

# **Introduction to Social Psychology (Psyc. 2071)**

## **Unit One: The Basics of Social Psychology**

Human life, in fact, is connected by thousands of invisible threads. The places that people live, the situations they meet are all continuously and consistently shape them as well as get shaped by them. The situations an individual meet creates a good number of possibilities for him to behave. Social psychology is a specific branch in psychology that scientifically tries to understand how people influence as well as gets influenced by on other. It is a systematic body of knowledge focusing on the social thinking, social influence and social relations. A fundamental theme of social psychology is to discover how a social situation leads very different people to act very similarly. As well as how very similar people act very differently. Social Psychology is a scientific discipline. It is deeply committed to understand the nature of social behavior and social thought. For this reason it makes sense to describe the field as a scientific in orientation. Such rich field has a systematic development over the periods of history. And as the field progressed the focusing of its area also get changed. All these processes are presented in this lesson.

### **1.1. Definition of Social Psychology**

The study of Social psychology is found to have been carried out from the very beginning of the scientific study of psychology was born. The history of the subject matter of social psychology seems to be continuously undergoing change adapting to the changing needs of the society. The present day science and technology, specifically, the information arena is getting new shapes and heights, which in turn, brings enormous change in the behavior patterns of every individual. Hence, coming out with a formal definition of social psychology is really a complex task. Every person gets chance to play various types of activities. Due to this everyone has to mix with or has to live among the midst of different types of people. In this context, so many physical, social and environmental factors necessarily influence human behavior. Reflecting on the above facts, social psychology can be comprehensively defined as, a discipline that uses scientific methods in “an attempt to understand and explain how the thought, feeling and behaviour of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined or implied presence of others” (Gordon Allport, 1985, p. 3).

Social psychology is the scientific study of how individuals think, feel, and behave toward other people and how individual's thoughts, feelings, & behaviors are affected by other people (Brehm, Kassin, & Fein, 2002, p. 5).

In the above two definitions of social psychology have been described, the first of these has been quoted in majority of the textbooks on social psychology.

### **Main Elements of Definitions**

Thoughts, Feelings, and Behaviors of individual influence of other people How these influences will be studied? It will be done by the use of Scientific Method.

The definitions suggest a cause and effect equation – people influencing individual's thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

### **How Others' Presence Affect an individual?**

The definition of social psychology suggests that it is the scientific study of how individual's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are influenced by the actual, imagined or implied presence of

other people. To better understand this definition, let's take a few examples.

### **Actual Presence of people affecting the individual:**

First take an example, how might the actual presence of others influence one's thoughts, feelings and behaviour. Response of cricket players may become different when fans of some opposing team shout and make loud noises to divert attention of the players. Similarly, your behaviour will be changed if you notice that someone is watching you.

### **Imagined Presence of people affecting the individual:**

Regarding how the imagined presence of others might influence thoughts, feelings, and behaviour, think about past incidents when you were considering doing something that ran counter to your parents' wishes. Although they may not have been actually present, did their imagined presence influence your behaviour? For example, if your parents have prohibited you from smoking, and you start smoking in a party on peer pressure, does their imagined presence affect your behaviour? Imagined presence in certain cases can be quite strong, as indicated by Shaw (2003), "Imagined figures can guide our actions by shaping our interpretation of events just as surely as do those who are physically present". In a few conditions, imagined presence can also help us fight negative emotions. For example, McGowan (2002) pointed out that in anxiety imagined presence of others can serve as emotional security blanket. Similarly, daughter of one renowned social psychologist confided to her father that she wants to be as brave as two young wizards, Hermione & Harry in Harry Potter books.

### **Implied Presence of people affecting the individual:**

Finally, how the implied presence of others influence an individual? If you have an experience of driving on the motorway, you would have noticed that signs of specific speed limit make you conscious. Similarly, in shopping stores sometime posters indicate that "You are being watched"... All of this makes you self-aware and brings a change in your behaviour.

## **1.2. Brief Historical Development of Social Psychology**

The science of social psychology began when scientists first started to systematically and formally measure the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of human beings (Kruglanski & Stroebe, 2011). The earliest social psychology experiments on group behavior were conducted before 1900 (Triplet, 1898), and the first social psychology textbooks were published in 1908 (McDougall, 1908/2003; Ross, 1908/1974). During the 1940s and 1950s, the social psychologists Kurt Lewin and Leon Festinger refined the experimental approach to studying behavior, creating social psychology as a rigorous scientific discipline. Lewin is sometimes known as "the father of social psychology" because he initially developed many of the important ideas of the discipline, including a focus on the dynamic interactions among people. In 1954, Festinger edited an influential book called *Research Methods in the Behavioral Sciences*, in which he and other social psychologists stressed the need to measure variables and to use laboratory experiments to systematically test research hypotheses about social behavior. He also noted that it might be necessary in these experiments to deceive the participants about the true nature of the research. Social psychology was energized by researchers who attempted to understand how the German dictator Adolf Hitler could have produced such extreme obedience

and horrendous behaviors in his followers during the Second World War. The studies on conformity conducted by Muzafir Sherif (1936) and Solomon Asch (1952), as well as those on obedience by Stanley Milgram (1974), showed the importance of conformity pressures in social groups and how people in authority could create obedience, even to the extent of leading people to cause severe harm to others. Philip Zimbardo, in his well-known “prison experiment” (Haney, Banks, & Zimbardo, 1973), found that ordinary male college students who were recruited to play the roles of guards and prisoners in a simulated prison became so involved in their assignments, and their interaction became so violent, that the study had to be terminated early. *The Stanford prison experiment conducted by Philip Zimbardo in the 1960s demonstrated the powerful role of the social situation on human behavior.*

Social psychology quickly expanded to study other topics. John Darley and Bibb Latané (1968) developed a model that helped explain when people do and do not help others in need, and Leonard Berkowitz (1974) pioneered the study of human aggression. Meanwhile, other social psychologists, including Irving Janis (1972), focused on group behavior, studying why intelligent people sometimes made decisions that led to disastrous results when they worked together. Still other social psychologists, including Gordon Allport and Muzafir Sherif, focused on intergroup relations, with the goal of understanding and potentially reducing the occurrence of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination.

Social psychologists gave their opinions in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court case that helped end racial segregation in U.S. public schools, and social psychologists still frequently serve as expert witnesses on these and other topics (Fiske, Bersoff, Borgida, Deaux, & Heilman, 1991).

The latter part of the 20th century saw an expansion of social psychology into the field of attitudes, with a particular emphasis on cognitive processes. During this time, social psychologists developed the first formal models of persuasion, with the goal of understanding how advertisers and other people could present their messages to make them most effective (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1963). These approaches to attitudes focused on the cognitive processes that people use when evaluating messages and on the relationship between attitudes and behavior. Leon Festinger’s (1957) important cognitive dissonance theory was developed during this time and became a model for later research.

In the 1970s and 1980s, social psychology became even more cognitive in orientation as social psychologists used advances in cognitive psychology, which were themselves based largely on advances in computer technology, to inform the field (Fiske & Taylor, 2008). The focus of these researchers, including Alice Eagly, Susan Fiske, E. Tory Higgins, Richard Nisbett, Lee Ross, Shelley Taylor, and many others, was on *social cognition*—an understanding of how our knowledge about our social worlds develops through experience and the influence of these knowledge structures on memory, information processing, attitudes, and judgment. Furthermore, the extent to which humans’ decision making could be flawed by both cognitive and motivational processes was documented (Kahneman, Slovic, & Tversky, 1982).

