Int. j. adv. multidisc. res. stud. 2025; 5(3):322-326

Received: 23-03-2025
Accepted: 03-05-2025

International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies

ISSN: 2583-049X

Impact of Cognitive-Social Representations on Relational Blood Donation Behaviors: A Medical-psychosocial Approach

Housni Kossai
Faculty of Letters and Humanities, University Mohammed V, Rabat 10000, Morocco

DOI: https://doi.org/10.62225/2583049X.2025.5.3.4231
Corresponding Author: **Housni Kossai**

Abstract
This study presents an inventory of the most important theories on social representations and their impact on blood donation behaviours within the framework of health psychology, since social representations are among the factors that determine psychosocial behaviours. Social representations are potentially stereotyped beliefs and attitudes. They can influence the behavior of individuals and determine, among other things, whether or not they accept to donate their blood. As included Theories, incredibly endorsing the Specific study of social thinking and its relationship with blood donation behavior. Indeed, this study also analyzes the impact of these theories on behavior, clarifying factors that influence and encourage the blood donation process.

Keywords: Social Representations, Blood Donation Behavior, Health Psychology

1. Introduction

Blood donation is an important modern concept that has been associated with many social, economic, cultural, medical and psychological issues. It has grown out of the scientific and technical advances in health care for the continuity of the human blood cycle. Scientists, thinkers and doctors are interested in this concept because it is the dividing line between death and life for many patients. Research in sociology, psychology and health psychology has shed light on the characteristics of blood donation, but has not provided enough information to understand why people give blood. However, they have all examined the relationship between psychosocial motivations and initial donation and frequency of donation, bridging this “gap” in understanding why people donate blood. It may seem surprising that researchers should use theories that apply to healthy behaviors to study blood donation. Indeed, this is part of the field of health, but we're talking here about a donation behavior, not a measure to improve the health of the people who adopt this behavior. With the help of various theories on individual behavior, researchers in this field are attempting to identify the psychological and social motivations that guide and adopt this behavior, with the aim of developing effective interventions.

The use of blood transfusion began with the Second World War, when scientific advances continued to become more precise. They made it possible to benefit from the therapeutic power of blood until there was an urgent and necessary need for blood. Similarly, some societies were able to obtain blood from their citizens, while others found a shortage of it, and then blood became a necessity for mankind, prompting governments to do all they could to solve the problem. Evidently, the life force increased and shifted to blood transfusion for children facing poor medical, family and economic conditions. In 1950, philosophers, moral theorists and ecclesiastics approached this concept by studying and analyzing it on the basis that the body compensates for blood and restores the loss of it within six weeks, unlike the loss of any other body component, and from this point of view, blood transfusion was seen as life-saving (Russel Fermez-la 1981 p 22) [1].

One of the first researchers to stress the importance of blood donation as a humanitarian act was British sociologist Richard Titmus. In 1971, in his book “The Donation Relation ship: From Human Blood to Social Policy Approaches”, he emphasized that the practice of free blood donation grew out of the debate on the factors associated with blood donation as a commercial product. It was the belief so common in 1971 that free blood donors in the U.S. were a myth, pointing out that 47% of the blood collected was by paid professional donors, and that it appeared from their social characteristics that they were poor and drug-addicted. So the risks of blood transfusion would be high, and adopted Titmus' critique of operations. Blood transfusions purchased from American donors as more likely to transmit the hepatitis A virus, are credited with the publication of this book as decrying American practices that involved the sale of blood as opposed to free donation in Britain, which led to the process

being abandoned shortly afterwards (Joël Schwartz 1999 p 2) [3]. Whereas the fourth position sees blood as a commodity traded on the market, it is bought and sold, and its price is determined according to its quality and efficacy, just like any other commodity (Johnson David 1976 p107-110) [4]. In the light of all these situations, it is possible to shed light on the question of blood donation from more than one angle. Economic and philosophical, sociological and psychological, as we shall try to show in this article.

2. Peculiarities of social thinking and its relation to blood donation behavior

Social thinking refers to the way in which individuals perceive the social world around them, and includes the social, cultural and psychological factors that influence their behavior and attitudes. Among the topics that can be studied using social reasoning are blood donation issues. Despite the importance of blood donation in saving the lives of those in need, few people give blood regularly. Studies indicate that social and psychological factors may play a role in the form in which individuals donate blood.

