Limitations and Needed Directions

Theories of Stigma

CHAPTER 8

TODD E. HEATHERTON
MICHELLE R. HELBL
EDEN B. KING
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The process of understanding the emotions involved in these interactions is complex and requires a multi-dimensional approach. Although the theory of emotional intelligence suggests that the expression of emotions should be controlled, the understanding of these emotions is also influenced by cultural and contextual factors. Theories of emotion provide a framework for understanding the expression and perception of emotions in different contexts. Understanding the role of emotions in social interactions is crucial for effective communication and relationship management.

Current Theories
could be other strategies aimed to diminish anger and stress as well.

The bottom line is that emotions influence our thoughts, actions, and decisions. The Interpersonal Emotions Theory (1969) by Henry A. Hebb, proposes that emotions are mental states that are triggered by interactions with others. This theory suggests that emotions are not just the result of past experiences, but are also shaped by current interactions. The theory emphasizes the importance of social context in emotional experiences, positing that emotions are subjective and are influenced by the social world. The theory suggests that emotions are not just reactions to past events, but are also shaped by current interactions with others.
individuals could arguably consume more resources than other individuals, making it more difficult to support the interests of the group as a whole. This might violate the norms of reciprocity and increase the likelihood of stigmatization (Neuberg et al., 2000). On the other hand, Kurzban and Leary (2001) admit that a biocultural approach cannot explain the stigma against obesity. Obesity is relatively new condition in evolutionary terms in that it is only within the last several hundred years that leisure has been coupled with excess food. Thus, evolutionary theories may have little value in understanding the stigma of obesity. Given these potentially popular and controversial evolutionary arguments, and the inherent challenge for prevention or remediation of stigma, future research should consider the stigma of obesity from a sociofunctional perspective.

System Justification Approach

A broad theoretical approach that has been applied to intergroup relations is predicated on the assumption that people justify and perpetuate the status quo (Jost & Banaji, 1994). According to the system justification approach, individuals of both high- and low-status groups reinforce existing social arrangements. Jost and his colleagues (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost, Pelham, & Carvallo, 2002) offered cognitive reasons (e.g., need for cognitive closure, uncertainty reduction) and motivational ones (e.g., belief in a just world, illusion of control) for participating in system justification. Extended to social stigma, this rationale suggests that both perpetrators and targets of stigmatization are likely to express preference for nonstigmatized (i.e., high-status) group members. This preference may, in turn, lead to the perpetuation of the existing status differences. Applied to the stigma of obesity, the system justification approach may explain why obese individuals perceive their stigma negatively. Whereas members of some stigmatized groups (e.g., African American individuals) maintain high self-esteem despite their stigma (Crocker & Major, 1989), obese individuals tend to view themselves negatively and have low self-esteem (Crandall & Biernat, 1990; Crocker et al., 1993). From a system justification perspective, obese individuals may share the thoughts and feelings of their stigmatizers and may engage in behaviors that reinforce the existing social structure and stigma of obesity. Following this approach, a first step toward remediation of the obesity stigma may be to change the reinforcing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of obese individuals themselves. The perpetuation of the obesity stigma, and the potential for its prevention, explained by a system justification theory make this an important area for research.

Justification-Suppression Model

In a departure from theories that consider the “what” (i.e., content) and the “why” (e.g., threat, survival) of stigmatization, Crandall and Eshleman (2003) proposed a model that examines the “when” of prejudice. In their justification-suppression model (JSM) of prejudice, Crandall and Eshleman describe a psychological process in which three sources of variation (i.e., genuine prejudice, suppression, justification) account for conditions under which prejudice may or may not be expressed regardless of the content or reason for stigmatization. They begin with the assumption that individuals face the conflicting demands of wanting to express their true emotions and wanting to maintain egalitarian values. The core emotional component of prejudice, termed “genuine prejudice” in Crandall and Eshleman’s model, consists of “pure, unadulterated, original, unmanaged, and ambivalently negative feelings toward members of a devalued group” (p. 422). The egalitarian component of prejudice consists of a “motivated attempt to reduce the expression or awareness of prejudice” (p. 423). This component of the JSM, termed “suppression,” can lessen the likelihood that an individual will express his or her genuine prejudice. However, “justifications” for prejudice can increase the likelihood of prejudice expression by undoing suppression and releasing prejudice. According to the JSM, the expression of prejudice is a function of the variation in genuine prejudice, suppression of prejudice, and justification for prejudice.

