

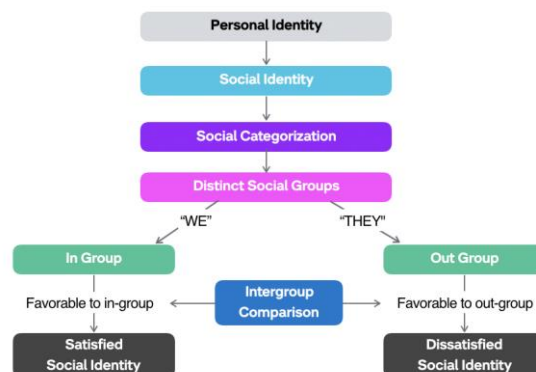
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After examining Mason's case study, I have written the report below using the three psychological theories:

- Social identity theory
- Theory of Planned Behaviour
- Frustration Aggression Hypothesis

The aim of this report is to help understand why Mason, who at first seemed positive at the opportunity at starting college, after release had not be attending college courses and being associated with former associates.

¹Social Identity theory



¹ Source: Tajfel (1979)

The first theory that I will be looking at to understand Mason's behaviour is Social identity theory. Henri Tajfel's was the psychologist who had constructed what is known as the social identity theory. According to a definition from *SimplePsychology* 'Social identity' is a person's sense of who they are based on their group membership. Tajfel (1979) proposed that the groups (e.g. social class, family, football team etc.) which people belonged to were an important source of pride and self-esteem. Groups give us a sense of social identity: a sense of belonging to the social world. Mason Kabee is a young man who has served an 18 months custodial sentence for possession of drugs. He had entered a joinery apprenticeship with a local college, however the youth offending team had been notified that Mason has not been attending his college course. I propose that Mason's 18 months in custodial sentence has caused him to feel isolated from his fellow peers who have been able to continue their education, this could be a possible reason why Mason had stopped attending his classes.

Henri Tajfel proposed that stereotyping (i.e. putting people into groups and categories) is based on a normal cognitive process: the tendency to group things together. In doing so we tend to exaggerate differences and similarities. As a result we divide the world into "them" and "us" based through a process of social categorisation. If Mason does not feel like he identifies with his fellow peers on his course, according to the Social identity theory, he will class them as the out group, therefore will find a group that he identifies with the most. This could most likely be the reason why Mason was seen to be hanging around with his former associates as they are familiar to him and he can identify with their particular behaviour. Using Tajfel theory, the central hypothesis of social identity theory is that group members of an in-group will seek to find negative aspects of an out-group, thus enhancing their self-image. This could explain why Mason had shown an aggressive response to the police as they would be considered the out group.

Tajfel and Turner (1979) proposed that there are three mental processes involved in evaluating others as "us" or "them" (i.e. "in-group" and "out-group". These take place in a particular order:

Categorisation

The first is categorization. We categorize objects in order to understand them and identify them. In a very similar way we categorize people (including ourselves) in order to understand the social environment.

Social Identification

In the second stage, social identification, we adopt the identity of the group we have categorized ourselves as belonging to. If for example you have categorized yourself as a student, the chances are you will adopt the identity of a student and begin to act in the ways you believe students act (and conform to the norms of the group). There will be an emotional significance to your identification with a group, and your self-esteem will become bound up with group membership.

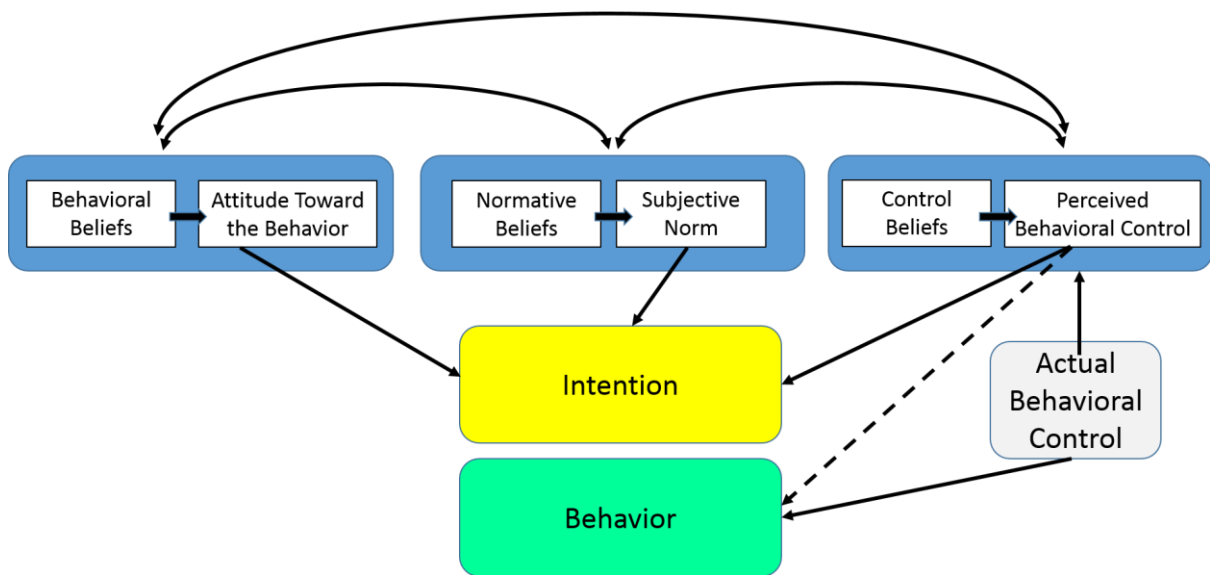
Social Comparison

The final stage is social comparison. Once we have categorized ourselves as part of a group and have identified with that group we then tend to compare that group with other groups.

