Emnekode	PSY2107 / PSYK4417
Emnenavn	Social-, Community-, and Cultural Psychology
Emneansvarlig/oppgavegiver	Mons Bendixen
Kvalitetssikret av	Ute Gabriel
Semester, år	Spring, 2024
Vurderingsform, lengde	Home examination, 1 week
Tillatte hjelpemidler	All

Emnets læringsutbyttebeskivelser angitt I kunnskaper, ferdigheter og generell kompetanse. (Henvisning med lenke til emnesiden på NTNUs nettsider er tilstrekkelig)	https://www.ntnu.edu/studies/courses/PSY2107/2023/1#tab=omEmnet
Pensum	
Eventuelle formelle krav til besvarelsen	References in APA style are preferrable. Number of words are outlined below
Hvordan de ulike oppgavene i eksamenssettet er vektlagt	Part 1 (30% of the final grade) Part 2 (70% of the final grade)

Guide for grading:

Part A
Short answer. Max 350 words per question. All three questions must be answered.

1. Explain the pathways of how the Social Comparison Theory as well as the Self-Discrepancy Theory can account for body image disturbance. Give a brief outline of the similarities and differences between these two theories and what possible interventions might look like for each theoretical approach.

Students should define the Social Comparison Theory and Self-Discrepancy Theory:

1. Social Comparison Theory:
    <u>Evaluation of Self</u>: Individuals assess their opinions and abilities by comparing themselves to others, which helps define their self-concept and influences self-esteem and social standing (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007)
    <u>Types of Comparison</u>: Upward Comparisons: Comparing oneself to those perceived as better off. Downward Comparisons: Comparing oneself to those perceived as worse off.
    <u>Impact on Self</u>: The results of these comparisons can significantly affect a person's self-esteem and motivation.
    Social comparison is particularly relevant in contexts lacking objective performance measures.
2. Self-Discrepancy Theory (Higgins, 1987):
    <u>Emotional impact of discrepancies between three self-states</u>: Actual Self: Attributes one currently possesses. Ideal Self: Attributes one aspires to possess. Ought Self: Attributes one believes they should possess.
    <u>Emotional Consequences:</u> Actual vs. Ideal Self: Discrepancies can cause dejection-related emotions, such as disappointment and dissatisfaction. Actual vs. Ought Self: Discrepancies can lead to agitation-related emotions, such as guilt and anxiety.
    The theory highlights the role of self-guided cognition in psychological disturbances that affect mood and self-esteem.

    Both theories delve into the psychological mechanisms influencing self-evaluation and perception, offering insights into how self-image and emotions are shaped by internal and external standards.

Students should then explain why these theories are relevant to understanding body image disturbances.

For the Social Comparison Theory, it is important to mention upward and downward comparisons and their effects on self-esteem and body image. For the Self-Discrepancy Theory, it is important to explain how discrepancies related to body ideals can lead to negative emotional states and disturbances in body image.

<u>Similarities:</u>

- Both, SCT and SDT put social comparison at the root of a disturbed body image
  Of course, there are several other factors that can lead to a disturbed body image (upbringing, personality, values in peer groups)
- Both theories involve internal standards and external influences affecting self-perception and emotional states.

Differences:

- Focus of Comparison: Social Comparison Theory focuses on comparisons with others, while Self-Discrepancy Theory focuses on comparisons with self-guided ideals.
- Nature of Emotional Distress: Different emotional outcomes (e.g., envy and inferiority in Social Comparison vs. disappointment and failure in Self-Discrepancy).

