

Exercise walk-through

21.1

Groups, relationships and intergroup processes: evidence and transfer

GRE · GRE Subject Test · GRE Psychology

Concepts 1

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Groups change performance. Social facilitation: the presence of others strengthens dominant responses, helping well-learned tasks and hurting novel ones. Social loafing: effort falls when individual contributions are unidentifiable. Groupthink: cohesive groups under pressure suppress dissent and reach poor decisions; deindividuation: anonymity in a crowd lowers self-restraint.

Attraction is predicted first by propinquity — physical or functional proximity, as in making friends on the same dorm floor — then similarity and reciprocal liking; mere exposure breeds familiarity-based liking. Social exchange theory reads relationships as outcomes minus costs against a comparison level; interdependence analyses use each partner's payoff structure.

Concepts 2

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Separate the intergroup trio: stereotypes are beliefs about groups, prejudice is evaluative affect, discrimination is behaviour. The minimal-group paradigm shows in-group favouritism from arbitrary assignment alone; realistic conflict theory ties hostility to competition over resources; the contact hypothesis reduces prejudice under equal status, common goals and cooperative contact, not mere exposure.

The bystander effect: help falls as witnesses increase, through diffusion of responsibility and pluralistic ignorance (each reads others' calm as no emergency). Aggression research links frustration to aggression and shows how residual arousal (excitation transfer) can escalate conflict; altruism is helped by clear identification of a single victim.

Check the transfer argument

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Measure initial individual positions and compare the final group/individual positions on the same scale. A shift further in the initially preferred direction fits polarization. If dissent was suppressed to maintain agreement, groupthink may also be relevant, but extremity alone does not establish it. Record decision procedures and contrary evidence considered.

Accept a different explanation when its evidence and limits are justified.

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 Friendship formation between residents of the same dorm floor best illustrates: [1]

A. self-reference B. propinquity C. overjustification D. perseverance E. deindividuation

2.2 Prejudice is best distinguished from discrimination as: [1]

A. belief versus behaviour B. affect versus behaviour C. behaviour versus belief D. individual versus group E. implicit versus explicit

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 Friendship formation between residents of the same dorm floor best illustrates: [1]

A. self-reference B. propinquity C. overjustification D. perseverance E. deindividuation

2.1 Answer: B. Physical proximity – propinquity – predicts liking and friendship. The other options do not satisfy the stated defining conditions.

2.2 Prejudice is best distinguished from discrimination as: [1]

A. belief versus behaviour B. affect versus behaviour C. behaviour versus belief D. individual versus group E. implicit versus explicit

2.2 Answer: B. Prejudice is evaluative affect; discrimination is the behaviour; stereotypes are the beliefs. Compare the exact process, design or evidence, rather than an associated keyword.

Exercises 2.3·3.1

2.3 Revisit the worked case. State one conclusion its evidence supports and one stronger conclusion it does not support. Explain the difference. [2]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 A group makes a more extreme decision after discussion. Give evidence needed to identify polarization and one alternative process. Give the interpretation, supporting reasoning, a relevant alternative or limitation, and an appropriate check. [4]

Exercises 2.3-3.1

2.3 Revisit the worked case. State one conclusion its evidence supports and one stronger conclusion it does not support. Explain the difference. [2]

3 Exam-style questions

2.3 Use the worked case evidence to support a bounded claim and explain why a causal, universal or stronger claim needs additional evidence. The claim must fit the specific design and observed process.

3.1 A group makes a more extreme decision after discussion. Give evidence needed to identify polarization and one alternative process. Give the interpretation, supporting reasoning, a relevant alternative or limitation, and an appropriate check. [4]

3.1 Measure initial individual positions and compare the final group/individual positions on the same scale. A shift further in the initially preferred direction fits polarization. If dissent was suppressed to maintain agreement, groupthink may also be relevant, but extremity alone does not establish it. Record decision procedures and contrary evidence considered. Award B1 each (authored) for the interpretation, its reasoning, a relevant limitation/alternative and an appropriate check, up to four points. Accept a different justified answer satisfying these demands.