CENSORS GUIDE

Subject code and name:	Semester / Year / Exam type:
PSYPRO4114 – Social Psychology 1	Spring Semester/2022/ Written home exam, 4 hours

Assignment:

Home exam in Social Psychology 1 (PSY1014/PSYPRO4114)
This exam contains two sections; a short answer section and an essay section. You will respond to both sections. Please follow the listed instructions. NB! Please note that all aids are allowed on the home exam. It is stated that the candidates should identify relevant studies with names of authors and years (but no reference list is required).

Part 1. (Weighted by 60% of the total grade).
Please answer **three of the four** short answer questions below (Up to 350 words for each of the questions):

1) You are talking to some of your co-workers, Terje and Charlotte, about a new manager, Anders, who has a tendency to micromanage. Charlotte says that she was designing an advertisement for the store, a novel task with this time being the second time she has ever done so, and that Anders watching her while she did it made it take twice as long to complete. Terje says that he agrees that the micromanagement is annoying, but argues that, when Anders watched him while he was restocking the shelves, a well-learned task, he found he actually completed it in record time. They ask you for your input.
Briefly discuss social facilitation. What effect is Anders having on Terje and Charlotte's performance of these tasks? Why does this effect occur?

2) You are at a party and are talking to a friend, Marina, who always goes by the nickname "Rina". A woman you have never met before walks up to you both, says that her name is Gina, and demands that Rina does not use that nickname anymore as Rina is 'too similar' to Gina and might make people confused. When Rina tries to argue back, Gina replies 'I am far more important than you, and you will do what I say', then walks away. You and Rina leave shortly afterwards, feeling that the night was ruined. Rina says there is no way she will submit to Gina's demand, but wonders whether you could offer some insight into why Gina thought her demand would work.
Drawing on your knowledge of social influence, define conformity, compliance, and obedience, and explain why Gina might have felt confident in making this demand.

3) Tajfel & Turner (1959) found that, by merely placing objects into categories, we change the way they are perceived.
What is the name of this effect? What changes in perception occur? What happens when humans are subjects of this categorisation?

4) You are at dinner with two of your friends, Silje and Stian, when the conversation turns to Silje's love life. Silje says that she has been looking for a partner, and mentions that she is basing her search on similarity, especially in terms of interests, as 'birds of a feather flock together'. Stian suggests that Silje considers basing her search on complementarity, as 'opposites attract'. They know that you are studying psychology, and ask for your opinion.

Briefly discuss how similarity and complementarity affect attraction and, based on this, the level to which you support Silje's and Stian's positions.

Part 2 (Weighted by 40% of the total grade).
Please answer **one of the two** discussion questions below (There is no word limit):

1) You are having coffee with some friends when the topic turns to emotional expression. One of your friends, Tommy, argues that emotional expressions are universal; that we all experience the same emotions, and express them the same way. Another friend, Henrik, disagrees, stating that he remembers reading somewhere that cultural expressions to a large degree differ between cultures. They ask for your input.
Drawing on your knowledge of social psychology, discuss the universal and culture-specific aspects of emotional expression, as well as the degree to which Tommy's and Henrik's positions are supported.

2) Causal attribution is an important process that allows us to understand and navigate in our social environment.
Briefly define causal attribution, and discuss the processes by which we make causal attributions.

Relevant syllabus literature:

Gilovich, Keltner, Chen & Nisbett (2019) Social Psychology, Norton, Chapters 1–10, and 12–14. Chapter 11 has been replaced by Chapter 11 in Sutton & Douglas (2020).

Exam requirements:
Three questions from the first part **(Short answer questions, weighted 60%)** must be answered. One of the three may be a fail (F), and the candidate will still be able to get a grade in this part if the other two assignments are generally well answered (C or better). If the chosen **essay (which is weighted 40%)** is not passed, the student will receive the grade fail (F) regardless of the result in the first part.

The essay (no word limitation) is evaluated according to the following four dimensions: (1) contents, (2) argumentation, (3) organization, and (4) to a certain extent style / format.

1. CONTENTS
Does the student present relevant theory and research (material) from the textbook (the literature)?
Is the material presented correctly?
Does the student integrate different theories and research?
Does the student critically evaluate the material?
Does the student show understanding of the field?