This integrative model of the expression of prejudice points to specific methods for investigation and remediation of the stigma of obesity. In particular, the JSM specifies that the expression of prejudice is lessened to the extent that suppression is maximized and justification is minimized. Crandall and Eshleman outline specific methods by which to achieve these ideal states. They suggest that prejudice suppression can be enhanced by extensive practice, egalitarian goal commitment, and improved cognitive resources. Furthermore, the negative effects of justification may be eliminated by avoiding the cognitions and values that serve to justify prejudice. Following the JSM, researchers of the stigma of obesity might investigate methods by which to bolster suppression in critical contexts. In the case of workplace discrimination (e.g., Roehling, 1999) it may be important that employers get trained to minimize their reliance on stereotypes of obese individuals when making job decisions. Some targets of stigmatization may limit the effects of justification by acknowledging their stigma (Hebl & Kleck, 2002), but obese individuals may need to develop other strategies to reduce justification (see Miller &
to the signification of objects, must be thoroughly revised and their theories reworked (Holtz and Kozlowski, 2002). This revision aims to facilitate the understanding of the key to conceptualization of objects, and to recognize the different dimensions of reality. For example, for some individuals, the conceptualization of objects is more specific and detailed, whereas for others, it is more general and abstract. This recognition becomes crucial in understanding the nature of objects and their significance.

Research limitations

In addition to the conceptualization of objects, we also need to address measurement and evaluation. This requires a clear understanding of the objects of interest, which can be complex and multifaceted. The concept of measurement is often misunderstood, leading to confusion and misinterpretation. Therefore, it is essential to develop a comprehensive framework that addresses the measurement and evaluation of objects.

Theoretical limitations

The focus on objects within the context of conceptualization represents a major breakthrough in the field of psychology. However, there are critical limitations to these frameworks, which need to be addressed. One of the most important limitations is the overemphasis on objects as opposed to processes. This overemphasis on objects can lead to a superficial understanding of the true nature of the theoretical frameworks presented in this chapter.

Limitations and Future Directions

The theoretical frameworks presented in this chapter are based on a comprehensive understanding of the concept of objects. However, there are certain limitations to these frameworks, which need to be addressed. One of the most critical limitations is the overemphasis on objects as opposed to processes. This overemphasis can lead to a superficial understanding of the true nature of the theoretical frameworks presented in this chapter. Future research should focus on developing a more comprehensive understanding of objects, and their role in the conceptualization and measurement of the expression of objects and their effects.
REFERENCES

In this chapter, we presented the comprehensive theoretical approaches to building a comprehensive understanding of the stigma of obesity. Thus, it is vital that theory and research continue to inform and develop models that explain and predict the ways in which obesity and related factors influence the self-esteem and self-worth of individuals. By integrating existing theoretical frameworks and incorporating new research findings, we contribute to the ongoing conversation about the stigma of obesity and the need for effective interventions to combat its negative impact on individuals and society at large.

CONCLUSIONS

Across multiple methods and across different populations and cultural contexts, the stigma of obesity is persistent and pervasive. This stigma is often internalized by individuals, leading to negative self-perceptions and feelings of inferiority. As such, it is crucial to develop effective interventions that address the root causes of the stigma of obesity and promote equitable access to healthcare for all individuals, regardless of their weight or body shape. By doing so, we can work towards creating a society that values diversity and inclusivity, and where all individuals, regardless of their weight, feel empowered and supported to reach their full potential.

NEEDS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

While significant progress has been made in understanding the stigma of obesity, there is still much to be learned. Further research is needed to explore the ways in which cultural and social factors influence the stigma of obesity. Additionally, more research is needed to understand the impact of the stigma of obesity on mental health and well-being. By addressing these gaps in knowledge, we can continue to develop effective interventions that promote health equity and reduce the stigma of obesity worldwide.
CHAPTER 9

Measurement of Bias

ROBIN K. MALLER
BETHANY A. TEACHMAN

MEASUREMENT OF BIAS

Origins, Explanations, and Measurement