In the 21st century, the field of social psychology has been expanding into still other areas. Examples that we will consider in this book include an interest in how social situations influence our health and happiness, the important roles of evolutionary experiences and cultures on our behavior, and the field of social neuroscience—*the study of how our social behavior both influences and is influenced by the activities of our brain* (Lieberman, 2010). Social psychologists continue to seek new ways to measure and understand social behavior, and the

field continues to evolve. I cannot predict where social psychology will be directed in the future, but I have no doubt that it will still be alive and vibrant.

### 1.3. Social Psychology's Relation to Other Fields of Inquiry

Social psychology is the scientific study of how people think, influence, and relate to one another. It is a comparatively young discipline. The broad theme of this course will be how individuals' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are influenced by other people -- the SOCIAL influences. Social Psychology is a surprisingly broad field that overlaps with other sub-disciplines of psychology like personality and cognition, and various other human disciplines like anthropology, sociology, and communication.

Whether within or outside of psychology, different fields rely on different *levels of explanation* (see Table 1.1). Different levels of explanation tell us different things about people's behavior. Table 1.1 lists several fields of inquiry ranging from those with a more *collective* focus (a larger group or groups) to the more *individual* (solitary person or process) level of analysis. By moving downward in Table 1.1, the focus becomes narrower and the phenomena of interest become more internal and distinct to individuals. Moving upward in the table, the research emphasis becomes broader and more inclusive, increasingly involving

**Table 1.1** Explaining Behavior: Selected Fields and Their Levels of Scientific Explanation  
**Field of inquiry    Level of explanation for behavior**

	<b>More collective focus</b>
Anthropology	Cultural features and differences of past and present
Sociology	Societal social structures and customs of groups
Social psychology	Individual affect, cognition, behavior influencing
interactions with other people, groups	
Personality Personal	psychological processes, individual differences
between people	
Developmental psychology	Ages, stages, and life span issues in individuals and
groups	
Cognitive psychology	Individual mental structures, cognitive processes
Neuroscience	Individual electrochemical processes

#### **More individual focus**

both individuals and their relations to groups, as well as within- and between-group processes.

Social psychologists are generally interested in the experience of people as individuals, notably how real or imagined others influence them in terms of affect (emotions, feelings), cognition (thoughts, beliefs), and behavior (actions, intentions). After learning about LaPiere's work, for example, most people are curious to know about the nature of the interactions between the travelers and the people they met. What, for example, were the innkeepers and waiters thinking and feeling when they served the travelers? Similarly, we would like to know the thoughts and feelings of the respondents who later indicated on paper that Chinese guests were unwelcome.

By comparison, psychologists interested in the emerging areas of neuroscience would want to examine the electrochemical activity in the brain during social encounters with minority group members or when thinking about minority groups (see the bottom of Table 1.1). Neuroscientists study neurochemical processes and how these processes affect the cognitive and behavioral responses of individuals. In contrast, a cognitive psychologist would be curious about a slightly higher level of analysis than a neuroscientist. What is the nature of the mental structures, for

example, that leads someone to categorize a person as a member of a minority rather than a majority group? Developmental psychologists, in turn, examine social, cognitive, and emotional changes that occur at different ages and stages of development (see Table 1.1).

Sociologists are often interested in some of the same issues that attract the attention of social psychologists. Yet sociologists would be likely to take a different, more collective approach, one involving a search for the general laws of behavior that are based on the nature of social structures and groups. In the context of LaPiere's research, instead of focusing on the experience of individual service providers, a sociologist would be interested in the nature of relations between different racial or ethnic groups, the effects of socioeconomic class, and possibly in the ways that owner-managers as a group held different beliefs than hired workers (see Table 1.1). Thus sociology's level of analysis is more societal, aimed at the effect of social institutions and customs on groups of people rather than individuals (see, e.g., Burke, 2006). Finally, an anthropologist would want to examine the origins and the physical, cultural, and social development of groups of people. In our current example, an anthropologist could examine how perceived differences between racial groups originated and influenced social interaction across time.

Not all academic fields relevant to social psychology are represented in Table 1.1, of course. Instead, my purpose here is to identify social psychology's unique place as a bridge between individual and collective levels of explanation. Thus social psychological research examines individual processes that people have in common with others, and how those processes regulate a person's interactions with other people, including groups.

#### **1.4. Theories of Social Psychology**

Social psychologists are primarily interested in understanding the many factors and conditions that shape the social behavior and thought of individuals. Mainly, how individuals form ideas relating to the actions, feelings, beliefs, memories and inferences concerning other persons. A huge number of different factors play a role in this regard.

The factors affecting social interaction fall into five major categories. They are, the actions and characteristics of others, basic cognitive processes, ecological variables, cultural context and biological factors.

##### **1.4.1 The Actions and Characteristics of Others**

One person's behavior and their characteristics expressed in the behavior directly influence other person's feeling and action. For example, suppose you are standing on the railway reservation line. If a stranger goes to the counter straightly without standing on the line, it will defiantly create different types of feelings and as well action from the people who are already waiting in the line. It is clear that the actions of others affect everyone. The behaviors of other persons often exert powerful effects on the behaviors and social thoughts of every individual. For example, When many people are attending a concert in a theatre when a person seated nearby receives a call on his cell mobile phone and begins a loud conversation about very private topics what happens to the people around him? The next idea in this line is that, the behavior of a person often affected by others appearance. For example, People normally feel uneasy in the presence of a person with a physical disability. People differently behave towards highly attractive person than toward less attractive person.

##### **1.4.2 The Cognitive Processes**

The Cognitive processes such as perception, memory and inferences play a key role on the understanding and behavior of every individual in the society. Reactions to a certain situation by

an individual strongly depend on the memories of others past behaviors and the inferences an individual formed about these behaviors. If anybody wants to clearly understand the causes of others behavior in a social situation it is a must that one should understand what went on in the thinking pattern and understanding process of those people when they behaved in a particular social situation. For example, if your friend fixes an appointment with you in a particular time. You are waiting for him at a particular point in a particular time, if he comes late what would be your reaction. In such situations, cognitive process plays a crucial role in the social behavior and social thoughts of every individual. A study of how people perceive, think about and remember information about others are really have a contributing effect of human social behavior.

Social cognition is a growing area of social psychology.

#### **1.4.3. The Environmental Factors**

The weather and the climate a person experiences has a say in his/her behavior. The findings of research indicate the physical environment necessarily influences the feelings, thoughts and behavior of everyone. The climatic conditions make a person either happy or sad. For example, if there is a continuous rain for a few days most of the people's day to day life gets disturbed. Another example is that people become more irritable and aggressive when the weather is hot and steamy than when it is cool and comfortable. The environmental factors create different types of impact on the perceptual experiences of individuals. The cognitive, affective, interpretive, and evaluative responses of individuals change drastically. Further, if a person is exposed to a particular environment for a long time he or she will adapt to that environment and will feel habituated for that condition. The environmental stimulations facilitate physical and psychological arousals. The increased arousals will either improve or impair individual performances. Hence, role of environment on the social behavior of individual has become one of the very important factors of study in social psychology.

#### **1.4.4. The Cultural Context**

People live in different cultural settings. Each culture comes out with its own rules and norms to be systematically followed in different facets of human life cycle. The practices followed in one culture will be different than the other cultures. If a person is hailing from a particular culture he/she has to adapt appropriately the behavior patterns accepted by his/her culture. In all these process an individual is continuously influenced by the culture from which he/she is hailing. Social behavior and social thoughts are often strongly affected by the cultural norms and factors. For example, there are cultural specific behavior patterns exist for the birth of a newborn, the age attainment ceremony, the marriage ceremony, and finally, the funeral ceremony. These are some of the specific cultural behaviors expressed by every culture. The cultural ideas also get changed by the passage of times. For example, previously love marriages were viewed in negative terms as drastic action but now the cultural beliefs and values about it have changed greatly. But, whatever the changes take place in a culture, person living in any one of the cultures is expected to follow the practices of that culture.

