to the extent to which the conclusions of a study can be applied to other contexts outside of the original study?

Ecological validity

**Accepted answers**

Ecological validity

Also accepted

External validity

Explanation

When a study has ecological validity (sometimes referred to as external validity) this means that the conclusions can be generalised to other people and situations.

Question 2

SL HL Difficulty:

In psychology, the term 1 etiology is used to refer to the origins of mental health disorders.

Accepted answers and explanation

#1 etiology

General explanation

Etiology refers to the causes or origins of something. In psychology, it is commonly used in reference to mental health disorders.

Question 3

SL HL Difficulty:

'Random sampling' refers to which of the following?

1 The participants involved in a research study

2 Every participant has an equal chance of selection



3 Participants selected based on availability

4 Proportionate representation of a population subgroup within a sample

Explanation

Random sampling can take the form of names out of a hat or a raffle to select participants. Each participant has an equal chance of selection.

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Can your environment affect your behaviour?

A-2: Causality B-3-1-1: Give examples of different acculturation strategies and their effect on behaviour and mental health.

B-3-1-4: Identify the role of one or more cultural dimensions in understanding group behaviour(s).

B-4-1-5: Explain the role of social learning theory in learning and apply its principles to modify behaviour.

C-3-1: Apply acculturation models to explain the experience of people taking an extended stay in another culture.



Teacher instructions

Learning outcomes

- Discuss the extent to which environments can cause specific behaviour.
- Identify the role of one or more cultural dimensions in understanding group behaviour(s).
- Explain the role of social learning theory in learning and apply its principles to modify behaviour.
- Give examples of different acculturation strategies and their effect on behaviour and mental health.
- Apply acculturation models to explain the experience of people taking an extended stay in another culture.

Facilitation guidance

This section focuses on how environment can affect behaviour. In particular, students will explore whether environment can ‘cause’ changes to behaviour, such as through culture. Students will also reflect on psychological theory, including social learning theory and whether behaviour can change as a result of observational learning.

Encourage students to think about the content critically throughout. In particular, ask them to reflect on the complex interaction between biological, social and cognitive factors and their effect on behaviour.

Guiding question(s)

In this subtopic, you will think about the question, ‘Are we in control of our own thoughts and behaviour?’ This section will help you make an informed response by working through the following guiding question:

- To what extent do environments dictate human behaviour?

This section will examine the role of both cultural dimensions and social learning theory in explaining human behaviour. This will be examined in the context of the larger subtopic question of, “Are we in control of our own thoughts and behaviour?”

The guiding questions in each section help to guide you towards answering the subtopic question(s) at the end of the subtopic. The subtopic questions require you to pull together your knowledge and skills from different sections, to see the bigger picture and to build your conceptual understanding.

How much influence does our environment have on our behaviour?

How much of your behaviour do you believe is a product of your environment, such as socialisation and culture, and how much is a result of your biology?

Historically, the debate around the interaction between biology and environment was framed in a binary argument between the concepts of nature versus nurture. However, contemporary research proposes that human behaviour is the result of a complex interaction between biological, social and cognitive factors.

How is behaviour learned?

In the early 20th century, the behaviourist movement emerged in the field of psychology. You may already be familiar with the work of behaviourists like John B. Watson [\(https://gazette.jhu.edu/2001/01/22/john-broadus-watson-the-father-of-behavioral-psychology/\)](https://gazette.jhu.edu/2001/01/22/john-broadus-watson-the-father-of-behavioral-psychology/) and Ivan Pavlov [\(https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/medicine/1904/pavlov/biographical/\)](https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/medicine/1904/pavlov/biographical/) who sought to investigate only observable events. Classical conditioning involved observing a stimulus response relationship. For example, Pavlov conducted one of the earliest pieces of systematic psychological research exploring whether dogs could be conditioned to salivate [\(\(https://educationalgames.nobelprize.org/educational/medicine/pavlov/readmore.php\)\)](https://educationalgames.nobelprize.org/educational/medicine/pavlov/readmore.php).

Like Watson and Pavlov, B. F. Skinner [\(\(https://psychology.fas.harvard.edu/people/b-f-skinner\)\)](https://psychology.fas.harvard.edu/people/b-f-skinner) believed that investigations into behaviour should focus on observable events. However, he argued that behaviour was influenced by consequences. This development led to the theory of operant conditioning, where behaviour was learned through schedules of reinforcement and punishment.

Concept

Responsibility

Many seminal pieces of research have used nonhuman animals. Nonhuman animals share common ancestry with humans, and this means that research may include investigations to compare functional (e.g. memory) and structural (e.g. brain) processes. However, critics argue that, with modern technology, there is less need to use nonhuman animals as researchers can use computer modelling.

Reflection question

1. Do researchers have a responsibility to use computer modelling instead of nonhuman animals?

Social learning theory

Albert Bandura [\(\(https://albertbandura.com/\)\)](https://albertbandura.com/) developed social learning theory (SLT), where he argued that children learn much of their behaviour from a model, such as a parent. According to SLT, the behaviour we witness from a model can become internalised and results in observational learning, which can change our own behaviour.

In 1961, Bandura, Ross and Ross [\(\(https://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Bandura/bobo.htm\)\)](https://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Bandura/bobo.htm) conducted an experiment to investigate whether aggression could be learned through observation and imitation. By testing a group of young children, they found that those who observed the aggressive model were more likely to imitate aggressive responses than those who observed the non-aggressive model or were in the control group. The findings suggested that modelling aggression could induce violent behaviour in young people.

Bandura used the term vicarious reinforcement to describe how humans weigh up the rewards and consequences of their behaviour. He also suggested that behaviour is acquired through four mediational processes:

- **Attention** – how much you notice of the behaviour
- **Retention** – how well you remember the behaviour
- **Reproduction** – the capability to perform the observed behaviour



HL Extension

Q Motivation

Methods used to study motivation in interpersonal relationships

Bandura emphasised that an individual's motivation can influence the likelihood of them learning a particular behaviour. However, he also noted that people are less likely to imitate behaviour when perceived rewards (the vicarious reinforcement) are not significant for them.

Bandura's work greatly contributed to the development of social cognitive theory, a theory that seeks to explain human cognition through social interaction and observation.

While this theory focuses on the individual in the context of the group, it is important to consider the motivation of an individual in seeking group membership or other social interactions in the first place.

Reflection and inquiry

1. Conformity is all around us in myriad ways. Identify specific instances of social conformity and attempt to identify the motivating factor behind that conformity.
2. Chen et al. (2022) (<https://doi.org/10.1002/pchj.515>) found that there are three fundamental motives in social conformity:
 - to be accurate
 - to obtain social approval from others
 - to maintain a favourable self concept.

These motivating factors are supported by Cialdini (2004) (<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.55.090902.142015>). Using 2–3 of your examples from the previous question, reflect on which of the above motivation factors were at play. Chen et al. found that more than one factor may, at times, be a motivator, so it is ok if you can't choose one!

3. Motivational strategies rely either on intrinsic or extrinsic factors (or sometimes both). Think of a time you took a 'social risk.' What led you to take that risk? Were you intrinsically or extrinsically motivated, or both?

In later work, Bandura acknowledged the role of cognition and renamed his original theory to social cognitive theory (SCT) in a bid to recognise the interactions between our own behaviour, the environment, and cognitive processes. He used the term triadic reciprocal causation to describe these connections (**Figure 1**).

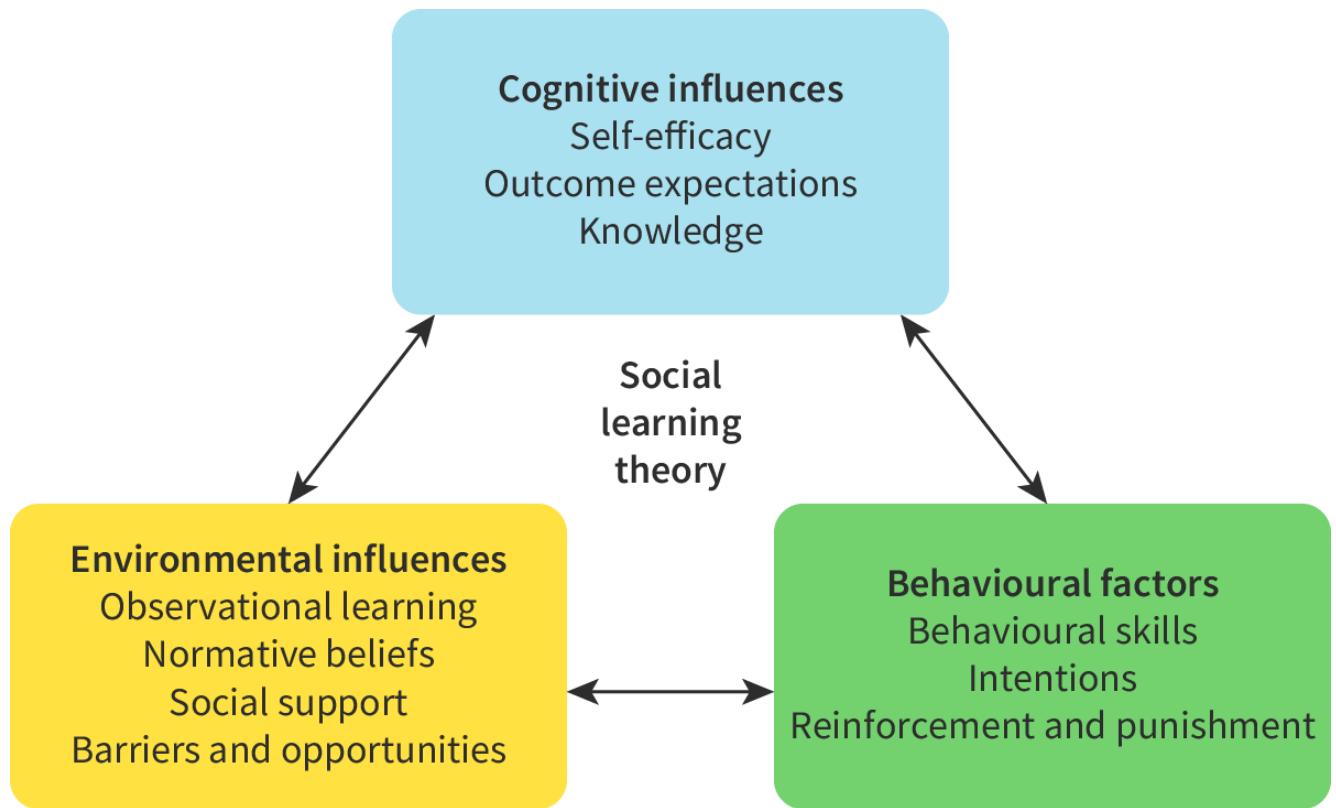


Figure 1. The triadic reciprocal causation model of social learning theory demonstrates the connections between behaviour, the environment and cognition.

Source: Hosseini et al. (2023)¹

[More information for figure 1](#)

Diagram representing social learning theory. Three boxes, all linked with two-way arrows, have the headings Cognitive influences, Behavioural factors, and Environmental influences. Cognitive influences include self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and knowledge. Behavioural factors include behavioural skills, intentions, and reinforcement and punishment. Environmental influences include observational learning, normative beliefs, social support, and barriers and opportunities.

