The Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues in Research and Practices

Instructor: Melvin Wilson    Meeting Time: Wed 9:00 – 11:30AM
Office hours: M 11-12:30 P.M.   Room: Gilmer B001

Syllabus

Course Aim:

Ethnic minority status represents a critical source of differences and variations in research and practices. Issues of ethnic minority status are often misunderstood and overlooked in research and practice. Using an ecological and cultural framework, the class considers the development and range of human behavior as an outcome of societal contextual influence. Our objective will be to demonstrate human characteristics as reflected by a range of similarities and differences among the racial and ethnic varieties of human populations.

Your grade will come from four sources. You are expected to 1) collect a bibliography of at least 25 references that go beyond the assigned class reading and produce an annotated bibliography using at least the 15 most important references of your bibliography, 2) write a literature review paper that is at least 16 pages, 3) present a discussion of your paper topic, and 4) actively participate in all class discussion.

Topics

Jan 14 (1)  Introduction and organization: Brief overview and description of course, assignments and requirements, and review of COLLAB resources. An opening lecture will be given on contextualism and context in psychology.

Jan 21 (2)  Demographic and Social Facts of Ethnic Minority Peoples: We will consider the four major groups of ethnic minority Americans.

Readings:


Jan 28 (3)  Ethnic Minority Status and Science: Race and ethnicity as an anomaly in research: A historical analysis of traditional empirical psychology in the study of racial and ethnic status will be addressed. We will discuss issues regarding the limits of between-group and within group comparisons.

Readings:


Feb 4 (4)  Cross-cultural approach in research: Issues and perspective of research anomalies in psychology are considered. In particular, the role of emic and etic issues in psychological research will be addressed.

Readings:


Readings:


Feb 18 (6)  Ethnic identity and intersectional positions and multiple identities in society.

Readings:


Mar 4 (7) Historical trauma, Micro-aggressions, and Perceived discrimination

Readings:


Mar 18 (8) Disparities are discussed in income, health, and education.

Readings:


Mar 25 (9) Acculturation Stress. Critique of international cross-cultural research and testing, role of inter-culture contact, issues of majority and minority dynamics, detecting normal and abnormal behavior in different cultures.

Readings:

Apr 1 (10) Collectivism and individualism. Perspectives on basic cultural values of collectivism and individualism will be considered.

*Readings:*


Apr 8 (11) Paper topic presentation

Apr 15 (12) Paper topic presentation

Apr 22 (13) Lecture: Final words on the ethnic minority perspective within the science of psychology and the value of cultural diversity.

**Requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography &amp; Annotated Bibliographies</td>
<td>Feb 11, 2015</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review Paper (including cover page and outline of paper)</td>
<td>Apr 30, 2013</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper Presentation</td>
<td>as assigned</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Active Class Discussion</td>
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**Presentation:**

There are two types of presentations. First, you are expected to be a participant in one of two panel discussions. As a panelist, you will briefly present your topic and also be ready to present and discuss pertinent questions about your topic. Second, you will present your paper topic in a lecture format. I do not expect you to have completed your paper by the time of its presentation but you will have completed your annotated bibliography by presentation time.

Outline for Bibliography and Annotated Bibliography Assignment

1. Title or theme of bibliography and annotated bibliography must be indicated on a cover
II. Complete bibliography or reference list of all articles must be included. The format for each article is APA 5th Edition of the Publication Manual.

III. Each annotated bibliography must have the following information

A. Author. (Year). Title of article. Title of Journal, Volume Number, (Issue Number), Page Number.

B. Briefly state

1. Purpose of the study.
2. Summarize procedures
3. Summarize result

C. Critical Analysis and Personal Reaction – Briefly state your thoughts of this article. You should summarize feelings, opinions, and reaction to the article. Also reflect on experimental, statistical, or theoretical issue that might exist in the research article. It is important that you comment on the theoretical perspective and/or the assumptions regarding the cross-cultural methodology.