2. ARGUMENTATION
Was the argument developed and critically analyzed?
Is the argument logically consistent?
Have significant counter-arguments been taken into account?

3. ORGANIZATION

4. STYLE / FORMAT
Formulation ability: linguistic style and grammar (but not simple typos)
Does the student critically evaluate the material?
Does the student show understanding of the field?

Specific examiner guide for the individual tasks

Part 1 (short answer questions)

1) This assignment in its entirety is covered by Chapter 12 of the textbook. What is being asked here is for the brief discussion of social facilitation, especially in terms of the effect of an audience, as well as a specification that Anders, acting as an attentive audience, is slowing down Charlotte and speeding up Terje.

Social facilitation refers generally to the tendency for the presence of others to facilitate your performance on tasks. For example, competitive cyclists are faster when training with other competitive cyclists than they are when training alone. One model to explain this is Zajonc's Mere Presence Theory. This theory holds that the presence of one or more others increases our psychological arousal, in turn increasing our dominant response tendencies. On simple or well-learned tasks, the dominant response is correct and performance is facilitated. However, on difficult or novel tasks, the dominant response is incorrect and performance is impaired.

An important part of this question is that Anders was an attentive audience for both Terje and Charlotte. Research (e.g., Markus, 1978) has found that attentive audiences increase social facilitation effects, leading to even further improvements in simple or well-learned tasks, and even further impairment in complex or novel tasks.

Comment: An answer that fails to discuss social facilitation, or which fails to discuss how Anders' observations affected Terje and Charlotte's work, will usually receive an F. A basic good discussion of social facilitation and mere presence theory, as well as how Anders' observations affected Terje and Charlotte's work, will give a C. A more detailed discussion of social facilitation and mere presence theory, such as a discussion of the difference between a merely present and an attentive audience, could increase the grade.

2) This assignment in its entirety is covered by Chapter 9 of the textbook. What is being asked here is for conformity, compliance, and obedience to be defined, and for Gina's actions to be identified as expecting obedience due to a perceived difference in importance.

Conformity can be defined as the change in one's beliefs and/or behaviours due to real or imagined social pressure. This pressure can be explicit (e.g., someone pointedly encourages you to smoke cigarettes) or implicit (e.g., you start smoking cigarettes to 'fit in' with your friends without them ever trying to pressure you).

Compliance can be defined as the favourable response to an explicit request by another person. This can come from someone of equal status as you, where they are usually nuanced and sophisticated, or from someone with more power than you, where they have less nuance or sophistication.

Obedience can be defined as submission to an explicit demand (rather than a request) from a more powerful person. Gina, in making a demand, was expecting obedience from Rina. Her statement indicates that she feels that she is more powerful than Rina, and that Rina will have no option but to submit. Importantly, students are not required to indicate whether Gina's

demand is realistic, just that it was grounded in Gina feeling more powerful, and therefore feeling able to demand obedience from Rina.

Comment: An answer that fails to define conformity, compliance, or obedience, or which fails to provide an explanation for why Gina felt confident in making the demand, will usually receive an F. An answer that defines conformity, compliance, and obedience, and which provides a basic good explanation of why Gina felt confident in making the demand, will give a C. A more detailed explanation of conformity, compliance, and obedience, and/or a more detailed explanation of why Gina felt confident in making the demand, could increase the grade.

3) This assignment in its entirety is covered by Chapter 11 of Sutton & Douglas (2020). What's being asked here is the identification of category accentuation, a brief statement on the changes in perception that occur during category accentuation, and a brief discussion of how category accentuation occurs when humans are categorised.

Category accentuation is a cognitive error that occurs when the mere act of categorising objects into groups leads to changes in how these objects are perceived. Specifically, differences between objects within the same group are minimised, leading to them being perceived as more similar than they truly are, while differences between objects that are in different groups are maximised, leading to them being perceived as more dissimilar than they truly are.

At the most basic, the research has found that similar effects occur for humans as for objects; when humans are the subject of categorisation, research has found that differences between people in different categories are accentuated (i.e., become perceived as being far stronger than they truly are), while differences between people in the same category are minimised. Further, we attend to (and more easily remember) people who confirm, rather than disconfirm, our category-based expectations.

