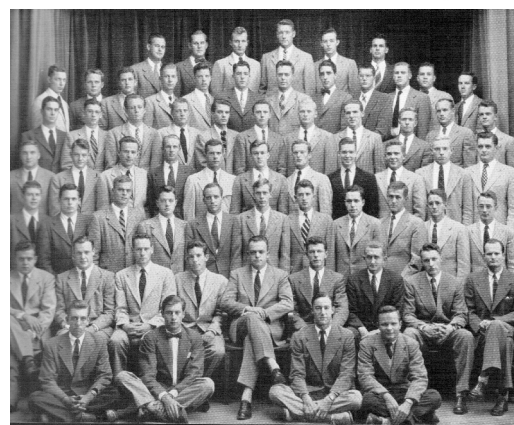


The following sample SAQ is for the learning objective: *Explain **one** principle that defines the socio-cultural level of analysis.*

What is the question asking for?

- * A clear statement of one principles that defines the sociocultural level of analysis.
- * An explanation of the principle. What is the basic assumption upon which this principle is based?
- * A study or theory may be used to illustrate the principle, but it is not required for this question.



Sample response

The principle is clearly stated.

This comment is not linked to the principle.

An explanation of why groups affect our behaviour.

More explanation of the role of groups.

A study is presented – although it is not necessary.

A satisfactory description, but the study could be a bit more precisely described.

One principle of the socio-cultural level of analysis is that our behaviour is influenced by groups, even when we believe that we are acting independently. We are constantly being influenced by our surroundings and hence we have not only a personal self, but a collective one as well. Susan Fiske says we join groups in order to belong somewhere, to understand, to control, to enhance and to trust others. This need to belong often influences our behaviour - making us do things in order to make sure that we are not isolating ourselves from the group. Deutsch & Gerhard say that one of the reasons that we conform to other people's behaviour is because of normative social influences. In other words, we compare ourselves to others and then imitate their behaviour to avoid disapproval. One study shows this was done by Asch. For each trial, Asch used six confederates and one participant in his study. They were put in a room and asked to match a line with one of three lines on a card. Even though the answers the confederates gave were obviously incorrect, 75% of the participants conformed to the incorrect answer at least once out of the 18 trials, even though the task was unambiguous. During the debriefing, many participants even admitted that they felt they had to low self-esteem when their answers did not match the unanimous response of the confederates – showing that they had a need to conform. This study shows that other people may affect our behaviour, causing us to act in a way which we would not behave if we were alone.

Predicted grade: Overall, a satisfactory explanation of the principle. The study does not really demonstrate the principle as the participants were not really "acting indepenently." Other studies may have been more relevant - for example, Sherif's Autokinetic Effect. Predicted: 5/8



What are common problems with this question?

- Two principles are explained. If more than one principle is explained, then only the first one is assessed, even if the later principle is better explained.
- The principle is stated but not explained in any detail. In other words, the assumptions upon which the principle is based are not identified.
- A study is outlined, but the focus of the response is not on the principle.
- There is only a study described, but no clear statement of the principle.
- The principle is either biological or cognitive in nature, rather than sociocultural.