SCT can be understood through the following features:

- **Identification** – you are more likely to learn from observing others with whom you identify, such as parents, siblings, and friends. Motivation is a crucial concept here as it is important to understand what motivating factors lead an individual to ‘identify’ with a group or individual.
- **Modelling** – you learn behaviour through the observation of role models, such as sports stars and influencers.
- **Expectations** – you consider the rewards and consequences of imitating a particular behaviour. If the reward outweighs the consequences, then you may be more likely to carry out the behaviour.
- **Self-efficacy** – this refers to how you feel about carrying out a particular behaviour and will include your emotions, levels of motivation, and cognition.

One way to think about these features is as a feedback loop (**Figure 1**), which Bandura called reciprocal determinism.

Teacher instructions

Goal

- To apply the elements of social learning theory to their own behaviour.



Facilitation guidance

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In this activity, students will consider a range of examples and apply their knowledge of the social learning theory (social cognitive theory) to these. Encourage students to refer to the material about the theory and apply this explicitly.

One suggestion is for students to share their thoughts on an online collaborative document and then discuss their thoughts as a class. This is also a useful opportunity to return to the guiding question for the subtopic (To what extent do environments dictate human behaviour?).

Activity

IB learner profile attribute: Thinker/Reflective

Approaches to learning: Thinking

Time required to complete activity: 20 minutes

Activity type: Individual

Application skills: Applying your own behaviour to social learning theory

Consider the following examples:

1. Getting dressed in the morning
2. The music that you listen to on your journey to school
3. First school dance
4. First date
5. First day at a new job

Apply the components of social learning theory to the scenarios presented above. You might find that **Figure 1** will help with this.

Here is an example to help get you started:

In the first scenario, imagine that you are getting ready for school and are deciding what to wear. Your chosen outfit or items of clothing may be similar to what some of your friends wear (identification), or you may possess an item in your wardrobe that you feel confident wearing (self-efficacy).

Reflection questions

1. Identify any limitations to the application of social learning theory for these examples.
2. (**Concept application: measurement**) How might you measure the components of social learning theory identified by Bandura?

Limitations of social learning theory

While social learning theory is one of the more well-established social theories in psychology, there are some limitations. Much of the research supporting social learning theory, like that of Bandura, focuses on observable behaviour. For example, did the child participant punch the doll after watching the model punch the doll? This certainly can inform our understanding of how behaviour is learned. However, it does not really give us any insight into cognitive factors such as motivation. Developing a greater understanding of cognitive factors such as motivation can teach us why some behaviours are learned and others are not.

Connected to this is the limitation that the theory can lead to the oversimplification of complex behaviour. For example, social learning theory has been used to explain substance abuse ([Andrews, Hops & Duncan, 1997 ↗](#) (<https://doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.11.3.259>)). While it's likely that modelling plays a role in substance use behaviour,

-  seeing models engage in substance use does not cause an adolescent to abuse those same substances. There are so many adolescents in homes where substance abuse occurs who choose not to use drugs or alcohol. Therefore, there are clearly other factors at play beyond social learning.
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- Additionally, there are many behaviours that we engage in that we cannot trace back to the observation of a model, and social learning does not account for this.

The role of culture and behaviour

How much influence does culture have on your behaviour?

Culture is a challenging concept to define, but it can be broadly described as:

... perspectives that focus on explaining how human psychological functions are culturally constituted through various forms of relations between people and their social contexts.² ([APA ↗ \(https://dictionary.apa.org/cultural-psychology\)](https://dictionary.apa.org/cultural-psychology))

So, when you consider how culture affects your behaviour, you should include shared customs and beliefs, language, religion, and national identity.

Concept

Causality

Causality is a key concept in understanding human behaviour, particularly when examining how external factors influence actions and changes. Reflecting on the relationship between environmental inputs, researcher involvement and theoretical explanations deepens our understanding of behavioural causes.

Reflection question

1. What does it mean for our environment to cause changes in human behaviour?
2. How can we truly know that the input from a researcher caused the 'observable behaviour'?
3. Consider the activity you have just completed. Do you believe that social learning theory serves as a valid explanation of cause regarding behavioural change?

Enculturation

Enculturation begins in early childhood and continues through your formative years. It is often compared to socialisation because both concepts involve the transmission of information that can affect your behaviour. However, conceptually, they are different. Socialisation refers to specific training that you receive about social norms and practices, such as knowing that you are required to wear a particular outfit for a formal occasion compared to when you are relaxing over the weekend. On the other hand, enculturation is much broader, and it is not necessarily a direct and conscious process. Thus, you may never be explicitly taught about certain cultural norms and practices, and instead acquire these through cultural transmission.

Acculturation

Another process related to how you acquire cultural values, ideas, and practices is acculturation. Unlike enculturation, which focuses on adopting the behaviours from our surrounding culture, acculturation occurs when we experience cultural, social and psychological changes through contact with another culture ([APA ↗ \(https://dictionary.apa.org/acculturation\)](https://dictionary.apa.org/acculturation))

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(<https://dictionary.apa.org/acculturation>). Consequently, research investigating how we acculturate includes the study of intergroup behaviour because the process is linked to understanding the dynamics between cultural groups.

Individuals who, for an extended period of time, stay within a culture that is different from the culture in which they spent the majority of their life are said to experience acculturation. Understanding the impact of acculturation on individuals' cognition and behaviour is crucially important for improving the lives of immigrants, refugees and international expatriate workers.

In a bid to develop the emerging field of acculturation, Sam and Berry (2010) (<https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691610373075>) devised a framework to help us better understand the consequences of acculturation (Figure 2). It shows that:

- cultures will experience behavioural changes to some degree.
- cultures may experience adaptation through psychological and sociocultural changes.

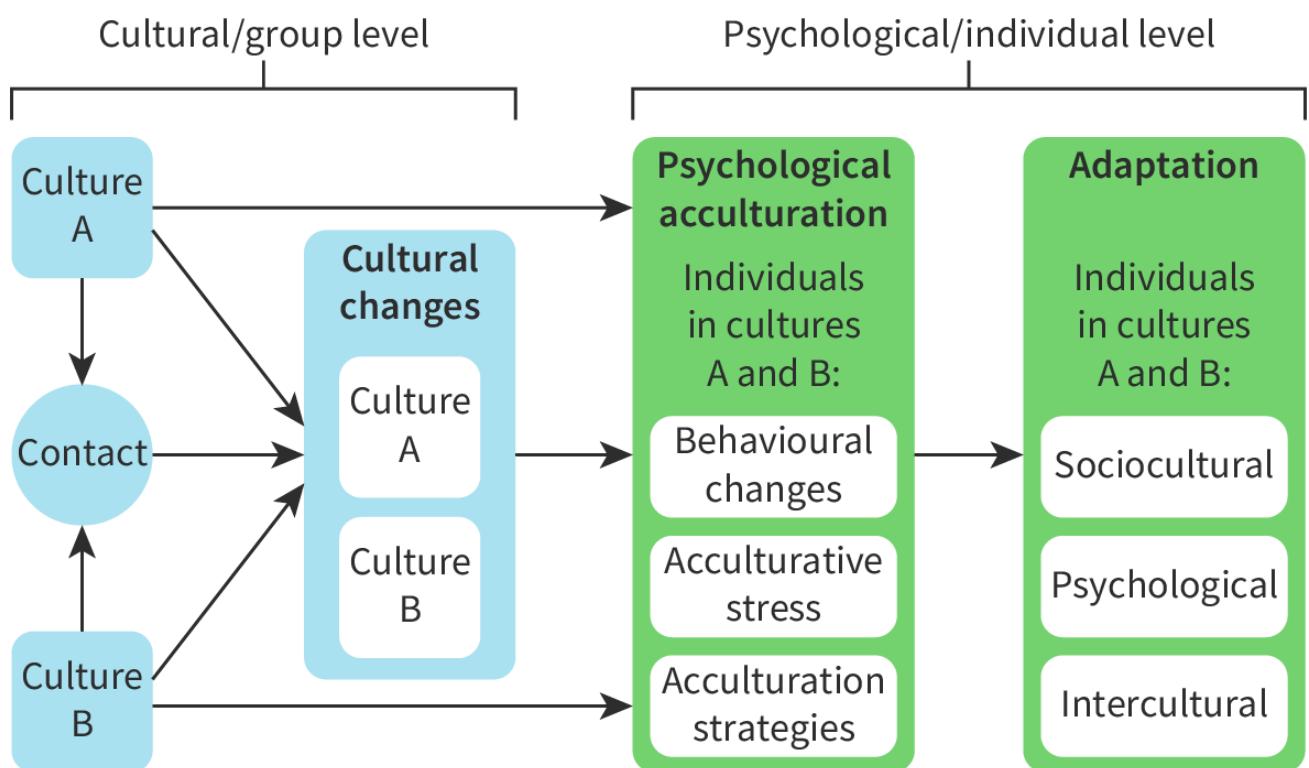


Figure 2. Acculturation framework (Sam and Berry, 2010) (<https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691610373075>)³

More information for figure 2

Acculturation framework diagram split into two linked sections: the cultural or group level, and the psychological or individual level. At the cultural level, arrows point from culture A and culture B to a box labelled contact. Arrows also point from Culture A, Culture B and Contact to a box labelled cultural changes, which includes both cultures, A and B. Arrows point from culture A, culture B and the cultural changes box to the second section of the diagram. This is the psychological or individual level. The first item here is psychological acculturation. This box states that individuals in cultures A and B experience behavioural changes, acculturative stress, and acculturation strategies. An arrow from here points to a box labelled Adaptation, which shows that individuals in cultures A and B undergo sociocultural, psychological and intercultural adaptation.

Sam and Berry's (2010) research led to the creation of four strategies that help to explain the variations in acculturation. When people interact with other groups from their new culture, they adopt one of the following strategies:

- **Integration** – People adopt some norms/practices, but they maintain their heritage culture.

- **Assimilation** – People adopt the norms/practices of a new culture and do not maintain their heritage culture.
- **Separation** – People do not adopt the norms/practices of the new culture and maintain the norms/practices of their heritage culture.
- **Marginalisation** – People do not adopt the norms/practices of their new culture and do not maintain their heritage culture.

When people integrate into their new culture, more positive psychological and sociocultural outcomes are observed compared to those who assimilate, separate or do not acculturate to either their host culture or the heritage culture (marginalisation). Marginalisation can lead to a decrease in mental health ↗ (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2005.07.013>) due to feelings of isolation and disconnect from community.

You can view acculturation as a bidirectional process, where both cultures provide feedback to one another (**Figure 3**). The success of the process relies on each culture balancing its own interests with the interests of the other culture.

