Welcome to Social Cognition
Psychology 380

Professor:
Dr. Stephanie Madon
Syllabus

Required Textbooks:


Syllabus

Quizzes: 3 quizzes. 1 prior to each exam.

Exams: 3 exams, all non-cumulative. Need to decide when Exam 3 will be.
Syllabus

Extra Credit: Unannounced class activities you can do to get extra credit

Grading: 180 points total.
Syllabus

**Missed Exam:** Take a makeup at end of semester with 10% penalty.

**Meeting Times:** Do you really want to take a 3 hour class?
What is Social Cognition?

Interface between social and cognitive psychology

Examines how people understand and make sense of their world, themselves, and others
Attributions

An attribution is an explanation for an event
Attributions

People make attributions to:

- Predict future events
- Control future events
Attributions

Two kinds of attributions:

- Internal attribution
- External attribution
Attributions

Attributions are explanations for events

People make attributions to predict and control the future

Internal attributions assign causality to factors within a person (e.g., personality)

External attributions assign causality to factors outside of a person (e.g., situation)
Attributions

Attributions affect behavior
Neatness Study
Miller, Brickman & Bolen (1975):
Study 1

Used internal attributions to make kids neater:

• Attribution group
• Persuasion group
• Control group
Neatness Study
Miller, Brickman & Bolen (1975): Study 1

Step 1: Measured base-line neatness

Step 2: Administered Treatment
- Attribution group: repeatedly told they were neat and tidy
- Persuasion group: repeatedly told students should be neat and tidy
- Control group: not told anything
Neatness Study
Miller, Brickman & Bolen (1975): Study 1

Step 3: Re-assessed neatness

![Graph showing the percentage of litter in garbage cans for Attribution, Persuasion, and Control groups. The graph indicates significantly higher litter in the Attribution group compared to the other groups.]
Math Study
Miller, Brickman & Bolen (1975):
Study 2

Used internal attributions to improve kids’ math:

• Attribution group
• Persuasion group
• Positive reinforcement group
Math Study
Miller, Brickman & Bolen (1975): Study 1

Step 1: Measured base-line math performance

Step 2: Administered Treatment

Teachers made statements to students about their math ability for 8 days
Math Study
Miller, Brickman & Bolen (1975):
Study 1

Attribution Group
- You seem to know your math assignments very well
- You really work hard in math
- You’re trying more, keep at it!
Math Study
Miller, Brickman & Bolen (1975): Study 1

Persuasion Group

- You should be good at math
- You should be getting better grades in math
- You should be doing well in math
Math Study
Miller, Brickman & Bolen (1975): Study 1

Reinforcement Group

- I’m proud of your work
- I’m pleased with your progress
- Excellent progress
Math Study
Miller, Brickman & Bolen (1975): Study 2

Math Score

Attribution | Persuasion | Reinforcement
14.5 | 16.0 | 18.5
Magic Marker Study
Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett (1975)

Observed that 3-5 year old kids love playing with magic markers

Created 3 groups of kids to see whether external attributions change behavior
Magic Marker Study
Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett (1975)

Expected reward group:
  • Expected a reward
  • Got a reward

External Attribution:
Should attribute playing with
magic markers to reward
Magic Marker Study
Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett (1975)

Unexpected reward group:
  • Did not expect a reward
  • Got reward

Internal Attribution:
Should attribute playing with magic markers to liking
Magic Marker Study
Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett (1975)

No reward group:
• Did not expect a reward
• Did not get one

Internal Attribution:
Should attribute playing with magic markers to liking
Magic Marker Study
Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett (1975)

% Time Played with Magic Markers

- Expected Reward
- Unexpected Reward
- No Reward
Overjustification Effect

When rewards undermine intrinsic motivation