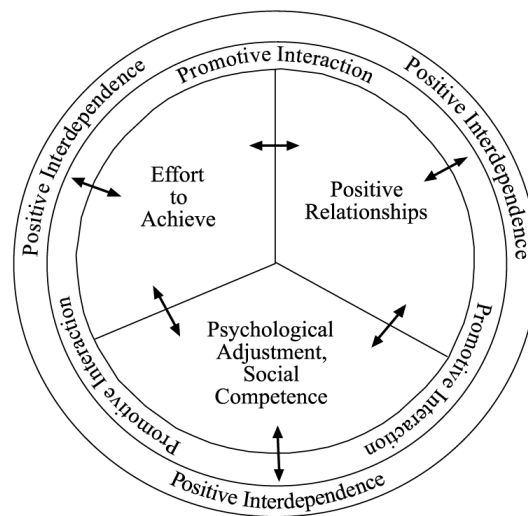


Social interdependence exists when the accomplishment of each individual's goals is affected by the actions of others (Deutsch, 1949, 1962; Johnson, 1970; D. W. Johnson & R. Johnson, 1989). There are two types of social interdependence, positive (cooperation) and negative (competition).

- Positive interdependence exists when individuals perceive that they can reach their goals if and only if the other individuals with whom they are cooperatively linked also reach their goals and, therefore, promote each other's efforts to achieve the goals.
- Negative interdependence exists when individuals perceive that they can obtain their goals if and only if the other individuals with whom they are competitively linked fail to obtain their goals and, therefore, obstruct each other's efforts to achieve the goals.
- No interdependence results in a situation in which individuals perceive that they can reach their goal regardless of whether other individuals in the situation attain or do not attain their goals.¹

Fig 1 ²



Source: Johnson and Johnson (1995)

Psychological Processes

The psychological processes created by positive interdependence include substitutability (the degree to which actions of one person substitute for the actions of another person), inducibility (openness to being influenced and to influencing others), and positive cathexis (investment of positive psychological energy in objects outside of oneself) (Deutsch, 1949, 1962).

These processes explain how self-interest is expanded to joint interest and how new goals and motives are created in cooperative and competitive situations. Self-interest becomes expanded to mutual interest through other people's actions substituting for one's own, through an emotional investment in achieving goals (that benefit others as well as oneself and generalizes to caring and committed relationships with those who are working for the same purposes and goals), and through an openness to being influenced so that joint efforts are more effective.

Demonstrating the transition from self-interest to mutual interest is perhaps one of the most important aspects of social interdependence theory.

Positive interdependence results in promotive interaction, negative interdependence results in oppositional or contrient interaction, and no interdependence results in the absence of interaction. Promotive interaction may be defined as individuals encouraging and facilitating each other's efforts to complete tasks, achieve, or produce in order to reach the group's goals. It consists of a number of variables, including mutual help and assistance, exchange of needed resources, effective communication, mutual influence, trust, and constructive management of conflict.³

¹ Johnson & Johnson & Smith (2007): 16 Educ Psychol Rev 19:15–29

² <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/fig/1350080301003.png>

³ Johnson & Johnson & Smith (2007): 16 Educ Psychol Rev 19:15–29