

# FEAR OF SOCIAL ISOLATION

---

Aman Pandya

11481

- A modified version of social isolation experiment by Shoemaker, Breen and Stamper.
- Experiment mainly to test an assumption from the Spiral of Silence theory by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann

# Spiral of Silence

- Directly inspired from the work of Solomon Asch.
- Introduced the concept of fear of social isolation.
- ‘Social nature’ of humans cited as the prime reason of fear.

# Social Anxiety

- Connection between self consciousness and a fear of being negatively evaluated by others – Monfries and Kafer (1994).
- Two types of self consciousness – public and private.
- Public self consciousness closest to fear of isolation.
- “Fear of loss of social approval identical to FNE”

# Hypotheses

- The more a person fears negative evaluation, the less discrepancy there will be between the person's opinion and perception of the predominant opinion.
- The more a person fears negative evaluation, the less likely he or she will be to discuss a minority opinion.

# Method

- Participants would be required to fill 2 survey forms.
- First will measure opinion variables.
- Second would assess fear of negative evaluation variables.
- Pearson correlational coefficients used to relate the opinions.

# Expected Results

- Minimal discrepancy between individual opinion and perceived dominant opinion.
- Greater the FNE, lesser will be the tendency to voice minority opinion.
- Gender variations in FNE.

# References

- Shoemaker, Breen and Stamper. 'Fear of Social Isolation: Testing an assumption from the Spiral of Silence', Irish Communications Review, Vol 8, 2000.
- Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, 'The Spiral of Silence: Public Opinion - Our Social Skin'.
- Asch, S.E. (1951) 'Effects of group pressure upon the modification and distortion of judgements'.
- Asch, S.E. (1952) 'Group forces in modification and distortion of judgements'.
- Watson, D. & Friend, R. (1969) 'Measurement of social evaluative anxiety'.



THANK YOU

---

Questions?

# Extra Slides

# Expected Response

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Individual's opinion*	3.82	1.19	396
Individual's perception of the predominant opinion*	3.55	1.06	363
Discrepancy between opinion and perception of predominant opinion**	0.74	0.87	359
Willingness to express individual opinion***	3.33	1.29	400
I worry about seeming foolish to others*	2.52	1.13	403
I worry about what people think of me even when I know it doesn't make any difference *	2.42	1.02	402
I become tense and jittery if I know somebody is sizing me up*	2.59	1.05	401
Other people's opinions do not bother me****	2.75	1.09	403
When I am talking to someone I worry what they may be thinking about me*	2.36	0.97	403
I often worry that people who are important to me won't think very much of me*	2.32	0.97	402
Fear of negative evaluation index	14.94	4.44	400

# Opinion Survey

- Individual opinion: Should the option of euthanasia be legally provided?
- Perception of the predominant opinion: Thinking about the people you normally socialize with, what would be their opinion on the subject?
- Willingness to express individual opinion: If you were at a social gathering and people there were discussing the mentioned issue, how likely would you be to enter the conversation if views are different from your own?

# FNE Survey

- I worry about seeming foolish to others.
- I worry about what people think of me even when I know it doesn't make any difference.
- I become tense and jittery if I know someone is sizing me up.
- Other people's opinion of me does not bother me.  
(Reverse coded)
- When I am talking to someone, I worry about what they may be thinking of me.
- I often worry that people who are important to me won't think very much of me.

# Pearson Correlation Coefficient

$$r = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})(Y_i - \bar{Y})}{\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2} \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^n (Y_i - \bar{Y})^2}}$$