CHALIMBANA UNIVERSITY

DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION TO CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY

SCHOOL HUMANITIES AND SOCIALS

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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COURSE AIMS

The aim of this course is to equip students with an understanding of the origin, development, nature, basic concepts, theoretical and methodological issues in social psychology.

COURSE OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, you should be able to;

1. explain the major theories and research findings in social psychology.
2. apply the concepts of obedience, conformity in everyday life.
3. discuss factors that influence attitude formation.
4. evaluate factors that influence self-esteem among people.
5. analyse characteristics and stages of group formation.
6. discuss factors that influence close relationships.
7. analyse factors that influence social behavior among people.
8. discuss causes, manifestations and management of aggression among people.
9. analyse personal characteristics associated with prosocial behavior.

Study skills

As an adult learner, your approach to learning will be different to that of your school days you will choose when you want to study. You will have professional and/or personal motivation for doing so and you will most likely be fitting your activities around other professional or domestic responsibilities.

Essentially you will be taking control of your learning environment. As a consequence, you will need to consider performance issues related to time management, goals setting, stress management, etc. perhaps you will also need to reacquaint yourself in areas such as essay planning, coping with examinations and using the internet as a learning source.

Your most significant considerations will be time and space i.e. the time you dedicate to your learning and the environment in which you engage in that learning. It is recommended that you take time now before starting your self-study to familiarise yourself with these issues. There are a number of excellent resources on the web. A few suggested links are: http://www.how-to-study.com/ and http://www.ucc.vt.edu/stdysk/stdyhlp.html

Time frame

You are expected to spend at least three terms of your time to study this module. In addition, there shall be arranged contact sessions with lecturers from the University during residential possibly in April, August and December. You are requested to spend your time carefully so that you reap maximum benefits from the course. Listed below are the components of the course, what you have to do and suggestions as to how you should allocate your time to each unit in order that you may complete the course successfully and no time.

Course Materials

Text books and module.

Need help

In case you have difficulties in studying this module don't hesitate to get in touch with your lecturers. You can contact them during week days from 08:00 t0 17:00 hours. Mr Moono Maurice mmoono.75@gmail.com Tutorial Room 3,. You are also free to utilise the services of the University Library which opens from 08:00 hours to 20:00 hours every working day.

Assessment

Continuous	**50%**
One Assignment	**25%**

One Test	**25%**
Final Examination	**50%**
Total	**100%**

UNIT 1

THE HISTORY OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

1.1 Introduction

Since the beginning of time, people have been trying to determine human behavior. Psychology also has a history that has been written by many psychologists and scholars throughout time. These people and ideas have come together to form what we know today as psychology. New ideas were manifested and soon so did the field of social psychology. Social psychology has many origins and cannot be traced back to just one origin. In this unit, we will tell about how this field of psychology was first formed and how it has evolved over time.

1.2 Learning outcomes

By the end of this unit, you are expected to;

- discuss the history of social psychology.
- examine causes of stereotypes and prejudice.
- explain the meaning of social trap.
- analyze causes of social influence.
- examine causes of social conformity.

What is Social Psychology?

Psychology is a science that has grown in the past hundreds of years since it was first founded. The history of psychology dates back to the ancient Greeks. It was a branch of philosophy until the 1870s and was developed separately in the United States and Germany. Hermann Ebbinghaus, a notable German psychologist, had a famous statement about the history of psychology, Psychology has a long past, but only a short history.

1.3 Pioneers of Social Psychology

Charles Darwin made a vast contribution to social psychology and to psychology as a whole. In this book entitled, The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals, Darwin (1872) proposed that emotional expressions might serve an adaptive social function. This adaptive social function is to communicate a person's (or an animal's) intentions to another person (or animal) (Darwin, 1872).

Herbert Spencer, Bagehot, and Karl Marx were social thinkers who were influenced by Darwin's findings. They all explained social evolution by using Darwin's theory of natural selection. Herbert Spencer said that human life is a continuous adjustment of internal and external relations. Thus, in order to understand life, one must understand the social environment. Many geographers saw human behavior as the outcome of climatic factors. Comte theorized three stages in the progress of society, religious, spiritual, and social. He believed that man's entire behavior is dependent upon society. In 1897, Herbert Spencer criticized this view and stated that changes in the social structure are caused by definite natural laws which dispense with the necessity of control by the administration (Sharma, 2004).

Jahoda (2007) found the term social psychology was coined by the Italian journalist and politician Carlo Cattaneo in an article published in 1864 in the journal, Il Politencio. Catteneo explained Hegel's ideas to interpersonal interactions and argued that conflicting ideas lead to the generation of new ones (Jahoda, 2007).

1.3.1 Social Psychology of the Early 20th Century

McDougall published the book, Introduction to Psychology, in 1908. His book was the first text in the field of social psychology with the term social psychology in the title. In 1908, McDougall adopted an explicitly evolutionary perspective. He theorized that human behavior was caused by instincts and later introduced the idea of the group mind. McDougall defined an instinct as, an inherited or innate psycho-physical disposition which determines its processor to perceive, and to pay attention to, objects of a certain class, to experience an impulse to such action (Plutchik, 1980) He viewed instincts as linked to seven powerful emotions: fear, disgust, curiosity, anger, embarrassment, pride, and empathy (McDougall, 1911). At the same time, Ross introduced

social psychology as concerned with conformity, imitation, and custom, forming theories for people's thinking. Ross focused on biological foundations, and conventions on the individual. In his book he emphasized on social influence through the processes of imitation and suggestion. Imitation is defined as the influence of other people on human behavior. Suggestion is defined as the influence of others on human thoughts.

At the start of the 20th century, the first empirical investigations were guided by the same type of questions that inspired the early thinkers and philosophers. In the 1920s and 1930s, a group of social psychologists challenged the reigning models of the individuals and the empiricism forwarded into emerging experimental program of research. Gardner Murphy, Lois Barclay Murphy, and Gordon Allport designed an alternative perspective based on William James's radical empiricism and a social activist stance. These researchers, according to Pandora (1997), rejected the image of the laboratory as an ivory tower, contested the canons of objectivity that characterized current research practices, and argued against reducing nature and social worlds to the lowest possible terms. The book Experimental Social Psychology was published by Gardner Murphy and Lois Murphy of Columbia University in 1931. The first studies in this book examined the influence of source factors on attitude change. Most of the book was dedicated to attitudes. Gardner Murphy defined social psychology as an experimental process, which separated it from naturalist observational methods used in sociology.

1.3.2 Social Psychology of the Late 20th Century

In the late 1960s and 1970s psychological research had expanded tremendously and there was no psychology department at a top university that did not have a strong social psychology unit. People found history to be a way to get a better understanding about the social sciences. Professional historians also became more interested in the impact social sciences had on the 20th century culture and society. Historians discovered that psychology opened a lot of doors to discover the extension of scientific customs to traditionally humanist subjects such as rationality, sociality, and mind. Early work of culture and personality school was highly influenced by Freud's theory of how culture and personality are related. Another key contribution to social psychology during this time was the demonstration that even basic differences in psychological processes are not necessary universal. Trandis's work during this time was arguably the first to

incorporate a wide range of social-psychological concepts in the study of culture and thus had an important influence on modern-day cross-cultural psychology. He believed that the basic element of the study of culture is categorization and that members of different cultures have unique ways of categorizing experience. Another belief he had was that the members of each culture have specific ways of associating with each other. We will now look at major studies done in the field of social psychology. Write brief notes on each of the scholars in the field of social psychology mentioned above.

1.3.3 Milgram and Zimbario's studies

As you may be aware the social psychology is a science, more experiments were conducted on different social issues. One famous one was Milgram's study on obedience. Milgram conducted an electric shock experiment, which looked at the role and authority figure plays in obedience. He wanted to experiment whether Germans were particularity obedient to authority figures because this was a common explanation for the Nazi killing in World War I. Milgram selected his participants for the study by advertising for male participants to take part in a study of learning at Yale University. The participant was paired with another individual and they were randomly divided amongst themselves to find out who would be the learner and who would be the teacher. The learner in the experiment was one of Milgram's confederates pretending to be a real participant and the participant was always the teacher. The learner was directed into a room and had electrodes attached to his arms. The researcher went into a room next door that contained an electric shock generator and a row of switches. The teacher was told by Milgram and his confederates to administer an electric shock every time the leaner makes a mistake. Administering a shock to the learner every time the learner would get a question wrong would result with an increase in shock level. The learner gave the wrong answers on purpose and for each wrong answer was administrated a shock. When the teacher refused to give the learner another shock they were told to continue. The result of the experiment was that most participants administrated to the highest level of electric shock. The conclusion from the study was that anyone is likely to follow orders given by an authority figure, no matter how gruesome the act may be. Do you think it was ethical for Milgram to conduct this type of research?

Another famous study was Zimbario's prison study demonstrated conformity to given roles in the social world. Zimbardo was interested in finding out whether the brutality reported among guards at American prisons was due to the personalities of the judges or have to do with the prison's environment. The basement of the Standford University was converted into a mock prison and he advertised students to play the roles of guards or prisoners. Within hours both guards and prisoners were taking on the roles very seriously. Guards were harassing prisoners and prisoners became more dependent. The conclusion of the experiment was found that people will conform to the social roles they are expected to play in their society. It was discovered that the roles that people play can determine their behavior and attitudes.

1.3.4 Present Day Social Psychology

Social Psychology has evolved tremendously since the beginnings of the study of the science. It has had a major influence on a variety of major real world societal problems. The study of social psychology has had many early influencers and it continues to be an evolving subject. Currently there are many social psychological ideas and commentaries in major popular media and books. Social psychological concepts have come a common way in which people talk about and understand individuals and societies. Because of social psychology there are many advancements in health, environmental, and legal psychology. Today social psychology is in all psychology departments at major universities around the world.

Summary

In this study you have learnt about the history of social psychology especially the major pioneers of social psychology who's work gave birth to a lot of social psychology principles. We hope that you are now able to have a clear understanding of the origin of social psychology. In the next unit you will learn about stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination and social self.

Activity

1. Discuss the history of social psychology

Reflection

Do you think the studies conducted by Milgram were ethical?

UNIT 2

STEREOTYPES, PREJUDICE, DISCRIMINATION AND SOCIAL SELF

2.1 Introduction

In this unit we will discuss stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination that take place among people. It is very important to understand this topic because it has issues that you face in everyday life. We will further explain the difference between stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination. As you read through this unit, you are expected to be relating every concept you will learn to your everyday interactions with others.

2.2 LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of his unit you will be expected to;

- differentiate between stereotype and prejudice.
- explain disadvantages of discrimination.
- discuss ways of avoiding stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination in everyday life.
- explain how the sense of self is influenced by others.
- discuss how upward and downward comparisons influence self esteems.
- discuss social identity theory.

The terms stereotype, prejudice, discrimination, and racism are often used interchangeably in everyday conversation. Let us explore the differences between these concepts. Stereotypes are oversimplified generalizations about groups of people. Stereotypes can be based on race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation—almost any characteristic. They may be positive (usually about one's own group, such as when women suggest they are less likely to complain about physical pain) but are often negative (usually toward other groups, such as when members of a dominant racial group suggest that a subordinate racial group is stupid or lazy). In either case, the stereotype is a generalization that doesn't take individual differences into account.

Where do stereotypes come from? In fact, new stereotypes are rarely created; rather, they are recycled from subordinate groups that have assimilated into society and are reused to describe newly subordinate groups. For example, many stereotypes that are currently used to characterize black people were used earlier in American history to characterize Irish and Eastern European immigrants. You have to bear in mind that, while some people truly do embody the traits of their stereotypes, they are not necessarily representative of all people within that group. Stereotypes are not accurate and even if they are positive they can be harmful and must be avoided.

2.3 Prejudice and Racism

Prejudice refers to the beliefs, thoughts, feelings, and attitudes someone holds about a group. A prejudice is not based on experience; instead, it is a prejudgment, originating outside actual experience. A 1970 documentary called Eye of the Storm illustrates the way in which prejudice develops, by showing how defining one category of people as superior (children with blue eyes) results in prejudice against people who are not part of the favored category.

While prejudice is not necessarily specific to race, racism is a stronger type of prejudice

e used to justify the belief that one racial category is somehow superior or inferior to others; it is also a set of practices used by a racial majority to disadvantage a racial minority. The Ku Klux Klan is an example of a racist organization; its members' belief in white supremacy has encouraged over a century of hate crime and hate speech.

Institutional racism refers to the way in which racism is embedded in the fabric of society. For example, the disproportionate number of black men arrested, charged, and convicted of crimes may reflect racial profiling, a form of institutional racism.

Colorism is another kind of prejudice; in which someone believes one type of skin tone is superior or inferior to another within a racial group. Studies suggest that darker skinned African Americans experience more discrimination than lighter skinned African Americans (Herring, Keith, and Horton 2004; Klonoff and Landrine 2000). For example, if a white employer believes a black employee with a darker skin tone is less capable than a black employer with lighter skin tone, that is colorism. At least one study suggested the colorism affected racial socialization,

with darker-skinned black male adolescents receiving more warnings about the danger of interacting with members of other racial groups than did lighter-skinned black male adolescents (Landor et al. 2013). From the definition of concepts discussed so far we hope you are now able to distinguish between stereotype and prejudice.

2.4 Discrimination

Let us now look at another term commonly used in everyday life. While prejudice refers to biased thinking, discrimination consists of actions against a group of people. Discrimination can be based on age, religion, health, and other indicators; race-based laws against discrimination strive to address this set of social problems. Have you ever felt that you were a victim of discrimination before? If yes, reflect on that situation now that you are clear of what discrimination is what do you think is the best way of addressing the problem of discrimination in society?

Discrimination based on race or ethnicity can take many forms, from unfair housing practices to biased hiring systems. Overt discrimination has long been part of U.S. history. In the late nineteenth century, it was not uncommon for business owners to hang signs that read, “Help Wanted: No Irish Need Apply.” And southern Jim Crow laws, with their “Whites Only” signs, exemplified overt discrimination that is not tolerated today.

However, we cannot erase discrimination from our culture just by enacting laws to abolish it. Even if a magic pill managed to eradicate racism from each individual’s psyche, society itself would maintain it. Sociologist Émile Durkheim calls racism a social fact, meaning that it does not require the action of individuals to continue. The reasons for this are complex and relate to the educational, criminal, economic, and political systems that exist in our society.

For example, when a newspaper identifies by race individuals accused of a crime, it may enhance stereotypes of a certain minority. Another example of racist practices is racial steering, in which real estate agent’s direct prospective homeowners toward or away from certain neighborhoods based on their race. Racist attitudes and beliefs are often more insidious and harder to pin down than specific racist practices.

Prejudice and discrimination can overlap and intersect in many ways. To illustrate, here are four examples of how prejudice and discrimination can occur. Unprejudiced nondiscriminatory are open-minded, tolerant, and accepting individuals. Unprejudiced discriminators might be those who unthinkingly practice sexism in their workplace by not considering females for certain positions that have traditionally been held by men. Prejudiced nondiscriminators are those who hold racist beliefs but don't act on them, such as a racist store owner who serves minority customers. Prejudiced discriminators include those who actively make disparaging remarks about others or who perpetuate hate crimes.

