



Norwegian University of
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Department of Psychology

Examination paper for PSY2014/PSYPRO4314 – Social psychology 2

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Instructions:

Part A. There are 4 questions that require a short answer. Respond to all 4 questions, each response of approximately 1 page or about 300 words. To pass the exam 3 of these questions must be evaluated as pass, (A-E). The best 3 responses are evaluated in Part A which counts for 60% of the final exam mark.

Part B. There are 3 questions to choose from in this part. Respond to 1 of those in an essay-like format. Part B counts for 40% of the final exam mark.

Language: You may respond in English or a Scandinavian language. If you have a problem to translate a certain concept, e.g. name of model or theory, you can use the English terminology.

PART A

There are 4 questions in this part. Answer all four questions (approximately 1 page or about 300 words for each question).

Question 1. Some theories of emotions hold that there are a number of “basic emotions”, a) list the basic emotions, and b) present at least three arguments that Zajonc (1998) uses to differentiate between cognitions and emotions.

Question 2. Describe the components in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (as presented by Ajzen, 1991).

Question 3. Herbert A. Simon coined two new concepts in 1957, a) bounded rationality and b) satisficing. Explain what these concepts mean.

Question 4. Describe what a) procedural justice and b) retributive justice research studies are concerned about and give an example of an important justice issue from each research area.

PART B.

There are 3 questions to choose from in this part. Respond to 1 of those in an essay-like format.

Question 1. The self is often described as a mental representation and several types of self-knowledge or self-views have been suggested. A) Describe at least 3 such types that underlie people's mental representations of self, and B) discuss freely the importance of self-knowledge.

Question 2. Why is it difficult to define "communication"? a) Present the central aspects of why communication is difficult to define. B) Describe why existing communication models presented by Krauss & Fussel (1996) are different.

Question 3. What behavioral and psychological reactions have been found among a) advantaged, and b) disadvantaged, persons towards injustice?

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Exam questions:

PART A

There are 4 questions in this part. Answer all four questions (approximately 1 page or about 300 words for each question).

Question 1. Some theories of emotions hold that there are a number of “basic emotions”, a) list the basic emotions, and b) present at least three arguments that Zajonc (1998) uses to differentiate between cognitions and emotions.

Guide to evaluation of responses

The expected answer for an A includes the following central points and more than 5 arguments:

The A) “basic emotions” are happiness, sadness, fear, surprise, anger, disgust and contempt. Some theories also consider shame and guilt as emotions whereas others do not. Similarly interest seen as an emotion (e.g. by Izard) by some theorists.

Zajonc holds that B) there are an infinite number of distinct cognitions but the number of emotion is limited. There are basic irreducible emotions (cf cognition). There are two main categories of emotion: positive-negative, and those are internally validated, but cognitions are either true-false and have external standards of validation. Emotions cannot be judged for accuracy or validity (only preference), but cognitions can. Emotions need no referent but cognitions are always about something. Emotions can in themselves cause action whereas cognitions cannot, but need emotion. Emotions are largely shared with animals whereas cognitions more uniquely human. Emotions are detectable but cognitions covert. Emotions and their expressions are fairly universal but cognitions and their expression (through languages) are not. Emotional reactions are evident before the identity of the stimulus whereas cognitive reactions need more information input. All reactions can be analyzed for their emotional antecedents and their emotional qualities, but not all reactions can be analyzed for their cognitive antecedents or cognitive qualities. An ”intellectual giant” makes sense, but not an ”emotional giant”. Attention plays a more important and pervasive role in cognition than in emotion. Probably more coherence between an emotion and its motor representation than is the case for a cognition.

Fail: if less than 3 basic emotions and/or less than 3 arguments are presented.

Question 2. Describe the components in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (as presented by Ajzen, 1991).

Guide to evaluation of responses

The expected core answer for an A includes all five components in the model with an adequate description/definition of each of them:

- **Attitude;** the extent to which an individual has a favourable or unfavourable evaluation of the behaviour or object in question
- **Subjective norm;** perceived social pressure or appraisal of behavioural conduct among significant others
- **Perceived behavioural control;** the perceived ease or difficulty (barriers) of performing the behaviour.
- **Intention;** motivational factors that influence a behavior; indications of how hard people are willing to try and how much of an effort they are planning to exert in order to perform the behavior.
- **Behaviour;** the performance of the behaviour itself.

