

ACQUISITION OF INTERGROUP DISCRIMINATION BEHAVIOUR

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It has been recognized since long that individuals often favour ingroup members at the expense of those in the outgroup. Several attempts have been made to scan the social and psychological factors that contribute to prejudice towards and discriminations against the outgroup members. In doing so, attention has been focussed on the factors of conflict arousal, relative outcomes, communication structures, and cooperation and competition. Relatively little attention has been paid to the effects of sharing or not sharing some category or group label in emergence of the discriminatory behaviour (Dwivedi, 1974 b; Tajfel, 1969; Tajfel and Jahoda, 1966; Tajfel and Wilkes, 1963).

Rabbie and Horowitz (1969) demonstrated the minimal conditions necessary for arousing intergroup discrimination. They created experimental situations wherein one group experienced a reward, while the other one a deprivation. A chance win or loss for a subgroup, determined by the flipping of a coin, was found sufficient to produce pro-ingroup bias. However, simply classifying the subjects into subgroups of blue or green without attaching reward or punishment failed to induce such a discrimination.

Tajfel, Billig, Bundy and Flament (1971) disagreed with the findings of Rabbie and Horowitz (1969) on the ground that an appropriate test of categorization producing bias was not provided. Mere classification of subjects, they reasoned, as blues or greens without attaching any psychological significance to the labels,

leaves the classification as esoteric and without impact. Accordingly, they suggested that members belonging to each of the subgroups must have been made to feel that they had something in common, either in terms of differential outcomes or of some attribute or trait which would have distinguished them from outgroup members. In their two experiments, Tajfel *et al* (1971) classified the subjects on the basis of the scores they obtained on a perceptual preference whereafter the subjects were asked to award or penalize others on a booklet comprising of 18 matrices purported for ingroup, outgroup and intergroup choices. The Ss awarded more rewards to the members of their own groups. In a subsequent experiment more awards were assigned following the scheme of maximum joint profit where individual choices were difficult. These choices were closely distributed along a point of fairness or the 'generic norm'.

Reasoning that the forced-choice situation of favouring member of either one or the other group renders methodological flaw in the studies of Tajfel *et al*. (1971). Gerard and Hoyt (1974) contended that "...in addition to creating impactful group categories, eliminating intergroup competition or expectations in future interaction, etc., the subjects should be able to make discriminatory responses, if such a tendency exists, but an invitation or demand towards such responses should not be inherent in the experimental situation (p. 837)". Accordingly Gerard and Hoyt (1974) attempted to test the hypo-

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thesis about the relative favourableness of ingroup evaluations to increase with the increasing distinctiveness in ingroup membership. Ingroups of 2, 5, and 8 members were created by an experiment of estimations of numbers of the dots on a card held by the experimenters. The *Ss* then wrote a short essay and evaluated essays written by the two other *Ss*, one of them happened to be an ingroup member and the other one an outgroup member. Results supported the hypothesis that the smaller the ingroup the more favourable would be evaluations of the ingroup writer relative to the outgroup writer.

The present study aimed at observing the emergence of pro-ingroup bias with the groups of moderate size of ten *Ss* in each. Using verbal reinforcements, contrary to the monetary as used by others, the present study attempted to observe discriminations against outgroup members. It was hypothesized that there would be discriminations against *Ss* of the outgroup and intergroup even when there were no apparent reasons in terms of the *Ss*' own vying interests. It was also hypothesized that in intragroup comparisons the discrimination would be observed in terms of maximum fairness.

Method

Subjects: Forty boys, aged 12 to 15 years, of Class VIII of a local school served as the *Ss* of the present study. The *Ss* were randomly divided into four groups of ten each, but were told to have been divided on the basis of their performance on the preliminary task of the span of attention. The *Ss* were from the same school and hence they knew each other fairly well. One *S* from each group worked at a time, and thus, they worked in groups of four.

Materials: The 'Intergroup discrimination matrices booklet' (Dwivedi, 1974, a) was used. On each page of this booklet there was one matrix consisting of 14 boxes, containing two numbers in each. The numbers in the top row were rewards and punishments to be awarded to one person of either the same group or of the outgroup and those in the bottom row were those to be allotted to the other one. Each row was labelled as "The praise and condemnations for a member of your group" or "... of the other group" as was the case of either of the 'ingroup', 'outgroup', or 'intergroup' situations. There were six matrices and each appeared thrice in the booklet, once each, for ingroup, outgroup, and intergroup situations, thus 18 in all. A pen or pencil was used for assigning the rewards and punishments.

