

ISSUES IN PSYCHOLOGY



ETHNOCENTRISM OF PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH

DESCRIPTION OF ETHNOCENTRISM

- This refers to the belief that one's own group (eg; ethnic, social, cultural) is the most important and superior to that of others.



- As individuals & groups we find it hard to think beyond our own cultural experience
- This means that **research may be biased**: psychologists may design research or draw conclusions that makes sense or applies to their own cultural group only.

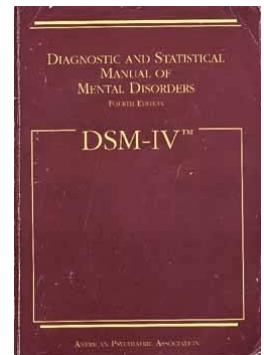
ETHNOCENTRIC RESEARCH

- Much research is based on American / European groups.
- Eg: **Piliavin's** observations on helping behaviour were limited to observations of New Yorkers



- Research into stress: **Holmes & Rahe**, & **Kanner** assumed that life events & daily hassles apply universally

- The **DSM-1V** may be biased & lack validity when applied to non-Western countries.



STRENGTHS OF STUDYING ETHNOCENTRISM

- Allows us to discover the **diversity** of behaviour & experience throughout the world.
- Encourages **researchers to be wary** of assuming their culture is superior and making biased conclusions about human behaviour.
- By understanding the mechanisms of ethnocentrism, we may be able to **improve society**. (eg; **Reicher & Haslam**)
- It may allow us to **discover** which behaviours are **inherited** and which are **learned** (cross-cultural studies) (eg; Autism is found in all cultures, social groups, etc.)

WEAKNESSES OF STUDYING ETHNOCENTRISM

- Difficulty in comparing cultures with **diverse philosophies**. (see **Chadda & Ahuja, 1990**)
- **Language/interpretation difficulties** in cross-cultural research
- **Samples** from studies may be **small and unrepresentative**, & difficult to generalise.
- Eg: Mental illness in Indian subcontinent (“Dhat”), diagnosed with depression. Only 7 participants (**Chadda & Ahuja, 1990**)

ETHNOCENTRISM OF PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH

This means:

Strengths of studying



Evidence:

Weaknesses of
studying

