

The effects of research on a psych 1 student



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The first paper I read, titled “ The impact of ingroup favoritism on self-esteem: A normative perspective” regards the need for positive self-esteem that people have, and the effect that ingroup favoritism has on one’s self esteem. This research was conducted by Vincenzo Iacoviello, Jacques Berent, Natasha Stine Frederic, and Andrea Pereira. The researchers argue that “ ingroup favoritism increases self-esteem to the extent that such behavior is congruent with one’s ingroup norms.

The researchers first discuss the Social Identity Theory, a prominent social psychology theory that hypothesizes that “ people have a basic motivation to enhance or maintain self-esteem, which can be satisfied by achieving or maintaining a positive social identity”. This theory led to two corollaries, one stating that people with low self-esteem “ should display higher levels of ingroup favoritism” than people with high self-esteem. The second corollary states that people that favor the ingroup have heightened self-esteem. The paper dwells on the second corollary, stating that when the ingroup has a set of social norms, conformity and favoritism to the ingroup norms causes members to increase their senses of belongingness. The researchers argue that instead of the classic perspective, which states that being in a good group yields self-esteem, the normative perspective suggests that being a good group member yields self-esteem.

To study the normative perspective, the researchers made three studies. The first directly manipulated the ingroups norms, specifically whether they were pro- or anti-discriminatory, and hypothesized that the effects if ingroup favoritism were contingent on the normativity of such behavior (Hypothesis 1). The second study dwelt on whether the ingroup norm was descriptive or

injunctive, and they hypothesized that an injunctive norm would have more of an effect on self-esteem (Hypothesis 2). The third study looked at interpersonal differences, and hypothesized that as a person conformed more to the norm, the more likely it would influence self-esteem (Hypothesis 3).

To conduct Study 1, the researcher drew American participants from Amazon's Mechanical Turk. They were randomly assigned to one of four groups, divided by ingroup or no ingroup favoritism, and academia or sports social context. To create the discrimination norm, the researchers told the participants that " a transnational American-Canadian institution would provide funds" to the US (ingroup) and Canada (outgroup). The study manipulated whether the US received more funds, the same funds, or less funds than Canada, and then gave the participants a bogus response on how the funds would be allocated. Participants then took a self-esteem test. Study 1 found that the academia group displayed increased self-esteem to ingroup favoritism, while the sports group did not. Study 1 gave evidence to Hypothesis 1.

Study 2 looked to further confirm this, and manipulated whether the participants had or did not have ingroup favoritism, if they had pro- or anti-discriminatory norm, and if they had descriptive or injunctive norm. Study 2 followed a similar process as Study 1, but before getting the bogus response, they were told how the rest of their group responded. They then took the self-esteem test. Study 2's results showed that self-esteem " depends on them feeling they are good group members and comply to prescriptive norms regarding intergroup discrimination".

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Study 3 looked at how conformity influenced the normative perspective. They took a group of participants from Geneva and tested how much each valued conformity. They then told them that Geneva (ingroup) and Basel (outgroup) would be receiving funds for traffic flow. They went through a similar process to measure their ingroup favoritism and self-esteem as in Studies 1 and 2. Study 3 found that self-esteem increased with ingroup favoritism if the participant valued conformity. Overall, this entire study largely supports a normative perspective on the impact of ingroup favoritism on self-esteem.

The second article I read was titled “ Being Your Actual or Ideal Self? What It Means to Feel Authentic in a Relationship”. This research was conducted by Muping Gan and Serena Chen. The research intends to explain what exactly makes a relationship feel authentic or genuine. It evaluates the current hypotheses on what results in an authentic relationship; if being your actual self, ideal self, or both, makes a relationship authentic. This research includes five studies.

The pilot study looked at common beliefs on what made a relationship genuine. It asked participants to rate how they thought relationships were authentic to them - whether being their ideal or real self, or both, made relationships more authentic. They reported if they were closer to their partner when they idealized themselves or acted themselves. 70% of participants reported that they felt closer to their partner when they acted their actual selves. However, the importance relationship-ideal had a high mean overlap, showing that it had some basis.

The first study looked at “ what predicts relational authenticity”. Participants were surveyed and asked to “ described their actual, ideal and relational selves and then rated their similarity”. 272 participants were given the survey, and were asked questions like “ How similar or different is who you are and/or how you act with your romantic partner from who you would ideally like to be in general?”. Participants also measured how authentic their relationships were on a scale from 1 to 9. All questions were randomized for each participant. Study 1 ultimately showed that relational-ideal overlap contributed to a more authentic relationship than actual-relational authenticity.