Discrimination also manifests in different ways. The scenarios above are examples of individual discrimination, but other types exist. Institutional discrimination occurs when a societal system has developed with embedded disenfranchisement of a group, such as the U.S. military's historical nonacceptance of minority sexualities (the "don't ask, don't tell" policy reflected this norm).

Institutional discrimination can also include the promotion of a group's status, such in the case of white privilege, which is the benefits people receive simply by being part of the dominant group.

While most white people are willing to admit that nonwhite people live with a set of disadvantages due to the color of their skin, very few are willing to acknowledge the benefits they receive.

2.5 The Social Self: The Role of The Social Situation

To this point, we have seen, among other things, that human beings have complex and well-developed self-concepts and that they generally attempt to view themselves positively. These more cognitive and affective aspects of ourselves do not, of course, occur in a vacuum. They are heavily influenced by the social forces that surround us. We have alluded to some of these forces already; for example, in our review of self-verification theory, we saw how feedback from others can affect our self-concept and esteem. We also looked at ways that our sociocultural backgrounds can affect the content of our self-concept.

We will now consider in more detail these and other social aspects of the self by exploring the many ways that the social situation influences our self-concept and esteem. The self is not

created in isolation; we are not born with perceptions of ourselves as shy, interested in jazz, or charitable to others, for example. Rather, such beliefs are determined by our observations of and interactions with others. Are you rich or poor? Beautiful or ugly? Smart or not? Good or bad at playing video games? And how do you know? These questions can be answered only by looking at those around us. The self has meaning only within the social context, and it is not wrong to say that the social situation defines our self-concept and our self-esteem. We rely on others to provide a "social reality"—to help us determine what to think, feel, and do (Hardin & Higgins, 1996). But what forms do these social influences take? It is to this question that we will now turn.

2.6 The Looking-Glass Self: Our Sense of Self Is Influenced By Others' Views Of Us

The concept of the looking-glass self-states that *part of how we see ourselves comes from our perception of how others see us* (Cooley, 1902). We might feel that we have a great sense of humor, for example, because others have told us, and often laugh (apparently sincerely) at our jokes. Many studies have supported a basic prediction derived from the notion of the looking-glass self, namely that our self-concepts are often quite similar to the views that others have of us (Beer, Watson, & McDade-Montez, 2013). This may be particularly so with people from our own families and culture. Perkins, Wiley, and Deaux (2014), for example, found that, in the United States, how members of ethnic minority groups believed other members of the same culture perceived them significantly correlated with their self-esteem scores. In contrast, their perceived appraisal of European Americans toward them was only weakly related to their self-esteem.

This evidence is merely correlational, though, so we cannot be sure which way the influence is working. Maybe we develop our self-concept quite independently of others, and they then base their views of us on how we see ourselves. The work of Mark Baldwin and colleagues has been particularly important in demonstrating that how we think we are being perceived by others really can affect how we see ourselves.

For example, Baldwin and Holmes (1987) conducted two experiments to test the hypothesis that our self-concepts derive partly from the way we imagine that we would be perceived by

significant others. In the first study, 40 women were instructed to visualize the faces of either two acquaintances or two older members of their own family. Later they were asked to rate their perceived enjoyableness of a piece of fiction with sexual content, and they typically responded in keeping with the responses they perceived the people they had visualized would have had. This effect was more pronounced when they sat in front of a mirror. In the second study, 60 men were exposed to a situation involving failure, and their self-evaluations to this setback were then measured. As with the women's study, the men's self-evaluations matched those they perceived that the people they were asked to visualize would have made, particularly when they were more self-aware. At least some of the time, then, we end up evaluating ourselves as we imagine others would. Of course, it can work both ways, too. Over time, the people around us may come to accept the self-concept that we present to others (Yeung & Martin, 2003).

Sometimes, the influence of other people's appraisals of ourselves on our self-concept may be so strong that we end up internalizing them. For example, we are often labeled in particular ways by others, perhaps informally in terms of our ethnic background, or more formally in terms of a physical or psychological diagnosis. The labeling bias occurs *when we are labeled, and others' views and expectations of us are affected by that labeling* (Fox & Stinnett, 1996). For example, if a teacher knows that a child has been diagnosed with a particular psychological disorder, that teacher may have different expectations and explanations of the child's behavior than he or she would if not aware of that label. Where things get really interesting for our present discussion is when those expectations start to become self-fulfilling prophecies, and our self-concept and even our behavior start to align with them. For example, when children are labeled in special education contexts, these labels can then impact their self-esteem (Taylor, Hume, & Welsh, 2010).

If we are repeatedly labeled and evaluated by others, then self-labeling may occur, which happens *when we adopt others' labels explicitly into our self-concept*. The effects of this self-labeling on our self-esteem appear to depend very much on the nature of the labels. Labels used in relation to diagnosis of psychological disorders can be detrimental to people whom then internalize them. For example, Moses (2009) found that adolescents who self-labeled according to diagnoses they had received were found to have higher levels of self-stigma in their self-concepts compared with those who described their challenges in non-pathological terms. In these

types of situation, those who self-label may come to experience internalized prejudice, which occurs *when individuals turn prejudice directed toward them by others onto themselves.* Internalized prejudice has been found to predict more negative self-concept and poorer psychological adjustment in members of various groups, including sexual minorities (Carter, 2012) and racial minorities (Szymanski & Obiri, 2011).

In other cases, labels used by wider society to describe people negatively can be positively reclaimed by those being labeled. Galinsky and colleagues (2013) explored this use of self-labeling by members of oppressed groups to reclaim derogatory terms, including "queer" and "bitch," used by dominant groups. After self-labeling, minority group members evaluated these terms less negatively, reported feeling more powerful, and were also perceived by observers as more powerful. Overall, these results indicate that individuals who incorporate a formerly negative label into their self-concept in order to reclaim it can sometimes undermine the stigma attached to the label.

2.7 Social Comparison Theory: Our sense of self is influenced by Comparisons with Others

Self-concept and self-esteem are also heavily influenced by the process of social comparison (Buunk & Gibbons, 2007; Van Lange, 2008). Social comparison occurs *when we learn about our abilities and skills, about the appropriateness and validity of our opinions, and about our relative social status by comparing our own attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors with those of others*. These comparisons can be with people who we know and interact with, with those whom we read about or see on TV, or with anyone else we view as important. However, the most meaningful comparisons we make tend to be with those we see as similar to ourselves (Festinger, 1954).

Social comparison occurs primarily on dimensions on which there are no correct answers or objective benchmarks and thus on which we can rely only on the beliefs of others for information. Answers to questions such as "What should I wear to the interview?" or "What kind of music should I have at my wedding?" are frequently determined at least in part by using the behavior of others as a basis of comparison. We also use social comparison to help us determine our skills or abilities—how good we are at performing a task or doing a job, for example. When

students ask their teacher for the class average on an exam, they are also seeking to use social comparison to evaluate their performance.

2.8 Research Focus

2.8.1 Affiliation and Social Comparison

The extent to which individuals use social comparison to determine their evaluations of events was demonstrated in a set of classic research studies conducted by Stanley Schachter (1959). Schachter's experiments tested the hypothesis that people who were feeling anxious would prefer to affiliate with others rather than be alone because having others around would reduce their anxiety. Female college students at the University of Minnesota volunteered to participate in one of his experiments for extra credit in their introductory psychology class. They arrived at the experimental room to find a scientist dressed in a white lab coat, standing in front of a large array of electrical machinery. The scientist introduced himself as Dr. Zilstein of the Department of Neurology and Psychiatry, and he told the women that they would be serving as participants in an experiment concerning the effects of electrical shock. Dr. Zilstein stressed how important it was to learn about the effects of shocks, since electroshock therapy was being used more and more commonly and because the number of accidents due to electricity was also increasing!

At this point, the experimental manipulation occurred. One half of the participants (those in the *high-anxiety condition*) were told that the shocks would be "painful" and "intense," although they were assured that they could do no permanent damage. The other half of the participants (those in the *low-anxiety condition*) were also told that they would be receiving shocks but that they would in no way be painful—rather, the shocks were said to be mild and to resemble a "tickle" or a "tingle." Of course, the respondents were randomly assigned to conditions to assure that the women in the two conditions were, on average, equivalent except for the experimental manipulation.

Each of the women was then told that before the experiment could continue the experimenter would have to prepare the equipment and that they would have to wait until he was finished. He asked them if they would prefer to wait alone or with others. The outcome of Schachter's

research was clear: while only 33% of the women who were expecting mild shocks preferred to wait with others, 63% of the women expecting to get painful shocks wanted to wait with others. This was a statistically significant difference, and Schachter concluded that the women chose to affiliate with each other in order to reduce their anxiety about the upcoming shocks.

In further studies, Schachter found that the research participants who were under stress did not want to wait with just any other people. They preferred to wait with other people who were expecting to undergo the same severe shocks that they were rather than with people who were supposedly just waiting to see their professor. Schachter concluded that this was not just because being around other people might reduce our anxiety but because we also use others who are in the same situation as we are to help us determine how to feel about things. As Schachter (1959) put it, "Misery doesn't just love any kind of company, it loves only miserable company" (p. 24). In this case, the participants were expecting to determine from the other participants how afraid they should be of the upcoming shocks.

In short, and as predicted by the idea of social comparison, the women in Schachter's studies relied on each other to help them understand what was happening to them and to find out how they should feel and respond to their social situations. Again, the power of the social situation—in this case, in determining our beliefs and attitudes—is apparent.

Although Schachter's studies were conducted in relatively artificial lab settings, similar effects have been found in field studies in more naturally occurring settings. For instance, Kulik, Mahler, and Moore (1996) found that hospital patients who were awaiting surgery preferred to talk to other individuals who were expecting to have similar procedures rather than to patients who were having different procedures, so that they could share information about what they might expect to experience. Furthermore, Kulik and his colleagues found that sharing information was helpful: people who were able to share more information had shorter hospital stays.

2.9 Upward and Downward Comparisons: Influence Our Self-Esteem

Although we use social comparison in part to develop our self-concept—that is, to form accurate conclusions about our attitudes, abilities, and opinions—social comparison has perhaps an even bigger impact on our self-esteem. When we are able to compare ourselves favorably with others, we feel good about ourselves, but when the outcome of comparison suggests that others are better or better off than we are, then our self-esteem is likely to suffer. This is one reason why good students who attend high schools in which the other students are only average may suddenly find their self-esteem threatened when they move on to colleges and universities in which they are no longer better than the other students (Marsh, Kong, & Hau, 2000). Perhaps you've had the experience yourself of the changes in self-esteem that occur when you have moved into a new year in school, got a new job, or changed your circle of friends. In these cases, you may have felt much better about yourself or much worse, depending on the nature of the change. You can see that in these cases the actual characteristics of the individual person have not changed at all; only the social situation and the comparison with others have changed.

Because many people naturally want to have positive self-esteem, they frequently attempt to compare themselves positively with others. Downward social comparison occurs *when we attempt to create a positive image of ourselves through favorable comparisons with others who are worse off than we are.* In one study Morse and Gergen (1970) had students apply for a job, and they also presented the students with another individual who was supposedly applying for the same job. When the other candidate was made to appear to be less qualified for the job, the downward comparison with the less-qualified applicant made the students feel better about their own qualifications. As a result, the students reported higher self-esteem than they did when the other applicant was seen as a highly competent job candidate. Research has also found that people who are suffering from serious diseases prefer to compare their condition with other individuals whose current condition and likely prognosis is worse than their own (Buunk, Gibbons, & Visser, 2002). These comparisons make them feel more hopeful about their own possible outcomes. More frequent use of downward than upward social comparison with similar others has been shown to be a commonly used coping strategy for preserving self-esteem in the

face of a wide variety of challenging life situations, including experiences of physical decline, rheumatoid arthritis, AIDS, occupational burnout, eating disorders, unemployment, educational difficulties, and intellectual disabilities (Buunk, Gibbons, & Buunk, 1997).

Although downward comparison provides us with positive feelings, upward social comparison, which occurs *when we compare ourselves with others who are better off than we are*, is also common (Blanton, Buunk, Gibbons, & Kuyper, 1999; Vrugt & Koenis, 2002). Upward comparison may lower our self-esteem by reminding us that we are not as well off as others. The power of upward social comparison to decrease self-esteem has been documented in many domains (Buunk, Gibbons, & Buunk, 1997). Thinking back to our case study at the beginning of this chapter, this power can sometimes be strongly felt when looking at social networking sites. Imagine someone who has had a bad day, or is generally unhappy with how life is going, then logs onto Facebook to see that most of his or her friends have posted very positive status updates about how happy they are, how well they are doing, or the wonderful vacations they are having. What would your prediction be about how that person would feel? Would that person take pleasure from knowing that the friends were happy, or would the friends' happiness make the person feel worse? The research on upward social comparisons to similar others would suggest the latter, and this has been demonstrated empirically. Feinstein and colleagues (2013) investigated whether a tendency to make upward social comparisons on Facebook led to increased symptoms of depression over a three-week period. Sure enough, making more upward comparisons predicted increased rumination, which in turn was linked to increased depressive symptoms.

Despite these negative effects of upward comparisons, they can sometimes be useful because they provide information that can help us do better, help us imagine ourselves as part of the group of successful people that we want to be like (Collins, 2000), and give us hope (Snyder, Cheavens, & Sympson, 1997). The power of upward social comparison can also be harnessed for social good. When people are made aware that others are already engaging in particular prosocial behaviors, they often follow suit, partly because an upward social comparison is triggered. This has been shown in relation to sustainable environmental practices, for example, with upward social comparisons helping to facilitate energy-saving behaviors in factory workers (Siero, Bakker, Dekker, & van den Berg, 1996) and hotel guests (Goldstein, Cialdini, & Griskevicius,

2008). As with downward comparisons, the effects of looking upward on our self-esteem tend to be more pronounced when we are comparing ourselves to similar others. If, for example, you have ever performed badly at a sport, the chances are that your esteem was more threatened when you compared yourselves to your teammates as opposed to the top professional athletes in that sport.

The outcomes of upward and downward social comparisons can have a substantial impact on our feelings, on our attempts to do better, and even on whether or not we want to continue performing an activity. When we compare positively with others and we feel that we are meeting our goals and living up to the expectations set by ourselves and others, we feel good about ourselves, enjoy the activity, and work harder at it. When we compare negatively with others, however, we are more likely to feel poorly about ourselves and enjoy the activity less, and we may even stop performing it entirely. When social comparisons come up poorly for us, we may experience depression or anxiety, and these discrepancies are important determinants of our self-esteem (Higgins, Loeb, & Moretti, 1995; Strauman & Higgins, 1988).

Although everyone makes social comparisons, both upward and downward, there are some sources of differences in how often we do so and which type we tend to favor. As downward social comparisons generally increase and upward ones generally decrease self-esteem, and the pursuit of high self-esteem, as we have seen, is more prominent in Western as opposed to Eastern cultures, then it should come as no surprise that there are cultural differences here. White and Lehman (2005), for example, found that Asian Canadians made more upward social comparisons than did European Canadians, particularly following failures and when the opportunity to self-improve was made salient. These findings, the authors suggest, indicate that the Asian Canadians were using social comparisons more as a vehicle for self-improvement than self-enhancement.