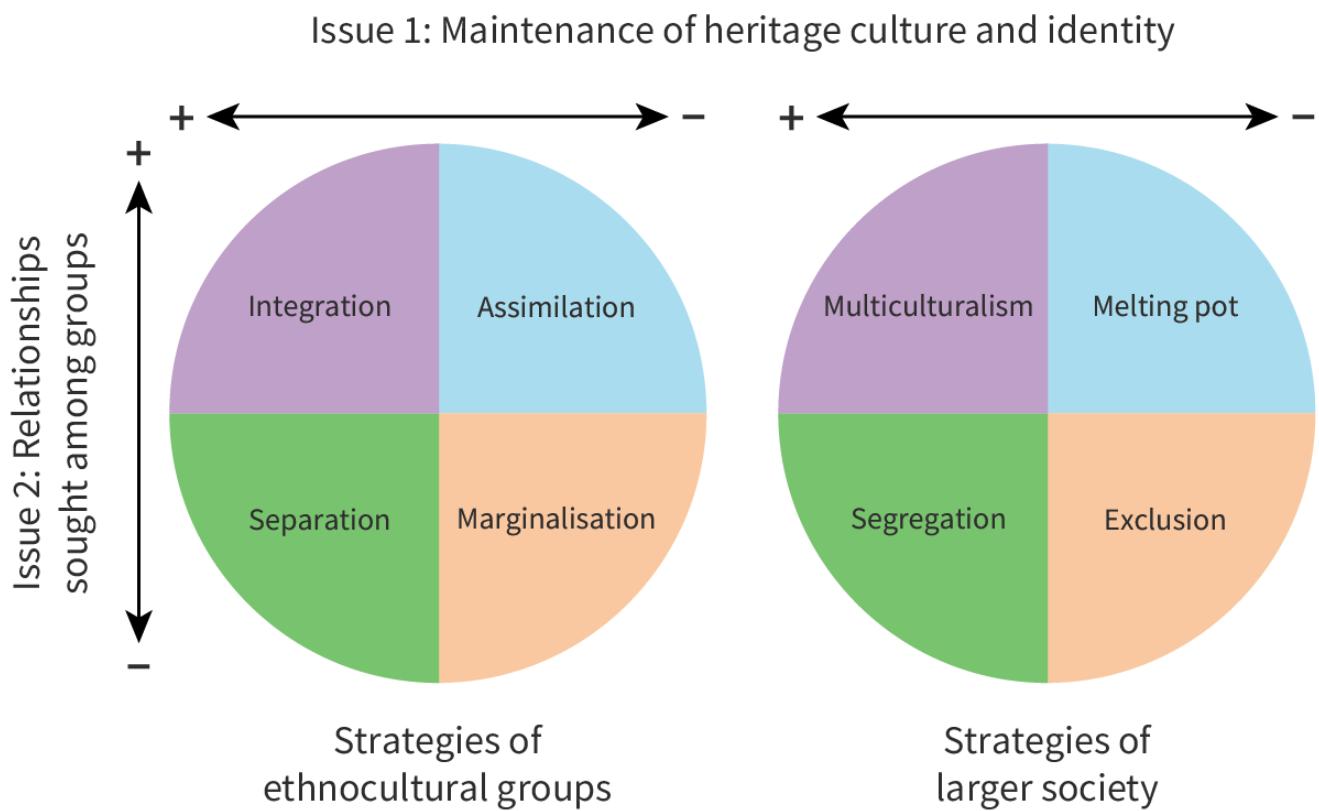


Figure 3. Acculturation strategies outlined by Sam and Berry (2010) ↗ (<https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691610373075>)³

↗ More information for figure 3

Acculturation strategies for ethnocultural groups and for larger society in two diagrams split into quadrants by two issues. Issue 1 is maintenance of heritage culture and identity. Issue 2 is relationships sought among groups. Where maintenance of heritage culture is high and relationship-seeking among groups is also high, ethnocultural groups have the strategy of integration, and larger society has the strategy of multiculturalism. Where maintenance of heritage culture is low and relationship-seeking is high, ethnocultural groups have assimilation, and society has the melting pot. Where maintenance of heritage culture is high and relationship-seeking is low, ethnocultural groups have separation, and larger society has segregation. Where maintenance of heritage culture and relationship seeking are both low, ethnocultural groups have marginalisation, and larger society has exclusion.

Immigration is seen as going hand-in-hand with acculturation because research in this area can draw upon immigrant populations to assess how they acculturate. Berry et al. (2006) ↗ (<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.2006.00256.x>) conducted a large-scale international study that aimed to investigate how well young immigrants adapted to their new

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cultures. The sample included individuals from Australia, Israel and Germany. Here, the researchers found that those who integrated had the best possible psychological and sociocultural outcomes compared to those who adopted other acculturation strategies.

Migrant groups (including refugees, migrant workers, members of ethnic minority groups, asylum-seekers, and immigrants) are particularly affected by the adaptation process to a host country. They can experience acculturative stress when the demands of adaptation exceed the psychological resources available for an individual, resulting in internal conflict and a decrease in well-being. Acculturative stressors include how a migrant balances their own cultural values and practices while learning about the values of their host culture, such as learning a new language while maintaining their first language.

Teacher instructions

Goal

- To explore coping strategies for acculturative stress.

Facilitation guidance

The goal of this activity is for students to learn more about positive psychology and how this could be applied to the area of acculturative stress.

Researchers working in positive psychology wish to explore the processes that contribute to human well-being, and this domain could be particularly useful when investigating how well people acculturate. For this activity, students could consider features of acculturative stress for migrant groups and then investigate how positive psychology could be applied to develop suitable coping strategies.

Students can share their findings in many ways, such as through presentations or in a whole-class discussion.

Activity

IB learner profile attribute: Inquirer/Knowledgeable/Balanced

Approaches to learning: Research/Communicating

Time required to complete activity: 45 minutes

Activity type: Group

Application of knowledge: Acculturative stress and positive psychology

Research suggests that migrant communities may experience acculturative stress when dealing with the demands of moving to a new country. However, the area of positive psychology (<https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.9.2.103>) suggests various coping strategies that could help people deal with the pressures of this. For instance, migrants could be encouraged to talk to other people about their experiences of acculturation rather than trying to deal with them on their own.

You might be unfamiliar with positive psychology. It is a relatively new area of psychology and explores factors that can improve human well-being and happiness.

With a partner or in a small group, discuss how positive psychology can be applied to acculturation. Here are some prompts to get your discussion started:

- What factors might lead to acculturative stress for migrant populations? Remember that migrants can move voluntarily and involuntarily.

 Student view



2. How could methods in positive psychology be applied to reduce the detrimental impact of acculturative stress on mental well-being?
3. **(Concept application: responsibility)** Do you believe that it is the responsibility of institutions (governments, schools, community organisations, etc.) to promote positive coping mechanisms to help reduce acculturative stress?

You may be asked to present your thoughts to the rest of your class.

Acculturation is a widely researched theory in social psychology and human relationships. However, conducting research into acculturation is not without its challenges. For one thing, it is particularly challenging to operationalise cultural integration. For example, what does ‘successful’ cultural integration look and feel like? Additionally, research into acculturation relies heavily on the self-perception of integration, and self-reported stress levels. While self-reports can certainly be valid, the large reliance on this method of data collection is a limitation of much acculturation research.

Cultural dimensions

Researchers suggest that culture should be viewed as a set of continuums because culture can change over time and between places.

International mindedness

Historically, psychology was criticised for ignoring culture and cultural change in research. Data was largely drawn from samples from WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialised, rich, and democratic) nations. However, as the field has become exposed to diverse perspectives and more research is published across the world, psychology has benefited as a result.

Geert Hofstede (<https://geerthofstede.com/geert-hofstede-biography/>) used interviews and surveys to gather employee data about workplace behaviour while he worked for US multinational, IBM. Hofstede classified behaviour into certain categories that each exist along different continuums. For example, one of the dimensions is individualism–collectivism. Individualism is described as when ties between individuals are loose, and people look out for themselves and immediate close ties (such as friends and family). In contrast, collectivism is the extent to which people are integrated into wider social groups ([Hofstede, 2011](https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1014)) (<https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1014>).

Hofstede's original work consisted of four continuums, but he expanded this to six after completing further research into cross-cultural behaviour using the same research methods (**Table 1**). He believed that, when we consider these cultural dimensions, it can help frame our national identity.

Table 1. Cultural dimensions.⁴

Low		High
Equality	Power distance	Inequality
Risk tolerant	Uncertainty avoidance	Risk intolerant
Collectivistic	Individualism	Individualistic
Collaboration and cooperation	Femininity/Masculinity	Power and competitiveness

Low		High
Tradition and short term	Time perspective	Future and long-term
Restraint is good	Restraint versus indulgence	Free satisfaction

HL Extension

Q Culture

Hofstede used surveys (questionnaires) to gather data at IBM and from students when he became a lecturer.

1. Why do you believe that Hofstede used surveys to investigate cross-cultural differences?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of using surveys when conducting research into cultural differences?

❖ Theory of knowledge

How does our culture influence our behaviour?

Hofstede believed that culture was like the 'software of our minds' (<https://geerthofstede.com/culture-geert-hofstede-geert-jan-hofstede/definition-culture/>)⁴, and to understand ourselves and other people's behaviour, we must understand cultural similarities and differences.

Reflection question

1. How does your culture determine what you know?

These dimensions allow culture to be quantified, which means that the cultures of different countries can be compared. However, it is important to remember that the cultural dimensions only provide a framework and should not be interpreted as a rule for all behaviour. For example, Bond and Smith (1996) (<https://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037/0033-2909.119.1.111>) conducted a meta-analysis in which they analysed 133 studies from 17 different countries. All the studies included in the meta-analysis used the Asch paradigm to investigate conformity. The researchers found that rates of conformity were positively correlated with the cultural dimension of collectivism. Collectivist countries 'tended to' have higher conformity rates than individualistic countries.

While the Bond and Smith (1966) study certainly seems to indicate that collectivism can increase conformity, it is important to appreciate the complexity of human behaviour and the difficulty of measuring cultural dimensions. Research into cultural dimensions relies heavily on survey data and can, therefore, be influenced by any confounds in the sample. For example, Hofstede's original work was conducted mostly on male subjects working for IBM, and it is very possible that female subjects or individuals from other economic classes may not view their cultural experience similarly. Additionally, many countries are made up of subcultures and the cultural dimension framework assumes a monoculture.

Additional limitations of viewing behaviour through the framework of cultural dimensions are that doing so doesn't adequately account for individual differences in behaviour or the fact that culture changes over time.



Goal

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- To examine how research into culture can help students better understand human behaviour.

Facilitation guidance

The goal of this activity is for students to investigate the role of the cultural dimensions as proposed by Geert Hofstede, and how they influence behaviour (for example, individualism vs. collectivism, power distance). Additional concepts could be explored here, including how bias may influence research into human behaviour (gender and cultural bias).

This activity can be completed individually or in groups.

Activity

IB learner profile attribute: Inquirer/Knowledgeable/Reflective

Approaches to learning: Research/Communicating

Time required to complete activity: 30 minutes

Activity type: Individual

Application of knowledge: Construct a graph using cultural dimensions data

Read about [Geert Hofstede's research](https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1014) (<https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1014>). Compare the cultural dimensions between countries (for example, individualism vs. collectivism, power distance). Then, use [this comparison tool](https://cultureinworkplace.com/country-comparison-dashboard/) (<https://cultureinworkplace.com/country-comparison-dashboard/>) to construct your own cultural dimensions chart.

Instructions

1. Select five countries and identify their 'scores' for the various cultural dimensions.
2. Plot the dimensions and the scores on a bar graph. Use different colours or patterns to represent each country.
3. Compare your graph with a partner's:
 - a. What is similar and different between your graphs (and your country choices)?
 - b. (Concept application: perspective) How can data regarding cultural dimensions inform perspectives on the social causes of behaviour?