Social Comparison Theory Intervention:

  - Education on Media Literacy: Teaching individuals to critically evaluate the realistic nature of images and representations they compare themselves to.
  -Encouraging Non-Physical Comparisons: Promoting values and achievements beyond physical appearance.
  - Focusing on similarities instead of differences

Self-Discrepancy Theory Interventions:

  - Cognitive Behavioral Techniques: Addressing and restructuring cognitive distortions regarding self-expectations
  - Goal Setting: Helping individuals set realistic and attainable personal goals reducing the gap between actual and ideal selves
  - Focusing on differences between present and feared self, combined with finding similarities between present and ideal self

Bonus:

It is considered positive if students provide real-life or hypothetical examples to illustrate how these theories apply to actual body image issues. It is also evaluated positively if students critically analyse the potential limitations of each theory in explaining body image disturbances.

2. **You have just purchased a car with a lot of sophisticated safety equipment. After the purchase, you notice that you are driving faster and more recklessly in traffic than before. Outline the psychological risk theory that can explain this psychological process.**

The correct theory to consider is the Risk Homeostasis Theory (RHT) (see also Wilde, 1998; Steg et al., 2017, pp. 366 – 367). This theory argues that people hold a target level of risk, representing the risk they are willing to accept. When perceived risk/risk perception exceeds the target level risk, people are assumed to behave more cautiously in order to establish homeostasis. Conversely, they are expected to behave in a riskier manner when risk perception falls below the target level risk. Since novel safety equipment in most cases will reduce risk perception, the discrepancy between risk perception and

target level risk can explain the psychological process in the question (i.e., drivers adjust their risk perception up to the target level by increasing their risky behaviour, due to their risk perception being reduced by safety equipment in their new car). Outlining this discrepancy between risk perception and target level risk, and the consequent compensatory process is the minimum requirement in response to the question.

It is noted that the book chapter (Steg et al., 2017) discusses the RHT on a very general level. The lecture on driving behaviour focused on the theory in somewhat more detail aided by the diagram in Figure 1. Students are not necessarily expected to reproduce the diagram. However, a strong response may incorporate the 'inner parts' of the model (a, b, c, d, e and f). These components and their interplay generally focus on: the interaction between (a) target risk and (b) perceived risk, the consequent adjustment (c and d) and potential safety consequences (e) with a lagged temporal feedback (f) before the process repeats in a loop. The comparator operates as a "thermostat" and maintains homeostasis between a and b. The lecture focused to a lesser extent on the more peripheral/distal components in the model (Figure. 1; components 1, 2, 3 and 4) and students are not expected to outline these in full detail (also considering the limit of 350 words in responses). In addition, the lecture focused on limitations in the theory. These were in general issues related to operationalization/measurement of the target risk asserted in the model (an aspect also mentioned briefly in the book chapter: Steg et al., 2017), and the fact that most safety measures (bicycles helmets, seat belts etc.) do not seem to be subjects to strong risk compensation in meta studies, Cochrane reviews and the like. RHT also requires a certain level of awareness of the safety equipment when driving, and a strong association between risk perception and behaviour. Both assumptions are rather questionable based on available empirical evidence.
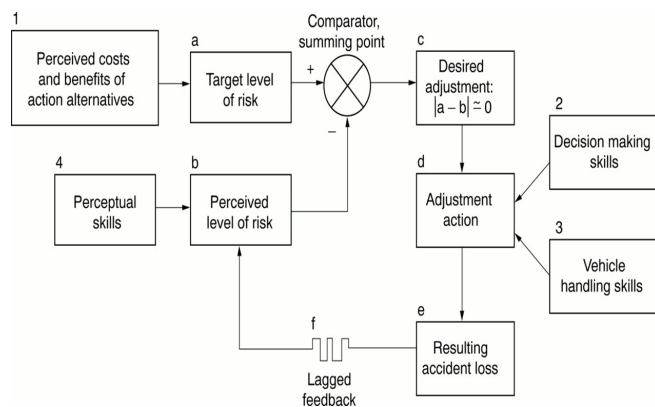

Figure 1. Risk Homeostasis Theory (Wilde, 1998; Steg et al., 2017).