#### **1.4.5 The Biological/Evolutionary Factors**

This is a new branch of social psychology that seeks to investigate the potential role of genetic factors in various aspects of human behavior. It is also called as genetic factors.

According to this view as any other species human beings also have a process of biological, evolution throughout history. This evolutionary process takes three basic components. They are of the view that man is getting emancipated as the generation processed by. Every time man is getting a new height in all his endeavors. This has led to the possible difference in body shapes

and structures, the improved inheritance equalities and better selection of passing the genetic variation to the coming generations.

Since the individuals evolutionarily differ on their biological structures their social interactions will also get varied in nature. The biological inheritance usually affects one's preferences, behaviors, emotions and attitudes. For example, hair color, skin color body structure gets changed from person to person in a long run.

### **1.5. Social Psychology in the new Millennium**

As the Social Psychology tries to understand the individual's thoughts and behaviors in social settings, the subject matter of Social Psychology goes on changing as the years pass by. Due to the tremendous changes happening in the fields, the present day human beings are well advanced in every sphere. The speedy growth found in every area of human life, the present day subject matter of the social psychology found to incorporate the latest developments into its subject matter. This has led to the changing and formulating of new perspectives in the study of social psychology. Mainly, cognitive perspective, application perspective, multicultural perspectives and evolutionary perspectives have become the focus of research on social psychology.

#### **1.5.1 Cognitive Perspective**

Social psychology is the field that studies both social behavior and social thought. The definition reflects the fact that both social psychologists have always been interested in how individuals think about other persons and about social situations. The cognitive side of social psychology has grown dramatically in importance. Most social psychologists believe that how people act in various situations are strongly decided by their thoughts.

The cognitive perspective is reflected in social psychological research in many ways, but two are most important. First, social psychologists have attended to apply basic knowledge about memory, reasoning and decision making to various aspects of social thought and behavior.

For instance, within this context, researchers have sought to determine whether prejudices stem, at least in part from our tendency to remember only information consistent with stereotypes of various groups, or tendencies to process information about one's own social group differently from interaction about other social groups; secondly there has been growing interest in the question of how one processes social information.

#### **1.5.2. Multicultural Perspective**

As recognition of the importance of cultural, ethnic and gender differences has grown, the field of Social Psychology has adopted an increasingly multicultural perspective, an approach that pays careful attention to the rate of culture and human diversity as factors that influence social behavior and social thought.

#### **1.5.3. Evolutionary Perspective**

An important trend in the modern social psychology is the increasing influence of a biological or evolutionary perspective (Buss, 1999). Evidence suggests that biological and genetic factors play a role in many forms of social behavior. Mueller and Mazur (1996) predicted that men who looked dominant would attain higher military rank in their careers than would men who would not look dominant. In general, studies conducted from the evolutionary perspective suggest that biological and genetic factors play some role in many aspects of social behavior.

### **1.6. Research Methods in Social Psychology**

Social psychologists are not the only people interested in understanding and predicting social behavior or the only people who study it. Social behavior is also considered by religious leaders,



philosophers, politicians, novelists, and others, and it is a common topic on TV shows. But the social psychological approach to understanding social behavior goes beyond the mere observation of human actions. Social psychologists believe that a true understanding of the causes of social behavior can only be obtained through a systematic scientific approach, and that is why they conduct scientific research. Social psychologists believe that the study of social behavior should be empirical—that is, *based on the collection and systematic analysis of observable data*.

There are three major approaches to conducting research that are used by social psychologists—the *observational approach*, the *correlational approach*, and the *experimental approach*. Each approach has some advantages and disadvantages.

### **Observational Research**

The most basic research design, observational research, is *research that involves making observations of behavior and recording those observations in an objective manner*. Although it is possible in some cases to use observational data to draw conclusions about the relationships between variables (e.g., by comparing the behaviors of older versus younger children on a playground), in many cases the observational approach is used only to get a picture of what is happening to a given set of people at a given time and how they are responding to the social situation. In these cases, the observational approach involves creating a type of “snapshot” of the current state of affairs.

One advantage of observational research is that in many cases it is the only possible approach to collecting data about the topic of interest. A researcher who is interested in studying the impact of a hurricane on the residents of New Orleans, the reactions of New Yorkers to a terrorist attack, or the activities of the members of a religious cult cannot create such situations in a laboratory but must be ready to make observations in a systematic way when such events occur on their own. Thus observational research allows the study of unique situations that could not be created by the researcher. Another advantage of observational research is that the people whose behavior is being measured are doing the things they do every day, and in some cases they may not even know that their behavior is being recorded.

One early observational study that made an important contribution to understanding human behavior was reported in a book by Leon Festinger and his colleagues (Festinger, Riecken, & Schachter, 1956). The book, called *When Prophecy Fails*, reported an observational study of the members of a “doomsday” cult. The cult members believed that they had received information, supposedly sent through “automatic writing” from a planet called “Clarion,” that the world was going to end. More specifically, the group members were convinced that the earth would be destroyed, as the result of a gigantic flood, sometime before dawn on December 21, 1954.

When Festinger learned about the cult, he thought that it would be an interesting way to study how individuals in groups communicate with each other to reinforce their extreme beliefs. He and his colleagues observed the members of the cult over a period of several months, beginning in July of the year in which the flood was expected. The researchers collected a variety of behavioral and self-report measures by observing the cult, recording the conversations among the group members, and conducting detailed interviews with them. Festinger and his colleagues also recorded the reactions of the cult members, beginning on December 21, when the world did not end as they had predicted. This observational research provided a wealth of information about the indoctrination patterns of cult members and their reactions to disconfirmed predictions. This research also helped Festinger develop his important theory of cognitive dissonance.

Despite their advantages, observational research designs also have some limitations. Most important, because the data that are collected in observational studies are only a description of the events that are occurring, they do not tell us anything about the relationship between different variables. However, it is exactly this question that correlational research and experimental research are designed to answer.

### **Correlational Research**

The goal of correlational research is to search for and test hypotheses about the relationships between two or more variables. In the simplest case, the correlation is between only two variables, such as that between similarity and liking, or between gender (male versus female) and helping.

In a correlational design, the research hypothesis is that there is an association (i.e., a correlation) between the variables that are being measured. For instance, many researchers have tested the research hypothesis that a positive correlation exists between the use of violent video games and the incidence of aggressive behavior, such that people who play violent video games more frequently would also display more aggressive behavior.

A statistic known as the *Pearson correlation coefficient* (symbolized by the letter  $r$ ) is normally used to summarize the association, or correlation, between two variables. The correlation coefficient can range from  $-1$  (indicating a very strong negative relationship between the variables) to  $+1$  (indicating a very strong positive relationship between the variables). Research has found that there is a positive correlation between the use of violent video games and the incidence of aggressive behavior and that the size of the correlation is about  $r = .30$  (Bushman & Huesmann, 2010).

One advantage of correlational research designs is that, like observational research (and in comparison with experimental research designs in which the researcher frequently creates relatively artificial situations in a laboratory setting), they are often used to study people doing the things that they do every day. And correlational research designs also have the advantage of allowing prediction. When two or more variables are correlated, we can use our knowledge of a person's score on one of the variables to predict his or her likely score on another variable. Because high-school grade point averages are correlated with college grade point averages, if we know a person's high-school grade point average, we can predict his or her likely college grade point average. Similarly, if we know how many violent video games a child plays, we can predict how aggressively he or she will behave. These predictions will not be perfect, but they will allow us to make a better guess than we would have been able to if we had not known the person's score on the first variable ahead of time.

