

Discovering Psychology: Judgment and Decision Making

- I. Biases in Judgments:** Systematic ways of thinking are responsible for errors in judgment sometimes called cognitive illusions.
- A. Reasoning under uncertainty → no list of rules (such as propositional calculus) can aid you in determining the relative merit of each option.
 - B. We often use mental shortcuts (or rules of thumb) called heuristics when making decisions. These heuristics may usually lead to correct conclusions, but they can also lead us astray when they are used inappropriately.
- II. Daniel Kahneman & Amos Tversky:**
- A. Two Approaches to Decision Making:
 1. Normative Approach - Asks the questions: (1) “How people ought to make decisions?” and (2) “What is the nature of rational decision making?”
 2. Descriptive Approach - Looks at how people actually make decisions.
 - B. Heuristics:
 1. Are there more words that have the letter ‘K’ as a 1st letter or a 3rd letter?
Heuristic ? _____
 2. You are to spend a month in the Middle East which would you worry most about a terrorist attack or and traffic accident?
Heuristic ? _____
 3. Linda is 31 years old . . . Which is more likely? Linda is a bank-teller or is a bank-teller and a feminist?
Heuristic ? _____
 4. Is the Mississippi river longer or shorter than _____ miles?
Heuristic ? _____
 - C. Risky Choices and Framing Effects: the outcome of a decision can be influenced by (1) the background context of the choice and (2) the way the question is worded (framed).
 1. Are people usually “risk adverse” or “risk seeking”? _____
- III. Group Decision Making and Group Think:**
- A. Characteristics of Group Think:
 1. Self-censorship of doubts.
 2. Unanimity of group (silence is seen as consent)
 3. Illusions of invulnerability
 4. Mind guarding - guard members of group from any information that may aid them to change their mind.
 - B. Ways to avoid group think:
 1. nominate a devils advocate
 2. bring in outsiders to raise questions or objections
- IV. Cognitive Dissonance (Leon Festinger) -** conflict between our beliefs and our behavior results in cognitive tension (cognitive dissonance) and we are motivated to change in order to reduce this tension by:
- A. Changing the way we think about the situation.
 - B. Changing the way others think about the situation.
 - C. Changing our behavior.