Learning outcomes

By the end of this section, you should be able to:

- Discuss the extent to which environments can cause specific behaviour.
- Identify the role of one or more cultural dimensions in understanding group behaviour(s).
- Explain the role of social learning theory in learning and apply its principles to modify behaviour.
- Give examples of different acculturation strategies and their effect on behaviour and mental health.
- Apply acculturation models to explain the experience of people taking an extended stay in another culture.

¹[Hosseini et al. \(2023\)](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12891-023-07021-5) (<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12891-023-07021-5>) 'Predictive factors of ergonomic behaviors based on social cognitive theory among women workers on assembly lines: application of Bayesian networks', *BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders*, Volume 24, Article 924. Licensed under the CC-BY-4.0 licence

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/> (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

² Definition from the APA Dictionary of Psychology. Retrieved 19-10-24 from <https://dictionary.apa.org/cultural-psychology> ↗ (<https://dictionary.apa.org/cultural-psychology>)

³ Sam, D. L., & Berry, J. W. (2010) ↗ (<https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691610373075>) 'Acculturation: When Individuals and Groups of Different Cultural Backgrounds Meet', *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, Volume 5, Issue 4, Pages 472-481. Copyright David L. Sam & John W. Berry 2010. Reproduced with permission.

⁴ Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, Michael Minkov (2010) 'Cultures and Organizations, Software of the Mind', Third Revised Edition, McGraw Hill, ISBN 0-07-166418-1. www.geerthofstede.com ↗ (<http://www.geerthofstede.com/>). © Geert Hofstede B.V. Reproduced with permission.

3 section questions ^

Question 1

SL HL Difficulty:

Which of the following is **not** a type of mediational process identified by Albert Bandura in social learning theory?

1 Focus — how much you focus your eyes on the behaviour 

2 Retention — how well you remember the behaviour

3 Reproduction — the capability to perform the behaviour that is observed

4 Motivation — the desire to perform the behaviour

Explanation

There was no mediational process entitled 'focus'. The missing mediational process is 'attention — how much you notice of the behaviour'

Question 2

SL HL Difficulty:

Bandura theorised that when you observe someone with whom you identify  (such as parents, friends, and sports stars), you are more likely to imitate their behaviour.

Accepted answers and explanation

identify

General explanation

According to Bandura, when you identify with someone that you observe, you are more likely to imitate their behaviour. Bandura proposed identification (along with modelling, expectations, and self-efficacy) as part of the wider process of how we learn behaviour according to social cognitive theory.

Question 3

SL HL Difficulty:

Sam and Berry (2010) developed several acculturation strategies. To which of the strategies does the following definition refer?

This is when people do not adopt the norms/practices of the new culture and maintain the norms/practices of their heritage culture.



Separation

Overview
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Accepted answers

Separation

Explanation

Separation is one of four acculturation strategies. The other three are integration, assimilation, and marginalisation.

 [Previous section \(/study/app/psychology-new/sid-540-cid-763690/book/the-big-picture-id-49126/review/\)](#)Next section [\(/study/app/psychology-i](#)

Student
view



Overview
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4. Human relationships / 4.1 Group behaviour



(https://intercom.help/kognity)



How can conformity be explained by social identity theory?

B-3-1-2: Identify the role of conformity in understanding group behaviour. B-3-1-5: Apply social identity theory to explain group behaviour change.

B-3-4-2b: (HL) Identify the motivational strategies to change individual behaviours. C-3-4: Describe the process of conformity and its role in understanding human behaviour.

C-3-7: Describe how social identity theory can be applied to change or explain behaviour.



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Learning outcomes

- Describe the process of conformity and its role in understanding human behaviour.
- Identify the role of conformity in understanding group behaviour.
- Describe how social identity theory can be applied to change and explain behaviour.
- Apply social identity theory to explain group behaviour change.

HL Extension

- Identify the motivational strategies to change individual behaviours.

Facilitation guidance

This section contains details about the role of conformity. Research into this area can help students to understand human behaviour, including within their own groups. Students will also gain insights into social identity theory and consider how we derive part of our identity from those around us.

Guiding question(s)

In this subtopic, you are thinking about the question, ‘Are we in control of our own thoughts and behaviour?’ This section will help you make an informed response by working through the following guiding question:

- How does social identity theory explain conformity?

As discussed throughout this book, social identity theory is a leading explanatory theory within social psychology. This section asks you to consider how social identity theory explains conformity. Understanding conformity aids in understanding many other elements of behaviour, and you should be able to identify connections to other psychological and social concepts.

Keep the guiding question in mind as you progress through this section. The guiding questions build into the subtopic question(s). You will return to the subtopic question(s) at the end of each subtopic. The subtopic questions require you to pull together your knowledge and skills from different sections, to see the bigger picture and to build your conceptual understanding.

How do we become part of a group?



Are you a member of any groups? A family would be one group, but how about a sports team or a club at school? What about your friendship groups?

Home
Overview (/study/app/new/sid-540-cid-763690/k)

Psychologists believe that group membership can help to shape your identity. For example, you might identify with a particular musical artist, sports team, or religious group, providing you with a sense of meaning and belonging.

Social identity theory

Tajfel et al. (1971) (<https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2420010202>) developed social identity theory (SIT) to describe how we derive part of our identity from our social groups. According to SIT, we make distinctions between the groups that we are members of (ingroups) and those groups that we are not a member of (outgroups). Tajfel et al. suggest that humans will self-segregate into groups even in the most insignificant contexts. This is known as the minimal group paradigm. Once in self-identified groups, individuals can develop an 'us' vs. 'them' mentality which Tajfel et al. referred to as ingroup favouritism (Figure 1).

SIT expands on existing research about intergroup behaviour, where it is believed that conflict arises when people are confronted with conflicting goals and have to compete over limited resources. This is known as realistic group conflict theory (RGCT) and you will learn more about this in [section 4.2.2 \(/study/app/psychology-new/sid-540-cid-763690/book/how-can-psychological-theory-be-applied-to-reduce-human-conflict-id-49138/\)](#).

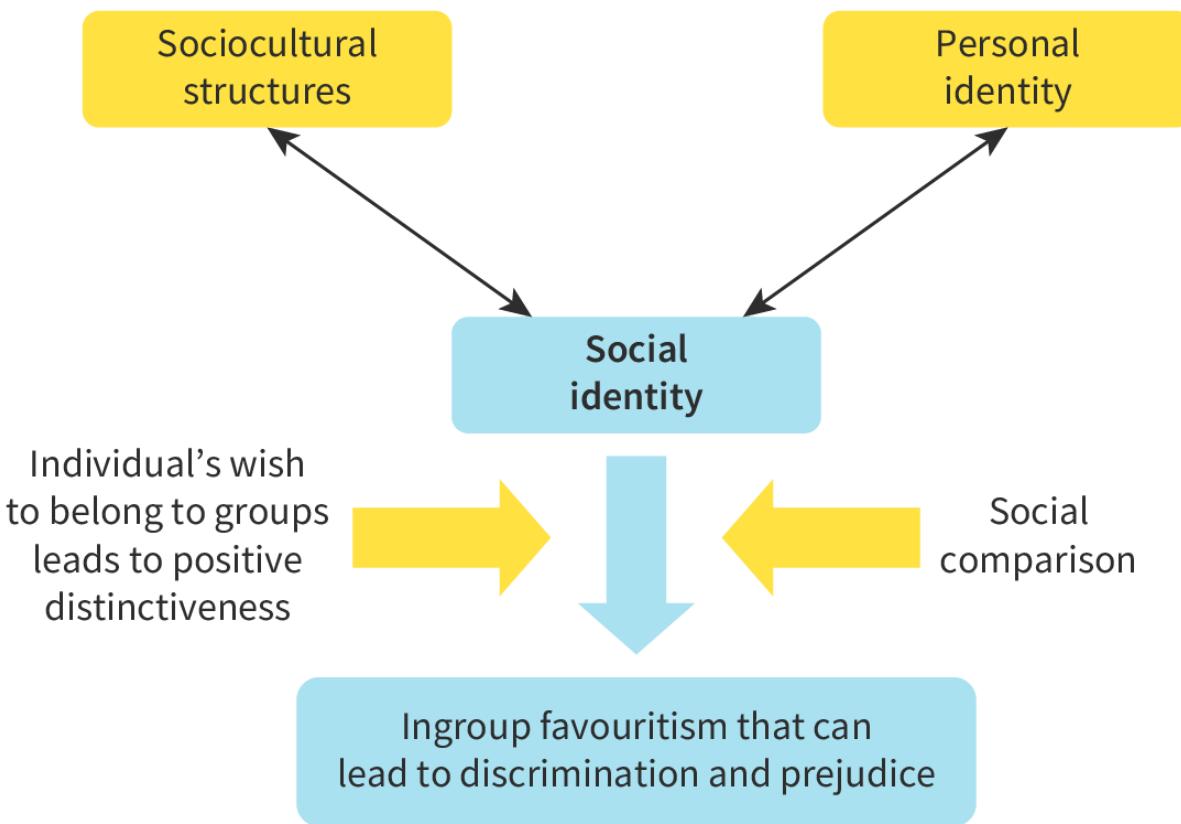


Figure 1. A model of social identity theory.

[More information for figure 1](#)

Diagram with social identity at the centre. Social identity is linked to sociocultural structures and personal identity at the top of the diagram. From social identity, an arrow points down towards ingroup favouritism that can lead to discrimination and prejudice. Two other factors also point towards the downward arrow. The first is social comparison. The second is the individual's wish to belong to groups, leading to positive distinctiveness.

SIT is based on four interrelated processes:

1. Social categorisation

Student view



This helps us to simplify our environment by categorising people into groups by, for example, religion, ethnicity and nationality. However, real or perceived differences between groups can lead to conflict because people begin to associate part of their identity with an ingroup. Subsequently, we may look towards the values and beliefs of a group to understand how we should behave in certain situations. For example, we may support a particular sports team and the first time that we go to watch them play live, we make a conscious decision to sit with other supporters rather than with the opposition.

2. Social identification

Once we have categorised ourselves as part of a group, we begin to identify with the group in a more profound way. If the group has distinct values and beliefs, we adopt these and conform to the group's social norms. For example, we may decide to purchase our favourite sports team's kit and other merchandise to reflect our support. It is believed that when we identify with a group, it provides us with a sense of belonging and helps us to feel good, which can influence our self-esteem and self-concept.

3. Social comparison

Our self-esteem and self-concept are intrinsically linked to our group's identity, and this results in social comparison, where we may compare the status of our ingroup to the status of outgroups. Social comparison has several implications such that we may perceive an outgroup as either superior or inferior to our own. This can lead to positive distinctiveness.

4. Positive distinctiveness

According to SIT, we want to strive for and maintain positive social identities which support our self-esteem. Therefore, the term 'positive distinctiveness' refers to how motivated we are to demonstrate that an ingroup is preferable and has greater status than an outgroup. As a result, discriminatory and prejudicial thoughts or actions can occur. This phenomenon is observed within the seemingly benign arena of athletic fandom. As you probably know, there is often much competition and rivalry between fans of competing athletic teams. Because we are members of many groups and have numerous social identities, this concept can help explain why we may identify more strongly with certain high-status groups over others.