There are also some age-related trends in social comparison. In general, older adults tend to make more downward comparisons than do younger adults, which is part of the reason why their self-esteem is typically higher (Helgeson & Mickelson, 2000). Older adults also use more downward social comparisons to cope with feelings of regret than do younger adults, and these comparisons are often more effective for them (Bauer, Wrosch, & Jobin, 2008). In addition to these cultural and age differences in social comparison processes, there are also individual

differences. People who score higher on a measure of social comparison orientation have been found to experience more positive affect following downward social comparisons and more negative affect following upward ones (Buunk, Zurriaga, Peiró, Nauta, & Gosalvez, 2005).

2.10 Social identity theory: Our sense of self is influenced by the groups we belong to

In our discussion of social comparisons, we have seen that who we compare ourselves to can affect how we feel about ourselves, for better or worse. Another social influence on our self-esteem is through our group memberships. For example, we can gain self-esteem by perceiving ourselves as members of important and valued groups that make us feel good about ourselves. Social identity theory asserts that *we draw part of our sense of identity and self-esteem from the social groups that we belong to* (Hogg, 2003; Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994; Tajfel, 1981).

Normally, group memberships result in positive feelings, which occur because we perceive our own groups and thus ourselves in a positive light. If you are an Arsenal F.C. fan, or if you are an Australian, or if you are a Muslim, for example, then your membership in the group becomes part of what you are, and the membership often makes you feel good about yourself. The list that follows presents a measure of the strength of social identity with a group of university students. If you complete the measure for your own school, university, or college, the research evidence would suggest that you would agree mostly with the statements that indicate that you identify with the group.

2.11 Self-presentation: Our sense of self is influenced by the audiences we have

It is interesting to note that each of the social influences on our sense of self that we have discussed can be harnessed as a way of protecting our self-esteem. The final influence we will explore can also be used strategically to elevate not only our own esteem, but the esteem we have in the eyes of others. Positive self-esteem occurs not only when we do well in our own eyes but also when we feel that we are positively perceived by the other people we care about.

Because it is so important to be seen as competent and productive members of society, people naturally attempt to present themselves to others in a positive light. We attempt to convince others that we are good and worthy people by appearing attractive, strong, intelligent, and likable

and by saying positive things to others (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Schlenker, 2003). *The tendency to present a positive self-image to others, with the goal of increasing our social status*, is known as self-presentation, and it is a basic and natural part of everyday life.

A big question in relation to self-presentation is the extent to which it is an honest versus more strategic, potentially dishonest enterprise. The sociologist Erving Goffman (1959) developed an influential theory of self-presentation and described it as a mainly honest process, where people need to present the parts of themselves required by the social role that they are playing in a given situation. If everyone plays their part according to accepted social scripts and conventions, then the social situation will run smoothly and the participants will avoid embarrassment. Seen in this way, self-presentation is a transparent process, where we are trying to play the part required of us, and we trust that others are doing the same. Other theorists, though, have viewed self-presentation as a more strategic endeavor, which may involve not always portraying ourselves in genuine ways (e.g., Jones & Pittman, 1982). As is often the case with two seemingly opposing perspectives, it is quite likely that both are true in certain situations, depending on the social goals of the actors.

Different self-presentation strategies may be used to create different emotions in other people, and the use of these strategies may be evolutionarily selected because they are successful (Toma, Hancock, & Ellison, 2008). Edward Jones and Thane Pittman (1982) described five self-presentation strategies, each of which is expected to create a resulting emotion in the other person:

1. The goal of *ingratiation* is to create **liking** by using flattery or charm.
2. The goal of *intimidation* is to create **fear** by showing that you can be aggressive.
3. The goal of *exemplification* is to create **guilt** by showing that you are a better person than the other.
4. The goal of *supplication* is to create **pity** by indicating to others that you are helpless and needy.
5. The goal of *self-promotion* is to create **respect** by persuading others that you are competent.

2.12 SUMMARY

In this unit you have learnt stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination. You have also learnt how prejudice influences people's behavior. We have also looked at how our sense of self is influenced by others. The upward and downward influence on people's self-esteem has also been well explained. It is our hope that you now have a clear understanding of these above concepts as they relate to human behavior.

ACTIVTY

1. Discuss self-presentation strategies
2. Differentiate between stereotype and prejudice
3. Discuss social identity theory and how it relates to the formation of self-esteem.

Reflection

How does downward and upward comparison influence your self-concept

UNIT 3

ATTITUDES

3.1 Introduction

The unit will expose you to the meaning and definition of attitude, the many influences on the formation of attitude, and how attitudinal changes affect relationships and organizations. The unit will further demonstrate how attitudes can be changed.

3.2 Learning Outcomes

As you study and work through this unit, you are expected to;

- define the term attitude.
- explain how attitudes are formed.
- explain the conditions that play a role in attitude formation.
- discuss how attitudes influence human behavior.

In your own understanding how can you define attitudes? We hope you have reflected on your own definition. Psychologists sometimes describe an attitude simply as a tendency to seek or avoid something. Their early studies of liking and disliking, approval and disapproval were helpful but incomplete. When we come across a new experience, we evaluate it to form long-term reactions that then govern the way we perceive that object again. Attitudes are these lasting evaluations that people make of the world around them. An attitude includes both cognitive and emotional information, and describes the way an individual makes associations between the object and opinions about that object. Attitudes can exist on a vast number of things, including people, events and behaviors; and are formed rapidly. They are also relatively persistent; and often determine the manner in which an individual respond to events at a later point.

3.3 Defining attitude

In general, attitude may be regarded as a series of personal belief or ideas which cause an individual to feel and act in certain ways. This feeling aspect indicates an emotional content that is always exhibited by individuals in any setting, which includes the organization.

Attitude can be defined as positive or negative evaluation of people, objects, ideas, or events. For example, a person's opposition to an organizational regulation or support for organizational polices

could be described as an attitude. Attitudes are studied by social psychologists because they are important determinants of behavior (Schaller, 1994).

They substantially influence our reaction in a wide variety of situations and tend to be quite stable over time. Attitudes are fundamental to understanding social perception because they strongly influence our perception of the people we meet and the groups we join or avoid.

3.4 Forming Attitude

We will now look at various factors that play a role in attitude formation. According to Schaller (1994) there are many factors that influence the formation of attitude these are:

(i) Social Influence: This is otherwise referred to as the influence of other people. Early in life, the family is the primary reference group, and parents are said to have the greatest influence on the developing attitude of the child. It is later in life that teachers, peers and other groups begin to influence attitudes.

The mass media (Ottarit, 1994), particularly television and the internet also substantially influence attitudes. All these groups influence attitude through three processes.

(a) Providing information

(b) Reinforcement

(c) Identification.

The first way parents or guardians influence attitude is by providing information about people, objects, ideas, policies and events in the world. Also information is provided by mass media such as the television, internet, and radio as earlier stated. A second means by which attitudes are being influenced is by administering rewards and punishment (Mc Ginnien, 1996) either by parents or by organizations. More often parents praise children for expressing some attitudes and disapproves when they express others. Such approval or disapproval has impact on people' attitudes. The third social influence on attitude is the process of identification. People emulate other people they admire, and this identification leads to the idea of mentorship. Contact with peers, teachers, and other adults also influence our attitudes.

(ii) Cognitive Influence**:** Another very important source of attitude is your own reasoning and logic. Often, we go beyond what we have been told by other people and we figure things out by ourselves.

(iii) Behavioural Influences: A third influence on people's attitude is their own behaviour rather than other. For example, when parents make sure that their children do not let their siblings or that they do their homework, the children should form attitudes consistent with these behaviour especially if the tangible rewards for the behaviour are small.

3.5 Conditions that play a role in attitude formation

Most attitudes are formed through Social learning, where people observe attitudes in others, or form associations between emotional responses and certain stimuli. Typically, different forms of Conditioning seem to play a role in the process of attitude formation.

- *Classical Conditioning* – People sometimes makes associations between positive or negative experiences and certain stimuli; and thus learns to associate the stimulus with the emotion. For example, if a child receives a lot of attention (and thus feels happy) each time a particular guest visits, but receives none (and thus feels sad) whenever another guest visits; the child is likely to develop a positive attitude towards the first guest and a negative attitude towards the second.
- *Instrumental Conditioning* – when a particular view or attitude is reinforced with rewards of praise and encouragement, the attitude strengthens; while an attitude that is punished with negative experiences is less likely to persist.
- *Subliminal Conditioning* – at times, the cues to attitude development are so subtle, that people are not aware of them. When such cues reinforce attitudes, subliminal conditioning is said to be at work.

Modeling is another important means of attitude formation. People, particularly children, try to emulate the persons they admire; and this includes accepting the attitudes held by these people as one's own. Even as adults, modeling affects attitude formation. For example, when a new course is introduced, the attitude held by a lecturer, depending on who one looks up to can influence the extent to which students like or dislike the new subject.

Learning is not the only means of attitude formation. Social Comparison theory suggests that an individual may form an attitude or reinforce one by comparing one's attitudes with those of another. When one's attitudes corroborate with those held by significant others, they are accepted as being accurate responses to the attitude-object, and thus, are reinforced. On the other hand, if a discrepancy is observed, people may choose to change their attitude to attain similarity. Also, when someone trusted shares an attitude, an individual may form a fresh attitude based simply on this information (for example, when a friend tells us about this new product, we may choose to believe her, and then pass on the recommendation if we are asked for it). Research studies have shown that attitudes seem to be heritable. This may be due to the heritability of temperament and other dispositional characteristics, and due to the ever-present opportunity to learn the attitudes of family members. Can you think of other ways in which you think attitudes can be formed apart from the ones discussed above?

3.6 Influence on behavior

One would intuitively assume that attitudes play an important role in choosing how to behave in a given situation. We constantly come across examples of how attitudes can shape behaviors. But this is not always the case; and most people will admit to having acted contrary to their own attitudes at some point or the other. Thus, it is important to understand the different factors that mediate the relationship between attitudes and behaviors. Some of these factors are associated with the attitudes themselves.

The origin of the attitude plays an important role in predicting if the attitude will lead to action. Typically, attitudes formed out of personal experience are more likely to govern behavior as compared to those formed out of hearsay. Thus, an individual is more likely to buy goods from a particular bakery if their personal experience with the products has been good, as compared to when they have simply heard of the bakery from someone else.

The Specificity of the attitude, or the extent to which it is associated with a particular person, event or object can predict behavior, so that the more specific the attitude, the more likely it is to resolve into behavior.

Strength of an attitude is another important factor. A stronger attitude is more likely to affect behavior. This is possibly because a stronger attitude contains more information about the attitude-

object; it is deemed more important and affects the individual directly by being associated with core values and principles.

A strong attitude is also one that has higher accessibility. Accessibility is the likelihood that a particular attitude can be retrieved and brought into conscious thought. An attitude that is more accessible is more likely to be considered when deciding on a behavioral response to a situation.

Besides these, a number of Situational Factors also affect the extent to which attitudes govern behavior. Social Norms that exist in a situation require particular responses to situations, and also dictate punishment for behaviors that do not fit these norms. This sets constraints on the possible range of behaviors, and people often choose to conform to norms rather than exhibit attitude – congruent behaviors. But when an individual is in a rush, they act more instinctively; and thus, may ignore cues to the prevalent norms. Thus, they are more likely to exhibit attitude – congruent behaviors. Also, people consciously choose situations that are congruent to their attitudes, and so provide themselves with opportunities to exhibit congruent behaviors.

The individual's personality also plays an important role. People who are high on self-monitoring are more conscious of the situational demands and constraints, and so are more likely to display expected behaviors regardless of their attitudes. On the other hand, people low on self-monitoring are more likely to exhibit attitude – congruent behaviors as they are less concerned with how they are perceived by others.

Research has yielded evidence for a theoretical approach to understanding the relationship between attitudes and behaviors. The Theory of Planned Behavior suggests that an individual's intentions help predict the nature of their actions. Thus, the final behavior exhibited may be predicted by the interaction of the person's attitudes, their understanding of the subjective norms of the situation, and the extent to which they perceive they can control the situation. The Attitude-to-Behavior Process Model suggests that an individual will when the response has to be given rapidly, people use their attitude and their previous knowledge of what behavioral responses are possible to decide on a behavior that is most likely to be effective and is as close to our attitudes as possible.

3.7 Changing attitude

From our discussion above, it can be stated that in the course of growing up, people form several attitudes. These attitudes are useful in forming perceptions and making judgments about the world,

and they help in guiding social interaction. It is to be remembered that attitudes are wrapped up with a person s feelings, needs, and self-concept. To change, such attitude requires a change in itself. In addition, attitudes are easy to maintain because a person sees what he or she wants to see and may distort reality to find evidence to support any position he wants to hold.

Modifying an old attitude and replacing it with a new one is a process of learning. An attitude that no longer serves its function will cause the individual holding that attitude to feel blocked or frustrated. Although many strategies have been employed to exert social influence upon attitudes, three of such have been found to be most successful:

(i) Persuasive Communications

(ii) Emotional Appeals

(iii) Induction of attitude discrepant behaviour.

(i) Persuasive Communication: Most attempts to modify our attitudes involve some type of persuasive communication, which could be spoken, written, televised, or filmed messages which seek to alter our reactions towards various objects through logical arguments, convincing facts and authoritative information. The effectiveness of this strategy has to do with some characteristics of the communicator (especially his or her credibility) the communication itself, in terms of content and form, and the recipients, when these characteristics are favorable persuasion may succeed, however, persuasion may fail and attitudes will remain largely unchanged. For example, school manager who intends to instill discipline in school must communicate it inactions and in persuasive forms. Reflect on a behavior of someone you can modify using Persuasive Communication.

(ii) Emotional Appeals**:** Some attempts to change our attitude involves the use of strong fear inducing appeals, suggesting that failure to adopt certain positions recommended or courses of action could lead to truly disastrous results. For example, frightening films showing diseased lungs and actual lung cancer operation shave been found to produce greater changes in smoker's attitude towards their habits than milder communications depicting charts and graphs.

(iii) Induction of attitude (discrepant behaviour): According to the theory of cognitive dissonance, human beings have a strong preference for cognitive consultancy agreement among their attitudes, opinions and beliefs. Consequently, whenever they become aware of an inconsistency between two or more related thoughts, they experience an unpleasant state of dissonance and will actively

strive to reduce or eliminate its presence. The dissonance theory also suggests that in situation in which individual are offered rewards for engaging in attitude discrepant behaviour, the degree of attitude change that is produced will be at a maximum when such rewards are just barely sufficient to reduce the inconsistent actions.

3.8 Attitudes for successful experiences in the school

If learning experiences are to be successful, attitudes towards teachers as well as towards the school, other students and one-self cannot be over emphasized.

Teachers should recognize that all successful learning is accompanied by changes in attitudes, formal instruction can crystalize attitudes already formed sometimes it can help the student acknowledge fallacies in his outlook or conflicts among his values. In the long run, attitudes are established by living, interpretation are tried, confirmed and retained accordingly. Each person takes on for the most part, the attitude of the people to whom he is loyal. For example, students take after the teacher/society. Therefore, the principal aim of the school is to make the students loyal to his society and develop his identification with good citizens.