Comment: An answer that fails to identify category accentuation, or which fails to identify the changes in perception that occur during category accentuation in relation to objects and/or to people, will usually receive an F. The identification of category accentuation and a brief statement on the changes in perception that occur during category accentuation for both objects and people (e.g., that objects/people in the same group are seen as more similar than they are, and that objects/people in different groups are seen as more dissimilar than they are) will give a C. The identification of category accentuation and a brief discussion of the changes in perception (e.g., specifying that differences between objects of the same group are minimised, causing them to be perceived as more similar than they truly are, while differences between objects of different groups are accentuated, causing them to be perceived as more dissimilar than they truly are) that occur for objects and for people could increase the grade. **Supplementary note: the question mentions Tajfel & Turner (1959); this should have been Tajfel (1959). Due to this issue, students may have referenced Tajfel & Turner (1979). Category accentuation should be identified in either case, but some leniency should be given for discussions that rely on Tajfel & Turner (1979).**

4) This assignment in its entirety is covered by Chapter 10 of the textbook. What is being asked here is for the brief discussion of how both similarity and complementarity interact with attraction, as well as a statement about the level to which Silje's and Stian's positions are supported.

Similarity is an important determinant of attraction. People like those who are similar to them, especially when it comes to core values and beliefs. People are far more likely to become romantically involved with those who are similar in terms of social class, educational level, and religious background. Further, Burgess & Wallin (1953) found that, compared to

'random couples' created by pairing individual members of different real couples, real couples were more similar on 66 out of 88 personal characteristics than random couples. The strongest shared characteristics are demographic characteristics (e.g., social class), and physical characteristics (e.g., health and physical attractiveness), and personality characteristics (e.g., extraversion and genuineness).

Complementarity is the idea that individuals with different characteristics complement each other and get along well; for example, someone who likes to talk dating someone who likes to listen. This effect does exist to some degree, but is far more limited as a determinant of attraction compared to similarity. This is because differing attitudes (e.g., about abortion), beliefs (e.g., about the existence of god), or physical characteristics (e.g., short vs. tall) do not necessarily lead to attraction. Complementarity, therefore, only really makes sense for traits for which one person's needs can be met by the difference. Someone who is dependent on others might benefit from having a partner who is nurturing, while someone who values honesty will likely refuse to associate with someone who is a known liar. As such, research on complementarity in relation to personality is mixed, with some supporting, some not supporting, and some inconclusive results. However, complementarity might be a stronger force in predicting attraction when it comes to social status. Social status can come from different sources, such as class background, educational achievement, and prestige of work. We may become attracted to someone who has elevated status in a domain where we are lacking (e.g., class background), but who are themselves lacking in a domain where we have elevated status (e.g., educational achievement). This is known as the status exchange hypothesis, where complementarity leads to the improvement of the social status of both members of a relationship.

In relation to the degree to which Silje's and Stian's positions are supported, Silje's position is supported to a much larger degree than Stian's, aside from when it comes to the specifics of social status. Further, even if two people on the surface appear to represent a perfect example of complementarity, this complementarity is likely just to be on one or two noticeable aspects of their personalities, with their other characteristics likely to be similar or unrelated.

Comment: An answer that fails to discuss similarity and complementarity, or which fails to state the degree to which they support Silje's and/or Stian's position, will usually receive an F. A basic good discussion of similarity, and a brief statement on the degree to which they support Silje's and Stian's positions, will receive a C. A more detailed discussion of similarity and complementarity, and/or a discussion of the level to which Silje's and Stian's positions are supported, could increase the grade.

Part 2 (essay questions)
1) This assignment in its entirety is covered by Chapter 6 of the textbook. The examiner's guide for this assignment only gives a certain indication of the content of an answer, it is not exhaustive.

This essay should highlight findings that support both universal and culturally-specific elements. At the most basic level, the argument for universal emotional expression is based in an evolutionary approach that views emotions as adaptive reactions to survival-related threats and opportunities, while the argument for culturally-specific expression is based around emotions, and therefore emotional expression, being strongly affected by the values, roles, institutions, and socialisation practices that an individual has been socialised within, and which differ greatly across cultures.