Despite their advantages, correlational designs have a very important limitation. This limitation is that they cannot be used to draw conclusions about the causal relationships among the variables that have been measured. An observed correlation between two variables does not necessarily indicate that either one of the variables caused the other. Although many studies have found a correlation between the number of violent video games that people play and the amount of aggressive behaviors they engage in, this does not mean that viewing the video games necessarily caused the aggression. Although one possibility is that playing violent games increases aggression, another possibility is that the causal direction is exactly opposite to what has been hypothesized. Perhaps increased aggressiveness causes more interest in, and thus increased viewing of, violent games. Although this causal relationship might not seem as logical to you, there is no way to rule out the possibility of such *reverse causation* on the basis of the observed correlation.

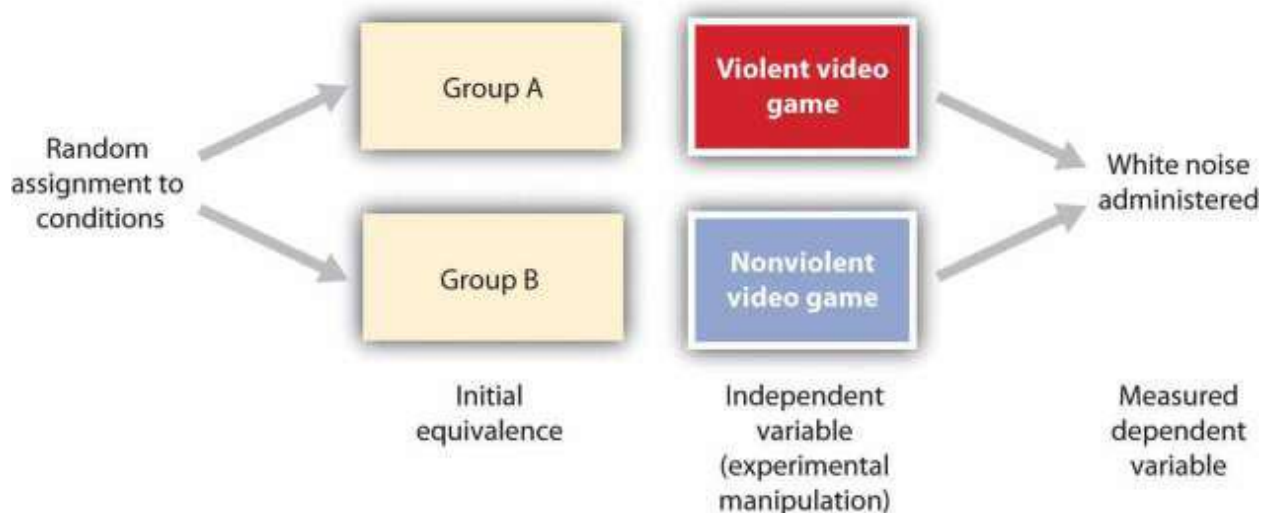
## Experimental Research

The goal of much research in social psychology is to understand the causal relationships among variables, and for this we use experiments. Experimental research designs are *research designs that include the manipulation of a given situation or experience for two or more groups of individuals who are initially created to be equivalent, followed by a measurement of the effect of that experience.*

In an experimental research design, the variables of interest are called the independent variables and the dependent variables. The independent variable refers to *the situation that is created by the experimenter through the experimental manipulations*, and the dependent variable refers to *the variable that is measured after the manipulations have occurred.* In an experimental research design, the research hypothesis is that the manipulated independent variable (or variables) causes changes in the measured dependent variable (or variables). We can diagram the prediction like this, using an arrow that points in one direction to demonstrate the expected direction of causality: viewing violence (independent variable) → aggressive behavior (dependent variable)

Consider an experiment conducted by Anderson and Dill (2000), which was designed to directly test the hypothesis that viewing violent video games would cause increased aggressive behavior. In this research, male and female undergraduates from Iowa State University were given a chance to play either a violent video game (Wolfenstein 3D) or a nonviolent video game (Myst). During the experimental session, the participants played the video game that they had been given for 15 minutes. Then, after the play, they participated in a competitive task with another student in which they had a chance to deliver blasts of white noise through the earphones of their opponent. The operational definition of the dependent variable (aggressive behavior) was the level and duration of noise delivered to the opponent. The design and the results of the experiment are shown in Figure 1.1 "An Experimental Research Design (After Anderson & Dill, 2000)".

**Figure 1.1** An Experimental Research Design (After Anderson & Dill, 2000)



Two advantages of the experimental research design are (a) an assurance that the independent variable (also known as the experimental manipulation) occurs prior to the measured dependent variable and (b) the creation of initial equivalence between the conditions of the experiment (in this case, by using random assignment to conditions).

Experimental designs have two very nice features. For one, they guarantee that the independent variable occurs prior to measuring the dependent variable. This eliminates the possibility of reverse causation.

Second, the experimental manipulation allows ruling out the possibility of common-causal variables that cause both the independent variable and the dependent variable. In experimental designs, the influence of common-causal variables is controlled, and thus eliminated, by creating equivalence among the participants in each of the experimental conditions before the manipulation occurs.

The most common method of creating equivalence among the experimental conditions is through random assignment to conditions, which involves *determining separately for each participant which condition he or she will experience through a random process*, such as drawing numbers out of an envelope or using a website such as <http://randomizer.org>. Anderson and Dill first randomly assigned about 100 participants to each of their two groups. Let's call them Group A and Group B. Because they used random assignment to conditions, they could be confident that *before the experimental manipulation occurred*, the students in Group A were, *on average*, equivalent to the students in Group B on *every possible variable*, including variables that are likely to be related to aggression, such as family, peers, hormone levels, and diet—and, in fact, everything else. Then, after they had created initial equivalence, Anderson and Dill created the experimental manipulation—they had the participants in Group A play the violent video game and the participants in Group B the nonviolent video game. Then they compared the dependent variable (the white noise blasts) between the two groups and found that the students who had viewed the violent video game gave significantly longer noise blasts than did the students who had played the nonviolent game. Because they had created initial equivalence between the groups, when the researchers observed differences in the duration of white noise blasts between the two groups after the experimental manipulation, they could draw the conclusion that it was the independent variable (and not some other variable) that caused these differences. The idea is that the *only thing* that was different between the students in the two groups was which video game they had played. When we create a situation in which the groups of participants are expected to be equivalent before the experiment begins, when we manipulate the independent variable before we measure the dependent variable, and when we change only the nature of independent variables between the conditions, then we can be confident that it is the independent variable that caused the differences in the dependent variable.

Such experiments are said to have high *internal validity*, where internal validity refers to the *confidence with which we can draw conclusions about the causal relationship between the variables*. Despite the advantage of determining causation, experimental research designs do have limitations. One is that the experiments are usually conducted in laboratory situations rather than in the everyday lives of people. Therefore, we do not know whether results that we find in a laboratory setting will necessarily hold up in everyday life. To counter this, in some cases *experiments are conducted in everyday settings—for instance, in schools or other organizations*. Such field experiments are difficult to conduct because they require a means of creating random assignment to conditions, and this is frequently not possible in natural settings.

A second and perhaps more important limitation of experimental research designs is that some of the most interesting and important social variables cannot be experimentally manipulated. If we want to study the influence of the size of a mob on the destructiveness of its behavior, or to compare the personality characteristics of people who join suicide cults with those of people who

do not join suicide cults, these relationships must be assessed using correlational designs because it is simply not possible to manipulate mob size or cult membership.

## **Ethical Issues**

Ethical issues must always be considered when research is conducted. In social psychology, the use of deception can be of particular ethical concern. Through institutional review boards, informed consent, and debriefing, social psychologists try to ensure the welfare of their research participants.