3.9 Summary

In this study unit, we have learnt the meaning of attitude and the formation of attitude in individuals. We also learnt that changes occur in our attitude due to three successful strategies which includes persuasive communication, emotional approach and induction of attitude discrepant behaviour. Finally, the study unit concluded that the attitude for successful learning experiences lies with the teacher, the school and the individual self.

Activities

1. Discuss factors that play a role in attitude formation
2. Can you recall any attitude formed by you through the influence of information from parents? State briefly how such attitudes influence your behaviour.
3. Identify factors that influence attitude formation.

Reflection

Think of some attitudes you held about some people and explain how some of them have been modified over time.

UNIT 4

CONFORMITY, COMPLIANCE, AND OBEDIENCE

4.1 Introduction

In this section, we discuss additional ways in which people influence others. The topics of conformity, social influence, obedience, and group processes demonstrate the power of the social situation to change our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. We begin this section with a discussion of the psychology of compliance. As you read through you should be relating what you will be reading about to what you see in every day life.

4.2 Learning outcomes

As you study and work through this unit, you are expected to;

- discuss how you can apply obedience in relationships.
- apply techniques of compliance in real life situation.
- explain factors that affect conformity.

4.3 The Psychology of Compliance

Have you ever done something you didn't really want to do simply because someone else asked you to? Buying something after being persuaded by a pushy salesperson or trying a particular brand of soda after seeing a commercial endorsement featuring your favorite celebrity are two examples of what is known as compliance.

What influence does it have on our social behavior? Are there any factors that impact on compliance? In order to learn the answers to these questions, it is important to start by understanding exactly what compliance is and how it works. Continue reading to discover more about what researchers have learned about the psychology of compliance.

What Is Compliance? In psychology, compliance refers to changing one's behavior due to the request or direction of another person. It is going along with the group or changing behavior to fit in with the group, while still disagreeing with the group. Unlike obedience, in which the other

individual is in a position of authority, compliance does not rely upon being in a position of power or authority over others. Compliance refers to a change in behavior that is *requested* by another person or group; the individual acted in some way because others asked him or her to do so (but it was possible to refuse or decline. (Breckler, Olson, & Wiggins, 2006). Situations calling for compliance take many forms. These include a friend's plea for help, sheepishly prefaced by the question "Can you do me a favor?" They also include the pop-up ads on the Internet designed to lure you into a commercial site and the salesperson's pitch for business prefaced by the dangerous words "Have I got a deal for you!" Sometimes the request is up front and direct; what you see is what you get. At other times, it is part of subtle and more elaborate manipulation." (Kassin, Fein, & Markus, 2011).

4.4 Techniques Used to Gain Compliance

Compliance is a major topic of interest within the field of consumer psychology. This specialty area focuses on the psychology of consumer behavior, including how sellers can influence buyers and persuade them to purchase goods and services. Marketers often rely on a number of different strategies to obtain compliance from consumers. Some of these techniques include:

4.4.1 The "Door-in-the-Face" Technique

In this approach, marketers start by asking for a large commitment. When the other person refuses, they then make a smaller and more reasonable request. For example, imagine that a business owner asks you to make a large investment in a new business opportunity. After you decline the request, the business owner asks if you could at least make a small product purchase to help him out. After refusing the first offer, you might feel compelled to comply with his second appeal.

4.4.2 The "Foot-in-the-Door" Technique

In this approach, marketers start by asking for and obtaining a small commitment. Once you have already complied with the first request, you are more likely to also comply with a second, larger request. For example, your co-worker asks if you fill in for him for a day. After you say yes, he then asks if you could just continue to fill in for the rest of the week.

4.4.3 The "That's-Not-All" Technique

Have you ever found yourself watching a television infomercial? Once a product has been pitched, the seller then adds an additional offer before the potential purchaser has made a decision. "That's not all," the salesperson might suggest, "If you buy a set of widgets now, we'll throw in an extra widget for free!" The goal is to make the offer as appealing as possible.

4.4.4 The "Lowball" Technique

This strategy involves getting a person to make a commitment and then raising the terms or stakes of that commitment. For example, a salesperson might get you to agree to buy a particular cell phone plan at a low price before adding on a number of hidden fees that then make the plan much more costly.

4.4.5 Ingratiation

This approach involves gaining approval from the target in order to gain compliance. Strategies such as flattering the target or presenting oneself in a way that appeals to the individual are often used in this approach.

4.4.6 Reciprocity

People are more likely to comply if they feel that the other person has already done something for them. We have been socialized to believe that if people extend kindness to us, then we should return the favor. Researchers have found that the reciprocity effect is so strong that it can work even when the initial favor is uninvited or comes from someone we do not like.

4.5 What Does the Research Say About Compliance?

There are a number of well-known studies that have explored issues related to compliance, conformity, and obedience. Some of these include:

4.5.1 The Asch Conformity Experiments

Psychologist Solomon Asch conducted a series of experiments to demonstrate how people conform in groups. When shown three lines of different lengths, participants were asked to select the longest line. When the others in the group (who were confederates in the experiment) selected the wrong line, participants would conform to group pressure and also select the wrong line length.

4.5.2 The Milgram Obedience Experiment

Stanley Milgram's famous and controversial obedience experiments revealed the power of authority could be used to get people to conform. In these experiments, participants were directed by the experimenter to deliver electrical shocks to another person. Even though the shocks were not real, the participants genuinely believed that they were shocking the other person. Milgram found that 65 percent of people would deliver the maximum, possibly fatal electrical shocks on the orders of an authority figure.

4.5.3 The Stanford Prison Experiment

During the 1970s, psychologist Philip Zimbardo conducted an experiment in which participants played the roles of guards and prisoners in a mock prison set up in the basement of the psychology department at Stanford University. Originally slated to last two weeks, the experiment had to be terminated after just six days after the guards began displaying abusive behavior and the prisoners became anxious and highly stressed. The experiment demonstrated how people will comply with the expectations that come from certain social roles.

4.5.4 Factors That Influence Compliance

- People are more likely to comply when they believe that they share something in common with the person making the request.
- When group affiliation is important to people, they are more likely to comply with social pressure. For example, if a college student places a great deal of importance on belonging

to a college fraternity, they are more likely to go along with the group's requests even if it goes against their own beliefs or wishes.

- The likelihood of compliance increases with the number of people present. If only one or two people are present, a person might buck the group opinion and refuse to comply.
- Being in the immediate presence of a group makes compliance more likely.

4.6 **Psychology of Conformity**

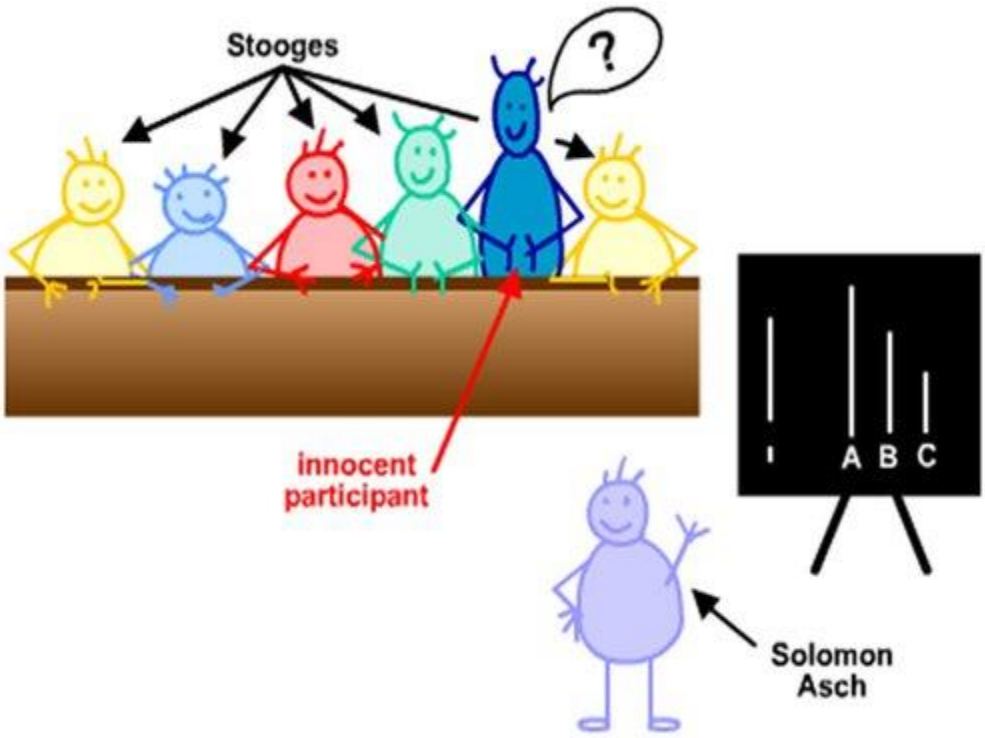
4.6.1 Solomon Asch - Conformity Experiment

Solomon Asch conducted an experiment to investigate the extent to which social pressure from a majority group could affect a person to conform.

He believed that the main problem with Sherif's (1935) conformity experiment was that there was no correct answer to the ambiguous autokinetic experiment. How could we be sure that a person conformed when there was no correct answer?

Asch (1951) devised what is now regarded as a classic experiment in social psychology, whereby there was an obvious answer to a line judgment task.

If the participant gave an incorrect answer it would be clear that this was due to group pressure.

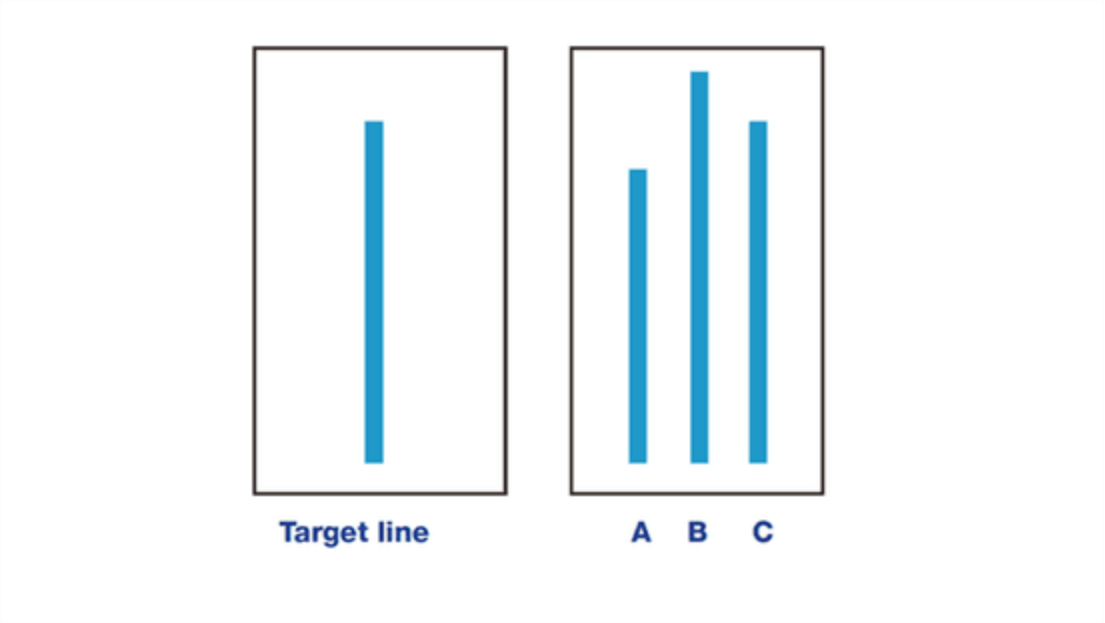


Experimental Procedure

Asch used a lab experiment to study conformity, whereby 50 male students from Swarthmore College in the USA participated in a 'vision test.'

Using a line judgment task, Asch put a naive participant in a room with seven confederates/stooges. The confederates had agreed in advance what their responses would be when presented with the line task.

The real participant did not know this and was led to believe that the other seven confederates/stooges were also real participants like themselves.



Each person in the room had to state aloud which comparison line (A, B or C) was most like the target line. The answer was always obvious. The real participant sat at the end of the row and gave his or her answer last.

There were 18 trials in total, and the confederates gave the wrong answer on 12 trails (called the critical trials). Asch was interested to see if the real participant would conform to the majority view.

Asch's experiment also had a control condition where there were no confederates, only a "real participant."

Findings

Asch measured the number of times each participant conformed to the majority view. On average, about one third (32%) of the participants who were placed in this situation went along and conformed with the clearly incorrect majority on the critical trials.

Over the 12 critical trials, about 75% of participants conformed at least once, and 25% of participant never conformed.

In the control group, with no pressure to conform to confederates, less than 1% of participants gave the wrong answer.

Conclusion

Why did the participants conform so readily? When they were interviewed after the experiment, most of them said that they did not really believe their conforming answers, but had gone along with the group for fear of being ridiculed or thought "peculiar.

A few of them said that they really did believe the group's answers were correct.

Apparently, people conform for two main reasons: because they want to fit in with the group (normative influence) and because they believe the group is better informed than they are (informational influence).

Critical Evaluation

One limitation of the study is that is used a biased sample. All the participants were male students who all belonged to the same age group. This means that the study lacks population validity and that the results cannot be generalized to females or older groups of people.

Another problem is that the experiment used an artificial task to measure conformity - judging line lengths. How often are we faced with making a judgment like the one Asch used, where the answer is plain to see?

This means that study has low ecological validity and the results cannot be generalized to other real-life situations of conformity. Asch replied that he wanted to investigate a situation where the participants could be in no doubt what the correct answer was. In so doing he could explore the true limits of social influence.

Some critics thought the high levels of conformity found by Asch were a reflection of American, 1950's culture and told us more about the historical and cultural climate of the USA in the 1950's than then they do about the phenomena of conformity.

In the 1950's America was very conservative, involved in an anti-communist witch-hunt (which became known as McCarthyism) against anyone who was thought to hold sympathetic left-wing

views. Conformity to American values was expected. Support for this comes from studies in the 1970s and 1980s that show lower conformity rates (e.g., Perrin & Spencer, 1980).

Perrin and Spencer (1980) suggested that the Asch effect was a "child of its time." They carried out an exact replication of the original Asch experiment using engineering, mathematics and chemistry students as subjects. They found that on only one out of 396 trials did an observer join the erroneous majority.

Perrin and Spencer argue that a cultural change has taken place in the value placed on conformity and obedience and in the position of students. In America in the 1950s students were unobtrusive members of society whereas now they occupy a free questioning role.

However, one problem in comparing this study with Asch is that very different types of participants are used. Perrin and Spencer used science and engineering students who might be expected to be more independent by training when it came to making perceptual judgments.

Finally, there are ethical issues: participants were not protected from psychological stress which may occur if they disagreed with the majority.

Evidence that participants in Asch-type situations are highly emotional was obtained by Back et al. (1963) who found that participants in the Asch situation had greatly increased levels of autonomic arousal.

This finding also suggests that they were in a conflict situation, finding it hard to decide whether to report what they saw or to conform to the opinion of others.

Asch also deceived the student volunteers claiming they were taking part in a 'vision' test; the real purpose was to see how the 'naive' participant would react to the behavior of the confederates. However, deception was necessary to produce valid results.

4.6.2 Factors Affecting Conformity

In further trials, Asch (1952, 1956) changed the procedure (i.e., independent variables) to investigate which situational factors influenced the level of conformity (dependent variable).