The discussion of universal emotional expression should focus on the universality of facial expression. This originated with Charles Darwin and his 'principle of serviceable associated habits', which holds that emotional expressions derive from actions that have been

useful in our evolutionary history, such as observable signs of anger (furrowed brow, clenched fists, etc.) being vestiges of threat displays and attack behaviours. From this principle Darwin drew three hypotheses; firstly, that people across cultures should communicate and perceive emotions similarly, secondly, that our emotionally expressive behaviours should be similar to other animals, and thirdly, that blind individuals will still express emotions in the same manner as sighted people. In relation to the first, cross-cultural research has found that there are six emotions (anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise) that, when people are shown video of them being expressed, are successfully interpreted 70% to 90% of the time (depending on the culture). In relation to the second, there is evidence that, at least with other primates, there are clear parallels in emotional expression (e.g., threat displays during anger, whimpering during sadness, and brief sounds [shrieks, laughs, cries, growls, etc.] to communicate emotions across the spectrum). In relation to the third, studies have found emotional expressions are remarkably similar for blind individuals as for sighted individuals; for example, Tracy & Matsumoto (2008) found that sighted and blind Olympic athletes expressed pride with smiles and by tilting their heads back, expanding their chests, and raising their arms in the air, and that both groups also lowered their heads and slumped their shoulders in shame if they lost.

The discussion of culture-specific emotional expression should focus on focal emotions, ideal emotions, and display rules. Focal emotions are the core emotion(s) that specific cultures are often defined by. For example, Tibetan culture is compassionate, and Mexican culture is proud. Mesquita et al., (2016) suggests that these focal emotions are experienced and expressed with greater frequency and intensity than non-focal emotions. Indeed, referring back to Tracy & Matsumoto's study, sighted and blind participants from independent cultures were found to display emotions when losing in a much more exaggerated fashion than participants from interdependent cultures. Ideal emotions are the emotions whose expressions are most highly valued in a specific culture. Indeed, Tsai et al. (2006) and Tsai (2007), through their affect valuation theory, hold that emotions become focal in a culture due to promoting important cultural ideas, with excitement being an ideal emotion in independent cultures where it is linked to independent action and self-expression, and with calmness/contentedness being ideal emotions in interdependent cultures as they make it easier for individuals to fit into harmonious relationships (e.g., Kitayama et al., 2004). These cultural differences in what emotions are valued gives rise to differences in emotional behaviour, with individuals from independent cultures being far more likely to show intense smiles of excitement, and to participate in exciting but risky practices. Display rules refers to differences in the manners in what kinds of emotional expressions are viewed as socially acceptable within differing cultures. Importantly, people can de-intensify emotional expressions (e.g., stopping yourself from laughing), intensify emotional expressions (e.g., laughing at a not-funny joke), mask negative emotions (e.g., by smiling when they feel bad), and neutralise their expressions (e.g., a poker face). Within a given culture, there can be specific manners in which it is acceptable for particular emotions to be shown, with people drawing upon the techniques of intensification, de-intensification, masking, and neutralising to be able to meet these expectations. For example, people from interdependent cultures are far more likely to suppress positive emotional expressions than those from independent cultures.

In relation to the degree to which Tommy's and Henrik's positions are supported, the student should indicate there is support for both, but that the nature of what is supported differs. For example, they might state that the universal factors supporting Tommy are based around what emotions fundamentally are and how they are interpreted, while the culturally-specific factors supporting Henrik are around how important they are, how frequently they are used, and what cultural factors affect the manner in which they are displayed.

2) This assignment in its entirety is covered by Chapter 5 of the textbook. The examiner's guide for this assignment only gives a certain indication of the content of an answer, it is not exhaustive.

This essay should highlight the core processes underpinning causal attributions. The definition of causal attribution should focus on it being a process that people use to explain both their own behaviour and the behaviour of others. We make causal attributions many times a day, and these attributions can greatly affect our thoughts, feelings, and future actions. Students may mention that this process is both crucial and pervasive, and that our attributions draw on internal (i.e., coming from within someone; also known as a dispositional cause) or external (i.e., coming from something about the specific relevant context or circumstances; also known as a situational cause) causes, as well as whether it is individual or cultural. The discussion of the processes by which we make causal attributions should focus on covariation, discounting, augmentation, and counterfactual thinking.