Teacher instructions Student... (0/0) Print (/study/app/psychology-new/sid-540-cid-763690/book/how-can-conformity-be-explained-by-social-identity-theory-id-49128/print/)

Goal

- To reflect on student's own social identities.

Facilitation guidance

Teachers should be mindful that the discussions in this activity could be sensitive, and students may not feel comfortable sharing personal information. Therefore, this activity could be completed as a class or individually. If this activity is completed as part of a larger group setting, you may want to set some boundaries around participation.

The goal of this activity is for students to consider how their groups may influence their social identities. Ask students to identify what groups they are members of, such as ethnicity, religion, nationality, friendship groups, sports teams, etc. Then, questions that could be posed include:

1. Which behaviours do you engage in to create positive distinctiveness regarding your group membership?
2. Which elements of your personal identity do you think may result from group membership?
3. Which elements of your identity are you most proud of?

This task was adapted from the [University of Michigan's work on social identity](https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/equitable-teaching/social-identity-wheel/) (<https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/equitable-teaching/social-identity-wheel/>).¹

Activity

IB learner profile attribute: Open-minded/Knowledgeable/Reflective

Approaches to learning: Thinking skills/Self-management

Time required to complete activity: 20 minutes

Activity type: Individual/Group

Application of knowledge: Influence of group membership on identity

As you learn more about SIT, you might start to think about your own group memberships, and how they influence your identity.

Your teacher will provide you with a series of questions about social identities, but first consider the following:

1. Think about two groups you identify with and two groups you don't.
2. Identify behaviours that you engage in to create positive distinctiveness regarding your group membership.
3. **(Concept application: measurement)** How might measuring positive distinctiveness differ from the concepts of social identification and social comparison?
4. **(Concept application: measurement)** What challenges would arise in measuring positive distinctiveness?

Share your thoughts with the class.

To many, social identity theory seems like a ‘magic wand’ of behavioural explanation. If you start to analyse the world around you through its lens, you will likely feel that few social behaviours cannot be understood. The political attack ads that inundate your social media feed during election season will clearly show positive distinctiveness. The uniformity of your classmates’ fashion choices will be a blatant display of social identification.

While it may be tempting to explain all human behaviour in this way, doing so fails to acknowledge the power of individuals to resist the pressures of the group. For example, there are likely more than a few kids at school who do not dress the same as everyone else, and there are plenty of passionate political pundits and participants who refrain from aggressive and mean-spirited attacks of the opposing political party.

Perspective lens

Cognitive and sociocultural approach

Conformity is often viewed from a strictly behavioural standpoint. However cognitive based conformity can also occur.

Schemas are an example of a mental process that influences group behaviour. Psychologists often use experimental methods to investigate how schemas can affect memory and behaviour.

Schemas are determined by social and cultural environments and affect memory and other cognitive processes. The information a person gains from their social identity and who they interact with on a daily basis forms their schemas about other people and groups. As a consequence, ingroup membership and social interactions can greatly influence schema development.

Reflection questions

1. Why might individuals within an ingroup share certain cognitive schemas? (Reference social identity theory in your response.)
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of conformity of belief or thought?



3. Discuss the interaction between the sociocultural perspective and the cognitive perspective when investigating ingroup wide beliefs, schemas, stereotypes and other cognitive frameworks.

It is important to remember that any complex human behaviour must be examined from a biological, cognitive and social perspective in order to understand it fully. And while SIT certainly provides a lens through which to begin an examination of the social factors contributing to a given behaviour, it will often fall short of informing researchers of the totality of etiology.

Why do you conform?

Do you believe that your behaviour is always the same, regardless of the people or groups you are with? Or do you think that your behaviour changes based on the people you are with, or even your environment?

As you learned in the previous section, your behaviour is influenced by your social identity. Likewise, psychologists believe that social influence is an important component within SIT, because we are likely to be guided by societal and cultural norms. This is known as conformity.

Concept

Causality

Causal explanations in psychology, such as social identity theory, provide valuable insights into human behaviour but may also have limitations.

Reflection question

1. In what ways is social identity theory limited as a causal explanation of human behaviour?

There are two main types of conformity:

1. Informational influence

This is where we conform because we want to be seen as ‘right.’ This occurs when we believe that a group is better informed than us, and because a situation may be ambiguous, we seek out information about how to behave. For example, remember the activity you completed for the Big picture in [section 4.1.0 \(/study/app/psychology-new/sid-540-cid-763690/book/the-big-picture-id-49126/\)](#), where you were asked to think about your first day at school? If you were new to the school, then you may have conformed to what everyone was doing, such as following people to certain locations if you weren’t sure where you were meant to go. This type of conformity can lead to internalisation when we believe that someone is genuinely right about something, then we internalise this information and it can inform our own behaviour.

2. Normative influence

Normative influence occurs when we want to be liked or to fit in with a group. This type of conformity tends to occur in public situations where we might want to be seen as conforming but not necessarily believe in it. Peer pressure is an example of normative influence, where we seek approval and/or acceptance from our peers.

Some of the most famous psychological experiments exploring normative influence were conducted by [Solomon Asch](#) (https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-1-4419-0463-8_346).

Theory of knowledge

Ethics

The formation of identity raises profound ethical questions about autonomy and influence. Reflecting on whether identities are chosen or imposed invites exploration of the potential ethical implications for individual freedom and societal responsibility.

Reflection questions

1. Are our identities chosen or given to us?
2. What could be the possible ethical implications of our identities being given to us?

Asch's original experiment involved asking participants to judge the length of a line when compared to a target line. However, this seemingly straightforward task was made more challenging when other confederates in the same room deliberately provided the incorrect answer. Here, Asch was interested in whether conformity would increase when a situation was unclear (in this case, if other people could influence your behaviour and if the real participant would conform and give the same length as the confederates) (Asch, 1956  (<https://doi.org/10.1037/h0093718>)).

HL Extension

Motivation

The role of motivation to conform (or not) to a group

According to SIT, motivation plays a crucial role in conformity. Research suggests that our self-esteem can act as a strong motivator in whether we conform or not.

Reflection questions

1. What motivates you to conform or not?
2. To what extent does your answer to the above question validate or refute social identity theory?

From the research, Asch found that around one-third (32%) of participants conformed. In other words, they went along with the confederates and provided the wrong answer! However, in the control group, conformity rates dropped to less than 1%.

Teacher instructions

Goal

- To understand a seminal piece of psychological research and consider the ethical implications of this.

Facilitation guidance

In this activity, students will develop their knowledge of conformity by researching some of the variations of Asch's original experiments as well as considering contemporary research.

Split the class into two groups and assign students one of two research areas:

1. Variations of the original study, such as group size, unanimity and task difficulty



2. Current research that examines other factors that could influence conformity, such as personality, intelligence and self-esteem.

Students need to research their area of focus and present their findings. This could be in the form of a short presentation or a role-play.

Given the previous section's focus on culture and environment, there is also a good opportunity here for students to consider the role of culture in conformity.

Activity

IB learner profile attribute: Inquirer/Communicator

Approaches to learning: Research/Communicating/Social

Time required to complete activity: 60 minutes (additional time may be required to present)

Activity type: Group

Application of knowledge: Examining research into conformity

Your teacher will split you into groups and you will be allocated one of the following:

1. Variations of the original study conducted by Asch (1956) (<https://doi.org/10.1037/h0093718>), such as:

- group size
- unanimity
- task difficulty.

2. Current research that examines other factors that could influence conformity, such as:

- personality
- intelligence
- self-esteem.

In your groups, you need to present your findings. You can do this through a presentation or a role-play!

1. (Concept application: change) How can researchers identify the agency or motivation to change in conformity research?

Learning outcomes

By the end of this section, you should be able to:

- Describe the process of conformity and its role in understanding human behaviour.
- Identify the role of conformity in understanding group behaviour.
- Describe how social identity theory can be applied to change and explain behaviour.
- Apply social identity theory to explain group behaviour change.

HL Extension

- Identify the motivational strategies to change individual behaviours.

¹ Task adapted from the University of Michigan's work on social identity. "Social Identity Wheel". *Equitable Teaching at U-M*, <https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/equitable-teaching/social-identity-wheel/>

[\(https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/equitable-teaching/social-identity-wheel/\)](https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/equitable-teaching/social-identity-wheel/). Accessed 12 February 2025.

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3 section questions ^

Question 1

SL HL Difficulty:

Social identity theory is based on four interrelated processes. Which of the processes does the following definition apply to?

This refers to how motivated we are to demonstrate that an ingroup is preferable to an outgroup.

- Positive distinctiveness



Accepted answers

Positive distinctiveness

Explanation

Positive distinctiveness is the fourth process of SIT. It follows social categorisation, social identification and social comparison.

Question 2

SL HL Difficulty:

According to Tajfel et al. (1971), how can the minimal group paradigm be described?

- 1 A minimal set of conditions needs to be met for happiness to occur.
- 2 A minimal set of conditions needs to be met for discrimination to occur.
- 3 A minimal set of conditions needs to be met for discrimination and sleep to occur.
- 4 No conditions need to be met for discrimination to occur.



Explanation

The minimal group paradigm refers to when we tend to favour our ingroup. This is because we may share similar beliefs and attributes, while we see outgroups as different and so we identify with them less, which can lead to an 'us' versus 'them' mindset. This paradigm proposes that there is a minimal set of conditions that need to be met for discrimination to occur.

Question 3

SL HL Difficulty:

One explanation of conformity is wanting to be seen as 'right.' This is known as 1 informational ... ✓ .

Accepted answers and explanation

#1 informational influence

General explanation

Informational influence occurs when we believe that a group is better informed than us and, because a situation may be ambiguous, we seek out information about how to behave.



Student
view



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4. Human relationships / 4.1 Group behaviour



(https://intercom.help/kognity)



When are you not in control of your behaviour?

A-2: Causality B-3-1-3: Discuss the application of one or more compliance techniques to change group behaviour.

B-3-4-3a: (HL) Discuss the impact of technology on interpersonal relationships. C-3-4: Describe the process of conformity and its role in understanding human behaviour.

C-3-9: Discuss the value of emic approaches in researching human behaviour. C-3-10: Identify the limitations of etic approaches to researching human behaviour.

Section

Student... (0/0)



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Assign

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Learning outcomes

- Describe the process of conformity and its role in understanding human behaviour.
- Discuss the application of one or more compliance techniques to change group behaviour.
- Discuss the extent to which human behaviour can be said to have an explicit and identifiable cause.
- Discuss the use of emic approaches in researching human behaviour.
- Discuss the use of etic approaches to researching human behaviour.

HL Extension

- (HL) Discuss the impact of technology on interpersonal relationships.

Facilitation guidance

In this section, students will be introduced to several compliance techniques (including foot-in-the-door). They should be encouraged to consider the applications of these techniques beyond those that are presented, how they link to their own lives and the broader area of social influence.

Students will then return to the concept covered within the foundational unit and examine whether human behaviour can truly have a clear and identifiable cause (see [section 1.1.4](#) (/study/app/psychology-new/sid-540-cid-763690/book/what-is-the-difference-between-causation-and-correlation-id-49354/)).

? Guiding question(s)

In this subtopic, you are thinking about the question, ‘Are we in control of our own thoughts and behaviour?’ This section will help you make an informed response by working through the following guiding question:

- How do compliance techniques illustrate a lack of behavioural control?