Through social reasoning studies, it has been shown that social perceptions about blood donation influence intentions, attitudes and behaviors related to blood donation. Many theories and concepts in the field of social thinking have been studied to understand how these social and psychological factors affect blood donation behaviors and attitudes. Thus, understanding the relationship between social thinking and blood donation can help to design effective awareness campaigns to increase the number of donors in general and increase perseverance in donation on a permanent basis. Before doing so, however, we will attempt to address all the psychological and social elements that control this thinking and play a role in the construction of dominant knowledge, ideas and beliefs, by trying to understand the problem of social representations in their relationship to the construction of attitudes, motivations and behaviours linked to blood donation.

3. Social representations and attitudes to blood donation

Social representations are an important concept in the social and psychological sciences, as they are defined as a set of knowledge, beliefs and values shared by social groups. Such knowledge, beliefs and values are important to individuals, helping them to understand and interpret the world and their interactions with their social environment. In sociology, social representations have been studied for social systems as products of the processes of social interaction and communication that occur within a society (Moscovici, 1984). In anthropology, social representations have been studied as a cultural construct that reflects the beliefs, values and norms of a particular society (Durkheim, 1912) [6]. In social psychology, social representations have been studied as a belief phenomenon enabling individuals to make sense of the social world around them (Moscovici, 1984). Social psychology researchers have used a variety of methods to study social representations, including content analysis, surveys and interviews (Goff, 1995). The concept of social representations originated with French researcher Serge Moscovici in 1961, and definitions and concepts related to this concept have varied through numerous research studies and theories.

3.1 Social representations according to Moscovici

Social representations have been defined and studied in several disciplines, and according to Moscovici (1984), social representations are forms of social knowledge shared and prepared by individuals in their everyday social interactions. They are tools of belief that enable individuals to understand and interpret the social world around them. Consequently, social representations are forms of collective thought that emerge from the interaction between individuals in a particular society. Moscovici's theory of social representations is based on the idea that individuals construct knowledge and meanings through social interactions, by connecting with others in their social environment. This theory proposes that social representations are forms of shared knowledge, the "common sense" that develops in specific social groups and provides a framework for interpreting the world and reality. Social representations are formed from two levels of reality: The level of tangible reality, which refers to directly observable physical objects, events and phenomena; and the level of symbolic reality, which includes the beliefs, values and social norms that govern social relations. Social representations are also characterized by their ability to influence individual behavior and attitudes, in addition to their role in the construction of social identity and social differences.

According to Moscovici, social representations are created through social communication processes, which involve the active participation of individuals in complex social interactions. These processes are characterized by phenomena such as meaning attribution, meaning negotiation and meaning production, which are essential for understanding how social representations are constructed and shared (Moscovici, 1984).

Moscovici's theory of social representations also proposes that social representations are associated with the objects, events and phenomena that led to their creation. This means that social representations are constantly changing, as they are constantly affected by social interactions and changes in the social environment (Moscovici, 1987) [11]. Ultimately, Moscovici's theory of social representations provides a framework for understanding how individuals construct and share knowledge and meaning in their social environment. This theory is relevant to many disciplines, including social psychology, sociology, anthropology, communication, and public health (Godley, 1989; Wagner and Hayes, 2005 [13]).

3.2 Godley's social representations

Godley (2008) defines social representations as knowledge shared between people in the community. This includes visions, concepts, perceptions, beliefs, fantasies, misconceptions, myths, values, expectations, customs, traditions, methods, language and other non-contents. Aware that individuals can use to interpret, clarify and direct their social behavior, actions, thoughts, feelings, communications and relationships in the social world. This means that social representations form a diverse group of concepts, beliefs, myths, values, traditions, styles, languages and this affects how they think, behave and interact with the social world.

3.3 Social representations according to Abric

In Abric's theory, social representations are a system of values, concepts, symbolic gestures, feelings, beliefs, memories, personal models, shared histories and knowledge shared by social groups and cultures, which are used to explain and interpret different practices, phenomena, objects

and individuals in the social world (Pére Rbeurk, 2003, p 15). In other words, social representations constitute the collective understanding of social reality and influence the interactions, behaviors, attitudes and decisions made by individuals in their society and culture.