His results and conclusions are given below:

4.6.2.1 Group Size

Asch (1956) found that group size influenced whether subjects conformed. The bigger the majority group (no of confederates), the more people conformed, but only up to a certain point.

With one other person (i.e., confederate) in the group conformity was 3%, with two others it increased to 13%, and with three or more it was 32% (or 1/3).

Optimum conformity effects (32%) were found with a majority of 3. Increasing the size of the majority beyond three did not increase the levels of conformity found. Brown and Byrne (1997) suggest that people might suspect collusion if the majority rises beyond three or four.

According to Hogg & Vaughan (1995), the most robust finding is that conformity reaches its full extent with 3-5-person majority, with additional members having little effect.

4.6.2.2 Lack of Group Unanimity / Presence of an Ally

As conformity drops off with five members or more, it may be that it's the unanimity of the group (the confederates all agree with each other) which is more important than the size of the group.

In another variation of the original experiment, Asch broke up the unanimity (total agreement) of the group by introduced a dissenting confederate.

Asch (1956) found that even the presence of just one confederate that goes against the majority choice can reduce conformity as much as 80%.

For example, in the original experiment, 32% of participants conformed on the critical trials, whereas when one confederate gave the correct answer on all the critical trials conformity dropped to 5%.

This was supported in a study by Allen and Levine (1968). In their version of the experiment, they introduced a dissenting (disagreeing) confederate wearing thick-rimmed glasses – thus suggesting he was slightly visually impaired.

Even with this seemingly incompetent dissenter conformity dropped from 97% to 64%. Clearly, the presence of an ally decreases conformity.

The absence of group unanimity lowers overall conformity as participant feel less need for social approval of the group (re: normative conformity).

4.6.2.3 Difficulty of the Task

When the (comparison) lines (e.g., A, B, C) were made more similar in length it was harder to judge the correct answer and conformity increased.

When we are uncertain, it seems we look to others for confirmation. The more difficult the task, the greater the conformity.

4.6.2.4 Answer in Private

When participants were allowed to answer in private (so the rest of the group does not know their response) conformity decreases.

This is because there are fewer group pressures and normative influence is not as powerful, as there is no fear of rejection from the group.

4.7 The Concept of Obedience in Psychology

Obedience is a form of social influence that involves performing an action under the orders of an authority figure. It differs from compliance (which involves changing your behavior at the request of another person) and conformity (which involves altering your behavior in order to go along with the rest of the group). Instead, obedience involves altering your behavior because a figure of authority has told you to.

4.7.1 How Obedience Differs from Conformity

Obedience differs from conformity in three key ways:

1. Obedience involves an order; conformity involves a request.
2. Obedience involves following the order of someone with a higher status; conformity usually involves going along with people of equal status.
3. Obedience relies on social power; conformity relies on the need to be socially accepted.

4.7.2 Milgram's Obedience Experiments

During the 1950s, a psychologist Stanley Milgram became intrigued with the conformity experiments performed by Solomon Asch. Asch's work had demonstrated that people could easily be swayed to conform to group pressure, but Milgram wanted to see just how far people would be willing to go.

The trial of Adolf Eichmann, who had planned and managed the mass deportation of Jews during World War II, helped spark Milgram's interest in the topic of obedience. Throughout the trial, Eichmann suggested that he was simply following orders and that he felt no guilt for his role in the mass murders because he had only been doing what his superiors requested and that he had played no role in the decision to exterminate the captives.

Milgram had set out to explore the question "are Germans different?" but he soon discovered that the majority of people are surprisingly obedient to authority. After the horrors of the Holocaust, some people, such as Eichmann, explained their participation in the atrocities by suggesting that they were just doing as they were commanded.

Milgram wanted to know-would people really harm another person if they were ordered to by an authority figure? Just how powerful is the pressure to obey?

Milgram's studies involved placing participants in a room and directing them to deliver electrical shocks to a "learner" located in another room. Unbeknownst to the participant, the person supposedly receiving the shocks was actually in on the experiment and was merely acting out responses to imaginary shocks. Surprisingly, Milgram found that 65 percent of participants were willing to deliver the maximum level of shocks on the orders of the experimenter.

4.7.3 Zimbardo's Prison Experiment

Milgram's controversial experiments generated a great deal of interest in the psychology of obedience. During the early 1970s, social psychologist Philip Zimbardo staged an exploration into the study of prisoners and prison life. He set up a mock prison in the basement of the

Stanford University psychology department and assigned his participants to play the roles of either prisoners or guards, with Zimbardo himself acting as the prison warden.

The study had to be discontinued after a mere six days even though it was originally slated to last two weeks. Why did the researchers end the experiment so early? Because the participants had become so involved in their roles, with the guards utilizing authoritarian techniques to gain the obedience of the prisoners. In some cases, the guards even subjected the prisoners to psychological abuse, harassment, and physical torture.

The results of the Stanford Prison Experiment are often used to demonstrate how easily people are influenced by characteristics of the roles and situations they are cast in, but Zimbardo also suggested that environmental factors play a role in how prone people are to obey authority.

4.7.4 Obedience in Action Definition and Examples

Milgram's experiments set the stage for future investigations into obedience, and the subject quickly became a hot topic within social psychology. But what exactly do psychologists mean when they talk about obedience?

Some definitions, examples, and observations:

Studies have been conducted with participants in other countries, with children, and with other procedural variations. The same basic result in consistently obtained: many people readily accept the influence of an authority, even when that means causing potential harm to another person. One interesting application of this concept has been to the nurse-physician relationship. Several studies have shown that nurses will often carry out the orders of a physician even when there is a good reason to believe that potential harm could come to the patient." (Breckler, Olson, & Wiggins, 2006). Other researchers have since replicated Milgram's findings. High school students were found to be even more willing to obey orders. Cross-cultural research in other Western cultures has also yielded high rates of obedience using Milgram's procedure. Unfortunately, it seems as though Milgram's results were not flukes." (Pastorino & Doyle-Portillo, 2013).

Are conformity and obedience unique to American culture? By no means. The Asch and Milgram experiments have been repeated in many societies, where they have yielded results roughly similar to those seen in the United States. Thus the phenomena of conformity and obedience seem to transcend culture... Many of the studies have reported even higher obedience rates than those seen in Milgram's American samples. For example, obedience rates of over 80% have been reported for samples from Italy.

4.8 Summary

In this unit you have learnt about conformity, obedience and compliance, Techniques that enhance compliance such as door in the face, the foot in the door and its-that's-not all technique were also discussed. It's hoped that you can now apply these concepts as you interact with others people. In the next unit, you will learn about group think and it how it affects human behavior

Activity

1. What is the difference between compliance and conformity?

Reflection

What factors do you think can make people comply other than the ones mentioned in this unit?

UNIT5

GROUP PROCESSES

5.1 Introduction

In this unit you are going to learn about how people behave in groups. You will look at group polarization, social affiliation, social loafing, stages of group formation with its characteristics will also be discussed.

5.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of his unit you are expected to;

- explain group polarization.
- discuss stages of group formation.
- discuss factors that influence behavior in groups.

When we are in a group setting, we are often influenced by the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of people around us. Whether it is due to normative or informational social influence, groups have power to influence individuals. Another phenomenon of group conformity is groupthink. Groupthink is the modification of the opinions of members of a group to align with what they believe is the group consensus (Janis, 1972). In group situations, the group often takes action that individuals would not perform outside the group setting because groups make more extreme decisions than individuals do. Moreover, groupthink can hinder opposing trends of thought. This elimination of diverse opinions contributes to faulty decision by the group.
Dig Deeper: An Example of Groupthink in the U.S. Government

There have been several instances of groupthink in the U.S. government. One example occurred when the United States led a small coalition of nations to invade Iraq in March 2003. This invasion occurred because a small group of advisors and former President George W. Bush were convinced that Iraq represented a significant terrorism threat with a large stockpile of weapons of mass destruction at its disposal. Although some of these individuals may have had some doubts about the credibility of the information available to them at the time, in the end, the group

arrived at a consensus that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and represented a significant threat to national security. It later came to light that Iraq did not have weapons of mass destruction, but not until the invasion was well underway. As a result, 6000 American soldiers were killed and many more civilians died.

Why does groupthink occur? There are several causes of groupthink, which makes it preventable. When the group is highly cohesive, or has a strong sense of connection, maintaining group harmony may become more important to the group than making sound decisions. If the group leader is directive and makes his opinions known, this may discourage group members from disagreeing with the leader. If the group is isolated from hearing alternative or new viewpoints, groupthink may be more likely. How do you know when groupthink is occurring?

The following are some of the signs of group think:

- perceiving the group as invulnerable or invincible—believing it can do no wrong
- believing the group is morally correct
- self-censorship by group members, such as withholding information to avoid disrupting the group consensus
- the quashing of dissenting group members' opinions
- the shielding of the group leader from dissenting views
- perceiving an illusion of unanimity among group members
- holding stereotypes or negative attitudes toward the out-group or others with differing viewpoints (Janis, 1972).

Given the causes and symptoms of groupthink, how can it be avoided? There are several strategies that can improve group decision making including seeking outside opinions, voting in private, having the leader withhold position statements until all group members have voiced their views, conducting research on all viewpoints, weighing the costs and benefits of all options, and developing a contingency plan (Janis, 1972; Mitchell & Eckstein, 2009).

5.3 Group Polarization

Another phenomenon that occurs within group settings is group polarization. Group polarization (Teger & Pruitt, 1967) is the strengthening of an original group attitude after the discussion of views within a group. That is, if a group initially favors a viewpoint, after discussion the group consensus is likely a stronger endorsement of the viewpoint. Conversely, if the group was initially opposed to a viewpoint, group discussion would likely lead to stronger opposition. Group polarization explains many actions taken by groups that would not be undertaken by individuals. Group polarization can be observed at political conventions, when platforms of the party are supported by individuals who, when not in a group, would decline to support them. A more everyday example is a group's discussion of how attractive someone is. Does your opinion change if you find someone attractive, but your friends do not agree? If your friends vociferously agree, might you then find this person even more attractive?

5.4 Social Facilitation

Not all intergroup interactions lead to the negative outcomes we have described. Sometimes being in a group situation can improve performance. Social facilitation occurs when an individual performs better when an audience is watching than when the individual performs the behavior alone. This typically occurs when people are performing a task for which they are skilled. Can you think of an example in which having an audience could improve performance? One common example is sports. Skilled basketball players will be more likely to make a free throw basket when surrounded by a cheering audience than when playing alone in the gym. However, there are instances when even skilled athletes can have difficulty under pressure. For example, if an athlete is less skilled or nervous about making a free throw, having an audience may actually hinder rather than help. In sum, social facilitation is likely to occur for easy tasks, or tasks at which we are skilled, but worse performance may occur when performing in front of others, depending on the task.

5.5 Social Loafing

Another way in which a group presence can affect our performance is social loafing. Social loafing is the exertion of less effort by a person working together with a group. Social loafing occurs when our individual performance cannot be evaluated separately from the group. Thus, group performance declines on easy tasks (Karau & Williams, 1993). Essentially individual group members loaf and let other group members pick up the slack. Because each individual's efforts cannot be evaluated, individuals become less motivated to perform well. For example, consider a group of people cooperating to clean litter from the roadside. Some people will exert a great amount of effort, while others will exert little effort. Yet the entire job gets done, and it may not be obvious who worked hard and who didn't.

As a university student you may have experienced social loafing while working on a group project. Have you ever had to contribute more than your fair share because your fellow group members weren't putting in the work? This may happen when a professor assigns a group grade instead of individual grades. If the professor doesn't know how much effort each student contributed to a project, some students may be inclined to let more conscientious students do more of the work. The chance of social loafing in student work groups increases as the size of the group increases (Shepperd & Taylor, 1999).

Interestingly, the opposite of social loafing occurs when the task is complex and difficult (Bond & Titus, 1983; Geen, 1989). Remember the previous discussion of choking under pressure? This happens when you perform a difficult task and your individual performance can be evaluated. In a group setting, such as the student work group, if your individual performance cannot be evaluated, there is less pressure for you to do well, and thus less anxiety or physiological arousal (Latané, Williams, & Harkens, 1979). This puts you in a relaxed state in which you can perform your best, if you choose (Zajonc, 1965). If the task is a difficult one, many people feel motivated and believe that their group needs their input to do well on a challenging project (Jackson & Williams, 1985). Given what you learned about social loafing, what advice would you give a new professor about how to design group projects? If you suggested that individuals' efforts should not be evaluated, to prevent the anxiety of choking under pressure, but that the task must be challenging, you have a good understanding of the concepts discussed in this section.

Alternatively, you can suggest that individuals' efforts should be evaluated, but the task should be easy so as to facilitate performance. Good luck trying to convince your professor to only assign easy projects.

5.6 Terms used in the unit

Asch effect group majority influences an individual's judgment, even when that judgment is inaccurate.

confederate person who works for a researcher and is aware of the experiment, but who acts as a participant; used to manipulate social situations as part of the research design

conformity when individuals change their behavior to go along with the group even if they do not agree with the group

group polarization strengthening of the original group attitude after discussing views within the group

groupthink group members modify their opinions to match what they believe is the group consensus

informational social influence conformity to a group norm prompted by the belief that the group is competent and has the correct information

normative social influence conformity to a group norm to fit in, feel good, and be accepted by the group

obedience change of behavior to please an authority figure or to avoid aversive consequences

social facilitation improved performance when an audience is watching versus when the individual performs the behavior alone

social loafing exertion of less effort by a person working in a group because individual performance cannot be evaluated separately from the group, thus causing performance decline on easy tasks

5.7 Stages of Group Process & Development

So, you've hired new employees or put together a well-rounded team to work on a particular project. Now what? Groups do not automatically become a team just because you desire it. Rather, they have to go through a bedding-in phase where they resolve interpersonal conflicts and figure out the best ways to work together. This process is common to all teams.

What Happens When You Start a Group?

Entering a new group is rather like an identity crisis because you're never quite sure what your role is or how you're going to fit in. How the group will work, communicate, allocate tasks, share ideas, hold people accountable, handle the plurality of viewpoints, make decisions and address conflict are all unknown at this point. It's inevitable that each group member will bring his own personality and past experiences to the table, and each will have his own ideas about how the group should work.

This means that there's a lot of groundwork to be done, especially at the beginning of a group. People need to develop a base level of group cohesion and build mutual trust before they can focus on the team's goals. They need to allocate responsibilities, open channels of communication and temper some of the dominating voices that may override the rest of the group. Ultimately, the group needs to find ways to be productive together so the group can achieve more than the members would on their own.

This process of group development happens naturally, although some groups are more successful than others in learning how to function effectively together. Many researchers believe that all groups go through exactly the same group processes and intergroup relations when growing to the point where it can deliver quality results.

5.7.1 The Four Stages of Group Work Process

In 1965, the American psychologist Bruce Tuckman created a four-phase model to describe how groups navigate the team-building process and resolve conflicts constructively. This model is known as Tuckman's stages or more often by the names of its four distinct phases: forming, storming, norming and performing.

In 1977, Tuckman added a fifth and final stage: adjourning. The adjourning stage occurs when the team is dissolved, and group members move on to other work in different teams.

