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THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA
FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY & COUNSELLING
2023/2024 – SEMESTER I —FINAL EXAMINATION



BSC (HONS) IN PSYCHOLOGY
PLU 3205 - ACADEMIC WRITING IN PSYCHOLOGY- LEVEL 3
FINAL EXAMINATION PAPER
DURATION: 02 HOURS

DATE: 26.03.2024

TIME: 1.30 PM-3.30PM

INDEX NO:

SECTION 2: STRUCTURED ESSAY QUESTIONS (60 MARKS)

Choose 04 out of the 06 questions given below and answer using the provided answer sheets

2.1 Read the following excerpt and answer the questions below:

The law of similarity, one of the two laws of sympathetic magic, was originally conceptualized by anthropologists to characterize the belief systems of preindustrial cultures (Frazer, 1890/1959; Mauss, 1902/1972). The belief underlying the law of similarity is that objects that share a similar superficial appearance also share a deeper underlying connection, such that “the image equals the object” (Frazer, 1890/1959; Rozin et al., 1990). In other words, actions taken on an object are believed to impact similar-looking objects, but notably, this research does not pinpoint the nature of the relationship between the image and its referent.

Despite its initial demonstration in preindustrial cultures, ample evidence for magical thinking, specifically the law of similarity, has been documented even among highly educated adults in modern society. Rozin et al. (1986) found that people rejected a piece of fudge resembling a disgusting object dog feces, and similarly, were reluctant to consume sugar from a jar that they had arbitrarily labeled “Sodium Cyanide, Poison” (Rozin et al., 1986, 1990). Further, people were less accurate throwing darts at photos of people they liked (King et al., 2007; Rozin et al., 1986), suggesting the law of similarity can elicit avoidance of both positively and negatively valenced objects. Notably, in the present research, we focus on positively valenced referents, or those that are seen as desirable for photo-product integration.

In all these examples, people acknowledged their behavior was irrational, but nonetheless exhibited such avoidance, indicating a “‘low-level’ gut feeling that can influence behavior despite countering cognitions” (Rozin et al., 1986, 1990, pg. 383). While thought-provoking, this body of work stopped short of identifying the specific psychological mechanisms underlying this phenomenon; thus, the literature still lacks

a clear theoretical understanding of how the law of similarity operates, particularly in consumption settings. By applying the law of similarity to products integrated with lifelike, photographic images, we contribute to this domain by identifying the underlying process driving consumer avoidance.

<https://myscp.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/jcpy.1415>

- a) Identify the two (02) main arguments presented in the excerpt. (5 marks)
- b) Explain the author's position or point of view regarding the law of similarity. (5 marks)
- c) Identify the topic sentence and the concluding sentence of the excerpt. (5 marks)

2.2

- a) List out and explain why research ethics is crucial in conducting research. (7 marks)
- b) Provide two (02) specific examples of potential ethical issues that can arise during research, and explain how each example could potentially harm participants or the research itself. (8 marks)

2.3

Write a short essay (200 words) discussing your personal experience with **stress in school** and whether you believe it helps or hinders your learning. Include the following:

- a) A suitable headline and topic sentence (5 marks)
- b) Specific examples to support your position (supporting sentences). (5 marks)
- c) Conclude with how you manage stress in your academic life. (5 marks)

2.4

Utilizing the brainstorm technique of **clustering**, answer the following questions:

- a) Use the clustering technique to identify the various factors that can contribute to stress in university students and how they can be managed. (5 marks)
- b) Based on your clusters, draft one to two paragraphs articulating why university students suffer stress. (10 marks)

2.5 Using the **listing** brainstorm technique, answer the following questions.

a) List the various communication styles that can be encountered in academic settings. Consider communication with professors, peers, and teaching assistants. (8 marks)

b) Explain the potential benefits and drawbacks of utilizing different communication styles in academic settings, considering the audience and purpose of the communication. (7 marks)

2.6 The following excerpt discusses the complex relationship between effort and status. Based on the study mentioned in the passage, does putting in effort to achieve status always backfire? Explain your answer by **paraphrasing** relevant information from the text and **citing the source(s)**.

The excerpt:

People kill for status. Sometimes literally. The desire for high-status sneakers has been inspiring robbery and murder since the introduction of Air Jordans in the 1980s, if not before (Aguirre, 2022; Telander, 1990). In India, where status historically depended more on family than footwear, parents have killed daughters to prevent them from marrying lower status men (SNS, 2022). Those who do not kill for status try to acquire it by purchasing conspicuous goods (Mandel et al., 2017; Rucker et al., 2012), collecting interesting experiences (Eckhardt & Bardhi, 2020; Keinan & Kivetz, 2011; Weinberger et al., 2017), or curating sophisticated tastes (Arsel & Bean, 2013; Bourdieu, 1984; Holt, 1998). Consumers in developed economies spend much of their income trying to gain, or at least maintain, status (Frank, 1985; Heath & Potter, 2004). Does this effort pay off? Specifically, are people who try to gain status more admired than people who reach a similar position without trying?

The answer is consequential. People with status are healthier, happier, and have better access to sustenance, money, and mates (Anderson et al., 2015; Sapolsky, 2004). But status is difficult to acquire. Status is defined as the relative amount of prestige, respect, admiration, and deference that a person receives from a group (Anderson et al., 2015; Bellezza, 2023). People cannot determine their own status—it can only be gained by earning the respect of others (Anderson et al., 2015; Benoit-Smullyan, 1944). Further, status is inherently scarce (Frank, 1985; Hirsch, 1976); for one person to rise in status, another must fall (Magee & Galinsky, 2008).

The answer remains also unclear. Classic research is associated high status with avoiding labor (Veblen, 1899), while contemporary research is associated increased labor with high status (Bellezza et al., 2017).

As labor is effortful, these findings reveal that the relationship between effort, wealth, and status remains uncertain. And it is even less clear how effort directed elsewhere influences status.

We show that effort can either increase or decrease status, depending on the goal that a person directs their efforts toward and how observers interpret the effort.

Specifically, people who try to be wealthy earn more esteem than people who are effortlessly wealthy, whereas people who try to be cool earn less esteem than people who are effortlessly cool. This is because observers perceive that wealthy people contribute more to the group when they tried to become wealthy, but that cool people contribute more when they did not try to become cool. Notably, these effects reverse when trying to earn wealth does not contribute to the group or when trying to be cool does contribute.

Our findings help explain why the same behavior may increase or decrease status. Status is awarded differently depending on the shared beliefs, or ideology, used to interpret whether a behavior contributes to the group. Groups can hold multiple ideologies, which they use to interpret whether different behaviors related to different goals contribute in different contexts. To keep the scope of our research manageable, we test this theory using one behavior (effort) directed at two goals (wealth, coolness) in one cultural context (21st-century United States). Note that the performance of the same behavior—effort, in our research—may vary depending on the goal towards which goal it is directed. For example, a consumer may try to become cool by wearing Vans and studying indie films but try to become wealthy by trading Bitcoin and studying economics.

Warren, N. B., & Warren, C. (2023)

(15 marks)

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