After examining social and biological correlates of behaviour, no one could be blamed for asking, ‘Do I have total control over any element of my cognition or behaviour?’ This section asks you to consider that very provocative question. As always, it is important to support your claims and beliefs through evidence. Thus, as you move through this section, consider the question: ‘What evidence exists that humans lack free will?’

Keep the guiding question in mind as you progress through this section. The guiding questions build into the subtopic question(s). You will return to the subtopic question(s) at the end of each subtopic. The subtopic questions require you to pull together your knowledge and skills from different sections, to see the bigger picture and to build your conceptual understanding.



Student view



Why do you comply?

Overview
(/study/app/new/sid-540-cid-763690/k)

Imagine the following scenario: You forget to bring in a piece of homework for one of your favourite teachers, and they ask to speak with you at lunchtime. As lunchtime approaches, you receive a message from a friend who says an event is happening at lunch and all of your friends are going. When you tell them about the meeting, your friend suggests that you could go and speak to your teacher at the end of the school day. What do you do?

- a) See your teacher at lunchtime.
- b) Do as your friend recommends – see your teacher at the end of the school day.

In [section 4.1.2](#) (/study/app/psychology-new/sid-540-cid-763690/book/how-can-conformity-be-explained-by-social-identity-theory-id-49128/), you learned more about conformity and how this acts as a form of social influence, through informational influence and normative influence. Now, you will learn more about another type of social influence known as compliance.

Perspective lens

Biological approach

Humans are social creatures with an innate need to belong. It is therefore interesting to consider the extent to which biological factors might contribute to compliance and conformity.

The evolutionary perspective is a framework that views human behaviour through the lens of evolutionary theory. Evolutionary psychologists ask the question, ‘Why might that behaviour be advantageous for survival of the individual or species?’

Reflection questions

1. From the six principles of compliance listed in the next part of this section (liking, authority, scarcity, consistency, reciprocity and social proof), identify those that you think could have an evolutionary origin.
2. Choose 1 or 2 of those compliance principles and use the evolutionary perspective to explain why a predisposition to that compliance principle may have evolved in humans?

Compliance is when people change their behaviour due to a direct request or demand ([APA ↗](#) (<https://dictionary.apa.org/compliance>)). According to this form of social influence, we do not necessarily need external pressure to change our behaviour, so compliance is not related to receiving a command to behave in a certain way. For example, return to the scenario above, notice that neither your teacher nor your friend ordered you to do something. Yet, you still may have experienced some form of pressure to comply, because you care more deeply about what one or the other thinks. When we comply with a request because we care what someone thinks about us, this is called ‘liking.’

Concept

Perspective

The perspectives held by individuals or groups can significantly influence behaviour, including the likelihood of compliance. Reflecting on these differing viewpoints offers insight into the complex interplay between social dynamics and individual actions.

Reflection question

1. Why might the perspectives of different individuals/groups affect compliance?

Student view

Generally, we have some awareness of when we are being asked to comply with a request. These can be both explicit (as in the scenario above) and implicit, such as a request to support a charity through an online advertisement.

Principles of compliance

Robert Cialdini  (<https://search.asu.edu/profile/10913>) is known for his extensive research into the field of compliance and persuasion. He argues that six principles can lead to effective social influence and compliance:

- **Liking** – If we like someone, we are more likely to be influenced by them.
- **Authority** – If we perceive someone as having legitimate authority, we are more likely to be influenced by them.
- **Scarcity** – If we believe that an item/opportunity is scarce, it can make it more desirable to people.
- **Consistency** – If opinions and actions are consistent, then we are more likely to comply.
- **Reciprocity** – If we give something to someone, such as a smile or a service, they are more likely to return it.
- **Social proof** – We often look at what similar people do in a particular situation, and this can lead us to behave similarly.

Cialdini's principles have been shown to be effective in commercial and business environments, such as in marketing. However, they underpin a number of compliance techniques that are discussed in this section.

Teacher instructions

Goal

- To examine how companies use compliance techniques in their advertisements.

Facilitation guidance

Students might want to begin this activity by considering their most recent purchase, and whether they believe that any of the principles of compliance played any part in the purchase.

Then, ask students to conduct research into at least two advertisements. These can be from multinational brands or local to a particular region. Students need to consider the principles of compliance and apply these as appropriate. Students may also wish to return to this task once they have covered the compliance techniques (see below), such as foot-in-the-door.

Finally, and with time allowing, encourage students to explicitly apply previous learning to this task, including:

- social learning theory - Can students identify models within the advertisements? Who are they, and what makes them models?
- social identity theory - Do students notice the use of ingroups and outgroups in the advertisements? If so, how are they used?

Activity

IB learner profile attribute: Thinker/Knowledgeable/Reflective

Approaches to learning: Research/Communicating

Time required to complete activity: 30 minutes

Activity type: Group

Application of knowledge: Applying compliance techniques to an advertisement

What was the last item that you purchased? Do you think that compliance principles may have played a role in the purchase? Why or why not?

You are likely to have come across a range of compliance techniques without even realising it. For example, limited-time offers on products such as airfares or limited-edition items like a pair of designer trainers rely on the scarcity compliance technique to encourage people to buy them. In this activity, you will analyse advertisements for other compliance techniques.

Working in a small group, choose at least two advertisements. These can be from multinational businesses or local to your region, and then analyse these advertisements for compliance techniques. Take the technique of 'authority' as an example:

1. If one of your products is an item of clothing for a sports brand, is there a particular person/group in the advertising campaign?
2. (Concept application: perspective) Do you believe that the individual/group's perspective of a particular sport might influence the likelihood of someone responding positively to the product (and consider buying it)?

In your groups, prepare a short presentation:

- Display each advertisement (include a link or photograph).
- Identify the compliance technique(s) present.
- Explain how each compliance technique encourages consumers to purchase the item or service.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the technique.

Compliance techniques

According to SIT, various social and cognitive processes affect our desire to fit in with an ingroup. Therefore, psychologists are interested in the techniques that can lead to compliance.

One type of compliance technique is known as the foot-in-the-door (FITD) technique ([Freedman and Fraser, 1966](#) ↗ (<https://doi.org/10.1037/h0023552>)). The phrase 'foot-in-the-door' derives from a sales strategy where a door-to-door salesperson gets a customer to agree to a modest request, such as letting them enter the home, with the aim that this leads to someone agreeing to a larger request, such as ordering a range of products. The term is used more generally today and refers to when you agree to a larger request because you have previously agreed to a smaller one.

The principle of consistency is important for the FITD technique because if someone has already agreed to the first (smaller) request, they may feel mental discomfort in not agreeing to a follow-up request. This 'discomfort' can be explained through cognitive dissonance, where our behaviour is incongruent with our beliefs and values. For example, someone may know that smoking cigarettes is hazardous to their health but may continue to smoke.

Creativity, activity, service

Strand

Service

Learning outcome

- Demonstrate the skills and recognise the benefits of working collaboratively.

Charities spend a significant amount of their resources devising marketing strategies so that people take notice of them and are encouraged to support their cause. Support for charities can take several forms, including individual monetary donations, volunteering of time, distributing marketing materials (sharing over social media), and organising fundraising activities.

Which charities is your school connected with? How could you work with local charities to help them use compliance techniques in their campaigns to increase support?

Within psychological research, the FITD technique has been shown to be used effectively in several areas, including:

- Females were more likely to seek support for cancer prevention when an additional request asked them to complete a monthly self-examination ([Dolin et al., 1995 ↗ \(https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327027hc0701_4\)](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327027hc0701_4)). This suggests that compliance techniques can influence health preventive behaviours.
- In a field study, participants who were exposed to a FITD condition were more likely to attempt to stop the theft of a bag ([Guéguen et al., 2016 ↗ \(https://doi.org/10.1057/cpcs.2015.20\)](https://doi.org/10.1057/cpcs.2015.20)). Here, compliance techniques may help with crime prevention.

HL Extension

Technology

The role of technology in developing and maintaining relationships

Compliance techniques such as the literal sense of foot-in-the-door might seem a little outdated. The technique is still relevant today, but technology has dramatically changed how this technique and others manifest.

Reflection question

1. How might the role of technology (particularly social media) influence compliance techniques such as foot-in-the-door?

Much of the research about the FITD technique focuses on face-to-face interactions. However, some research suggests that the technique is effective over email too. In one study, it was found that after a small request via email, compliance increased among a group of university students when there was a later request (also via email) that would have required more time from them.

Teacher instructions

Goal

- To learn more about compliance techniques.

Facilitation guidance

In this activity, students can learn more about two other compliance techniques and compare them to FITD. Students should consider the merits of the different techniques and apply real-world examples of their own.

Students may wish to link this activity to the previous one in which they were required to apply Cialdini's principles of compliance to some advertisements.

Activity

IB learner profile attribute: Inquirer/Knowledgeable/Balanced

Approaches to learning: Research/Thinking/Communicating



Time required to complete activity: 30 minutes

Activity type: Group

Application of knowledge: Learning more about compliance techniques

In addition to the foot-in-the-door technique, several other examples of compliance techniques exist.

1. Working in groups, research the following compliance techniques:

- [Guéguen and Pascual \(2013\) Low-ball and compliance: Commitment even if the request is a deviant one ↗](https://doi.org/10.1080/15534510.2013.798243)
- [Cialdini et al. \(1975\) Reciprocal concessions procedure for inducing compliance: The door-in-the-face technique ↗](https://doi.org/10.1037/h0076284)

2. Beyond the applications provided in the research, can you apply these techniques to other scenarios? Discuss your thoughts with your group.

3. (Concept application: perspective) How might these compliance techniques be applied to the advertisements that you shared with the rest of the class?

Does human behaviour have a clear and identifiable cause?

A team of researchers decide to investigate whether there is a relationship between happiness rates and income levels.

After completing their research, they find that as income levels increase, happiness rates increase! Therefore, they state that there is a causal link between levels of income and rates of happiness.

Why should the researchers be careful about coming to this conclusion?

The ‘causes’ of human behaviour

Researchers who use quantitative research methods may wish to investigate whether there is a relationship between two areas, for example, income and happiness. To do this, they can conduct a correlational research study and administer surveys to measure the co-variables:

- Income level (measured in monthly salary)
- Happiness rate (measured through a self-report survey)

Correlational studies are useful in psychology because they can measure the strength of a relationship between two co-variables. However, as you learned in [Section 1.1.1](#) (/study/app/psychology-new/sid-540-cid-763690/book/psychology-as-a-science-id-49351/), causation cannot be established using this research method.

Making connections

As you learned in [Section 1.1.1](#) (/study/app/psychology-new/sid-540-cid-763690/book/psychology-as-a-science-id-49351/), causation can only be established from conducting a true experiment. This is where participants are randomly assigned to an experimental group or a control group, and they take part in a level of the independent variable. Researchers will then determine if there has been any effect on the dependent variable.

One of the issues with establishing causality in psychology is that it can be challenging to maintain a high degree of control over all of the possible variables in a piece of research, apart from the one being studied. Human behaviour is complex.

Concept

Causality

In this subtopic, you have covered a range of studies related to human behaviour, including Asch's research into social influence and conformity (see [Section 4.1.2 \(/study/app/psychology-new/sid-540-cid-763690/book/how-can-conformity-be-explained-by-social-identity-theory-id-49128/\)](#)).