By looking at this theory, we can see why Mason has categorised himself with his former associate and why he views himself different from his course mates.

Theory of planned behaviour

The theory of planned behaviour is a theory created by by Azjen (1985). The theory suggests that an individuals decision to engage in a behaviour can be predicated by their intention to engage in that behaviour. Taken from Azjens theory, 'Intentions are assumed to capture the motivational factors that influence a behaviour; they are indications of how hard people are willing to try, of how much of an effort they are planning to exert, in order to perform the behavior. As a general rule, the stronger the intention to engage in a behavior, the more likely should be its performance' (Ajzen, 1991 p. 181).



The theory of planned behaviour has three variables. The first one being personal attitudes. This is an individual's personal attitude towards a particular behaviour. Their personal attitude is affected by their attitudes, knowledge, experience etc... By understanding this variable, it might help to be wary that as a result of Mason's upbringing, education, circumstances, his attitude towards a particular behaviour will be different to an individual who has had a better upbringing.

The second variable being subjective norms. This is how we view the ideas of other people about the behaviour. If Mason is hanging around peers who have a certain attitude towards certain behaviours this may make him believe that, that particular behaviour is acceptable. For example, if Mason's peers believe that it is not worth attending college and instead engage in criminal activities, then Mason will adopt these behaviours.

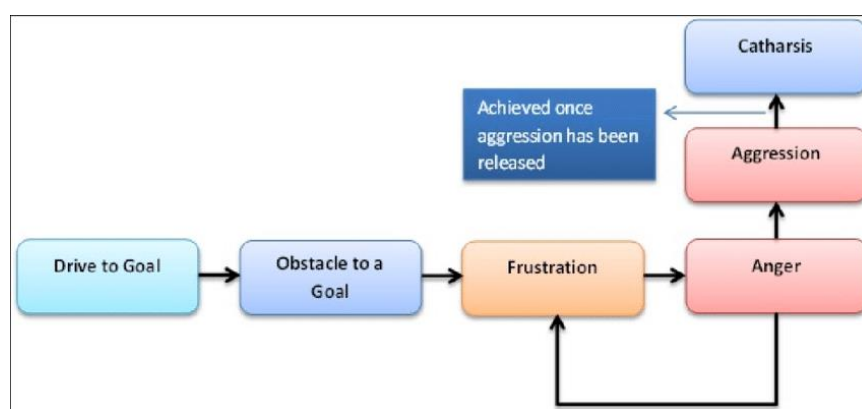
The perceived behavioural control is the extent to which we believe we can control our behaviour. This depends on things such as internal factors such as our own belief in our ability and determination to act on or against a behaviour and also external factors such as resources and support. Mason may also not have the resources and support around him to help stop him from engaging in certain behaviours and instead support and encourage him to attend his college course.

² Source: Azjen (1985)

Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis

The first to formulate the frustration-aggression hypothesis were the Yale University researchers John Dollard, Leonard Doob, Neal Miller, O. H. Mowrer, and Robert Sears (1939). The frustration-aggression hypothesis is based on the psychodynamic approach. When people are frustrated, they experience a drive to be aggressive towards the object of their frustration, but this is often impossible or inappropriate, so the source of their aggression is displaced on something or someone else.³

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Dollard (1939) puts forward that frustration often leads to aggressive behaviour. This is because frustration causes tension when our efforts are blocked by an obstacle. Frustration is also where it that prevents an individual from attaining a goal and it's accompanying reinforcement quality (Dollard & Miller, 1939). In Mason's case, this can explain his reaction towards the youth offending team. Mason could be frustrated for a number of reasons. He could be frustrated as a result of not attending his college course and not attaining results. He could also be frustrated at feeling misunderstood by the youth offending team. As stated by the theory, because Mason cannot target his frustration at a particular feeling or situation, his frustration has been displaced and directed at the youth offending team.

³ Brookes, E. (2021, Sept 20). The theory of planned behavior. Simply Psychology. www.simplypsychology.org/theory-of-planned-behavior.html

⁴ Source: Dollard (1939)

Competition between multiple people can also be a cause of frustration (Deutsch, 1949). Berkowitz (1989) noted that “competitive encounters are at least partly frustrating as the contestants block each other’s attempts to reach the disputed goal and threaten each other with a total loss.” We have to consider the perhaps Mason could feel frustrated at the difference between himself and his peers at college and also not fitting in with the former associates known to the police who may have a certain opinion of college.

Conclusion

Taking these three theories into account, this should help create an understanding for Mason’s behaviour and will help the youth offending team

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