Stage One: Forming

The forming stage covers the first days or week in the office or on a new work team. The group members are getting to know each other and are learning to orient themselves to the group. Each person has her own ideas and expectations for the team and may remain distant as she sizes up the others and the project at hand. There will be some early discussion about the project's goals and objectives and about each other. Some members may contribute more than others at this stage.

Generally, everyone wants to be liked and accepted by the other group members. People play nicely with each other in the forming stage and try to make a good first impression.

However, they do not yet know each other well enough to focus on productive work. They likely will need strong guidance from a group leader to define the project and provide clear direction regarding the team roles and responsibilities. Without this early guidance, the team may never get off the ground.

Stage Two: Storming

In stage two, the first storms arise. The group members know each other better, and sympathies and personality clashes have emerged. People start competing for team roles, for status and for their ideas to be accepted. You start to see a pecking order emerge as certain members jostle for the top spots on the team.

For the group members who do not tolerate conflict, this is a difficult stage to go through. Nonetheless, it is inevitable. While a good team leader can help the team learn to resolve conflicts quickly and fearlessly, the members must do a lot of the work on their own. Some people must learn to be more assertive, while others must learn to hold back and listen more. This stage will come to an end when the team becomes more accepting of its individual members and starts transitioning toward some effective decision making.

Sadly, some teams never make it past the storming stage. This may be because the team composition is wrong, with too many similar or conflicting personalities that cause the team to be continually engaged in conflict.

Stage Three: Norming

As the team moves into the norming stage, a group identity emerges**.** The team has developed a clear set of roles and responsibilities, open lines of communication and its own rules for coexistence. Conflicts may still pop up from time to time, but the group has figured out a way to handle them purposefully.

To outsiders, the group will finally look like a team. The members are noticeably respectful of each other and are focused on a common objective rather than pursuing their own self-interests. The team leader may start to take a back seat at this point, stepping in only when the team gets stuck.

Stage Four: Performing

With the groundwork laid and the wrinkles ironed out, the team can now function at a very high level. The group is productive and efficient**,** and the team members support and rely on each other to achieve the group's objectives in the best way possible. Business leaders want their teams to operate in the performing stage for as long as possible.

Not every team makes it to this stage. Some will stop at stage three, functioning reasonably well but not performing as highly as it could be. A stage-four team is special because it is highly motivated to get the job done. It no longer needs any external assistance with problem solving or managing personal relationships.

The difficulty is keeping a performing team in this state of perfect balance. If a team member leaves and a new person joins or if any other change throws a wrench in the works, then the team could easily slip back into one of the earlier stages: forming or storming. It's best to leave a performing team as untouched as possible for as long as possible to get the best out of the group.

Stage Five: Adjourning

In the context of group process and practice, adjourning occurs when the project ends and the team is dissolved**.** The members may meet for a final celebration to mark the success of the

project. They may share lessons learned and best practices for future use. Ultimately, though, the team members will be moving on to different teams and projects. They're looking for closure before they all go their separate ways.

For teams that reached the performing stage, it's likely that the team members will stay in touch with each other and may even seek out opportunities to work together in the future. A performing team is a very close-knit group. The focus shifts to the individual experience at this stage since team members may be feeling sad or even despondent as the group breaks up. Adjourning is sometimes known as the mourning phase because individuals feel a deep bereavement once the experience is over.

5.8 Summary

The power of the situation can lead people to conform, or go along with the group, even in the face of inaccurate information. Conformity to group norms is driven by two motivations, the desire to fit in and be liked and the desire to be accurate and gain information from the group. Authority figures also have influence over our behaviors, and many people become obedient and follow orders even if the orders are contrary to their personal values. Conformity to group pressures can also result in groupthink, or the faulty decision-making process that results from cohesive group members trying to maintain group harmony. Group situations can improve human behavior through facilitating performance on easy tasks, but inhibiting performance on difficult tasks. The presence of others can also lead to social loafing when individual efforts cannot be evaluated.

Activity

1. Describe how seeking outside opinions can prevent groupthink.

2. Compare and contrast social loafing and social facilitation.

Reflection

- Conduct a conformity study the next time you are in an elevator. After you enter the elevator, stand with your back toward the door. See if others conform to your behavior. Did your results turn out as expected?

- Most students adamantly state that they would never have turned up the voltage in the Milligram experiment. Do you think you would have refused to shock the learner? Looking at your own past behavior, what evidence suggests that you would go along with the order to increase the voltage?

UNIT 6

ATTRACTION AND CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

6.1 Introduction

In this unit you are going to learn about attraction and close relations. A brief history of close relations will be critically examined. issues of love, commitment in relationships will all be at the center of discussion in this unit. We will conclude in this the unit by looking at Gender differences in close relationships. As you read engage unit activities in this unit so that you can cement your understanding of the topic

6.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you should be able to**;**

- discuss the history of close relationships.
- discuss commitment and love in relationships.
- critically examine gender differences in close relationships.

6.3 Close Relationships

Why are we attracted to some people? How do people know they are in good relationships? Why do people fall in love? Does good communication really produce successful relationships? Are men really from Mars and women from Venus? These are just some of the intriguing questions that social psychologists attempt to answer. Indeed, the study of close relationships has become one of the most important domains in social psychology over the past several decades.

But what are close relationships? It turns out that answering this question is not as easy as it seems. One key concept, developed by Harold Kelley and John Thibaut in the 1960s and 1970s, describes close relationships in terms of interdependence. Close relationships differ from having

acquaintances by the profound way in which the well-being and psychological processes of one individual resonate with, and are tied to, the same processes in another person. Furthermore, close relationships are characterized by relatively high levels of trust, love, knowledge, commitment, and intimacy. However, close relationships themselves divide into two further categories: platonic friendships versus romantic relationships. Romantic relationships differ from close platonic friendships in two major ways. First, romantic relationships contain the elements of sex and passion, and second, individuals are typically involved in just one romantic attachment at one time. Friendships can be intense and are of enormous psychological importance in our lives, but most research in social psychology has been devoted toward understanding romantic relationships. Accordingly, this entry focuses on this domain in this synopsis.

6.4 A Brief History of Close Relationships Research

A social psychological approach to close relationships focuses on the interaction between two individuals, paying close attention to both behavior and what goes in people's minds (emotions and cognitions). Within social psychology, up to the late 1970s, research into relationships concentrated on interpersonal attraction; namely, what factors lead people to be attracted to one another at the initial stages of relationship development? This research tended to be a theoretical and the results read like a shopping list of variables that influence attraction, including similarity, proximity, physical attractiveness, and so forth. In the 1980s the psychological Zeitgeist shifted towards the study of the much greater complexity inherent in the development, maintenance, and dissolution phases of dyadic romantic relationships. This shift was prompted by several key developments in the 1970s. First, John Gottman and others in the clinical area began research that, for the first time, observed and carefully measured the dyadic interchanges of married couples in an attempt to predict who would divorce. Second, Zick Rubin and others became interested in love and devised reliable scales that could measure the concept. Third, Harold Kelley led a team of social psychologists in producing a seminal book published in 1983 (Close Relationships), which presented the first full-blooded treatment of close relationships from an interactional, social psychological perspective.

Social psychological research in psychology over the past two decades has been marked by three major developments. First, there has been an explosion of work concerned with understanding the

role that social cognition (beliefs, cognitive processes, etc.) and emotions play in intimate relationships. This work has borrowed theories and methodologies from both social and cognitive psychology. Second, there has been a burgeoning interest in how attachment and bonding processes contribute to adult romantic relationships. Attachment research in adults appropriated the basic theories from the work in the 1960s and 1970s by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth concerning infant-caregiver attachment bonds. Third, the study of interpersonal attraction (in the context of romantic relationships, this is typically labeled mate selection) has once again become a hot topic, but under the new banner of evolutionary psychology. This approach is based on the evolutionary work of Darwin, but it has been honed into modern social psychological guise by figures such as David Buss and Jeffry Simpson.

Thus, as can be seen, social psychologists have freely borrowed from other domains in studying close relationships. However, this process is a two-way street, with social psychological research and theorizing being imported back into and enriching these same domains. Social psychologists have made important contributions in four major domains: how people choose their mates, love and commitment, communication and relationship interaction, and gender differences in the context if romantic relationships. Each of these domains will be discussed here.

Searching for the “Ideal” Mate

In New Zealand, the United States, African hunter-gatherer cultures, indeed around the world, people focus on similar categories in evaluating potential mates: personality factors related to warmth and intelligence, cues related to attractiveness and health, and the possession of status and resources. Moreover, there is remarkable agreement across both gender and cultures concerning which factors are most important in selecting mates for long-term relationships: The winner is warmth and loyalty, a close second is physical attractiveness and general vitality, and down the track is status and resources.

Research suggests that individuals do not differ simply in whether they set their mate standards as demanding or modest. Rather, they attach more or less importance independently across these three categories. Thus, some people (both men and women) are essentially on the hunt for an exciting, passionate relationship, whereas others care relatively little about passion and are

preoccupied with the search for intimacy, warmth, and commitment. Yet still others are prepared to sacrifice somewhat on the passion and intimacy front, if they can obtain a partner with considerable status and resources.

Why do people not want it all? Why is Jane's ideal partner not incredibly kind, handsome, remarkably fit with a wonderful body—and rich? First, such people might be plentiful in TV soap operas, but in real life they are remarkably thin on the ground. Second, even when Jane meets such a male paragon, he will probably not be interested in Jane (who is not a perfect 10 in every category). Third, even if Jane succeeds in striking up a relationship with such a catch, he may be difficult to retain, and Jane may find she needs to invest an exhausting amount of time and resources in maintaining the relationship.

The name of the mating game is to do the best one can in light of the available pool of mates, one's own perceived mate value, and other prevailing circumstances. What causes individuals to attach different amounts of importance to different ideal categories? Perhaps the major factor is self-perceived mate value. For example, those who perceive themselves as more attractive give more weight to this particular aspect in choosing a mate. This is one major reason why people are strongly similar with their mates on factors such as physical appearance and education level.

Evolutionary-based models of mate selection typically frame their predictions and explanations relative to two different goals: the search for a short-term sexual fling or the search for a mate who would make a suitable partner in a long-term committed relationship. It should be stressed that these goals are not necessarily conscious and typically find their expression in emotions and desires. This distinction in goals is exploited by Steve Gangestad and Jeffry Simpson to argue that humans can, and do, change their mating aims depending on circumstances, but both men and women may adopt a characteristic mate-selection style as a function of their upbringing, personal experiences, situational contingencies, and so forth.

In short-term sexual liaisons, women need to invest heavily in any subsequent offspring resulting from such a union but will not have the benefit of a lifelong mate and father for the children. Thus, in this context, women should be mainly on the hunt for an attractive man (good genes) rather than

for a sensitive and supportive mate. In short-term settings, men also should not be much interested in their mate's suitability as a long-term partner, but, if they have a choice, they should go for the best genes (e.g., the sexiest woman in the bar). However, because the potential investment in subsequent offspring for the woman is vast, compared to the man flitting through town, the woman should be even choosier than the man in this context.

Research has generally affirmed this theorizing. Several studies have found that when men and women are asked about their minimal requirements in a mate for a one-night stand, men typically express more modest requirements than do women on factors associated with warmth, loyalty, intelligence, status, and so forth. Given that men are generally more persuadable than women when it comes to rapid sexual conquests, women can afford to be much choosier than men in such a context. In a famous study, Russell Clark and Elaine Hatfield had (brave) male and female confederates approach members of the opposite gender on the campus at the Florida State University and ask them if they would go to bed with them. Seventy-two percent of the men agreed, whereas none of the women did.

The standards used in evaluating mates are also influenced by local circumstances. James Pennebaker and his colleagues found that, as the hours passed, both men and women perceived potential mates in bars as more attractive. Further research has replicated the finding for both genders, confirmed that the effect is not simply caused by people steadily getting drunk, and shown that the effect only occurs for those who are not involved in an intimate sexual relationship (and who are thus more likely to be monitoring the bar for potential mates).

Overall, however, the standards that are maintained most steadfastly across short-term and long-term relationships are concerned with physical attractiveness, and this is true for both men and women. These findings are consistent with the theory that physical attractiveness and vitality form the primary "good genes" factor: In a short-term relationship all one is getting out of the deal (reproductively speaking) are (potentially) the other person's genes. In a long-term mating scenario, women should be exceptionally picky about the factors that make for a good parent and a supportive mate, that is, warmth/loyalty and status/resources. They should also be interested in good genes (attractiveness and vitality), but they may be prepared to trade such characteristics

against the presence of personal warmth and loyalty or money and status. Men should certainly be more interested in the woman's ability to be a supportive mate and parent than in the short-term mating context, and they should also maintain their search for a woman with good genes; after all, men make substantial investments as a father and partner in long-term relationships.

However, in evolutionary terms, the woman's eggs are more or less all in one basket: The success with which she can pass her genes on is dependent on her husband (and wider family). In contrast, the man has more options. He can continue to spread his genes around while he is married, and he will remain fertile with the ability to father children for many more years than women are able to muster. Thus, evolutionary logic dictates that a high level of investment by the man should be more important to the woman than vice versa (although, in absolute terms, high levels of investment should be important to both genders in long-term relationships).

There is a wealth of research that supports the existence of gender differences in what people want in a partner and relationship. In long-term relationships, men tend to attach more importance to attractiveness and vitality than do women, and women tend to give more weight to loyalty and warmth and to status and resources than do men. These findings have been found in many cultures and have been replicated consistently within Western cultures by research using standard rating scales or by analyzing the contents of personal advertisements. An important caveat is that the size and significance of such gender differences are sensitive to the cultural context. Alice Eagly and Wendy Wood found that as women's empowerment (indexed by their earnings, their representation in legislative government, and their involvement in professional positions) increased relative to men across cultures, women placed increasingly less value on the status and earnings of a mate.

6.5 Love and Commitment

One of the most important generalizations established by social psychologists is that the way in which relationships develop is profoundly linked to what people bring with them into the relationship as mental dispositions, that is, expectations, beliefs, and personality traits. As noted previously, individuals select mates (in part) by the extent to which they meet important standards on dimensions such as warmth, attractiveness, and status. Hence, there exist strong similarities

between partners on such factors. However, expectations and standards never sleep. As knowledge of the other develops, and individuals and perceptions change, people continue to evaluate their partners and relationships by how they meet expectations and standards. The discrepancies between expectations or standards and perceptions of reality are then used to accomplish four pivotal major goals or functions in intimate relationships: evaluation, explanation, prediction, and control.

Take Fiona, who places huge importance on passion and sex in relationships and, thus, places a premium on vitality and attractiveness in evaluating a mate. Fiona was very attracted to Charles initially, mainly because he was athletic and attractive. Two years into the relationship, Charles has gained a lot of weight, and he has lost interest in going to the gym. Fiona's evaluations of Charles are, as a result, on the slide, and she is having doubts about the long-term future of the relationship (the evaluation function). Fiona can use the gap between her ideals and perceptions to help provide her with an explanation of why she is dissatisfied with her relationship: Charles is letting himself go (the explanation function). Fiona can also use the gap between her ideals and perceptions to predict the future of the relationship: Unless Charles takes better care of himself, the relationship is doomed (the prediction function). Finally, on the basis of her evaluation, explanation, and prediction, Fiona may actively attempt to change her partner's behavior, for example, by buying Charles a year's subscription to a health club for his birthday (the control function).