Some Examples of Annotated Bibliographies


**Purpose**

This article investigated the relationship between self-esteem and academic performance among black high school students. It was hypothesized that low achievers would have low self-esteem.

**Procedure**

The subjects were 148 black students, 48.6% female and 57.4% male, constituting the entire sophomore class in a high school located in an urban, inner city area in the northeastern U.S. The subjects were separated into three groups, average, above average, and below average, based on classroom grades. Then the subjects were given the Piers Harris Self-Concept Scale Test which measures self-concept along six dimensions: behavior, intellectual and school status, physical appearance and attributes, anxiety, popularity, and happiness and satisfaction.

**Results**
Above average and average students scored significantly higher than the below average students on the intellectual and school status, physical attributes and appearance, and happiness and satisfaction self-concept dimensions. The above average scores were significantly higher than those of the below average students on the behavior self-concept dimension. The above average and average students did not differ significantly on any of the self-concept dimensions.

**Conclusion**

The finding that students who are assessed as being below average in classroom tasks tend to have significantly lower levels of self-esteem than their higher achieving peers, not only in terms of their intellectual and school status, but also on other dimensions supports the theory of a ripple effect. The ripple effect means that failure on a given task can lower self-esteem of ability for that particular task, and then these low estimations can generalize to other tasks.

**Critical Analysis and Personal Thoughts**

It would be more helpful if we could determine which comes first, the low self-esteem or the low achievement in school. This analysis does not determine a direction of causation, nor does it rule out the possibility of some third confounding variable, such as relationships with parents. Teachers should help students focus on their good points to try and avoid this ripple effect.

Theoretically, this study suggests, at least minimally, that there are critical environmental variables that influence the achievement levels of minority students. However, given the suspicions regarding internal validity, it is difficult to infer. Nevertheless an important strength of the study was its sensitivity to an ethnic minority perspective.

------------ Second Example ------------


**Purpose:**

The author critiques the past research on child abuse. He reviews major themes of the research and examines the shortcomings of child maltreatment research methodology.

**Procedure:**

The author employs an extensive literature research and suggests new directions to consider in future research.

**Major Themes/Conclusions:**

1) Physical damage continues to be emphasized in studies of child maltreatment. The psychological aspects, however, have been insufficiently treated.

2) Past research has failed to differentiate between abused children versus neglected children, yet there is a qualitative and quantitative difference between the two.

3) Small sample sizes continues to hinder empirical research on child maltreatment. The author identifies small sample size as an serious anomaly.

4) Many studies fail to provide a matched comparison group in their research. Failure to properly match sample lead to intersectional identities problems.
5) The lack of standard measurements of child maltreatment has led to diverging operational definitions of child maltreatment, and hence has led to conflicts between researchers in the field.

6) In spite of these methodological shortcomings, most of the studies generally agree that there are qualitative differences in the cognitive, affective, and social characteristics of maltreatment victims.

7) IQ scores have been consistently found to be lower in abused children than nonabused individuals. They also tend to lag in language development.

8) Emotional development has been the least studied topic among psychologists. The findings that do exist indicate that abuse victims suffer lower self-esteem and insecure social attachments.

9) Abused children are more aggressive than nonabused subjects. Moreover, they exhibit hyper-vigilance and chameleon-like behavior designed as defensive mechanisms.

**Critical Analysis and Personal Reactions:**

This article underscored my feelings about the inadequacy of current child maltreatment research. With the shortcomings of this research highlighted, we may now suggest new avenues to investigate. However, the scarcity of cross-cultural research remained unaddressed. It would have been useful for the authors to examine from a cross-cultural perspective possible racial and gender effects that must exist in this particular social issue. As currently presented the authors assume that the problem of child maltreatment is universally experienced by the society.

**Paper:**

You are required to write a 16-page literature review paper which is based on your bibliography and annotated bibliography.

**Required Texts:**


COLLAB Readings


Oishi, Shigehiro; Hahn, J., Schimmack, U. (2005). The measurement of values across cultures:


