
Book Reviews

The Measurement of Human Aggressiveness. *G. E. Edmunds and D. C. Kendrick.* Chichester, England, Horwood (Halsted Press), 223 pp.

PERSONS, SITUATIONS, AND AGGRESSION

The Measurement of Human Aggressiveness presents an attempt to develop and validate a questionnaire measure of aggressiveness. As you might guess about anyone who would attempt this task, Edmunds and Kendrick initially assumed that they would find consistent individual differences. By the end of their efforts, they have converted to person-situation interactionism, a somewhat more modern faith. Unfortunately, their research serves best as an example of the difficulties facing a trait-based approach to personality. It offers little new insight for either the person-situation debate or the study of aggression.

The most interesting feature of Edmunds and Kendrick's work is their willingness to cross disciplinary boundaries in seeking validation for their measure. They compare their questionnaire measure to ratings of aggressiveness, criminal records, and delivery of shocks in a laboratory situation. Their failure to find strong relations among measures is, indeed, pertinent to cross-situational consistency in aggressiveness. Such comparisons are also important to the study of aggression for reasons that go beyond the person-situation debate. Undoubtedly, delivering noxious stimuli via a shock machine involves a constellation of factors different from those surrounding assaultive crimes or ratings by observers. If the factors are different enough, then the various research traditions have focused on essentially unrelated phenomena.

Because the original purpose of this research was to validate the questionnaire measure of aggressiveness, Edmunds and Kendrick compare the nonquestionnaire measures to the questionnaire, but not to each other. This severely limits the relevance of their work to broader issues. It is quite possible that there is a great deal of consistency among some of the nonquestionnaire measures. There may also be other versions of some measures that would fare far better. For example, Edmunds and Kendrick use only official (arrest) data for criminal activity, a measure generally acknowledged as represen-

ting a small fraction of a person's illegal activities. Self-report measures avoid that problem and are readily available. The point is not that the authors chose the wrong measures, but rather that the issue of cross-situation or cross-method consistency is much more complex than the research they offer.

Not only is Edmunds and Kendrick's research limited in these ways, but their results add little to what has been found by others. As they themselves allows:

Certainly from our review of the literature regarding questionnaire measures of aggressiveness, we found little cross-situational consistency between self-ratings of aggressiveness, observer-rated aggressiveness, known acts of violence, and experimentally induced aggression. Our thinking at the time of writing the review in the early 70s regarding the evidence was that there was something wrong with the measures! (p. 192).

I wish that Edmunds and Kendrick had shown more foresight. If they had considered the possibility of obtaining similar results (as was to be the case), they might have used research designs that would be more informative about the generality versus specificity of aggressiveness. It is surprising that the authors expected substantially different results than they were to obtain, considering the methods they chose. They derived their measure by factor analyses of the seven subscales of the Buss-Durkee Inventory. Their own literature review found little empirical support for the validity of this inventory, in terms of either subscales or the total score. Given those results, it would be very unlikely that factors based on the common variance of the subscales would be much more successful.

On the other hand, the authors can be commended for conducting a very thorough validation study. Their factor analyses yielded two stable factors, which they labeled Aggressiveness (instrumental aggressiveness) and Hostility (injury-reinforced aggressiveness). These factors consistently emerged for four samples of males, but the pattern did not hold for females. In addition to the tests of external validity, construct validity was examined in terms of sex differences, social class differences, and correlations with the Green and Stacey measure of aggressiveness and with Eysenck's personality dimensions. The authors find considerable support for the construct validity of their Aggressiveness factor, but not for Hostility.

There are some serious weaknesses to the authors' presentation of the material. The opening chapters on theories of aggression, aggressiveness, and measurement are so brief as to mean little to anyone not already familiar with the material. Throughout the book the arguments given for conceptual and methodological choices were sketchy to the point that I was often at a loss as to the authors' reasoning, even though the path taken was on the surface quite plausible.

The lengthy review of questionnaire measures of aggressiveness should be valuable to anyone interested in that method. The book would appeal

to a broader audience if it contained equally thorough reviews of the literature for other types of measurement. Unfortunately, as the above quote implies, the review that is included obviously was written several years before the book was completed. The most recent reference I found in this section was dated 1972.

Edmunds and Kendrick's ultimate adoption of the interactionist perspective is far from satisfying, even though it is compatible with their findings. The authors' conversion does not serve as an occasion for integration and synthesis, but rather as an opportunity for surrender without remorse. After following their efforts for 200 pages, the reader arrives at their conclusion that this sort of work isn't worth much.