Research evidence suggests that this story about Fiona and Charles accurately reflects the psychological reality of relationships. Provided prior pivotal expectations are reasonably met in close relationships, the conditions are set for love, commitment, and trust to flourish. However, another important determinant of the capacity to trust and to form healthy adult intimate relationships are what are termed working models, which are composed of beliefs and expectations concerning the behavior of both self and others in intimate settings. This construct was initially developed by John Bowlby in the 1970s (as a part of what is termed attachment theory) as a tool to explain how pivotal interactions that infants have with caregivers continue to influence individuals as they develop into adulthood.

The first application of attachment theory to adult romantic relationships was published by Cindy Hazan and Phillip Shaver in 1987, triggering a massive surge of theorizing and research dealing with adult attachment. Interestingly, there are many similarities between the love that develops between parents and children and adult romantic love. For example, lovers often use favorite nicknames, slip into singsong cadences, have strong needs to spend a lot of time together, often caress and kiss one another, seem fascinated with each other's physical appearance, and engage in long bouts of prolonged eye contact. Exactly the same is true of parent-infant interactions. The underlying neurophysiological processes are also similar, with the same "love" hormones, such as oxytocin, involved in both adult-infant attachment and adult-adult romantic love.

The similarity between adult-adult and child-parent forms of attachment supports the argument that evolutionary processes have lifted and reworked the ancient mechanisms that promote mother-infant bonding in mammals to promote pair-bonding between humans. Thus, romantic love consists of an exceptionally strong attachment that inspires strong emotional drives toward commitment and caring, along with the passion and excitement that derives from sexual activity.

Moreover, adult attachment working models come in two broad dimensions or styles similar to those found in infant attachment styles: secure versus avoidant, and anxious or ambivalent. Those who possess secure (nonavoidant) attachment working models are comfortable with intimacy and closeness and are happy to rely on others for support and succor. Ambivalent individuals intensely desire closeness and intimacy but are fearful of rejection and are constantly vigilant for signs that their partners may betray them or leave.

Adult attachment working models are relatively stable, but they are also sensitive to experiences in intimate relationships. Having a successful and happy relationship pushes people into secure working models, whereas relationship breakups move people in the opposite direction. For example, Lee Kirkpatrick and Cindy Hazan reported that 50% of a sample of 177 individuals who were originally secure, and who experienced a relationship breakup, switched temporarily to an avoidant style. Moreover, as infants develop into adults, attachment working models become differentiated across domains. Thus, research has found that an individual may have an avoidant working model for romantic relationships but a secure working model for friends or family.

Working models have the same functions in social interaction (as previously described) concerning discrepancies between standards and perceptions of the partner or relationship; namely, they help people to evaluate, explain, predict, and control their relationships.

For example, Nancy Collins has shown that when secure individuals explain negative behaviors from their partners (e.g., failing to comfort them when they were depressed), they are inclined to produce charitable, relationship-positive attributions (e.g., the partner had a bad cold) apparently designed to retain their belief in the essential warmth and trustworthiness of their partner. In contrast, ambivalent individuals tend to adopt a relationship-negative pattern and emphasize their partner's indifference to their needs and lack of commitment.

In a pioneering piece of research, Simpson and colleagues tested Bowlby's hypothesis that attachment systems should kick into action when individuals are under stress. In this research, the female members of dating couples were initially stressed (by being shown some fearsome-looking apparatus they were supposedly about to be hooked up to in an experiment). The chilled women then returned to sit with their partners in a waiting room, during which time the couple's behavior was surreptitiously videotaped. The more stressed the individual women became, the more their attachment styles (assessed prior to the experiment) seemed to influence their behavior; secure women sought support whereas avoidant women avoided seeking support from their partner, to the point of expressing irritation if their partners asked what was wrong or proffered support. Moreover, secure men offered more emotional and physical support the more anxiety their partners displayed, whereas the avoidant men became less helpful and, again, actually expressed irritation.

Finally, people enjoy thinking, analyzing, writing, and talking about their own and others intimate relationships in a thoroughly conscious fashion. However, research carried out by Mario Mikulincer (and many others) has demonstrated that relationship attachment working models, beliefs, and expectations also automatically and unconsciously influence everyday relationship judgments, decisions, and emotions.

6.6 Communication and Relationship Interaction

The belief that good communication produces successful relationships seems close to self-evident. Yet, such unadorned claims are problematic from a scientific perspective, partly because defining and measuring the nature of (good) communication is anything but straightforward. However, there is general agreement that the way in which couples deal with the inevitable conflict or problems that crop up in relationships, and how they communicate their subsequent thoughts and feelings to one another, is a critical element (many have suggested the critical element) in determining the success of intimate relationships. Almost everyone experiences dark or uncharitable emotions and thoughts in intimate relationships. Two general competing accounts have been advanced specifying how individuals should best deal with such mental events: the good communication model and the good management model.

The good communication model is based around three empirical postulates, describing what couples in successful relationships are supposed to do with their negative thoughts and emotions. First, they frankly express their negative feelings and cognitions (albeit in a diplomatic fashion). Second, they deal openly with conflict—they don't stonewall, withdraw, or go shopping. Third, they honestly attempt to solve their problems. If the problems are not dealt with, then it is believed they will stick around and eat away at the foundations of the relationship over time, or return at a later date possibly in a more corrosive and lethal form.

The good management model is also based around three empirical postulates. First, the regular and open expression of negative thoughts and feelings is posited as corrosive for relationships. Second, it is proposed that exercising good communication skills often involves compromise and accommodation to the partner's behavior (and not shooting from the hip with uncharitable emotions and cognitions). Third, relationships always have problems or issues that cannot be solved. People in successful relationships supposedly recognize them, accept them as insoluble, and put them on the cognitive backburner. They don't get obsessive about them or fruitlessly struggle to solve them.

Both models possess some intuitive plausibility. Moreover, each has a body of research evidence to call upon in support. Buttressing the good communication model, studies by John Gottman and

others have found that avoidance of conflict and less frequent expression of negative emotions and thoughts in problem-solving discussions are associated with lower relationship satisfaction and higher rates of dissolution. In support of the good management model of relationship success, research has shown that those in more successful relationships tend to sacrifice their own personal interests and needs, swallow hard, and ignore or respond positively to their partner's irritating or negative behaviors.

This apparent paradox can be solved in several ways. First, extensive research has shown that the way in which people interpret and explain negative relationship behavior plays an important role. If Bill's partner is short with him, Bill's causal attributions will determine the end result. If Bill attributes insensitivity to his partner and blames her, he may well yell at her. On the other hand, if Bill attributes her remark to a cold she is suffering from, he is more likely to forgive her lapse and show solicitude. Second, it may depend on the compatibility between partners rather than on the style of communication itself. There is evidence that relationships in which one individual is vainly attempting to discuss a problem (most often the woman) while the other partner withdraws and stonewalls (most often the man) are associated with both short-term and long-term unhappiness. Third, a social psychological approach would suggest that the ability of individuals to adjust their expression of negative thoughts and feelings as a function of the situational requirements might also play a decisive role.

The last point cited (i.e., the ability to strategically alter levels of honesty and expression) is nicely illustrated in the research on anger in relationships. The expression of anger (within bounds) seems to be mildly beneficial for relationships when couples are in conflict-resolution mode. In this context, anger communicates to one's partner that (a) I am not a doormat; (b) this is important to me, so listen to what I am saying; (c) I care enough about the relationship to bother exhibiting my concerns; and (d) will you "please" alter your behavior! On the other hand, the expression of even mild anger when the partner needs support and soothing is particularly corrosive for relationships. In this context, the lack of support combined with the expression of mild irritation communicates (a) I don't care for my partner, or (b) I do not love my partner, or (c) I cannot be counted on when the chips are down. Thus, it may well be the ability to adjust communication strategies and behaviors according to the contextual demands that is critical in maintaining close and successful

relationships. Partners who adopt either the good communication or the good management strategy as a consistent default option, across time and across social contexts, will have fewer psychological resources to cope with the inevitable relationship hurdles thrown across their paths. Of course there are two people to consider in intimate relationships, so the way in which couples negotiate and harmonize their individual communicative styles will be an important ingredient in determining relationship success. However, one relationship size does not fit all. There exist a range of relationship communication styles that all appear to be successful, but which are strikingly different from one another.

Communication style is important in predicting relationship success, but it is clearly not the only important factor. A large body of research has accumulated that documents the best predictors of relationship happiness and longevity. Perhaps surprisingly, the evidence that similarity is an important factor is mixed, with many studies reporting null results, although (reflecting the power of the relationship mind) a well-replicated finding shows that couples who perceive themselves as more similar are considerably happier with their relationships. The two most powerful predictors of relationship success are more positive perceptions of relationship quality and more positive interactional behavior when problems are being discussed or one partner needs help or support. Measuring just these two factors enables researchers to successfully predict from 80% to 90% of couples who will stay together in marital or premarital relationships.

6.7 Gender Differences in Close Relationships

Well-documented gender differences in intimate relationships can be summarized by four propositions. First, women are more motivated and expert lay psychologists than men in intimate relationships (e.g., women talk and think about relationships more than men do and are more accurate at reading emotions and thoughts in their partners than men are). Second, men adopt a more proprietorial (ownership) attitude toward women's sexuality and reproductive behavior (e.g., men exhibit stronger sexual jealousy at hypothetical or actual sexual infidelities). Third, men possess a stronger and less malleable sex drive and a stronger orientation toward short-term sexual liaisons than do women (e.g., men masturbate more and have more frequent sexual desires than do women). Fourth, women are more focused on the level of investment in intimate relationships than are men (e.g., women rate status and resources in potential mates as more important than do men).

The origin of these gender differences remains a controversial issue. Evolutionary psychologists argue that they are linked to biological adaptations derived from gender differences in investment in children (women invest more), differences in the opportunity to pass on genes (men have greater opportunity), and uncertainty about who is the biological parent of children (for men but obviously not for women). Some theorists, in contrast, posit that culture is the main driving force behind gender differences. Of course, these are not either-or options, the most sensible conclusion being that both factors are important in explaining gender differences in intimate relationships.

Some caveats are in order. First, there are substantial within-gender differences for all four of these aspects that are typically greater than the between-gender differences. This pattern typically produces massive overlap in the distributions of men and women. For example, Gangestad and Simpson estimated that approximately 30% of men are more opposed to casual sex than are average women (in spite of men overall exhibiting more approval of casual sex than women). Second, men and women are often strikingly similar in their aspirations, beliefs, expectations, and behavior in intimate relationships. And, finally, as previously pointed out, gender differences come and go in magnitude depending on the circumstances.

6.8 Conclusions

The public is sometimes derisive of social psychologists' study of love and research questions like "Does good communication make for successful relationships?" They may believe that common sense already provides what people need to know about love. Either that, or they claim that romantic love is a mystery nobody can explain. These common beliefs are false. It does not pay to be overly confident about maxims learned at one's caregiver's knee or garnered from the latest column one has read about relationships in a magazine. Some popular stereotypes about relationships are true, others are false, and many are half-truths.

On the other hand, lay beliefs or lay theories should not be dispensed with automatically as unscientific rubbish. After all, laypeople share the same set of aims with scientists, namely, to explain, predict, and control their own relationships. Psychological folk theories and aphorisms concerned with love and relationships have developed over thousands of years. Given that humans are still here and prospering, it is unlikely, to say the least, that such lay theories should turn out

to be utterly false and therefore useless as tools for people to use for predicting, explaining, and controlling their own relationships. Moreover, even if commonsense theories or maxims are false, this does not mean that they are not worthy of scientific study. False beliefs cause behavior every bit as much as true beliefs do. Thus, (social) psychologists who wish to explain relationship behavior or cognition are forced to take the existence of commonsense beliefs and theories into account, even if such beliefs are false.

The social psychology of close relationships has a dual role. It increases understanding of intimate relationships while simultaneously contributing to scientific understanding of the basic building blocks of psychology: cognition, affect, and behavior. And this is simply because so much of human cognition, emotion, and behavior is intensely interpersonal in nature.

6.9 Summary

This unit has discussed attraction and close relationships, commitments and gender differences in relationships. We hope that what you have learnt in this module will help you handle love issues with understanding. The knowledge obtained in this unit may also help you to counsel others on issues of relationship. In the next unit, you will learn more about prosocial behavior another very interesting aspect of social psychology.

6.10Activity

1. Discuss gender differences in relationships.
2. Discuss the history of close relationships research.
3. Discuss the importance of communication in Relationships.

Reflection

What do you think people in a relationship should do in order to live in peace?

UNIT 7

PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR

7.1 Introduction

This unit presents personal characteristics associated with prosocial behavior and differences in prosocial behavior. It is hoped that by the time you finish reading this unit, you will be able to have a clear understanding of why some people help other in in a crisis.

7.2 Prosocial Behavior Definition

Prosocial behavior is voluntary behavior intended to benefit another. Thus, it includes behaviors such as helping, sharing, or providing comfort to another. Prosocial behavior is evident in young children but changes in frequency and in its expression with age. Individual differences in prosocial behavior are caused by a combination of heredity, socialization, and situational factors. Prosocial behaviors can be performed for a variety of reasons, ranging from selfish and manipulative reasons (e.g., helping get something in return) to moral and other-oriented reasons (e.g., helping because of moral principles or sympathy for another's plight). Prosocial behavior that is not performed for material or social rewards (e.g., rewards, approval), but is based on concern for another or moral values, is usually labeled "altruism."

A topic of attention in the social psychological literature is whether there is true altruism—that is, if people ever help others for reasons that are not really selfish. Although people sometimes assist others even when they receive no social or material benefits, some psychologists argue that there is always a selfish reason underlying altruistic motives. For example, they argue that people actually help because of the psychological merging of the self with another, the desire to elevate one's own mood or to avoid negative feelings or a negative self-evaluation (for not helping). People sometimes help others to alleviate their own feelings of distress when dealing with someone else in distress or need, or primarily because of personal ties to needy others. Nonetheless, Batson has provided evidence that people often assist for other-oriented sympathy, and there is likely at least some selfless motivation for some types of prosocial actions.

Prosocial behavior is relevant to both the quality of close interpersonal relationships and to interactions among individuals and groups without close ties. People, as individuals or as members of a group, often assist others in need or distress, as well as others whose needs are relatively trivial. Charities and societies depend on people helping one another. In addition, prosocial behavior has benefits for the benefactor. For example, children who are more prosocial tend to be better liked by peers, and adults who engage in helping activities tend to have better psychological health.

7.3 Personal Characteristics Associated with Prosocial Behavior

As is evident in everyday life, some people are more prosocial than others. Prosocial children and adults tend to be prone to sympathize with others. They also are more likely to understand others' thoughts and feelings and to try to take others' perspectives. In addition, people who tend to assist others often hold other-oriented values (e.g., value others' well-being) and tend to assign the responsibility for actions such as helping to themselves. Prosocial children tend to be positive in their emotional expression, socially competent, well adjusted, well regulated, and have a positive self-concept. In both childhood and adulthood, people who reason about moral conflicts in more mature ways (e.g., use more abstract moral reasoning, with more sophisticated perspective taking and a greater emphasis on values) are also more likely than their peers are to help others. Of particular note, preschool children who engage in spontaneous, somewhat costly prosocial behaviors (e.g., sharing a toy they like) engage in more prosocial behavior as adolescents and tend to be sympathetic and prosocial as adults. Thus, there appears to be some continuity in prosocial responding from a fairly early age.