Reflection question

1. Do the findings from Asch provide a causal link between conformity and social influence?

With recent decades' advances in the field of cognitive psychology, researchers believe that cognition may play a pivotal role in causality. For instance, using our reasoning to make causal connections between information is part of an automatic cognitive process. We want to make sense of the world around us and causal knowledge helps us to make decisions and predictions. However, we must be mindful that cognitive biases and heuristics can influence our thinking and decision-making. You will learn more about the cognitive processes associated with human behaviour in [Section 4.2.1 \(/study/app/psychology-new/sid-540-cid-763690/book/how-can-understanding-human-cognition-decrease-conflict-id-49137/\)](#).

Teacher instructions

Goal

- To consider reflectively the advantages and disadvantages of emic and etic research.

Facilitation guidance

This activity is designed to give your students a deep dive into emic and etic approaches to research. The activity will require the creation and completion of a chart to aid understanding of these two research approaches. The reflection questions will take their thinking beyond the knowledge level and require that they consider the ethical implications of the two different approaches.

Three great options for the reflection questions could be:

- A Socratic seminar covering all the questions
- Individual essay responses
- Short presentation on one or more of the reflection questions

Activity

IB learner profile attribute: Thinker/Inquirer

Approaches to learning: Thinking/Researcher

Time required to complete activity: 30—45minutes

Activity type: Group

Understanding the responsibilities that come with conducting scientific research

Concept application: Responsibility/Perspective

Taking an emic or etic approach to research in psychology is often viewed as not just a methodological issue but an ethical one.

Recreate and complete the following table before answering the reflection questions.

Approach	Definition	Strengths	Limitations
Emic			
Etic			

Reflection questions

- Should taking an etic approach in order to establish transcultural generalisable principles of human behaviour be the ultimate goal of psychologists? Explain your thoughts.
- Is there anything unethical about an etic approach to explaining human behaviour? To what extent could etic research be considered culturally imperialistic?
- Is taking an emic approach a more responsible way to conduct research? Explain your thoughts.
- Read the following statement and consider whose interests are served by etic research:

'Research is never neutral — it always serves somebody's interests.'

💡 Concept

Perspective

Cultural perspectives shape how psychological theories and behaviours are understood and applied. Reflecting on their role in various psychological theories offers valuable insight into the influence of cultural context on human behaviour.

Reflection question

- To what extent might different cultural **perspectives** play a role in each of the following:
 - Social learning theory
 - Social identity theory
 - Compliance techniques

☰ Learning outcomes

By the end of this section, you should be able to:

- Describe the process of conformity and its role in understanding human behaviour.
- Discuss the application of one or more compliance techniques to change group behaviour.
- Discuss the extent to which human behaviour can be said to have an explicit and identifiable cause.
- Discuss the use of emic approaches in researching human behaviour.
- Discuss the use of etic approaches to researching human behaviour.

HL Extension

- Discuss the impact of technology on interpersonal relationships.

Question 1

SL HL Difficulty:

According to Robert Cialdini, there are six principles of compliance. 1 Scarcity refers to the belief that making an item/opportunity appear less available can make it more desirable.

Accepted answers and explanation

#1 Scarcity

General explanation

This principle of compliance is one of six that Cialdini originally developed. The others are liking, authority, consistency, reciprocity and social proof.

Question 2

SL HL Difficulty:

Causation can only be established when conducting a field experiment. True or false?

1 True

2 False

Explanation

Causation can only be established by conducting a true experiment in which:

- there must be at least two conditions (including a control).
- participants are randomly allocated to a condition.
- a double-blind experiment is used.

Question 3

SL HL Difficulty:

The term cognitive 1 dissonance refers to behaviour that contradicts what we really think about something.

Accepted answers and explanation

#1 dissonance

General explanation

Cognitive dissonance is when our beliefs are incongruent with our behaviour. For example, someone may know that smoking cigarettes is hazardous to their health but may continue to smoke.

 Previous section(/study/app/psychology-new/sid-540-cid-763690/book/how-can-conformity-be-explained-by-social-identity-theory-id-49128/review/)



Overview

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4. Human relationships / 4.1 Group behaviour



(https://intercom.help/kognity)



Activity sheet: What can cross-cultural research tell you about human relationships?

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Learning outcome

- Discuss the extent to which environments can cause specific behaviour.

Facilitation guidance

This activity sheet is designed to give students the opportunity to explore cross-cultural research and friendship. There are two contemporary research studies from which students can learn more about research methodology before responding to the reflection questions.

This activity also provides a good opportunity for students to consider the difference between etic and emic approaches to research.



Figure 1. Psychological research investigating friendship is still emerging.

Credit: FatCamera, Getty Images

In this activity, you will learn more about how cross-cultural psychologists investigate friendship.

? Subtopic question(s)

During this activity sheet, you will be working towards answering the following subtopic question:

- Are we in control of our own thoughts and behaviour?





Part A

Overview
(/study/ap/
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Knowledge and understanding

The following questions are designed to test your knowledge of cross-cultural research in psychology.

The 1 power distance✓ cultural dimension refers to the distribution of power and the extent to which the least powerful expect their leaders to evenly distribute power.

Which cultural dimension refers to interdependency within a group?

Collectivism



Accepted answers

Collectivism

According to Geert Hofstede's cultural dimension of restraint versus indulgence, which of the following countries is the most indulgent?

1 France

2 Mexico



3 Russia

4 United States of America

Part B

Application and analysis

Friendships provide health and well-being benefits across all age ranges. However, research into this topic is still emerging.

Cross-cultural psychologists believe that investigating friendship can provide useful insights into its role in society, as well as how friendship can support psychological well-being. For instance, friendship is more likely to be prioritised in more indulgent cultures than in more restrained cultures.

1. Choose **one** of the following studies. Read the abstract to learn more about the research.

- Doucerain et al. (2021) ↗ (<https://doi.org/10.1177/10693971211024599>) – cross-cultural research into friendship
- Lu et al. (2021) ↗ (<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.570839>) – friendship, and links to health and well-being

2. Then, prepare a one-slide presentation about the key aims, findings and conclusions.

3. Share your presentation with the class.

Doucerain et al. (2021) investigated cross-cultural differences in friendship between which two countries?

1 Russia and China

2 Canada and Russia



Student view

Overview
(/study/app/new/sid-540-cid-763690/)
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3 Canada and USA

4 Iran and Portugal

According to the research conducted by Lu et al. (2021), why might indulgent cultures place more emphasis on friendships?



Key

Lu et al. (2021) suggest that indulgent cultures place more value on friendships because these cultures have higher levels of education and economic equality across society.

Part C

Synthesis and evaluation

Doucerain et al. (2021) criticise existing research into friendship because it is WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialised, rich, democratic).

Why might a great deal of existing research be WEIRD? How does this affect the interpretation of data from these studies?



Key

Doucerain et al. (2021) argue that much of the research into friendship has been conducted in North America. As a result, this has led to bias in the research.

To what extent does culture affect friendship?



Section

Student... (0/0)

Feedback



Print (/study/app/psychology-new/sid-540-cid-763690/book/activity-sheet-what-can-cross-cultural-research-tell-us-about-human-relationships-id-49130/print/)

Assign

Student view



Summary

Overview
(/study/app/new/sid-540-cid-763690/k)

In this activity, you have considered the role of culture in human relationships, notably in friendships. You have investigated a piece of academic research and applied the knowledge and understanding gained throughout this subtopic to that research.

[◀ Previous section\(/study/app/psychology-new/sid-540-cid-763690/book/when-are-we-not-in-control-of-our-behaviour-id-49129/review/\)](#)

[Next sect](#)



Student view



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4. Human relationships / 4.1 Group behaviour



(https://intercom.help/kognity)



Checklist

Section

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Print

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Assign

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Learning outcomes



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By the end of **subtopic 4.1**, you should be able to:

- Discuss the extent to which environments can cause specific behaviour.
- Identify the role of one or more cultural dimensions in understanding group behaviour(s).
- Explain the role of social learning theory in learning and apply its principles to modify behaviour.
- Give examples of different acculturation strategies and their effect on behaviour.
- Apply acculturation models to explain the experience of people taking an extended stay in another culture.
- Describe the process of conformity and its role in understanding human behaviour.
- Describe how social identity theory can be applied to change and explain behaviour.
- Apply social identity theory to explain group behaviour change.
- Discuss the value of emic approaches in researching human behaviour.
- Discuss the use of etic approaches to researching human behaviour.
- Discuss the application of one or more compliance techniques to change group behaviour.
- Discuss the extent to which human behaviour can be said to have an explicit and identifiable cause.

HL Extension

- Identify the motivational strategies to change individual behaviours.
- Discuss the impact of technology on interpersonal relationships.

Student
view

< Previous section (/study/app/psychology-new/sid-540-cid-763690/book/key-terms-id-49133/review/)

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4. Human relationships / 4.1 Group behaviour

Collected research studies

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Notebook



Glossary

Reading
assistance

Teacher instructions

These are the main research studies mentioned throughout this subtopic. However, this is not an exhaustive list, and you are encouraged to use other research studies that are relevant.

Students are not required to memorise all details of the studies but may wish to include them to support their explanations.

Summary	Evaluation
<p>Bandura et al. (1961)  https://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Bandura/bobo.htm</p> <p>Location of study USA</p> <p>Aim To investigate whether aggression can be learned through observation and imitation</p> <p>Method Observation</p> <p>Results The researchers found that children from Group 1, who observed aggressive models, exhibited far more aggressive behaviours than children from Groups 2 and 3, who were exposed to non-aggressive models or to no model. The children often exhibited the exact same forms of physical and verbal behaviour that they had seen in the models.</p> <p>Conclusion The researchers interpreted this as meaning that social learning had taken place and that similarity to role models (male or female) appeared to be a factor.</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly demonstrated Bandura's social learning theory Dual gender study The matched-pairs design minimised confounding variables. <p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Because children were used in the study, the results were not generalisable to the adult population. Demand characteristics could have confounded the results. Children may have thought they were supposed to behave violently because the model did. <p>Ethical considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children were used in the study, so parents needed to consent to their participation, which they did. The violence displayed, as well as the violence demonstrated by the children, was directed at inanimate objects and not humans. Therefore, it was morally acceptable. <p>Research considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand characteristics could have confounded the results. Children may have thought they were supposed to behave violently because the model did, resulting in 'false positive' results.

 Student view

Summary	Evaluation
<p>Summary</p> <p>Berry et al. (2006) [https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.2006.00256.x].</p> <p>Location of study</p> <p>USA</p> <p>Aim</p> <p>To investigate how well young immigrants adapt to a new culture</p> <p>Method</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants from 26 cultural backgrounds in 13 countries took part. Structured questionnaires and responses were anonymous. The questionnaire covered a wide range of variables related to acculturation and adaptation. <p>Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants in the integration profile followed the integration strategy for acculturation. Participants in the national profile generally followed the assimilation strategy. <p>Conclusion</p> <p>Integration was the most successful acculturation strategy, as it was linked to more positive psychological and sociocultural adaptation.</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The study could contribute to the quality of life in countries receiving immigrants, for both nationals and immigrants. <p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The study gathered self-report data and is therefore subject to participant expectations. <p>Ethical considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no major ethical considerations in this study. All researchers conducting studies within the field of psychological research are expected to consider ethical guidelines. <p>Research considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of Likert scales and structured questionnaires may give a reductionist view of this complex social issue.

