

Causal uncertainty

Psychology



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The purpose in this study was to see how casual uncertain people define their initial interactions. This study included 53 undergraduate students enrolled in experimental psychology at UTPB. Included in the study were 43 women and 9 men, age ranging from 19 – 56. They were rated by two scales, casual uncertainty scale (Weary and Edwards, 1994), and the definition of initial interaction scale (Douglas, 1991). The results did not conclude that casual uncertainty correlates into negative descriptions. Casual uncertainty is the differences in people's ability to understand casual relationships in the social world (Weary and Edwards, 2010).

There has been very little research done on casual uncertainty and initial interactions. According to previous research, Edwards, Wichman, & Weary, (2009), everyone experiences causal uncertainty at some point in their life, however, some experience these feelings more than others. People determine causes of social events differently. This could be described as worrying in social situations. Many have questioned whether self-esteem affects the level of self- regulation. There have been studies done to investigate levels of confidence in individuals following social interactions, and the role of self-esteem.

This is pertaining to the fact that those who are high in causal uncertainty may come up with explanations as to the cause of something that occurred. Research has shown this is related to depression, neuroticism, social anxiety, shyness, and loneliness. Those that are low in causal uncertainty are able to go on about their day without focusing on what the cause was, and possibly may not even analyze the social interaction at all. Causal uncertainty affects interpersonal relationships (Weary, Tobin, Edwards, 2010).

Those high in casual uncertainty will have difficulties in relationships. Everyone interacts with others, but I wonder how many accurately conclude the intents behind another's actions. According to research, shyness and loneliness is associated with high casual uncertainty individuals (Weary, Tobin, & Edwards, 2010). Those with high casual uncertainty have been studied and many results have come out of the research. One interesting conclusion was that they are not fond of face-to-face interactions. Also, Males were more likely to avoid conversations they weren't familiar with.

Another conclusion in the study was that high casual uncertainty can lead to cardiovascular disease. Different participants were examined, from college students to those who play online games. Those with high casual uncertainty were rejected more and reacted negatively, which is considered to be related to depression. The understanding of how people's initial interactions are related to causal uncertainty. Another analysis focused on global uncertainty, which is the level of ability one has to determine the intents behind a stranger's actions or statements.

Douglas (1991) performed a research on global uncertainty. He concluded that the reason when someone meets a new person and has high global uncertainty, it is based on past experiences. Those high in casual uncertainty and high in global uncertainty will usually have casual uncertainty in more situations. According to Douglas' findings, social performance was examined in two ways. The first being multiple analysis, the second were entered as a single set. Gender was also a factor in the study. Participants' uncertainty scores varied.

Douglas' findings in the first multivariate concluded that females defined initial interaction less awkward than men (Douglas, 1991). In the second multivariate on performance, approach/avoidance, interaction competence, and loneliness scores were affected by global uncertainty (Douglas, 1991). Due to the fact that casual uncertainty and how it perceives initial interactions has not been studied enough, research is necessary on the subject (Table 2 of Douglas, 1991). The study is to see the participation and results of initial interactions and causal uncertainty.

After studying Weary and Douglas, (1994), my hypothesis is that those high in casual uncertainty will behave more negatively in social situations in ways such as confidence, unpredictable, intense, intimate, self-conscious, serious, and do not know how to behave. I believe they will have positive correlation in the areas of superficial, simple, interesting, and routine. According to Douglas (1991), one who enters a social situation high in confidence can disrupt the initial interaction, however, one who is low in confidence will be high in casual uncertainty during the initial interaction.

Method Participants The participants involved in this study included 53 undergraduate students enrolled in experimental psychology at UTPB. Included in the study were 43 women and 9 men, age ranging from 19 – 56. The mean age was 26.93 years, the standard deviation being 8.65. Various ethnic groups were recruited, including 27 European-Americans, 3 African-Americans, 21 Hispanic/Latinos, and 2 European-American & Hispanic/Latinos. **Measures and Procedures** One source used was the casual uncertainty scale by Weary and Edwards (1994).

This scale measures the casual uncertainty level of the individuals. One example on the scale was “ When I see something good happen to others, I often wonder why. ” They were given a 6-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The higher the score, the higher the casual uncertainty. In this study, the mean casual uncertainty score was 38. 18 (SD 11. 83). The scores ranged from 14 to 69. Two questionnaires were completed by participants. Another scale used was the Initial Interaction Scale(Douglas, 1991). This measured how participants described initial interactions.

The scale lists 11 perceptions of how an individual perceives interactions with strangers. What is included in the scale is how routine to how unpredictable; how superficial to how intense; how serious to how non-serious; how simple to how complex; how intimate to how non-intimate; how self-conscious to how self-confident; I know how to behave to I do not know how to behave; how relaxed to how tense; how pleasant to how unpleasant; how interesting to how boring; how uninvolving to how involving. This is a scale from 1 to 6, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

My hypothesis was not in agreement with the results of the study. I guessed that in social situations, participants with high uncertainty will behave more negatively in the areas of confidence, unpredictable, intense, intimate, self-conscious, serious, and do not know how to behave. The level of casual uncertainty of the participants was not negative as I predicted. The participants differed in levels of casual uncertainty. The levels of casual uncertainty was correlated in a negative way when described by participants concerning initial interactions.

The participants were from an experimental class and I believe one fact that made a difference in the results of the study is that it consisted of participants answering questions, as opposed to it being the real situation. Sometimes we can answer questions but when in the real dilemma, we do and think the unexpected. The participants in the study did not define initial interactions as confidence, unpredictable, intense, intimate, self-conscious, serious, and do not know how to behave.

The participants did not see these words as negative in a social situation. The study by Weary 2010 was a study that was real life situations, and I believe this changes the results. I see that if the interactions were real life interactions and not done by participants, it could change the descriptions given. I believe my findings differed from Douglas' findings because I did not do enough research and therefore, my studies lacked.

One limitation in the study is the fact that it included 53 undergraduate students enrolled in experimental psychology at UTPB. Possibly, if participants were in other classes, they may have had various answers. Also, there were 43 women, and only 9 men. I believe having more men could have changed the results. One more limitation is that Douglas had more participants in his study as well, which I see as something that affects the results. I believe there are a few factors that can make this study better.

First, I am convinced that if done using real life interactions, the results would be more accurate and real. I also believe the gender should be more equal. One more factor would be is to have a variety of participants with differences, as opposed to all being in the same college course. In conclusion, I my hypothesis did not agree with the results, however, future

research could change that. Also, there is a correlation between negative perceptions and casual uncertainty of initial interactions.

Everyone faces social interactions, and how they look at the meeting affects casual uncertainty. Someone could be having a bad day and describe the interaction in a way they wouldn't normally. I believe further research will provide more results that will allow knowledge to be enhanced in those interested in this subject. Then, feelings, thoughts, and emotions will be better correlated with casual uncertainty. I see casual uncertainty and initial interactions a very interesting study to perform and I hope to see further studies in the future.