Social representations develop through individuals' interactions with their social environment and culture, and the influence of the information they receive and the experiences they have. It is reinforced by various social contacts, including the media, education, religion, institutions, organizations and groups.

In Abric's theory, social representations are analyzed by the basic elements that make them up, which include: Target group, subject, meaning, symbolism, distribution and index. According to him, social representations are made up of three main elements:

1. **Social element:** This is the content that is represented and refers to the social subject under discussion, such as gender, racism, religion, politics, etc.
2. **Represented group:** This is the group representing the social element, characterized by its distinctive social characteristics, and with which the social element is associated.
3. **Interpretations and meanings:** The way in which the social element and the group represented are interpreted, and these interpretations are affected by cultural, historical and social factors.

Abric therefore stresses the importance of social representations for understanding the behavior of individuals and their interpretations and meanings, as well as for understanding social dynamics and the changes taking place in societies. Social representations are also essential for understanding relations between groups and individuals, and how social identity is formed.

4. Relationship between social representations and blood donation behavior

Donating blood is an act of giving and solidarity, and helps save human lives. Blood products are essential to the practice of modern medicine, particularly in the care of patients suffering from chronic diseases, cancer, injuries and natural disasters and road accidents. However, blood donation is still not sufficient to meet the growing needs of the world's population. According to the World Health Organization, around 118.4 million units of blood are collected worldwide each year, representing only 62% of global needs. This figure is therefore of particular concern in low- and middle-income countries, where the availability of blood products is low.

Blood donation is a voluntary, charitable act based on individual and social motivations. Social representations of blood donation represent the beliefs, attitudes and behaviors shared by blood donors and non-donors that influence their decision to give blood or not. Social representations of blood donation can vary according to culture and country, religious beliefs and social norms, communication strategies and public health policies. It has to be said that understanding these social representations is essential to improving awareness and motivation towards blood donation.

Research into social representations of blood donation is relatively new and has not developed to include more complex aspects of social representations of blood donation, such as the psychosocial aspects of blood donors and non-blood donors. The relationship between social representations and actual blood donation behavior is a subject of great importance worldwide. Blood donation being a charitable and humanitarian act of great importance. So the aim of this article is to understand the social representations of blood donation in Moroccan society and analyze the different factors influencing these representations of perceptions, such as culture, education, religious beliefs and fear of blood-borne diseases as raised by the article on the theory of mental sociology seeking to understand social stereotypes and their relationship with blood donation behavior from the point of view of social psychology.

In general, this article will contribute to improving our understanding of the representations of blood donation as a social act in Moroccan society and the factors that influence them, which may help to strengthen confidence in blood donation, increase the number of donors and improve the general state of health in our Kingdom. As already mentioned, social representations can be defined as forms of social knowledge shared and constructed by individuals in their daily social interactions, and play a role in shaping the behaviors and attitudes of individuals within a specific society (Moscovici, 1984).

When it comes to blood donation, social perceptions can play an important role in the individual's decision whether or not to give blood. According to some studies, social representations can be linked to beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviors related to blood donation (Goff, 1995; Noel, Gigon & Martin, 2009 [19]).Thus to understand social representations of blood donation in the Moroccan context, it is important to consider research conducted in other cultural and social contexts outside Morocco. In this context, we will review research on social representations of blood donation, focusing on the factors that influence individuals' decision to donate or not, such as religious beliefs, fears and attitudes towards blood donation. Numerous studies have been carried out worldwide on social representations of blood donation. For example, a study conducted in Tunisia showed that social representations of blood donation are influenced by the individual's religious beliefs, cultural, social and economic dimensions (Bin Hussein, Ben Mohamed and Bouruiser, 2013) [20]. Another study in Egypt shows that social and cultural factors greatly influence social representations of blood donation, in particular the widespread idea that blood donation leads to a loss of energy and physical strength (Khalil and Hassan, 2016) [21]. In Morocco, another study has shown that social representations of blood donation vary according to geographical region and local culture, but revolve around the values of solidarity, giving and appreciation of human life (Ait El Hussein *et al*, 2020) [22]. Another study in Morocco again indicates that social representations of blood donation are strongly associated with religious factors and beliefs and human values related to charity work (Zaz, 2015) [23]. It's important to note that, although social representations of blood donation vary from culture to culture and society to society, there are certain reasons that apply to every country in the world (with their different social and cultural specificities) linked to blood donation, which can influence social representations in different cultures and societies. These include, for example, the urgent need for blood in the event of a medical