## **Unit Two**

### **Understanding the Causes of Others Behavior**

#### **2.1 Impression Management/Self Presentation**

***Self-presentation or impression management: the tendency to present a positive self-image to others, with the goal of increasing our social status,***

Ways of self presentation:

- a. To display our positive physical characteristics (spend money on teeth whiteners, hair dye, face-lifts, and fashion accessories of every sort )
- b. By collecting expensive possessions such as fancy cars and big houses and by trying to associate with high-status others.
- c. By attempting to **dominate or intimidate** others in social interaction. People who talk more and louder and those who initiate more social interactions are afforded higher status. A businessman who greets others with a strong handshake and a smile and people who speak out strongly for their opinions in group discussions may be attempting to do so as well.
- d. In some cases, people may even resort to aggressive behavior, such as bullying, in attempts to improve their status

#### **Self-presentation strategies**

-used to create different emotions in other people

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.

### **Self-Monitoring and Self-Presentation**

Although the desire to present the self favorably is a natural part of everyday life, both **person and situation factors influence** the extent to which we do it.

For one, **we are more likely to self-present in some situations than in others**. For example, when we are applying for a job or meeting with others whom we need to impress, we naturally become more attuned to the social aspects of the self, and our self-presentation increases.

And there are also individual differences. Some people are naturally better at self-presentation—they enjoy doing it and are good at it—whereas others find self-presentation less desirable or more difficult.

An important individual-difference variable known as *self-monitoring* has been shown to have a major impact on self-presentation. Self-monitoring refers to *the tendency to be both motivated and capable of regulating our behavior to meet the demands of social situations*.

High self-monitors are particularly good at reading the emotions of others and therefore are better at fitting into social situations—they agree with statements such as “In different situations and with different people, I often act like very different persons” and “I guess I put on a show to impress or entertain people.” Low self-monitors, on the other hand, generally act on their own attitudes, even when the social situation suggests that they should behave otherwise.

Low self-monitors are more likely to agree with statements such as “At parties and social gatherings, I do not attempt to do or say things that others will like” and “I can only argue for ideas that I already believe.”

In short, high self-monitors try to get other people to like them by behaving in ways that the others find desirable (they are good self-presenters), whereas low self-monitors do not.

## **Narcissism and the Limits of Self-Enhancement**

There is a negative aspect to having too much self-esteem, however, at least when the esteem is unrealistic and undeserved.

**Narcissism is a personality trait characterized by overly high self-esteem, selfadmiration, and self-centeredness.**

Narcissists agree with statements such as the following:

- “I know that I am good because everybody keeps telling me so.”
- “I can usually talk my way out of anything.”
- “I like to be the center of attention.”
- “I have a natural talent for influencing people.”

People do not normally like narcissists because they are unrealistic and think only of themselves. Narcissists make bad romantic partners—they behave selfishly and are always ready to look for someone else who they think will be a better mate, and they are likely to be unfaithful. Narcissists may also be unbearable, continually interrupting and bullying others, and they may respond very negatively to criticism.

Although they make positive first impressions, people eventually see narcissists less positively than narcissists see themselves, in part because they are perceived as arrogant.

Perhaps surprisingly, narcissists seem to understand these things about themselves, although they engage in the behaviors anyway.

## **Unit Three: Social Perception**

### **3.1. Definition of Social perception**

**Social perception** is defined as the study of how we form impressions of and make inferences about other people.

Impression formation is one important topic within social perception. Impression Formation is the process through which we develop our beliefs and evaluations of other people.

In order to know about other people, we depend on information gained from their physical appearance, and verbal and nonverbal communication.

### **Factors In Impression Formation**

Communication is a vital part of human life. It is what allows us to share thoughts, feelings, wonderings, and knowledge with others and also shapes our social perceptions to a great extent. Though we use both verbal and nonverbal communication, the vast majority of communication we do is through nonverbal channels. The next section deals with nonverbal communication in detail.

## Nonverbal Communications

**Nonverbal communication** can be defined as the way in which people communicate intentionally or unintentionally, without words. There are eight different types of nonverbal communications.

**1) Facial Expression** This makes up the largest proportion of nonverbal communication. Large amounts of information can be conveyed through a smile or frown. The facial expressions for happiness, sadness, anger, and fear are similar across cultures throughout the world.

**2) Gestures** Common gestures include pointing, waving, and using fingers, etc. You can tell a person's attitude by the way they walk or by the way they stand. Same goes for gestures.

**3) Paralinguistics;** This includes factors such as tone of voice, loudness, inflection, and pitch. Tone of voice can be powerful. The same sentence said in different tones can convey different messages. A strong tone of voice may indicate approval or enthusiasm, whereas the same sentence said with a hesitant tone of voice may convey disapproval or lack of interest. Vocal Behaviors such as pitch, inflection (change in pitch), volume, rate, filler words, pronunciation, articulation, accent, and silence, often reveal considerable information about others.

**4) Body Language and Posture** A person's posture and movement can also convey a great deal of information. Arm crossing or leg-crossing conveys different meanings depending on the context and the person interpreting them. Body language is very subtle, and may not be very definitive.

**5) Proxemics** This refers to personal space. The amount of space a person requires depends on each individual's preference, but also depends on the situation and other people involved in the situation. -T

**6) Eye Gaze** Looking, staring, and blinking are all considered types of eye gaze. Looking at another person can indicate a range of emotions including hostility, interest, or attraction. – Eye behaviors- plays a role in several important types of relational interaction.

**7) Haptics** This refers to communicating through touch. Haptics is especially important in infancy and early childhood. -Touch is one of our five senses, but, every touch has a different kind of meaning to it and when nonverbally communicating – it's something you need to know. Five major areas of touching is : affectionate touch, caregiving touch, power and control touch, aggressive touch, ritualistic touch.

**8) Appearance** Our choice of color, clothing, hairstyles, and other factors affecting our appearance are considered a means of nonverbal communication.

The particular nonverbal behaviors that we use, as well as their meanings, are determined by social norms, and these norms may vary across cultures. For example, people who live in warm climates nearer the equator use more nonverbal communication (e.g., talking with their hands or showing strong facial expressions) and are more likely to touch each other during conversations than people who live in colder climates nearer Earth's poles.

And the appropriate amount of personal space to keep between ourselves and others also varies across cultures. In some cultures—for instance, South American countries—it is appropriate to stand very close to another person while talking to him or her; in other cultures—for example, the United States and Europe—more interpersonal space is the norm.



The appropriate amount of eye contact with others is also determined by culture. In Latin America, it is appropriate to lock eyes with another person, whereas in Japan, people generally try to avoid eye contact.

In general, they communicate our own status or dominance (self-concern) as well as our interest in or liking of another (other-concern). If we notice that someone is smiling and making eye contact with us while leaning toward us in conversation, we can be pretty sure that he or she likes us.

On the other hand, if someone frowns at us, touches us inappropriately, or moves away when we get close, we may naturally conclude that they do not like us.

We may also use nonverbal behaviors to try out new situations: If we move a little closer and look at someone a bit longer, we communicate our interest. If these responses are reciprocated by the other person, that can indicate that he or she likes us, and we can move on to share other types of information.

If the initial nonverbal behaviors are not reciprocated, then we may conclude that the relationship may not work out and we can withdraw before we go “too far.” When we use nonverbal communication, we do not have to come right out and say “I like you.” That’s dangerous!

Nonverbal behavior provides different information than verbal behavior because people frequently say one thing and do another. Perhaps you remember being really angry at someone but not wanting to let on that you were mad, so you tried to hide your emotions by not saying anything. But perhaps your nonverbal behavior eventually gave you away to the other person: Although you were trying as hard as you could not to, you just looked angry.

