PSY 222 Project Two
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Research Study: Escaping Affect: How Motivated Emotion Regulation Creates Insensitivity to Mass Suffering

1. Analyze the **introduction** section of the research study in about 50 to 100 words. Include the following in your response:
   A. The title of the article
   B. The purpose of the study
   C. How the article's introductory content is relevant and how it logically leads into the study

   I will be analyzing the introduction of the research study titled, "Escaping Affect: How Motivated Emotion Regulation Creates Insensitivity to Mass Suffering". The purpose of the study is to determine if self-regulation of emotions would increase an individual's levels of compassion for multiple victims instead of viewing multiple victims as a statistic. The article's introductory content explains the two reasons, concluded by previous research studies, why there is a collapse of compassion when there are multiple victims. The two reasons are affective triggers and motivated emotion regulation. Each factor is a way to explain why there is a collapse of compassion and explaining both is a great way into the study. The explanations teach the readers what previous studies have concluded, and the study done in this experiment will test both of those findings to see if they can be replicated.

2. Analyze the **method** section of the research study in about 250 to 350 words. Include the following in your response:
   D. The study's method and design
   E. The study's primary hypothesis and claim
   F. How the method and design align with the primary hypothesis to reach a strong conclusion
   G. How the researchers made measurements and whether they were good choices for the conceptual variables
   H. How the researchers obtained participants, how many participants there were, and their characteristics
   I. The sampling characteristics (sample size, strategy, composition, etc.) as they relate to this study

   The study had two hypothesis to test using 3 different experiments. Experiment one focused on the first hypothesis, "... that the collapse of compassion would emerge most strongly when there is a clear motivation to avoid feeling compassion for multiple

victims" (Cameron & Payne, 2011, p. 3). Experiments two and three focused on the second hypothesis "... that the collapse of compassion would depend upon emotion regulation" (Cameron & Payne, 2011, p. 3). For the first experiment, the participants included 120 college students. 84 participants were female and 36 were male. All students were from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The participants were randomly assigned to one of two groups. Both groups read about one to eight children from Darfur. However, one group was told they would have to report a donation amount later on; whereas the other group was told they would have to rate their emotions toward the children. The design was a 2 (number of victims) x 2 (expectation to help) between-subjects design, with the self-reported emotion being the dependent variable. Participants saw the same Darfur information and completed a nine-item scale that measured their compassion-related feelings toward the children. They also completed other scales that measured alternative reasons why there could be a collapse of compassion. Psychological distance was measured using the eight item Distance scale, diffusion of responsibility was measured using the two-item Diffusion scale, and perceived efficacy was measured using the two-item Efficacy scale. Participants also answered questions regarding their race and gender. For the second experiment, the participants included 60 college students. 49 of the college students were female and 11 were male. All students were from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Participants were randomly assigned to view one, four, or eight children from Darfur. The same images used for experiment one were used in this experiment. Online emotion rating was calculated for this experiment and time was the within-subjects factor. Participants had a real time emotion rating while viewing the images. They could slide the emotion bar between 1 (not at all upset) to 11 (Extremely upset). All groups were told that after they rated their feelings, they would be asked how much money they would donate to help the victims. After completing the online emotion rating, participants completed the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale and were asked questions about their race and gender. For the third experiment, participants included 112 college students. 84 of the participants were female and 28 were male. All students were from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Participants were randomly assigned into groups. Both groups were shown images of one or eight children in Darfur. One group, the regulation condition group, was told to have a detached and unemotional attitude when viewing the images of the Darfur children. The other group, the experience condition group, was told to experience any feelings they had and focus on those feelings. The online emotion rating used in experiment two was also used in experiment three. After completing their online emotion rating, the participants completed the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule and answered questions regarding their race and gender. The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule measured the participants state mood. Each method and design for the experiments aligned with the primary hypothesis to reach a strong conclusion. The researchers choice of measurements were good choices for the conceptual variable. Although, efficacy was measured using only a two-item scale which may not be as effective as other forms of measurement.