emergency or accident, and the importance of blood donation as a charitable and humanitarian practice. In addition, the media can play an important role in shaping social representations of blood donation. A study, among others, in Iran showed that the media can influence social representations of blood donation by covering blood donation events and broadcasting blood donation-related media campaigns (Zeinali *et al*, 2019) [24]. From the same perspectives, some studies indicate that social representations of blood donation may be affected by individuals' past donation experiences, as negative or positive experiences may influence their perception of blood donation in the future (Shahin *et al*., 2019) [25]. In addition, some studies indicate that social representations of blood donation may differ between the sexes, as in some cultures men tend to donate more blood than women, due to different cultures and social traditions (Darvish *et al*, 2020) [26]. For example, much research indicates that psychological factors such as fear, anxiety and reluctance to donate blood can influence social representations of blood donation and reduce the percentage of donors (Sharif *et al*, 2020) [27]. In addition, cultural and religious factors can influence social representations of blood donation. For example, some studies indicate that certain cultures promote the idea that blood donation leads to loss of energy and weakness, which affects the percentage of donors in these cultures (Zerbouh *et al*, 2019) [28]. In the same context, religious factors can also influence individuals' perceptions of blood donation, as some studies indicate that religions that prohibit blood consumption influence individuals' decision to donate blood (Abu Al-Hassan *et al*, 2020) [29]. It is also important to examine regulatory factors that may influence social representations of blood donation, such as legislation, regulations and policies related to blood donation. For example, several studies indicate that certain laws imposing fees on donors or prohibiting donation by groups carrying transmissible diseases can affect the percentage of donors and social representations of blood donation (Al-Madina *et al*., 2018) [30]. In addition, socioeconomic factors can influence social representations of blood donation, such as economic status, health awareness and health culture in the community (Al-Bashir *et al*., 2016) [31].

5. Conclusion

Generally speaking, social representations of blood donation vary according to culture, society and social, economic, cultural and religious factors. Indeed, these representations are an essential part of human behavior towards blood donation. This article can therefore help to understand the social representations of blood donation through theories that explain it, and identify the factors that influence them in the light of previous literature in this field. Some of the factors influencing social representations of blood donation can be identified, including psychological, cultural, religious, educational, social, economic and organizational factors. A critical review of this specialized literature effectively confirms the convergence between the results of these psychosociological studies on blood donation around the world. A consensus of specialists in this field guides us perfectly well in the approach adopted in this article, which emerges from our working research in the field of health psychology.

6. References

1. Scott Russell. The body as property New York, The Viking press, 1981.
2. TITMUSS RM. The gift relationship: From human blood to social policy, London, Allen & Unwin, 1971.
3. Schwartz J. Blood and altruism, 1999. www.ehostvagw7.epmel.com/fulltext.asp?reust Setld Roooooo & hit Num 103 & boo le26/09/2001.
4. Johnson David B. Blood policy: Issues and Alternatives. Conference on blood policy. Washington, D,C American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Researchi, 1976.
5. Moscovici S. The phenomenon of social representations. In R. M. Farr & S. Moscovici (Eds.), Social representations (pp. 3-69). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
6. Durkheim E. Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse. Paris: Alcan, 1912.
7. Emile Durkheim. les règles de la méthode sociologique, version électronique, 1894. disponible sur le site: http://www.uqac.uquebec.ca/zone30/Classiques_des_sciences_sociales/index.html, pp.12-13.
8. Émile Durkheim. Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse, p.20. Un document produit en version numérique par Jean-Marie Tremblay, disponible sur le site web: http://classiques.uqac.ca/, consulté le 28-11-2018.
9. Moscovici S. Le phénomène des représentations sociales. Dans RM Farr & S. Moscovici (Eds.), Représentations sociales (pp. 3-69). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
10. Joff H. The power of visual material: Persuasion, emotion and identification. In P. H. David & P. Walton (Eds.), Psychological perspectives on the self, Vol. 5. (pp. 183-202). Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press, 1995.
11. Moscovici S. La représentation sociale et le champ psychologique. Dans RM Farr & S. Moscovici (Eds.), Représentations sociales (pp. 169-184). La presse de l'Université de Cambridge, 1987.
12. Denise Jodelet. Représentations sociales: Phénomène, concept et théorie, in Moscovici, psychologie sociale, 1984, 367.
13. Wagner W, Hayes N. (Eds.). Discours quotidien et sens commun: La théorie des représentations sociales. Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
14. Denise Jodelet. perspectives d'étude sur le rapport croyances/représentations sociales, revue psychologie et société. 2002; 5(157-178):158-159.
15. Jean-Claude Abric. Méthodologie de recueil des représentations sociales, dans Jean-Claude Abric, pratiques sociales et représentations, Paris, PUF, 1994, 59.
16. Patrick Rateau. Idéologie, représentation sociale et attitude: Etude expérimentale de leur hiérarchie, revue internationale de psychologie sociale 2000, N°1, Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, p31.
17. Abric J-C. Méthodes d'étude des représentations sociales. Dans S. Moscovici, Psychologie sociale (pp. 407-445). Paris, France: Presses universitaires de France, 2003.
18. Joffe H. Représentations sociales du sida: Vers une

