

CARD 01 | CORE IDEA

What does social comparison theory explain?

Answer on reverse

CARD 02 | ORIGINAL THEORY

What did Festinger propose in 1954?

Answer on reverse

CARD 03 | THREE STEPS

Which three ideas must stay separate?

Answer on reverse

CARD 04 | UPWARD TARGET

What is an upward social comparison?

Answer on reverse

CARD 05 | DOWNWARD TARGET

What is a downward social comparison?

Answer on reverse

CARD 06 | LATERAL TARGET

What is a lateral social comparison?

Answer on reverse

ANSWER 02 | ORIGINAL THEORY

People seek to judge their views and skills. When no clear test is at hand, they may use social clues. A target who seems similar on the trait can give more useful information.

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ANSWER 01 | CORE IDEA

It explains how people use other people as clues when they judge an opinion or ability, most of all when no clear objective test is at hand. It does not say that every peer view is a contest.

Evidence-bounded to article SHA f62f71aff55e

ANSWER 04 | UPWARD TARGET

The target seems to do better on the trait in view. A stronger peer paragraph is one example. The result can be a useful next step or a gap that feels too wide.

Evidence-bounded to article SHA f62f71aff55e

ANSWER 03 | THREE STEPS

Target direction says who seems better, worse or similar. Reaction says whether the self moves towards or away from the target. Outcome says what changes next, such as effort, mood or strategy.

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ANSWER 06 | LATERAL TARGET

The target seems close to the same level on the trait in view. It can give a fair benchmark, support joint work or make a small peer gap feel stark. It is not always the healthiest type.

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ANSWER 05 | DOWNWARD TARGET

The target seems to do less well on the trait in view. It can bring calm, pride, concern or little change. It does not always raise self-esteem or reduce effort.

Evidence-bounded to article SHA f62f71aff55e

CARD 07 | ASSIMILATION

What is assimilation after a comparison?

Answer on reverse

CARD 08 | CONTRAST

What is contrast after a comparison?

Answer on reverse

CARD 09 | WHAT SHAPES IT

What can change the response to the same target?

Answer on reverse

CARD 10 | RESEARCH PATTERN

What did Gerber, Wheeler and Suls find?

Answer on reverse

CARD 11 | CLASSROOM EVIDENCE

What does classroom research warn us about?

Answer on reverse

CARD 12 | TEACHER BOUNDARY

How can a teacher shape the comparison context?

Answer on reverse

ANSWER 08 | CONTRAST

The view of the self moves away from the target. The same strong model can make a learner think, 'That shows how far behind I am.' The model did not change; the reading did.

Evidence-bounded to article SHA f62f71aff55e

ANSWER 07 | ASSIMILATION

The view of the self moves towards the target. A learner sees a strong model and thinks, 'That step is within reach for me.' Direction and reaction are separate ideas.

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ANSWER 10 | RESEARCH PATTERN

Across more than 60 years of research, upward choice was common in two-option tests and contrast was the main reaction. These are group trends, not rules for one learner.

Evidence-bounded to article SHA f62f71aff55e

ANSWER 09 | WHAT SHAPES IT

A fair match, the size of the gap, the value of the task, a sense of control and the learner's goal can all shape the response. No one cue sets the result.

Evidence-bounded to article SHA f62f71aff55e

ANSWER 12 | TEACHER BOUNDARY

Make task rules clear, keep marks private, show how models were made, use more than one good route, compare new work with past work and ask what the peer model means. Do not diagnose from one response.

Evidence-bounded to article SHA f62f71aff55e

ANSWER 11 | CLASSROOM EVIDENCE

Learners may choose a similar peer who does better. This can aid work yet also harm mood or academic self-concept. Class mean and group context matter, but no one result predicts each learner.

Evidence-bounded to article SHA f62f71aff55e