An A-response should include relevant examples for each component, in addition to necessary definitions/elaborations on each model construct. Evaluations of B-E are based on the content and quality of the overall response and depending on how much content is included/excluded or elaborated on in the overall response. The student fails (F) if/when less than 3 components are presented or when only 1-2 components are described without approaching adequate descriptions and definitions of the components.

Question 3. Herbert A. Simon coined two new concepts in 1957, a) bounded rationality and b) satisficing. Explain what these concepts mean.

Guide to evaluation of responses

The expected answer for an A includes the following central points:

Bounded rationality. Rationality is limited when individuals make decisions: by the tractability of the decision problem, the cognitive limitations of the mind, and the time available to make the decision. That is, Simon pointed to effective, instead of perfect, rationality in contrast to the prevailing “rational man” concept of the normative theories.

Satisficing. To search for a satisfactory, or good enough, outcome based on a strategy that examines local and easy options before looking further, a stopping rule that specifies an aspiration level that must be met, and a simple assessment of future values of a choice. Thus, the concept means a strategy of considering the options available for choice until one finds one that meets or exceeds a predefined threshold (the aspiration level) for a minimally acceptable outcome.

Fail: if one of these concept is incorrectly responded to and the other is insufficiently explained.

Question 4. Describe what a) procedural justice and b) retributive justice research studies are concerned about and give an example of an important justice issue from each research area.

Guide to evaluation of responses

The expected answer for an A includes the following central points:

Regarding: a) Procedural justice concerns how decisions are made and it is hypothesized that people make distinct evaluations of the fairness of decision-making procedures (e.g. Thibaut & Walker, 1975). These kinds of judgments have been shown related to people's reactions to social politics, e.g. affirmative action, evaluation of group authorities, institutions and rules. In this field, both subjective (evaluations of whether a procedure is fair), and structural components of procedures have been studied, the latter type including e.g. appeals mechanisms, processes for gathering information, etc. An additional example of research suggesting "original structural elements" comes from Leventhal (1980) and includes: allocation of the responsibility for the selection of agents, allocation of the responsibility for setting ground rules, processes for gathering information, processes for using information to make decisions, processes for handling appeals and safeguards (e.g. mechanisms for considering and implementing changes)

Regarding: b) Retributive justice concerns people's reactions to rule-breaking behavior and questions such as when is some form of sanction needed, how severe should it be, and what form should it take. The chapter holds that the feeling/view that rule-breakers should be punished is "older, more universal and socially more significant" than any other justice feeling (both among children and adults). They also suggest that retribution concerns attempt to restore "equity" when victimized (following Equity theory), but that just "restoring equity" is not always enough and in addition to restoring equity the rule breakers should be punished. Explanations to this phenomenon include instrumental views, e.g. that an equity response would only encourage further rule-breaking, as well as moral views, e.g. "symbolic harm", that the symbolic meaning of the act must be considered. The nature of the offence can affect the intensity of the motive for retribution, as well as decisions about how to react. Four categories of rules that regulate activities of members of social groups are discussed in the chapter: Personal material resource transactions, personal status transactions, the use of collective material resources and rules that support fundamental collective values. Usually do status and value offences render harsher verdicts whereas economic compensation may be enough for material offences.

Pass requires that the response clearly distinguishes between the procedural and retributive justice fields and provides one example of considerations from each field. Higher evaluations include more considerations, although it is not expected that an A-mark should present all of the examples given here. **Fail:** if the response does not distinguish between the procedural and retributive justice fields.

PART B.

There are 3 questions to choose from in this part. Respond to 1 of those in an essay-like format.

Question 1. The self is often described as a mental representation and several types of self-knowledge or self-views have been suggested. A) Describe at least 3 such types that underlie people's mental representations of self, and B) discuss freely the importance of self-knowledge.