In relation to causal attributions, covariation can be understood as an attempt to identify causes that are always present when a specific event, effect, or phenomenon occurs, and are always absent when that same event/effect/phenomenon is not occurring. In assessing causality we use the covariation principle (Kelley, 1973) where we try to determine what causes – internal or external, individual or cultural – 'covary' with the thing we are trying to explain. Three sources of covariation information are particularly relevant; consensus (the level to which an individuals' response to a specific event/effect/phenomenon is in keeping with how people commonly react [high consensus] or is unique to that individual [low consensus], with higher consensus interpreted as saying less about them as an individual and more about the situation), distinctiveness (the specific actions undertaken by an individual, and whether they are unique to the situation [high distinctiveness] or are common for the individual to undertake regardless of situation [low distinctiveness], with higher distinctiveness interpreted as saying less about them as an individual and more about the situation), and consistency (what an individual does in a specific situation that occurs on different occasions, and whether their actions remain constant [high consistency] or change each time [low consistency], with high consistency allowing for more definite attributions to either the individual or the situation). When all three are high, we are highly likely to form *situational* attributions; i.e., assume that it is something about the situation itself that is leading to the actions individuals are taking. When consistency is high but both consensus and distinctiveness are low, we are highly likely to form *dispositional* attributions; i.e., assume that it is something about the individual that leads to the specific actions that individual is undertaking.

The discounting principle says that our confidence that a particular cause is responsible for a given outcome will be seen as less plausible (and will therefore be discounted to at least some degree) if there are other plausible causes that might have led to the same outcome (Kelley, 1973). When there is more than one potential explanation for an event, then we can't confidently make an attribution by pure logic. As such, we supplement logic with our knowledge of what people are like. Based on these beliefs about people, we give increased weight to the option(s) we find more believable, and further discount the option(s) that we find less believable.

The augmentation principle says that our confidence that a particular cause is responsible for a given outcome will be seen as more plausible (and will therefore be augmented to at least some degree) if the other plausible causes are believed to lead to different outcomes than what did occur. For example, if someone advocates for a certain position even under threat of torture, we can likely safely conclude that the individual truly believes in their position.

The principle of counterfactual thinking says that we often consider whether a given

outcome is likely to have happened if the circumstances were slightly different, thus shaping our attributions not only by what actually happened but by thoughts counter to the real facts (hence counterfactual thinking). Because attributions affect emotions, counterfactual thinking does as well through a phenomenon known as emotional amplification; for example, research suggests that Olympic silver medal winners are less happy than bronze medal winners, because counterfactual thoughts lead silver medal winners to consider winning the gold medal, while leading bronze medal winners to consider not winning any medal.

Students may also mention the influence of exceptions vs. routines. It is easier to imagine an event not occurring when it results from a departure from a normal routine than when it results from following routine actions. For example, research done by Miller & McFarland (1986) found that, in a task where people were tasked with recommending compensation for injuries, found that, when judging a case where someone was shot when the store they were in was robbed, people suggested awarding over $100,000 USD more if that was not their regular store compared to when it was their regular store.

Students may also discuss errors and biases relating to causal attribution. Core among these are fundamental attribution error (FAE), actor-observer bias, and self-serving attribution bias.

FAE is the tendency to attribute people's behaviours to elements of their character or personality, even when there is strong situational forces that are acting to produce the behaviour. This is a very strong error, and overwhelms our normal processes of attribution. Indeed, research suggests that we are subject to it even when it is our own actions that are directly causing someone else to act in a specific manner. One area where this is especially present is in our perceptions of the advantaged and disadvantaged. We tend to see people's success or failure as directly related to some internal qualities, such as level of talent, and discount external factors, such as familial wealth.

Actor-observer bias can be seen to follow FAE. Under this bias, we tend towards situation-based attributions when we are an 'actor' in a situation, but tend towards individual-based attributions when we are an 'observer' of a situation. This has significant implications for human conflict – for example, in a relationship, you might blame traffic as making you late home and therefore preventing you from doing your part of the chores, while your partner might see this as you being lazy, inattentive, and/or 'not caring'.

Self-serving attribution bias is a consistent motivated bias by which individuals externalise failure (e.g., 'the test questions were unfairly hard') while simultaneously internalising success (e.g., 'I did well on the test because I worked hard'). This bias is theorised to occur because externalisation of failure and internalisation of success makes us feel good about ourselves, and/or prevents us from feeling bad about ourselves.

Grade description:
https://innsida.ntnu.no/wiki/-/wiki/Norsk/Karakterskalaen

Subject teacher / assignment giver:

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