We frequently rely more on nonverbal than on verbal behavior when their messages are contradictory. It is relatively easy to monitor our verbal behavior but harder to monitor the nonverbal. However, we expect that people who need to deceive others—for instance, good poker players—are able to monitor their nonverbal behavior better than most people, making it difficult to get a good read on them.

### **Judging People by Their Traits**

Although we can learn some things about others by observing their physical characteristics and their nonverbal behaviors, to really understand them we will eventually need to know their personality traits. Traits are important because they are the basic language by which we understand and communicate about people. When we talk about other people, we describe them using trait terms. Our friends are “fun,” “creative,” and “crazy in a good way,” or “quiet,” “serious,” and “controlling.” The language of traits is a powerful one—indeed, there are over 18,000 trait terms in the English language.

### **The Importance of the Central Traits Warm and Cold**

*The traits of warm and cold* are known as central traits. The powerful influence of central traits is due to two things.

For one, they lead us to make inferences about other traits that might not have been mentioned. The students who heard that the professor was “warm” might also have assumed that he had other positive traits (maybe “nice” and “funny”), in comparison with those who heard that he was “cold.” Second, the important central traits also color our perceptions of the other traits that surround them. When a person is described as “warm” and “intelligent,” the meaning of

“intelligent” seems a lot better than does the term “intelligent” in the context of a person who is also “cold.”

Overall, the message is clear: If you want to get someone to like you, try to act in a warm manner toward them. Be friendly, nice, and interested in what they say. This attention you pay to the other will be more powerful than any other characteristics that you might try to display to them.

## 4.2 Attribution and Its meanings

Attribution refers to the thought processes we employ in explaining the behavior of other people and our own as well.

### The Two-Step Process of Making Attributions

There are two steps involved in the process of attribution.

**First step:** Here people analyze another’s behavior, they typically make an internal attribution automatically.

**Second step:** Here they think about possible situational reasons for the behavior.

After engaging in the second step, they may adjust their original internal attribution to take account of situational factors.

Because this second step is more conscious and effortful, people may not get to it if they are distracted or preoccupied. People will be more likely to engage in the second step of attributional processing when they consciously think carefully before making a judgment, when they are motivated to be as accurate as possible, or if they are suspicious about the motives of the target.

Internal and external attributions can have dramatic consequences on everyday interactions. How you react to a person’s anger may be dependent on whether you believe that they are having a bad day or that they dislike something about you – the ripples flow into the future and influence how you treat that person henceforth.

## Theories of Attribution

### I. Heider’s Theory of Naïve Psychology

How do people in general assign causal explanations for events? Studying the attribution process has been of a primary concern to a number of social psychologists over the past forty years. Fritz Heider (1958) was the first social psychologist to formally analyze how people attempt to understand the causes behind behavior. He believed that everybody has a general theory of human behavior---what he called a *naïve psychology*--- and that they use it to search for explanations of social events.

In making causal attributions, by far the most important judgment concerns *the locus of causality*. According to Heider, people broadly attribute a given action either to internal states or external factors. An **internal attribution** (also called person attribution) consists of any explanation that locates the cause as being internal to the person, such as *personality traits*,

*moods, attitudes, abilities, or effort*. An **external attribution** (also called situation attribution) consists of any explanation that locates the causes as being external to the person under scrutiny, such as the actions of others, the nature of the situation, or luck. For Heider and other attribution theorists, whether my explanation is correct or not correct is not the issue. Their task is not to determine the true cause of events, but rather to explain how people *perceive* the causes.

## II. **Weiner's Attribution Theory**

Besides making internal or external distinctions, people also attempt to answer other important attributional questions. Bernard Weiner and his colleagues expanded Heider's primary distinction between the internal and external locus of causality to include questions about stability and controllability. Stable causes are permanent and lasting, while unstable causes are temporary and fluctuating. This stable/unstable dimension is independent of the direction of causality. Some causes, called dispositional, are both internal and stable ("she insulted me because she is rude"). Other causes are considered to be internal but unstable ("She insulted me because she has a cold"). Likewise, some causes are seen as external and stable ("She insulted me because I rub people the wrong way"), while others are perceived as external and unstable ("She insulted me because the weather conditions that day made her job very difficult").

Although judgments of the locus and stability of causes are the most important in making attributions, a third dimension we often consider is controllability of these causes. According to Weiner (1982), we think some causes as being within people's control and others as being outside their control. The controllable/uncontrollable dimension is independent of either locus or stability. Weather is a good example of uncontrollable factor.

The locus, stability, and controllability of causal attributions appear to be the primary dimensions employed when people explain events.

Since Heider's initial formulations other social psychologists have expanded upon his insights and developed formal attribution theories. The following discussion focuses on theories that have had the most influence on the field and also discuss recent refinements in our understanding of the attribution process.

## III. **Jones & Davis's Correspondent Inference Theory**

In developing correspondent inference theory, Edward Jones and Keith Davis (1965) were particularly interested in how people infer the cause of a single instance of behavior. According to them, people try to infer from an overt action whether it corresponds to a stable personal

characteristics of the actor. Thus, a **correspondent inference** is an inference that the actor's action corresponds to, or is indicative of, a stable personal characteristic. For example, if Jane acts compassionately toward Bob, his correspondent inference would be that Jane is a compassionate person. But will Bob actually make a correspondent inference? Not always. If there are several plausible reasons why someone may have performed a certain act, correspondence is low, and therefore you cannot be confident about the cause of the act. However, if there is only one plausible reason to explain the act, correspondence is high and you will be confident in your attribution.

In explaining social events, Jones and Davis argued that people have a preference for making dispositional attributions (that is, those that are internal and stable), and that external attributions are merely default options, made only when internal causes cannot be found. The reason for this preference is the belief that knowing the dispositional attributes of others will enable one to better understand and predict their behavior. The problem in confidently making these attributions, however, is that social behavior is often ambiguous and the causes are not always readily apparent to the observer. Therefore, to guide them in their attempts to infer personal characteristics from behavior, Jones and Davis stated that people use several **logical rules of thumb**.

One such rule deals with the *social desirability* of the behavior. That is, people are much more likely to make dispositional attributions about behavior that is socially undesirable than about behavior that is desirable. This is the case because socially desirable behavior is thought to tell us more about the cultural norms of the group than about the personality of the individuals within that group. Yet when people are willing to break from these norms to act in a certain way, such unexpected behavior demands an explanation. When such action is taken, people realize that the social costs incurred by the actor may be great, and they are much more confident that the behavior reflects a stable and internal disposition.

Another rule considered by people is the actor's degree of *choice*. Actions freely chosen are considered to be more indicative of an actor's true personal characteristics than those that are coerced.

According to Jones and Davis, we not only observe the social desirability of behaviors and the degree of choice of the actors, but we also analyze the actor's chosen behavior in the context of other potential behaviors. We then ask "Is there some effect or outcome unique to the chosen

behavior?" By comparing the consequences of the chosen behavior with the consequences of other actions not taken, people can often infer the strength of the underlying intention by looking for unique or "non common" consequences. This third rule of inferences then has to do with actions that produce noncommon effects-- outcomes that could not be produced by any other action.

Taking these rules into account, according to Jones and Davis's theory, people are most likely to conclude that other people's actions reflect underlying dispositional traits (that is, they are likely to make correspondent inferences) when the actions are perceived to (1) be low in social desirability, (2) be freely chosen, and (3) result in unique, noncommon effects.