3. **What do we mean when we talk about "Sense of community" and "Social capital"? How are these concepts related to each other?**

The answer should include three equally graded parts: "Sense of community", "Social capital" and comparison of these two. Students should be able to define these concepts and compare them and describe how they are overlapping/different form each other.

The sense of community is defined as "the feeling derived from belonging to a particular group where the individual experiences bonds of affection, influence, companionship and support" (Nelson & Prilleltensky, page 124). Sense of community consists following domains: membership, influence, integration and fulfilment of needs, and shared emotional connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). More recently, Wilkinson (2007) conceptualized psychological sense of community, attraction and neighboring, as parts of social cohesion (p. 103). Social capital refers to "collective resources consisting of civic participation, networks, norms of reciprocity and organizations that foster trust among citizens and actions to enhance the common good". Both sense of community and social capital deal with the intersection of people, well-being and community. The main difference between the sense of community and social capital lies in the level of analysis. Whereas the sense of community is typically measured and discussed at the group or neighborhood level, social capital research has looked at the results of cohesion at state and national levels. The sense of community is only a part of social capital. Social capital consists of four dimensions: sense of community, neighboring, collective efficacy, and citizen participation. The sense of community is commonly used in community psychology while social capital is more used in sociology, community development and political science. Social capital, in the form of connections of trust and participation in public affairs, enhances community capacity to create structures of cohesion and support that benefit the population and produce positive health, welfare, educational and social outcomes. Research indicates that communities with higher social capital are much better in terms of health, education, crime and well-being than communities with low social capital. The key issue in social capital is community members' participation in volunteer organizations, political parties, local and professional associations.

A successful answer defines the concepts sense of community and social capital and can point out the differences and similarities. A successful answer mentions the benefits of high social capital for communities. Extra points can be given for examples, but examples are not required for full points.

Part B
Essay. Max 3500 words

Select one societal challenge discussed in this course. Compare and contrast the theories and approaches that social psychology, community psychology, and cultural psychology use to address this challenge, focusing on the theories and methods that each field uses. Discuss the similarities and differences in their approaches, and how each field's perspective contributes to understanding and potentially mitigating your chosen societal challenge.

This is a test of the student's ability to compare and contrast theories and approaches to increase the understanding and possibly mitigating societal challenges.

Students need to present theories and approaches taken from **both** social- and community psychology (possibly also presenting approaches from cultural or cross-cultural psychology). Students are expected to **present** material, to formulate a **thesis** that answers the question and to **argue** for their thesis.

The answer should be made up of an introduction, a main part and a conclusion.

The Part B answer will be evaluated on four dimensions, namely content, argument, organization and style/format. The questions below are given as a guideline. As a general rule, more emphasis will be put on content (ca. 40%) and argument (ca. 30%) than on organization (ca. 25%) and style/format (ca. 5%) when assigning the grade.

1. CONTENT
   - Is the interpretation of the question reasonable, and has the student argued for their selection of theories and approaches and formulated one or more theses? (i.e., problemstillinger og/eller hypoteser)
   - Does the student present relevant material? (selected from the course literature and elsewhere)
   - Is the material presented correctly?
   - *In general, students are expected to identify central theories, concepts, methodological approaches, results and authors.*
   - Does the student integrate the material?
   - Does the student critically evaluate the material?
   - Does the student demonstrate an understanding of the topic area?

2. ARGUMENT
   - Was an argument developed and critically analyzed?
   - Is the argument logically consistent?
   - Are major counter arguments taken into account?

3. ORGANIZATION

- Is there a systematic exposition of ideas, not straying from the topic and leading to a conclusion?
- Is the answer well-structured and understandable?

4. STYLE/FORMAT
- (Intelligibility of expression, literacy and grammar)
- Evaluation of style/format should mainly focus on intelligibility of expression.

Karakterskala som er benyttet

Bokstavkarakter: https://innsida.ntnu.no/wiki/-/wiki/Norsk/Karakterskalaen