3. Analyze the **results** section of the research study in about 50 to 100 words. Include the following in your response:
   A. The "big idea" of the analysis (compare means, look for relationships, assess frequency, etc.)
   B. How the primary hypothesis was supported
   C. The analysis used for the primary hypothesis

For experiment one, compassion toward victims was measured using a two-way between-subjects analysis of variance was used to compare the number of help requests to the number of victims on compassion. The results showed that the difference in compassion between 1 to 8 victims is influenced by the expectedness of the participants to be asked to help the victims. When participants were shown 8 victims, they were more likely to show compassion when they were not asked to help. Likewise, when participants were shown 1 victim, they were more likely to show compassion when asked to help. Psychological distance was measured using the eight-item Distance scale. There were no significant differences between the number of victims and the help requests. Efficacy was measured using the two-item efficacy scale. Efficacy did not change when help was requested, or the number of victims changed. For the second experiment, log-transformed valued in subsequent analyses was used to analyze the online emotion ratings. The Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale was used as a moderator variable because it was not impacted by the number of victims. The results showed that participants felt more upset towards the end then at the beginning. They also felt more upset when it was one victim than when it was multiple victims. Participants who regulated their emotions better showed more emotions than participants who were not good at regulating their emotions. Researchers did a regression analyses testing the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation scale x the number of victims at each time interval. Results showed that participants who regulated their emotions better had more collapse of compassion than poor regulators. For experiment three, the same log-transformed valued in subsequent analyses was used to analyze the online emotion ratings. The results also showed that the participants felt more upset towards the end then at the beginning. The three-way interactions between time, emotions, and number of victims showed that over time, the regulation instructions effected the amount of emotion between one and eight victims. In the regulation group, participants showed more emotion toward one victim than eight. In the experience group, the number of victims had no effect on emotions. Researchers also tested affect intensity using PANAS. The results were analyzed using a 2 (Regulation instruction) x 2 (Number of victims) ANOVA. For the positive and negative effects, there was no significance. Affective intensity was obtained by adding the positive affect and negative affect scored. The experience condition had more affect intensity than the regulation condition.

4. Analyze the **discussion** section of the research study in about 150 to 200 words. Include the following in your response:
   A. The major findings
   B. The strengths and limitations described in the study
   C. The conclusions and whether they were supported by the method that the researchers used
   D. Whether the claims and inferences the researchers draw seem appropriate, given their findings
   E. How the study could be improved or extended in future research

One of the major findings of the study was the collapse of compassion is dependent on the expectation of having help. Greater compassion was shown toward eight victims than one when people did not expect to receive help and less compassion was shown toward eight victims than one when people did expect to receive help. Therefore, emotion regulation can influence the collapse of compassion. Another major finding of the study is people may numb their emotions before viewing photos of victims and rationalize their behavior afterwards. Emotion regulation may be related to morality. The conclusions were supported by the method that the researchers used. The researchers conclusions were based off of their analyses of their results, as well as the results from previous studies. The claims and inferences the researchers draw seem appropriate, given their findings. There are strengths and weaknesses to the study. One weakness is that the variables measured in the three experiments conducted were measured using self-reporting tools. "Our studies relied on self-report measures of emotional experience, which leaves open the possibility that the results were influenced by demand effects or social desirability" (Cameron & Payne, 2011, p. 12). Self-reports may not provide accurate results which interferes with the reliability and validity of the study. Another weakness of the study is that some of the observations made were not explained by the experiment or data. The researchers stated "... it is difficult to see how a demand account can explain the specific patterns we observed. In particular, only skilled emotion regulators showed the collapse of compassion in Experiment 2. If faking drove the effects, there is little reason to expect only skilled regulators to do so" (Cameron & Payne, 2011, p. 12). The study can be improved by using measures that do not rely on self-reports. One strength of the study is that three experiments were conducted to measure different variables and gain a more accurate conclusion. By conducting different experiments and measuring different variables allowed for researchers to better understand how the variables effect one another and if a mediator variable was needed. Mediators can be helpful to researchers because "when researchers propose a mediator, they are interested in isolating which aspect of the presumed causal variable is responsible for that relationship" (Morling, 2020, p. 6.3). Another strength of the study was "The dynamic measures in Experiments 2 and 3 allowed us for the first time to capture emotions toward victims in real time. We were therefore able to assess whether participants experienced strong emotion toward multiple victims and then eliminated it or whether they never experienced strong

emotions at all" (Cameron & Payne, 2011, p. 3). The strengths of the study allowed to confirm or deny the findings of previous study and open the door for future research studies. The study's findings may encourage studies to focus on the relationship between emotional regulation and morality. To the extent that deliberate analysis contributes to emotion regulation, removing deliberation may be another future direction of research.

5. Explain how the findings of this research study could apply to your **personal or professional life** in about 50 to 100 words.

The major findings of this research study could apply to my personal life. The main finding of the study is that greater compassion is shown toward eight victims than one when people do not expect to receive help and less compassion is shown toward eight victims than one when people do expect to receive help. I will keep this finding in mind during my everyday life. For instance, when I witness an individual getting bullied, I am more likely to show compassion towards the victim. Whereas if it is a group of people getting bullied, I am less likely to show compassion towards them.

References

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