### **Attribution Biases/Error in Attribution:**

In psychology, an **attribution bias** is a cognitive bias that affects the way we determine who or what was responsible for an event or action (*attribution*). It is natural for us to interpret events and results as the consequences of the purposeful actions of some person or agent. This is a deep-seated bias in human perception which has been present throughout human history. Our ancestors invariably attributed real events like earthquakes, volcanoes, or droughts to the angry retaliation of gods. Attribution biases are triggered when people evaluate the dispositions or qualities of others based on incomplete evidence. Attribution biases typically take the form of *actor/observer differences*: people involved in an action (*actors*) view things differently from people not involved (*observers*). These discrepancies are often caused by asymmetries in availability (frequently called "salience" in this context). For example, the behavior of an actor is easier to remember (and therefore more available for later consideration) than the setting in which he found himself; and a person's own inner turmoil is more available to himself than it is to someone else. As a result, our judgments of attribution are often distorted along those lines.

The attribution bias causes us to under-estimate the importance of inanimate, situational factors over animate, human factors. For instance, we might talk to a person from another country who mentions they only venture outside the house for outdoor recreation only once a week, and assume this means that they are a person who loves the indoors. However, we may be unaware that they live in a cold location where it is freezing outside for most of the season.

The **fundamental attribution error** (also known as **correspondence bias**) describes the tendency to over-value dispositional or personality-based explanations for the observed behaviors of others while under-valuing situational explanations for those behaviors. It is most visible when people explain the behavior of others. It does not explain interpretations of one's own behavior - where situational factors are often taken into consideration. This discrepancy is called the **actor-observer bias**. Fundamental Attribution Error refers to the tendency to make attributions to internal causes when focusing on someone else's behavior. When looking at the behavior of others, we tend to underestimate the impact of situational forces and overestimate the impact of dispositional forces. Most people ignore the impact of role pressures and other situational constraints on others and see behavior as caused by people's intentions, motives, and attitudes.

**Self-Serving Attributions:** Self-serving attributions are explanations for one's successes that credit internal, dispositional factors and explanations for one's failures that blame external, situational factors. Self-serving bias is a tendency to attribute one's own success to internal causes and one's failures to external causes. This pattern is observed in the attributions that professional athletes make for their performances. It has been found that less experienced athletes, more highly skilled athletes, and athletes in solo sports are more likely to make self-serving attributions.

One reason people make self-serving attributions is to maintain their self-esteem. A second reason is self-presentation, to maintain the perceptions others have of one self. A third reason is because people have information about their behavior in other situations, which may lead to positive outcomes being expected and negative outcomes being unexpected (and thus attributed to the situation). People often blame themselves for their own misfortune. Because otherwise, they would have to admit that misfortune was beyond their control, and they would be unable to avoid it in the future.

**Defensive attributions** are explanations for behavior or outcomes (e.g., tragic events) that avoid feelings of vulnerability and mortality. One way we deal with tragic information about others is to make it seem like it could never happen to us. We do so through the **belief in a just world**, a form of defensive attribution wherein people assume that bad things happen to bad people and that good things happen to good people. Because most of us see ourselves as good, this reassures us that bad things will not happen to us. The belief in a just world can lead to blaming the victim for his or her misfortunes.

Culture also influences attributional bias. With regard to the belief in a just world, in cultures where the belief is dominant, social and economic injustices are considered fair (the poor and disadvantaged have less because they deserve less). The just world belief is more predominant in cultures where there are greater extremes of wealth and poverty.

Our attributions may not be always accurate under many circumstances. First impressions, for example, are not very accurate. However, the better we get to know someone, the more accurate we will be about them. One reason our impressions are wrong is because of the mental shortcuts we use in forming social judgments. Another reason our impressions can be wrong concerns our use of schemas, such as relying on implicit theories of personality to judge others. Attribution errors are the most pervasive and ultimately the most destructive of the cognitive deficits. Avoiding the attribution bias can be difficult. One strategy is to simply give other people the benefit of the doubt. Another would be to inquire into the background behind the circumstances of a situation, to clarify whether a dispositional explanation is really most plausible. Yet another would be to ask oneself how one would behave in a similar situation. Eliminating the attribution bias completely seems impossible, as it is built into human nature. However, through reflective thinking, it appears possible to minimize its effects. To improve accuracy of your attributions and impressions, remember that the correspondence bias, the actor/observer difference, and defensive attributions exist and try to counteract these biases.

## **Chapter Four: Attitude and Attitude Change**

### **4.1. Definition of Attitude**

Prior to the 1990s, attitudes were often defined in terms of three distinct components: beliefs, feelings, and behavioral intentions. According to this multidimensional, or tricomponent

view, attitudes are made up of our beliefs about an object, our feelings about the object, and our behavior toward the object. Although this definition is appealing because it so neatly carves up the attitude concept into three distinct categories, research indicates that not all three of these components need be in place for an attitude to exist. For example, you could develop a positive attitude toward a product you see on television without developing any beliefs about it or every engaging in any behavior relevant to the product. Simply by repeatedly being exposed to the product, you can develop a positive attitude toward it.

Because the three aspects of the component definition are not always present in an attitude, many social psychologists have moved away from this elegant multidimensional view to an earlier, more basic unidimensional, or single component, definition in which evaluation is central. Here, attitude is simply defined as a positive or negative evaluation of an object. “Objects” include people, things, events, and issues. When people use such words as like, dislike, love, hate, good, and bad, they are usually describing their attitudes. Social psychologists also use specialized terms to describe certain classes of attitudes. For example, an attitude toward the self is called self-esteem, negative attitude towards groups are referred to as prejudice, and attitudes toward individuals are referred to as interpersonal attraction. The movement away from the tricomponent attitude definition does not mean that social psychologists no longer consider beliefs, feelings, and behavior important in explaining attitudes. Instead, these three sources of evaluative judgment—beliefs, feelings, and past behavior—are thought of as determining attitudes singly or in combination.

#### **4.2. Attitude Formation**

Attitudes can develop from your beliefs, your feelings, and your behavior, singly or in combination. Due to the various ways in which attitudes can be formed, social psychologists have generated or applied a number of theories to explain these various developmental processes. In this section of the chapter, we first examine theories that explain fairly simple attitudes formed through mere exposure and classical conditioning. These largely feeling or affect-based explanations are then followed by theories that involve more behavioral and/or cognitive sources (For example, operant conditioning and self-perception theory). We also examine one perspective on attitude formation and change, the functional approach that describes how the three sources of attitudes- feelingsthinking and behavior- might differently come into play due to a person’s current psychological needs

## Persuasion: Attitude Change

Persuasion is the effort to change our attitudes through the use of various kinds of messages. It is a part of daily life. Studies of social psychologists yielded insights into the cognitive process that play a role in persuasion. For attitude change persuasive communication plays a vital role. Persuasive communication is such a skill which is employed by a person to persuade other person or persons. The skill may be based on reason. In persuasive behaviour communication is vital. It can be through dialogue, written ideas, television or film. Through these media, the messages sent might bring changes in our view point. Some persuasive appeal do not succeed in attitude change.

### The Elements of Persuasion

*Among the ingredients of persuasion explored by social psychologists are these four:*

*(1) The communicator, (2) the message, (3) how the message is communicated, and (4) The audience. In other words, who says what, by what method, to whom? How do these factors affect the likelihood that we will take either the central or the peripheral route to persuasion?*

### Who Says? The Communicator

Social psychologists have found that who is saying something does affect how an audience receives it. In one experiment, when the Socialist and Liberal leaders in the Dutch parliament argued identical positions using the same words, each was most effective with members of his own party (Wiegman, 1985). It's not just the message that matters, but also who says it. What makes one communicator more persuasive than another?

### CREDIBILITY

Any of us would find a statement about the benefits of exercise more believable if it came from the Royal Society or National Academy of Sciences rather than from a tabloid newspaper. But the effects of source **credibility** (perceived expertise and trustworthiness) diminish after a month or so. If a credible person's message is persuasive, its impact may fade as its source is forgotten or dissociated from the message. And the impact of a noncredible person may correspondingly increase over time if people remember the message better than the reason for discounting it. This delayed persuasion, after people forget the source or its connection with the message, is called the **sleeper effect**.