analyse du rôle des médias. Dans MJ L lewellyn, NWG Booth, & GJR Watson (Eds.), AIDS: Perspectives interdisciplinaires (pp.56-72). Bristol, Pennsylvanie: Taylor et Francis, 1995.
19. Noël C, Guéguen N, Martin A. Représentations sociales et attitude envers le don du sang chez les jeunes adultes. Santé Publique. 2009; 21(3):253-263.
20. Ben Hussein W, Ben Mohamed E, Bourouisser N. Social representations of blood donation in Tunisian university students. Transfusion clinique et biologique. 2013; 20(1):49-54. Doi: 10.1016/j.tracli.2012.12.006
21. Khalil MM, Hassan EM. Blood donation among Egyptians: Knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs. Journal of community health. 2016; 41(5):1053-1059. Doi: 10.1007/s10900-016-0192-2
22. AIT EL Hassane I, El ouahabi A, El Hassouni M, Eloualid M, El ouali M. Social representations of blood donation among Moroccan students: A qualitative study. BMC public health. 2020; 20(1):1-10. Doi: 10.1186/s12889-020-08941-7
23. ZAZ S. Social representations of blood donation in Morocco: Between the need for altruism and the fear of contamination. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Research. 2015; 5(5):1-9.
24. Zinali R, *et al*. Le rôle des médias de masse dans la formation des représentations sociales du don de sang: Une enquête en Iran. Journal des études sur les médias. 2019; 20(3):135-148.
25. Shaheen Z, *et al*. L'effet des expériences passées sur les représentations sociales du don de sang: Une étude de cas au King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Center. Journal de la santé mentale. 2019; 11(2):55-68.
26. Darawish H, *et al*. Différences sexuelles dans les représentations sociales du don de sang dans la société arabe israélienne. Journal de la santé publique et de l'environnement. 2020; 13(2):183-192.
27. Sharif N, *et al*. Défis psychologiques auxquels sont confrontés les donneurs de sang à Riyad. Journal de la sécurité et de la santé au travail. 2020; 8(2):123-131.
28. Zarbouh A, Al-Saadawi S, Al-Hamdan H, Al-Ghamdi M, Al-Khadra M, Al-Arfaj A, *et al*. Don de sang en Arabie saoudite: Une analyse des facteurs d'influence. Revue d'études sociales et humaines. 2019; 7(1):51-67.
29. Abu Al-Hassan E, Al-Balawi M, Al-Anzi P, Al-Sharif T, Al-Mushaiti R, Al-Hakami P, Al-Qahtani M. L'attitude des individus musulmans envers le don de sang en Arabie Saoudite: Une étude exploratoire. Journal du travail social. 2020; 16(2):29-48.
30. Al-Madina S, Al-Jaber Z, Al-Otaibi N, Al-Ateeq G, Al-Harbi A, Al-Enezi H, *et al*. Don de sang en Arabie saoudite: Analyse des facteurs d'influence et des défis. Journal de santé publique et communautaire. 2018; 4(1):12-24.
31. Al-Bashir M, Al-Maliki A, Al-Jarallah P, Al-Sumaili P, Al-Fifi P, Al-Maliki H, *et al*. Analyse des facteurs affectant le don de sang au Royaume d'Arabie saoudite. Journal de santé publique et communautaire. 2016; 2(1):15-28.