Study 2 manipulated “ whether participants perceived high, low, or baseline levels of relational-ideal overlap and measured their state relational authenticity”. Participants were randomly assigned to high, low or control relational-ideal overlap conditions. They were given questions specific to their group, and then they were all given a survey to see their current perception of their relationship. Study 2 found that the low- overlap conditioned group reported less relational-ideal overlap compared to other groups. The high-overlap conditioned group, however, did not yield high relationship-ideal overlap, suggesting a high baseline.

Study 3 looked at the different effects relational-ideal or actual-relational overlap had on relationship authenticity. This study crossed the low- versus high-overlap manipulation with the type of overlap, actual or ideal.

Participants were placed in one of four groups, and reported their answers to questions regarding how they acted in their relationship, how they normally act, and how authentic their relationship seemed. This study found that the

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more a person acts like their ideal self, the more authentic the relationship seemed.

Study 4 looked at whether authenticity in relationships resulted from relational self-matching ideal self or having one's self-aspect match their ideal-self. This study made four groups, crossing low vs high overlap with type of overlap (actual-ideal vs relational-ideal). Participants were randomly assigned to each group and put under the groups conditions. They were then asked questions regarding how they wanted to act and how they really acted, as well as how they acted and wanted to act in relationships. Then they answered questions on relationship authenticity. Results ultimately showed that high relational-ideal overlap led to higher relationship authenticity, and that acting as your ideal self in general yielded no effect on relationship authenticity.

This research helps support the hypothesis that matching your relationship-self to your ideal-self helped lead to a more authentic relationship. This research aimed to add more evidence to this claim. The studies ultimately showed people's perception in the pilot study did not align with what the study showed.

The third article I read was titled " You are what you eat: An empirical investigation go the relationship between spicy food and aggressive cognition". This research was conducted by Rishtee K. Batra, Tanuka Ghoshal, and Rajagopal Raghunathan. This research wanted to empirically test the popular phrase " you are what you eat". The research was organized into three studies. Before the studies, people were asked what food would

best prepare them for a meeting with a confrontational colleague. The answers were “ hot and spicy”, “ neither hot and spicy nor bland and mild”, or “ bland and mild”. The result from this survey suggests that the common belief is that spicy food leads more aggressive actions. Participants were then a part of the studies.

Study 1 was a “ preliminary test for the association between spicy food and aggression”. They looked at self-reported consumption of spicy food and self-reported aggression levels. To keep the participants from knowing the study had to do with aggression, they paired the questions with attributes unrelated to aggression. The results to this study showed that those that ate spicier food reported higher levels of aggressive behavior. This result is limited, however, because it relies on measured, not manipulated, data, it isn't completely indicative that people who eat spicy food are more aggressive.

Study 2 looked to further research the spicy food - aggression relationship. This experiment manipulated the intake of spicy food and looked at the aggression response. Participants were randomly assigned to a spicy or mild food group. After eating, they were exposed to “ a vignette in which the protagonist behaves in an ambiguously aggressive manner”. The participants then indicated how aggressive they perceived the protagonist. It was found that eating spicy food made participants perceive the protagonist as more aggressive, which showed that they themselves were more aggressive. This Study, paired with study 1, showed that spicy food primed people for aggressive thoughts.

Study 3 explored the aggression relationship to the sense it was exposed to, meaning whether a person became more aggressive when exposed to spicy food visually or verbally. For this study, participants were randomly assigned to one of four groups, which crossed food type (spicy vs non-spicy) and sense (visual vs verbal). They were either shown pictures of food or told about food. Participants then rated how spicy the food probably was. Lastly, they took the same tests in Study 2 see measure their aggression levels. Results from Study 3 showed that aggression can still be triggered without even eating the food. It can result from simply mentioning the food. The study also showed that visual cues had a more prominent aggression response than did verbal cues. This entire study helps corroborate the saying "you are what you eat". People that enjoy spicy food tend to be more aggressive than those that don't.

These Research Papers helped me understand how psychological research is conducted. Research requires an advanced understanding of statistics to understand data and whether it is reliable. There is also a standard way the information is laid out. All research papers start with the "Abstract", indicating general points about the study. It is then followed by general information, like important terms and previous research, that might be necessary for the understanding of the paper. Next, they list out all the studies, and include the method, procedure, participants, results, and discussion. Following all the studies, research then has a general discussion to evaluate all the information collected from the studies. These papers gave me a general understanding of the methods behind psychology research, and the way it is presented.