Guide to evaluation of responses

The expected answer for an A includes the following central points:

The self refers to a representation or set of representations about oneself in a similar way as people have representations of other people. It is the "me" (or self-as-object) which include an entire set of beliefs, evaluations, perceptions, and thoughts that people have about themselves. The types of self-representation exemplified in the chapter are: **Active vs. stored** self-knowledge

(what is immediate in consciousness, sometimes called the working, spontaneous or phenomenal self vs. not attended to information about the self, accessible in memory). **Semantic vs. episodic** self-knowledge (related to abstract, context-free type of memory linked to semantic knowledge of one-self, e.g. one's qualities, vs. specific events in one's life). **Implicit vs. explicit** self-knowledge (relatively automatic and indirect vs. relatively controllable, direct or deliberate).

Actual vs. possible (ideal and ought) self-knowledge or self-views (from Higgins' 1987 "self-discrepancy theory" that differentiates between actual beliefs about the self, as well as ideal and ought beliefs). Actual beliefs about the self differ from the possible self-views; The ideal self contains beliefs about own and others' aspirations for them, and the ought self relates to personal obligations and duties. Discrepancies between actual-ideal selves relate to sadness and feeling gloomy whereas discrepancies between actual-ought selves produce anxiety or fear (according to Higgins' 1998 theory of regulatory focus). **Global vs. specific** self-knowledge relate to the amount of information included, breadth and specificity of self-view. The field still discusses the structure(s) of self-views, forms of relationships and if there is a hierarchy or not, and whether these components are beliefs or feelings. One suggestion is self-esteem as a global belief and self-concepts as specific beliefs, and others suggest an hierarchical structure: one global self-esteem or self-competence and self-loving). **Personal vs. social** self-knowledge is a distinction based on the Social identity theorists Tajfel and Turner (1979; -86); personal self-knowledge or – view refer to trait-like attributes whereas social self-views refer to people's knowledge of their social group. Some differentiate between personal and relational self-views. Two types of self-views are associated with group memberships: collective self-views and group identities. The chapter discusses that cultures and groups may differ how they focus on, value and derive self-esteem from these (personal vs. collective) levels.

Fail: If less than 3 types or categories (i.e. pairs) are described, or the descriptions are not sufficient.

Question 2. Why is it difficult to define "communication"? a) Present the central aspects of why communication is difficult to define. B) Describe why existing communication models presented by Krauss & Fussel (1996) are different.

Guide to evaluation of responses

The expected answer for an A includes the following central points:

There are many and different definitions of "communication" and various theorists present different understandings of e.g. symbolic vs. expressive behaviors. Watzlawick et al. holds there is no distinction ("you cannot not communicate"), and this position fails to distinguish between behavior more and less significant to communication. Ekman and Friesen focus on informative information by signs. Wiener and colleagues hold that communication is symbol use and requires a socially shared signal system (code), an encoder that makes something public by code and a decoder who responds systematically to that code (the chapter points out that Weiner's position needs a definition of "code", and that communication becomes restricted to language).

Different kinds of communicative acts convey information in different ways and there are a number of different ways to conceptualize these differences. Communication that conveys information, i.e. signals, can be divided into symbols or symbolic behavior (like language) and signs or expressive behaviour (like blushing). In addition signs and symbols both differ with

respect to the process by which they are produced, and the process by which they are understood. Regarding the process of production, symbol use is learned behavior and sign use is innate (but often socially modified). Regarding the process of comprehension the symbols and signs draw understanding from different sources, i.e. for symbols because we know of the symbol system (e.g. words, specific gestures, etc.) so called communicative inference, and for signs because there is a causal attribution (e.g. blushing), a process for understanding signs. In addition, the literature considers complementary (and often simultaneous) processes that work on both intrapersonal levels (that enable production and comprehension of messages) and interpersonal levels (that cause participants to affect, and to be affected by, others).

The communication “models” are the following: Encoder-Decoder models, intentionalist models, perspective-taking models, and dialogic models. Their differences lie in the views on meaning (significance). The **Encoder-Decoder models** meaning is fully specified by its elements (based on principles of information theory), i.e. the property of messages. It has a code in a system that maps a set of signals into a set of “significates” or meanings. The internal representation is encoded by the source, transmitted through a channel, received by the decoder (e.g. Morse signals). The **intentionalist models** are based on “social construction of meaning” which resides in a speaker’s intentions. Intentionality is essential to understand how messages function in communication. Communication entails the exchange of communicative intentions. Messages are just the vehicle for accomplishing such intentions. A process of inference is required to derive the intended meaning or intention that underlies it and interpretations of utterances take place in a context or arenas of common ground or mutual knowledge.