7.4 Situational Factors and Prosocial Behavior

Even though some people are more prone to help than are others, situational factors also can have a powerful effect on people's willingness to help. For example, people are less likely to help when the cost of helping is high. They also are more likely to help attractive people and to help if they are the only ones available to help (e.g., there are no other people around who see an individual

who needs assistance). People in good moods are likely to assist others more than are people in neutral moods, although sometimes people in bad moods seem to help others to raise their moods. People also are more likely to help if they are exposed to models of prosocial behavior. Moreover, the interaction of situational factors with personality characteristics of potential helpers is important; for example, sociable people seem more likely to provide types of helping that involve social interaction whereas shy individuals often may tend to help in situations in which they do not need to be outgoing or socially assertive.

7.5 Origins of Prosocial Behavior

Prosocial behavior is a complex behavior affected by numerous factors, both biological and environmental. Findings in twin studies support the view that heredity plays a role: Identical twins (who share 100% of their genes) are more similar to each other in prosocial behavior, as well as sympathetic concern, than are fraternal twins (who share only 50% of their genes). Heredity likely affects aspects of temperament or personality such as self-regulation, emotionality, and agreeableness, which contribute to people engaging in higher levels of prosocial behavior.

Considerable evidence also indicates that individual differences in prosocial behavior also are linked to socialization. For example, adults are more likely to help others if, as children, their parents were models of prosocial behavior. Warm, supportive parenting, especially if combined with the use of positive discipline (e.g., the use of reasoning with children about wrongdoing), has also been linked to prosocial tendencies in children, whereas punitive parenting (e.g., parenting involving physical punishment, the deprivation of privileges, or threats thereof) has been inversely related. Parents who help their children to attend to and understand others' feelings tend to foster prosocial tendencies in their offspring. Appropriate levels of parental control, when combined with parental support, prosocial values, and behaviors that help children to attend to and care about others' needs, seem to foster prosocial responding.

7.6 Age and Sex Differences in Prosocial Behavior

Even very young children, for example, 1-year-olds, sometimes help or comfort others. However, the frequencies of most types of prosocial behavior increase during childhood until adolescence.

It currently is unclear if prosocial tendencies increase or not in adulthood. This increase in prosocial behavior with age in childhood is likely caused by a number of factors, including increased perspective-taking skills and sympathy, internalization of other-oriented, prosocial values, greater awareness of the social desirability of helping, and greater competence to help others.

There also are sex differences in sympathy and prosocial behavior. In childhood, girls tend to be somewhat, but not greatly, more likely to engage in prosocial behavior. Girls also are more empathic or sympathetic, albeit this sex difference is small and depends on the method of assessing empathy or sympathy. Women are perceived as more nurturant and prosocial, although they likely help more only in certain kinds of circumstances. Indeed, men are more likely to help when there is some risk involved (e.g., interactions with a stranger on the street) or if chivalry might be involved.

7.7 Summary

The unit has discussed personal characteristics associated with personal behavior in human beings. The age and sex differences in prosocial and behavior have also been clarified. We hope you enjoyed reading this unit because most of the issues raised are issues we experience in everyday life.

7.8 Activity

1. Discuss factors that cause differences in prosocial behavior.

Reflection

Explain your personal attributes that make you to be involved in prosocial behavior.

UNIT 8

AGRESSION: THEORIES, CAUSES, MANIFESTATION AND MANAGEMENT OF AGGRESSIVE LERNERS

8.1 Introduction

You may have asked yourself a lot of questions about aggression such as, why do human beings aggress against each other? What makes them turn with savage brutality on the fellow human being? Most psychologists have also pondered on these questions for centuries and have proposed many contrasting explanations. In Psychology, the term aggression refers to a range of behaviors that can result in both physical and psychological harm to oneself, others or objects in the environment. The expression of aggression can occur in a number of ways, including verbally, mentally and physically.

This unit will therefore, examine causes, theories, manifestation and finally tips on how to control aggressive learners will be discussed.

8.2 Learning Outcomes

As you study and work through this unit, you are expected to;

- discuss theories of aggression.
- explain causes of aggression among learners.
- discuss management of aggressive learners in schools.

8.3 Theories of Aggression

8.3.1The Instinct Theory

Popular Instinctivists includes giants such as Frend, Lorenz, Mclean, Thorndike, James and McDongall (Petersen & Davies, 2005) believe that aggression springs from an innate fighting instinct. That is, aggressive energy is spontaneously generated within a person more continuously and constantly. Once accumulated, this energy must be expressed independently of the individual's choice. In the Concise Encyclopedia of Psychology (1996: 27) it is stated that "… aggressive energy inexorably accumulates and inexorably must be expressed." It implies that

aggressors cannot be held accountable for their aggressive behavior since the behavior is expressed involuntarily. They may not have proper control of it.

8.3.2 The Drive Theory

Protagonists of this theory such as Leonard Berkowitz and Seymour Feshback on the other hand asserts that it is likely that aggression could be people who were once victims of aggression at some stage in their lives. According to Berkowitz, frustration induces anger that by itself leads one's readiness to respond aggressively. He concludes that aggression – relevant cues (Stimuli such as places, people and objects) which are also relevant to current or previous anger instigators can enhance or stimulate a person's aggression.

8.3.3 The Social Learning Theory

Social learning theorists believe that aggression is acquired via direct or vicarious means. Direct experiences include childhood pushing and shoving as well as adolescent fighting. Vicarious experiences through which aggression could be acquired include adult militancy, since aggressive children come from aggressive, unstable and frustrated families (Corro & William, 2000). Once the aggressive behavior is acquired, the individual will also learn how to instigate such acts overtly and also how to maintain them. If a child's aggression, which occurs through trial and error, is reinforced, it increases their probability to acquire aggression.

The theory further implies that individuals' neurophysiological characteristics enhance their aggressive behavior. It purports that the genetic, hormonal, central neurons systems and the resultant physical characteristics all influence the individual's capacity to aggress and their likelihood to learn specific forms of aggression.

The social learning theorists assert that the theory provides the most theoretically sound empirically supported and pragmatically useful views of aggression. Above all, it is testable and provides logically consistent set of constructs of increasing demonstratable validity. It is apparent that actual outburst of aggression can be influenced by aversive events, modeling influences, incentive inducements, instructional control, delusional control and environmental control.

8.4 Causes of aggression among adolescents

8.4.1 Biological Causes

8.4.1.1 Genetic Predisposition

A particular characteristics (gene) present in parents is likely to be passed on to their children (Groebel & Hinder, 1989) certain character traits are hereditary. Copps (in Baner & Shea, 1999) agrees that approximately 30% of fathers and 20% of mothers of children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder have inherited the disorder themselves. Again Schizophremic parents are likely to give birth to children with Schizophremia.

The genetic element called Y chromosomes that is transmitted from father to son is associated with abnormal tallness (asynchrony) and abnormal aggressiveness in the males comprising the normal XY constitution (Groebel & Hinde 1989). Thus, those males with a XYY constitution manifest hyper – aggressiveness and also maintain an unusual, 'supermale' image. Any child with this XYY chromosomes abnormality is amenable to aggression, since it is exposed to all intricacies of parental, familial and cultural influences during this development. The chromosomally abnormal children can be identified by an increased incident of severe temper tantrums and more behavior problems i.e. lability of moral and unstable impulsivity and a lower intelligence Quotient (IQ) than of the control group, delayed speech development and dyslexia, although they seem to perform on average in mathematics.

8.4.1.2 Psycho neurology

Children who are hyperactive, inattentive and disruptive could be afflicted with a neurologic disease called encephalitis (Baner & Shea, 1999) such are considered 'brain damaged' or 'behavior disordered.' Due to the distaste of the word 'damage' the name of the condition was changed to 'minimal brain dysfunction.' This causes aggressive behavior in children.

Any child with a deficiency in chemical elements such as catecholamine, dopamine and norepinephrine will have deficit hyperactivity disorder and is likely to develop behavioral disorder problems such as aggression. Some children who experience inefficient transmission of neurological impulses (which affect the entire system of the brain) may suffer from the so – called Attention Hyperactivity Deficit Disorder (AHDD). Such children would not be able to

regulate, integrate and coordinate various cognitive processes to support goal directed behavior. Thus learners who are deficient the executive control is neurologically incapacitated to select and maintain goals, to anticipate, plan and complete tasks. Therefore, they cannot think, judge and plan critically or monitor their behavior properly. They are mainly impulsive, reckless, aggressive and/ or manifest suicidal behavior.

8.4.2 Family Related Causes

8.4.2.1 Discipline

Szyndrowski (2005) observed that 3.3 and 25 million children throughout the world experience some kind of domestic violence each year. This ongoing process of child maltreatment may cause disturbances in their lives. Extreme measures of discipline may lead to child abuses and child neglect. Child abuse may take verbal, physical, mental and sexual harassment. Under these circumstances, the victim's health and welfare is harmed.

Research findings state that family interaction patterns and parental discipline practices strongly affect that development of aggressive behavior in children. Some studies have found that domestic violence affects the children emotionally, socially, physically and behaviorally (Szyndrowski, 2005). Inadequate child rearing practices, disruptions in the family, antisocial parents, child abuse and aggressive interaction between siblings are regarded as risk factors associated with adolescent aggression in schools (Mc Adams & Lambie, 2003). Children subjected to coercive disciplinary measures could develop aggressive behavior in their interaction with others.

8.4.2.2 Upbringing

The most vulnerable learners who come from one – parent households, which may be due to bereavement, divorce or the unmarried status of the existing parents or children whose parents do not stay at home due to work may develop on their own towards adulthood and may have to learn values from the streets. Such children are more at risk to aggression because they experience more alienation, indifference and antagonism. Bauer and Shea (1999) acknowledge that the absence of the father figure in the family may lead to how self – esteem, susceptibility to group influence and juvenile delinquency.

8.4.2.3 Aggressive Parents

Research indicates that between 50% and 75% of male aggression also abuse their children (Bauer & Shea, 1999). Parents, who are aggressive during disagreements, may ultimately handle disharmony in a noise and moody way. In the heat of the moment either party may indulge in verbal offensive or subject another to physical aggression. A boy child, who observes his father regularly beating his mother every time they have a difference, is likely to butter his partner in an attempt to coerce her into submission (Szyndrowski, 2005). A girl child, who observes that her mother subjects her partner to verbal slurs, will learn to humiliate others verbally if things do not go her away.

In the end, the children who witnessed abusive relationships are likely to exhibit problems relating to autonomy, psychosomatic, complaints, fear and distrust of close relationships or patterns of over – compliance and fearfulness (Szyndrowski, 2005).

8.4.2.4 Parental Substance abuse

Many learners in rural, disadvantaged schools come from homes where alcohol and other illegal drugs play a significant role (Dudge, Bates & Retit, 1990). Children from such families experience neglect as their siblings are forced to become their caretakers as their parent's caretaking abilities might be hampered. parents who use drugs are usually aggressive to their children. Feeling frustrated, neglected and abused these children can be perceived acting out their frustration on their peers at school.e.g. getting easily annoyed even at the provocation. Thus they may screem and physically or verbally abuse others without reason (Mc Adams & Lambie, 2003).

8.4.3 School Related Causes

1. Education role models Carter (2002) observed that educators who terrorize learners into submission for any reason might synchronously incite intolerance and fear, especially if they are further managed with hostility and conflict. Thus, the boys would adopt the dictatorial model of the male education and girls would be enticed by the verbal aggression of their female teachers.
2. Educator- learner relationship Duncan (1999) posits that learners react aggressively if their classroom environment continues to further the alienation, as opposed to

controlled classroom millien, mostly such a situation is aimed at suppressing behavior instead of teaching any skill. ldeally, educators should be pillars of strength and hope in this relationship. However, they are educators who are poor at supporting their learners. Learners would find them helpless and subject them to contempt and resist their instructions all the time. Most aggressive learners lacked adult care – a salient etiological condition for people development. A less emphatic relationship with such learners aggravates their risk condition.

8.4.4 Environmental Causes

8.4.4.1Community related causes

Most secondary school learners residing in rural areas do not have before or after school programmes that help to prevent them from admiring the antisocial lifestyles that surround them. Seeing their models and other people in their neighborhood gaining more respect and status because of their notoriety might adversely inspire young adolescents to emulate them. And in instances of experiencing rejection, the learner may indulge in aggressive behavior to be acceptable by gangsters (Christie, Jolivett's & Nelson, 2000).

8.4.4.2 Peer Culture

The Peer Culture is perceived to be in conflict with that of adults, adolescents typically turn to their peers for guidance in matters of dress, identity, social attitudes and acceptable behaviors (Bauer & Shea, 1999). To be accepted in a group, a new member should conform. If aggression is considered an acceptable norm among members it is expected of everyone to conform to its culture. Demonstration of disruptive behavior on others in and out of the classroom may be a fitting way to gain peer approval or recognition.

8.4.4.3 The Media

The media can enhance the adolescent leaner aggressive behavior by their coverage of violence as a means to solve problems. Incidences of television violence are believed to be increasing. Chorry – Assad and Tamborini (2004) agree that verbally aggressive

sitcoms occur in a humorous context. Consistent with antisocial behavior acts, Chorry – Assad and Tamborini discovered that increased exposure to learners to verbally aggressive sitcoms is associated with aggressive communication.

8.5 Manifestation of Aggression

Aggression is manifest in more ways than one. Some manifestations embarrass both the aggressor and the victim alike. Overall, the aggressor's manifestations often castigate the perpetrator into becoming a social outcast. These manifestations include hyperactivity, impulsiveness, depression, tourette's disorder, suicidal ideation, verbal aggression, oberrant sexual behavior, consistent class repetition, tardiness and absenteeism, vandalism and criminality.

8.6 How to Manage Aggression

- Never ignore inappropriate aggression and do not get drawn into a power struggle with aggressors.
- Deal one to one with the aggressor and devise a plan for him/her to take control of their own behavior.
- Establish one to one relationship with the aggressor, success will soon follow. Remember, the aggressor can usually tell if you genuinely like him/her, be genuine, this child just needs attention.
- Provide opportunities for this child to act appropriately and get some badly needed attention give him/her responsibilities and provide praise.
- Catch the aggressor behaving well and provide immediate, positive feedback, within a short time you will see that the aggressive behaviors will start to diminish.
- Provide activities that bring forth leadership in a positive way always. Let the aggressive child that you care, trust and respect him/her. Remind him/her that it is the inappropriate behavior that you do not like.
- Punish unacceptable behavior.
- Refer to relevant experts to help such as counsellors.

- Create a calm, positive and safe environment with clear rules and boundaries to promote positive behavior.

8.7 Summary

In this unit you have learnt the following theories of aggression; the drive theory, the instinct theory and the social learning theory. Causes of aggression such as the genetic disposition, family related causes, psycho neurology and school related causes were also discussed. The unit was concluded by discussing various ways of managing aggression

8.8 Activity

1. Identify in your community who exhibit aggression towards their friends and conduct a detailed study to determine the causes of their aggression.
2. Devise a plan to correct their behavior.

Reflection

Having looked at a number of theories of aggression which do you think gives a better explanation of aggression.

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