Summary	Evaluation
<p>Summary</p> <p><u>Chen et al. (2022)</u>  (https://doi.org/10.1002/pchj.515)</p> <p>Location of study China</p> <p>Aim To understand the motivational factors that contribute to conformity, while accounting for both personality and other individual differences</p> <p>Method</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiment and questionnaire • Ninety-seven male and female college students were recruited to participate in a common social conformity task in which they rate the attractiveness of faces. • On a third of the trials, they received feedback that their confederates rated the individual 2–3 points higher, while on another third of the trials, they received feedback that others rated the individual 2–3 points lower. • A questionnaire was then used to assess motivation within the task. <p>Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researchers concluded and corroborated claims made in other investigations that social conformity is driven by the desire to be accurate, to obtain social approval and to maintain a favourable self-concept. • Uniquely, these findings also provided evidence that all three motivational factors can operate in a single conformity-based behaviour. <p>Conclusion This study suggests that multiple motivating factors drive social conformity. Thus, the study establishes conformity as a complex social behaviour.</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study used an established social conformity task as the experimental paradigm. • It had 97 male and female participants. • The study connected personal motivation to the behaviour of conformity, therefore addressing its cognitive cause. <p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study only consisted of Chinese university students and therefore has reduced generalisability. • The task of rating faces on a computer screen may be considered somewhat artificial. <p>Ethical considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No ethical violations or considerations beyond the standard requirements. The researchers did state that they conformed with the Helsinki Standards of Ethical Practice. <p>Research considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of both the experimental procedure and survey was a clever way to establish motivational meaning to the participants' actions and provide a more detailed level of insight than simply observed behaviour.

Summary	Evaluation
<p>Summary</p> <p>Bond and Smith (1996) ↗ https://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037/0033-2909.119.1.111</p> <p>Location of study</p> <p>17 countries around the world</p> <p>Aim</p> <p>To investigate whether conformity, as measured by the Asch paradigm, is impacted by the cultural dimensions of individualism/collectivism</p> <p>Method</p> <p>Meta-analysis of 133 studies conducted across 17 countries</p> <p>Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collectivist countries showed higher levels of conformity than individualist countries. Overall, the rate of conformity has declined since Asch's original study. <p>Conclusion</p> <p>This study provides evidence for cultural dimensions of collectivism and individualism, and provides evidence that these dimensions can impact the behaviour of conformity.</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-cultural and cross-national High degree of statistical power (lots of participants) Asch paradigm of conformity updated by addition of a cultural lens <p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meta-analysis can embed previous limitations from included studies. Conformity, as measured by the Asch paradigm, lacks ecological validity. <p>Ethical considerations</p> <p>n/a</p> <p>Research considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A meta-analysis can embed limitations that were present in the included studies. It is possible that selection bias exists — meaning the researchers only selected and included studies that would fit their hypothesis and yield significant results.

Summary	Evaluation
<p>Tajfel et al. (1971)  (https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2420010202)</p> <p>Location of study UK</p> <p>Aim To investigate the minimal conditions under which discrimination between social groups could be brought about</p> <p>Method 48 schoolboys (14–15 years old), randomly allocated to either:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Klee group' or• 'Kandinsky group'The boys were asked to express their preferences for one or the other as slides of the artists' paintings were displayed. After they had said which paintings they preferred, the boys were told (on a purely random basis) that they were in the 'Klee group' or the 'Kandinsky group'. The boys were then asked to allocate points (worth one-tenth of a penny each). Such allocation was done anonymously.</p> <p>Results When the boys had the choice between maximising the profit for all and maximising the profit for their own group, they chose the latter.</p> <p>Conclusion This is evidence of blatant discrimination associated with the categorisation of the boys into apparently meaningless social groups.</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study effectively established the bare minimum for group membership. • The study clearly illustrated ingroup bias in the context of resource competition. • It starkly illustrated the occurrence of ingroup bias as a result of very insignificant distinctions and minimal emotional involvement. <p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study was conducted on 14–15-year-old boys, so the results cannot be extrapolated or generalised to a broader population. <p>Ethical considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research was conducted on participants under the age of 18, and parents would have had to give their consent to participation. • Deception was used to hide the true aim from participants. • All researchers conducting studies within the field of psychological research are expected to consider ethical guidelines. <p>Research considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study was conducted in a lab; therefore, it had high levels of control over variables. This means it lacked both ecological validity and mundane realism.

Summary	Evaluation
<p>Cialdini et al. (1975) [1] (https://doi.org/10.1037/h0076284)</p> <p>Location of study USA</p> <p>Aim To investigate the rate of compliance to a reduced request after the refusal of an initial larger request</p> <p>Method Three conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rejection—moderation condition The participant was asked and refused the first request (which was to volunteer at a detention centre for juvenile delinquents for two hours per week for two years) and was then asked a smaller favour. 2. Smaller request-only control The participant was asked only the smaller request. 3. Exposure control The participant was described the big request and then asked for the smaller favour. <p>Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group 1: Large request then small request showed 50% compliance • Group 2: Small request only showed 16.7% compliance • Group 3: Both requests at once showed 25% compliance <p>Conclusion A smaller request after a bigger request <i>does</i> improve compliance. Reciprocity has to be induced by an initial refusal (the door-in-the-face) and subsequent modification of the first request.</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study illustrates the ‘door-in-the-face’ compliance technique. • The results have implications for other areas of research, such as economics and marketing. • Researchers used a single-blind procedure, which minimises demand characteristics. • Reciprocity was effectively isolated by the use of a second researcher to make the second request. Compliance was much lower in this variation. <p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arguably, compliance changed for reasons other than door-in-the-face, though it's not clear what these might be. • Limited generalisability because door-in-the-face was only tested for face-to-face prosocial requests from a same-sex requester <p>Ethical considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All researchers conducting studies within the field of psychological research are expected to consider ethical guidelines. <p>Research considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecologically valid as the experiment simulated a real-world situation

Summary	Evaluation
<p>Asch (1956) (https://doi.org/10.1037/h0093718)</p> <p>Location of study USA</p> <p>Aim To test conformity to the majority incorrect opinion in an unambiguous situation</p> <p>Method</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fifty male students from Swarthmore College in the USA participated in a 'vision test.' Using a line judgement task, Asch put a naive participant in a room with seven confederates. Eight participants were seated around a table, with the seating plan carefully constructed to prevent any suspicion on the part of the naive participant that the others were confederates. The task was to estimate which of the three vertical lines drawn on one card matched the single vertical line on the other card. The participants answered one at a time, and, on some occasions, the confederates unanimously gave an obviously wrong answer. In the original 1951 experiment, there were 18 trials in total and the confederates gave the wrong answer on 12 trials (called the critical trials). <p>Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On average, about 32% of the participants who were placed in this situation went along and conformed with the clearly incorrect majority on the critical trials. Over the 12 critical trials, around 75% of participants conformed at least once and 25% of participants never conformed. In the control group, with no pressure to conform to confederates, less than 1% of participants gave the wrong answer. When participants were interviewed after the experiment, most of them said that they did not really believe their conforming answers but had gone along with the group for fear of being ridiculed. <p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People conform for two main reasons: because they want to fit in with the group (normative influence) and because they believe the group is better informed than they are (informational influence). Asch repeated the experiment over the years, changing the procedure (including the independent variables) in order to investigate which factors influenced conformity. He found that the size of the group, the status of the group, whether a confederate changed their mind and agreed with the naive participant, the difficulty of the task, and being allowed to answer privately all affected conformity rates. 	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Normative conformity was clearly illustrated. The study is easily reproducible. The simplicity and obviousness of the task starkly illustrated the ease and willingness of people to conform. <p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The study was conducted with only university-aged men, and therefore is not generalisable to a broader population. The simple design is also a limitation, as participants may not have seen any negative aspect of conforming. The study lacks ecological validity. The study is old. This is a major limitation, as American culture has changed a great deal since then, and it is now established that culture can have a major impact on behaviour. <p>Ethical considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participants were deceived and may have felt mild emotional discomfort as an 'outsider.' However, this is not a major ethical concern. All researchers conducting studies within the field of psychological research are expected to consider ethical guidelines. <p>Research considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The study's results neglected to be replicated at such an extreme in other cultures, therefore further illustrating its limitations relative to generalisability.

Summary	Evaluation
<p>Freedman and Fraser (1966) ↗ (https://doi.org/10.1037/h0023552)</p> <p>Location of study USA</p> <p>Aim To investigate compliance techniques (foot-in-the-door)</p> <p>Method Psychologists contacted female homemakers and asked about household products. Three days later, the women received another call asking whether a team of men could search their cupboards as part of a two-hour investigation into their household products.</p> <p>Results Women who had participated in a phone call were more likely to agree to a two-hour request compared to those who just received a larger (two-hour) request.</p> <p>Conclusion Larger requests are more likely to be accepted when presented by the same person that has previously made a smaller request.</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the first studies to investigate compliance techniques <p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions about whether the research was truly investigating foot-in-the-door or self-perception theory, which is similar. <p>Ethical considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All researchers conducting studies within the field of psychological research are expected to consider ethical guidelines. <p>Research considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand characteristics may have influenced the women's responses to the first phone call rather than the actual request.
<p>Dolin et al. (1995) ↗ (https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327027hc0701_4)</p> <p>Location of study USA</p> <p>Aim To investigate the impact of foot-in-the-door (FITD) on cancer prevention</p> <p>Method Sixty-seven women were assigned to either the treatment or control condition. All completed a survey after being asked to schedule a gynaecological examination. Two-stage communication strategy: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Treatment group: A request is made that the receiver complies with (They are given a free vision test and breast self-examination card.) Control: Attend appointment but no additional support </p> <p>Results The treatment group were more likely to seek out support for preventative healthcare.</p> <p>Conclusion Practical application of FITD and supported preventative treatments for cancer</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The study has practical applications to help support females with preventative health benefits. <p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sample was relatively small, so it is not possible to easily generalise findings from the study. <p>Ethical considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All researchers conducting studies within the field of psychological research are expected to consider ethical guidelines. <p>Research considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other factors outside of the study could have influenced the women's decisions to seek a gynaecological examination.

Summary	Evaluation
<p>Guéguen et al. (2016) ↗ https://doi.org/10.1057/cpcs.2015.20</p> <p>Location of study France</p> <p>Aim To investigate FITD through a bystander's reaction to a theft</p> <p>Method</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field experiment • Male confederate seated alone with a suitcase on the ground • FITD condition: The confederate asked a participant for the time and left to go to the bar. • Control condition: No initial verbal contact. • After 20 seconds, a second confederate took the suitcase and then left. <p>Results More participants in the FITD condition intervened to stop the theft (84%) compared to the control condition (47%).</p> <p>Conclusion Social responsibility activation was used to explain the results. Findings could be used to support crime prevention.</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are practical applications, such as encouraging public involvement in crime prevention. <p>Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only male confederates were used; participants may have responded differently to female confederates. <p>Ethical considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All researchers conducting studies within the field of psychological research are expected to consider ethical guidelines. • There are various ethical considerations, such as lack of informed consent and right to withdraw. <p>Research considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real participants may have suspected the aims of the study, leading to demand characteristics.

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