Perspective-taking models assume that individuals experience the world from different vantage points and that each individual’s experience to some degree is dependent on his/her vantage point, thus meaning is understood from the addressee’s point of view. There must be a shared context to produce and comprehend messages (created in a reciprocal process). Shared contexts are constructed, e.g. “take the role or attitude of the other”. Assumption is that participants’ views of each other constitute part of a message’s interpretative context. The social construction of meaning derives from the participants’ implicit theories of each other. **Dialogic models** hold communication to be a joint accomplishment of participants, based on collaboration, collective activity. Thus, meaning is based on participants’ joint activity. Individual contributions cannot be defined apart from the interaction situation. The models take conversational speech as the model for communication and the meaning of an utterance can be understood *only* in the context of the surrounding circumstances. The goal is intersubjectivity, not necessarily to convey information.

Fail: if no theoretical positions are mentioned and/or if less than 2 models are described.

Question 3. What behavioral and psychological reactions have been found among
a) advantaged, and b) disadvantaged, persons towards injustice?

Guide to evaluation of responses

The expected answer for an A includes the following central points:

The second part below is central to the question and such contents would be sufficient for a high evaluation, but the student may also mention assumptions and background, as shown in the first part, and in doing so also complement and improve the character.

First, the assumption in the literature is that justice judgements reflect people’s efforts to make sense of their social experiences following “rational processes”. This means that people

generally want to know the truth and when knowing the truth, they want to behave justly. However, we also know that people distort their judgements to keep resources and opportunities, through e.g. bolstering feelings of confidence or security. Justice judgments affect people's feelings and attitudes and shape how they behave in social settings. There may be both positive behaviors (like follow rules or make an extra effort for the group) and negative behaviors (like sabotage or aggression toward others).

Equity research shows that recognition of injustice is an uncomfortable and a distressful emotional state. To reduce anxiety people can a) restore actual equity, viz. actual restoration or b) by reframing the situation psychologically (cf. cognitive dissonance), viz. psychological restoration. (For example: If perceiving unfair overpayment one can work harder, or look at the job as a more qualified one).

People can engage individually or collectively to injustice. On an individual level people can choose not to act, just accept due to loyalty or resignation (although this does not mean that one denies the injustice and the choice is associated with depression and physical stress, even self-destructive behavior). People can also choose to act by trying to verify the injustice (e.g. to gain social support), to seek to restore fairness (e.g. by demanding compensation, although compensation may lead to perceptions of legitimizing the done injustice) or by retribution (by the "silence treatment", absenteeism, stealing from employer, doing harm to perpetrator, or to others). On a collective or group level responses to injustice can include use of formal means (legal system, sanctions, or symbolical acts) or informal ways (e.g. jokes, insults). Reactions to serious offences may involve isolation, discrimination, or vigilante acts. It could also be mentioned that people do acknowledge injustice when the benefits of being a victim are larger than the costs (e.g. by compensation or by being "righted") or to avoid being victimized twice or more.

Second, **the A) advantaged** (those with more resources or power, or "the harm doer") are more likely to engage in psychological restoration (due to self-interest or to protection of self-image on the individual level. (For example, acts of cruelty could be seen as justified due to victims deserving punishment – thus "justified acts"). On the societal level the advantaged often prefer equity-based justice distribution (whereas disadvantaged prefer principles of equality and need). It should be noted though that the advantaged do not always act in self-interest but may support redistributive policies.

B) The disadvantaged (those who have less resources or power, or "the victim") often show more complex reactions. For example, they often do not act in the face of injustice (maybe due to threat or fear of consequences), and sometimes do not feel disadvantaged. There are several suggested explanations to apparent acceptance of injustice: social comparison theory suggest comparisons to others who are similar, comparisons to oneself at other points in time, others that experiences are filtered by beliefs about legitimacy, or that there may be tendencies to legitimize status quo (what is= what ought to be) or actual denial of being victimized. Especially disadvantaged groups are mentioned in the chapter to maybe try to pursue change in political engagement (voting, etc), use third person intervention (legal system, etc), challenge the current system (through riots, violence, etc) or "exit", leave or disengage.

Fail: when the response does not address either the first or the second part sufficiently.