Experimental Design: The *Ss* were divided in four groups and were asked to assign their responses in terms of praises and condemnations to others on an intergroup discrimination matrices booklet. The divisioning of the groups was done for categorization purposes and the influence of this grouping was to be noted for each of the three conditions of comparison of discrimination *per se*.

Procedure: The experiment was conducted in two parts. The first part may be conceived as the preparatory phase of the experiment, wherein the *Ss* were asked to observe and count the dots of a series of span of attention cards. The *Ss* were, for this preparatory or categorization phase, tested in whole group and span of attention cards bearing some dots were shown to them by the experimenter. Each of these cards was displayed for two seconds only and the *Ss* were asked to guess and write the number of dots on a sheet of paper. Half of the *Ss* were told that some people respond almost instantly

while others respond with delay. The remaining half of the *Ss* were told that some persons count the dots very accurately while others follow approximation for the counting. Their responses were collected and ostensibly scored then and there in presence of the *Ss*.

The *Ss* were apparently told that those who responded immediately were grouped as one and those who gave delayed responses were grouped together, and similarly, those who gave accurate responses were grouped as one group and those who were less accurate in their responses were grouped together. Though these groupings were done randomly, the *Ss* were informed that the grouping was done on the basis of their obtained score on the immediately finished span of attention experiment.

In the second phase of the experiment, one *S* from each group was put to work at a time. Each *S* was seated on a separate table and *E* distributed the 'Intergroup discrimination matrices booklet' (Dwivedi, 1974a) to them and asked them to fill in their name, age, class and group they belonged to. The instructions for the forthcoming task followed. The *Ss* were told individually that their task would consist of giving to others the praise and condemnations without knowing their identity. The *Ss* were told that they would work separately and the praise or the condemnations assigned by them would be kept confidential. It was repeatedly stressed that they would never award or punish themselves, instead they would always be allotting praise and condemnation to others.

As there were six matrices and each appeared three times, once for each of the ingroup, outgroup, and intergroup, the top and bottom rows signifying group positions were varied at random. The *Ss* had to check, by marking a tick, the appro-

priate box signifying the highest or lowest number of praise or condemnation. The *Ss* were told that the high numbers stood for praise and the low for the condemnations. After *Ss* had awarded praise and condemnations, the matrices were collected and analyzed in terms of choices awarded by them to different groups.

Results

The responses, obtained in terms of preferences, were scored by ranking them from 1 to 14 depending on which box was checked. The box of the matrix which awarded the ingroup member minimum number of points was designated as 1, whereas the other end which gave the ingroup member the maximum point was kept as 14. The mean choices and corresponding S.D.s for all the four groups for each of the three situations were computed, which are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1
MEAN CHOICES AND S.D.S ON INTERGROUP DISCRIMINATION EXPERIMENT

Groups	CONDITIONS					
	Ingroup		Outgroup		inter-Group	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Immediate	8.67	1.62	6.21	2.10	9.19	1.25
Delayed	7.32	2.25	6.13	1.58	7.56	1.29
Accurate	8.15	1.66	6.56	1.10	8.77	1.55
Less-Accurate	6.52	2.12	6.26	2.12	7.88	1.17

It would become apparent from the above Table that the choices have been assigned in a hierarchical order of intergroup occupying the highest ranks, outgroup occupying the lowest ranks with the ingroup holding an intermediary position. This supports the findings of

Tajfel and his collaborators (Tajfel, 1969; Tajfel *et al.* 1971) who contend that an ingroup member is always preferred as compared to an outgroup member, since the group cohesion warrants it. Contrary to the above, those belonging to outgroup are always discriminated against and ranked for choices without seriousness. In the comparison between ingroup and outgroup, i.e. in the intergroup condition, the ingroup member is always favoured and an outgroup member is always rejected.

