

TALK

UNCERTAINTY REDUCTION AS AN UNDERLYING MOTIVE FOR OPTIMAL DISTINCTIVENESS

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ABSTRACT

Following the emergence of uncertainty identity theory (Hogg, 2007), the popularity of optimal distinctiveness theory (Brewer, 1991) has dwindled somewhat. While there's been expansive evidence in favor of each theory, little work has investigated the relationship or impact between the two. More specifically, the needs for assimilation (belonging) and differentiation (uniqueness) as postulated by the optimal distinctiveness model may be better understood as derivatives of the desire to reduce self-uncertainty. It's this in-progress proposal's aim to address the overlap between these two theories by experimentally testing the mediating effect of uncertainty on the relationship between the need for assimilation and differentiation and social identity. Participants will be sampled from the American population ($N = 400$) through the crowdsourcing platform MTurk. They will be administered one of four randomly assigned need conditions and be placed in either a minority or majority group following a dot estimation task. Feelings of uncertainty and level of group identification will be measured at the study's conclusion. It's predicted that participants will only identify with their respective group when experiencing feelings of uncertainty. Additionally, participants experiencing uncertainty and a need for belonging will identify more strongly with the majority than the minority group. The inverse will be true for participants experiencing uncertainty in the need for uniqueness condition. The findings from this in-progress experiment will demonstrate the mediating effect of uncertainty on the optimal distinctiveness model.