That's a shame, because there is no end of raw materials available for a synthesis. They can be found in conceptions of personal and situational determinants of aggression in fields from ethology to criminology. Though the authors offer the mathematics of Catastrophe Theory as the basis for this synthesis, they are not able to accomplish much in the two pages they devote to the topic. The interactionist position holds out the hope of a more sophisticated understanding of the complexity of human behavior. When it is used merely as an excuse for failure, we are better off without it.

To summarize, though *The Measurement of Human Aggressiveness* presents a competent piece of research, it is a very limited book. Its strengths are the review of questionnaire measures of aggressiveness and the thorough examination of the validity of the authors' measure. Unfortunately, the results were not supportive, and their interpretation of the findings in terms of the person-situation debate contributes little.

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Scheme Theory: A Conceptual Framework for Cognitive-Motivational Processes. *Gudrun Eckblad*. London, Academic Press, 1981, V + 131 pp.

AN INTRODUCTION TO COGNITIVE RESEARCH

The book is modest in length but broad in its intended scope. In the words of the author, it seeks to "account for all types of human motivation in one unified framework." As one might surmise from the title, the framework selected to accomplish this purpose is scheme theory.

The organization of the book is straightforward. Chapter 1 is the introduction, but unlike many introductions that may be scanned quickly and

somewhat cursorily, this chapter is required reading. It represents a thorough, albeit somewhat laborious, treatment of theory and concepts that the reader must know to understand the remaining text.

Chapter 2 continues the presentation of basic concepts and relationships, providing a concise explanation of terms such as *scheme*, *assimilation*, *accommodation*, and *equilibrium/disequilibrium*. In combination with the introduction, this chapter serves as a brief but comprehensive primer for understanding the theoretical underpinnings of a wide range of current cognitive research. The chapter also develops an intriguing model of scheme development that blends the basic concepts of scheme theory with Brunswik's hierarchical lens model and Hebb's phase sequence theory. In this reviewer's opinion, the first two chapters represent the primary strength of the book.

The third chapter seeks to tie the foregoing model into the broad domain covered by intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Thus, it represents the most critical chapter in the book if the author is to accomplish her stated purpose. Unfortunately, the chapter is not equal to the task. The task requires a clearly articulated development of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and an explicit statement of the processes by which these concepts influence behavior. Instead the reader is provided with a somewhat tautological explanation that defines intrinsic motivation as a "state where the present activity is spontaneously active" but does not give an adequate analysis of how such a state comes to exist. Further, while several theories are reviewed as alternatives to scheme theory (e.g., reversal theory, attribution theory, achievement motivation theory) and are discarded as inadequate, the review tends to present these theories as "straw men" rather than providing a clear statement of weaknesses and ensuing recommendations that lead compellingly to scheme theory. There is too often the tendency to aver the scheme theory overcomes the weaknesses of an alternative perspective without a comprehensive statement about how it does so.

Chapter 4, entitled "Applications of Scheme Theory," helps to offset some of the weaknesses inherent in the preceding chapter through the use of specific examples. Unfortunately, even with the examples, the chapter tends to present a schematic of what occurs rather than an explanation of why it occurs. Further, the concept of intrinsic motivation retains its blurred outlines. For example, the author argues that all stimuli are intrinsically attractive until they have been identified at the required level for the ongoing activity. Finally, the book acknowledges the role of individual differences in the desirability of different levels and types of sensory stimulation but generally fails to discuss the implications of such differences.

The final chapter, "Comparison and Evaluation," represents a return to the level of writing seen in the first two chapters. The presentation of concepts is clear and relevant. Many of the ideas are thought-provoking and

many of the conclusions are compelling. For example, the author argues that “the account of the cognitive processes itself may be incomplete as long as the mechanism of central control is not treated in the same framework and to the same depth as the more subordinate information handling processes.” (p. 110). Unfortunately, the reader is likely to find little more than the bare beginnings of such a framework in the present text.

In sum, the book presents an excellent introduction to a wide variety of theories and concepts that are relevant to understanding scheme theory in particular and recent cognitive research in general. Unfortunately, it does not succeed in pulling these concepts into a theoretical model that accounts for both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. When this failure is combined with the relatively high cost of the book, it seems unlikely that either the readership or the scientific impact of this text will be great.

In large part, the failure of the book seems to reflect an inappropriate choice of format. The underlying ideas are good and would have formed an excellent basis for a review article in a journal such as *Psychological Bulletin*. Similarly, if expanded and refined through the greater use of specific examples and the systematic development of current theory and concepts, it offers the potential to educate the reader about cognitive theory and to stimulate new research. In this reviewer’s opinion, the ideas expressed in the book do have the potential to be developed into the type of model the author seeks if given sufficient additional time and nurturance. I look forward to the future efforts in this direction.

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