These observations needed further statistical corroboration and the 't'-ratios were computed to substantiate the said expectations arising out of the data obtained. The 't'-ratios were therefore, computed between ingroup-outgroup, outgroup-intergroup, and ingroup-intergroup comparisons. The following Table No. 2 provides the obtained 't'-ratios.

TABLE 2

'T' RATIOS COMPUTED FOR ASCERTAINING SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONDITIONS

Groups	CONDITIONS COMPARED		
	Ingroup-outgroup	Ingroup-intergroup	Outgroup-intergroup
Immediate	2.83*	0.82	3.92**
Delayed	1.29	0.30	2.75*
Accurate	2.69*	0.88	3.74**
Less Accurate	0.28	1.81	2.16*

* Significant at .05 level of confidence.

** Significant at .01 level of confidence.

The 't'-ratios presented in Table No. 2 provide, among other things, that all the comparisons have yielded a superior position of ingroup over outgroup, intergroup (in favour of ingroup) over outgroup, as also over ingroup. All the 't'-ratios corroborate the contention that the members of one's own group receive better

treatment and preference than the members of the other group. In making their intergroup choices, a large majority of Ss, in all groups and in all conditions, preferred to assign more praise to members of their own group than to the members of the other group. All the mean ranks of the intergroup condition were above the rank of 7.5 which represents their leaning towards the member of their own group.

The high level of significance of intergroup over outgroup, and suggestible (under delayed and less accurate groups) but statistically not significant superiority of intergroup in favour of ingroup member over the ingroup, corroborate and confirm the first hypothesis which envisages discrimination against outgroup member even without any apparent reason in terms of individual's own interests of possible gain as a result of the discriminating against the outgroups. Though prior to this experiment, there was no evidence of an outgroup pre-existing and sharpening the reactions against themselves, the group categorization helped in creating the discriminations *per se*. The group categorization by arbitrary standards or otherwise help developing a 'generic norm' and as a consequential pattern the discrimination ensues. Since all mean ranks in intergroup comparison are above 7.5, which represents the point of maximum fairness, the second hypothesis contending the distribution of intergroup discrimination along the point of the maximum fairness, also stands confirmed.

Discussion

The results support the prediction that the group categorization, even by quite arbitrary means, produces discriminatory evaluations. Since the groups were categorized by unspecified standards and

the interests of the subjects were not curbed by their awarding of choices as they always assigned praise and condemnations to other two persons whose identity was never defined or disclosed to them, the generic norm found ample pace to develop. The resultant was an intergroup discrimination. The need to bring some kind of order into our social construction of reality gets embedded with the hostility inherent in many of the intergroup categorizations to which we are continually exposed. The results make it evident that whenever we are confronted with a situation to which some form of inter-group categorization appears directly relevant, the prejudices and discriminations against outgroup and favour for ingroup or pro-ingroup bias, follow. The results support the expectations of Gerard and Hoyt (1974) that arousal of pro-ingroup bias in the evaluation of products is contingent upon group categorization *per se*.

As a sequel to the consequences, referred to above, the Ss, inasmuch as they did not know who was to be awarded and who was not to, had no option but to assume either of the two choices, viz., either choosing the maximum joint profit scheme or choosing maximum fairness. Results have indicated that they tried to choose the second alternative as long as their choices were not involved in terms

of a distinction between an ingroup and an outgroup. When this differentiation came to the fore, they discriminated in favour of their own group rather than choosing the first alternative of maximum joint profit. It is evidenced from the present results that the intergroup discrimination works as a deliberate strategy in making intergroup choices.

The observation of intergroup discriminatory behaviour in the present experiment even in the lack of monetary gain or loss, is a pointer of confirming the results of Tajfel *et al.* (1971). It is obvious from the trend of results of the present experiment that the discrimination is more directly a function of the social situation with which an individual finds himself attached. Stated otherwise, this refers to the implications arising out of the socialization process. The child, in his course of socialization, learns not only whom he should like or dislike in the complex social environment to which he is exposed but also something more basic. Pursuant to the above, the present experiment has demonstrated confirmatory evidence to the 'similarity attraction hypothesis' of Byrne (1969), and propositions of Harding, *et. al.* (1969), insofar as their contentions about the intergroup attitudes as learned, multi-casually determined, and functional or need satisfying in character are concerned.

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