**PERCEIVED EXPERTISE** How does one become an authoritative "expert"? One way is to begin by saying things the audience agrees with, which makes one seem smart. Another is to be introduced as someone who is *knowledgeable* on the topic. A message about toothbrushing from "Dr. James Rundle of the Canadian Dental Association" is more convincing than the same message from "Jim Rundle, a local high school student who did a project with some of his classmates on dental hygiene" (Olson & Cal, 1984).

Another way to appear credible is to *speak confidently*. Bonnie Erickson and her collaborators (1978) had University of North Carolina students evaluate courtroom testimony given in a straightforward manner or in a more hesitant manner. For example:

**QUESTION:** Approximately how long did you stay there before the ambulance arrived?

**ANSWER:** *[Straightforward]* Twenty minutes. Long enough to help get Mrs. David straightened out.

*[Hesitating]* Oh, it seems like it was about uh, twenty minutes. Just long enough to help my friend Mrs. David, you know, get straightened out.

The students found the straightforward witnesses much more competent and credible.



**PERCEIVED TRUSTWORTHINESS** Speech style also affects a speaker's apparent trustworthiness. Gordon Hemsley and Anthony Doob (1978) found that if videotaped witnesses looked their questioner *straight in the eye* instead of gazing downward, they impressed people as more believable.

Trustworthiness is also higher if the audience believes the communicator is *not trying to persuade* them. In an experimental version of what later became the "hidden-camera" method of television advertising, Elaine Hatfield and Leon Festinger (Walster & Festinger, 1962) had some Stanford University undergraduates eavesdrop on graduate students' conversations. (What they actually heard was a tape recording.) When the conversational topic was relevant to the eavesdroppers (having to do with campus regulations), the speakers had more influence if the listeners presumed the speakers were unaware of the eavesdropping. After all, if people think no one is listening, why would they be less than fully honest?

We also perceive as sincere those who *argue against their own self-interest*. Alice Eagly, Wendy Wood, and Shelly Chaiken (1978) presented University of Massachusetts students with a speech attacking a company's pollution of a river. When they said the speech was given by a political candidate with a business background or to an audience of company supporters, it seemed unbiased and was persuasive.

When the same antibusiness speech was supposedly given to environmentalists by a pro environment politician, listeners could attribute the politician's arguments to personal bias or to the audience. Being willing to suffer for one's beliefs—which Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and other great leaders have done—also helps convince people of one's sincerity (Knight & Weiss, 1980).

Clearly, communicators gain credibility if they appear to be expert and trustworthy (Pornpitakpan, 2004). When we know in advance that a source is credible, we think more favorable thoughts in response to the message. If we learn the source *after* a message generates favorable thoughts, high credibility strengthens our confidence in our thinking, which also strengthens the persuasive impact of the message.

Clearly, communicators gain credibility if they appear to be expert and trustworthy (Pornpitakpan, 2004). When we know in advance that a source is credible, we think more favorable thoughts in response to the message. If we learn the source *after* a message generates favorable thoughts, high credibility strengthens our confidence in our thinking, which also strengthens the persuasive impact of the message.

Clearly, communicators gain credibility if they appear to be expert and trustworthy (Pornpitakpan, 2004). When we know in advance that a source is credible, we think more favorable thoughts in response to the message. If we learn the source *after* a message generates favorable thoughts, high credibility strengthens our confidence in our thinking, which also strengthens the persuasive impact of the message.

### **ATTRACTIVENESS AND LIKING**

We may think we are not influenced by attractiveness or likability, but researchers have found otherwise. We're more likely to respond to those we like, a phenomenon well known to those organizing charitable solicitations, and candy sales. Even a mere fleeting conversation with someone is enough to increase our liking for that person, and our responsiveness to his or her influence (Burger & others, 2001). Our liking may open us up to the communicator's arguments

(central route persuasion), or it may trigger positive associations when we see the product later (peripheral route persuasion). As with credibility, the liking-begets-persuasion principle suggests applications.

Attractiveness comes in several forms. *Physical attractiveness* is one. Arguments, especially emotional ones, are often more influential when they come from people we consider beautiful (Chaiken, 1979; Dion & Stein, 1978; Pallak & others, 1983). *Similarity* is another. We tend to like people who are like us. We also are influenced by them, a fact that has been harnessed by a successful antismoking campaign that features youth appealing to other youth through ads that challenge the tobacco industry about its destructiveness and its marketing practices (Krisberg, 2004). People who *act* as we do, subtly mimicking our postures, are likewise more influential. Thus salespeople are sometimes taught to “mimic and mirror”: If the customer’s arms or legs are crossed, cross yours; if she smiles, smile back.

### What Is Said? The Message Content

It matters not only who says something but also *what* that person says. If you were to help organize an appeal to get people to vote for school taxes or to stop smoking or to give money to world hunger relief, you might wonder how best to promote central route persuasion. Common sense could lead you to either side of these questions:

- Is a logical message more persuasive—or one that arouses emotion?
- Will you get more opinion change by advocating a position only slightly discrepant from the listeners’ existing opinions or by advocating an extreme point of view?
- Should the message express your side only, or should it acknowledge and refute the opposing views?
- If people are to present both sides—say, in successive talks at a community meeting or in a political debate—is there an advantage to going first or last?

Let’s take these questions one at a time.

### REASON VERSUS EMOTION

Suppose you were campaigning in support of world hunger relief. Would you best itemize your arguments and cite an array of impressive statistics? Or would you be more effective presenting an emotional approach—perhaps the compelling story of one starving child? Of course, an argument can be both reasonable and emotional.

You can marry passion and logic. Still, which is *more* influential—reason or emotion? Was Shakespeare’s Lysander right: “The will of man is by his reason sway’d”? Or was Lord Chesterfield’s advice wiser: “Address yourself generally to the senses, to the heart, and to the weaknesses of mankind, but rarely to their reason”?

The answer: It depends on the audience. Well-educated or analytical people are responsive to rational appeals (Cacioppo & others, 1983, 1996; Hovland & others, 1949). Thoughtful, involved audiences often travel the central route; they are more responsive to reasoned arguments. Uninterested audiences more often travel the peripheral route; they are more affected by their liking of the communicator (Chaiken, 1980; Petty & others, 1981).

It also matters how people’s attitudes were formed. When people’s initial attitudes are formed primarily through emotion, they are more persuaded by later emotional appeals; when their initial attitudes are formed primarily through reason, they are more persuaded by later intellectual arguments (Edwards, 1990; Fabrigar & Petty, 1999). New emotions may sway an emotion-based attitude. But to change an information-based attitude, more information may be needed.

## DISCREPANCY

A communicator who proclaims an uncomfortable message may be discredited. People who disagree with conclusions drawn by a newscaster rate the newscaster as more biased, inaccurate, and untrustworthy. People are more open to conclusions within their range of acceptability (Liberman & Chaiken, 1992; Zanna, 1993). So perhaps greater disagreement will produce less change. Elliot Aronson, Judith Turner, and Merrill Carlsmith (1963) reasoned that a *credible source*—one hard to discount—would elicit the most opinion change when advocating a position *greatly discrepant* from the recipient's. Sure enough, when credible T. S. Eliot was said to have highly praised a disliked poem, people changed their opinion more than when he gave it faint praise. But when "Agnes Stearns, a student at Mississippi State Teachers College," evaluated a disliked poem, high praise was no more persuasive than faint praise. Thus discrepancy and credibility *interact*: The effect of a large versus small discrepancy depends on whether the communicator is credible. So, if you are a credible authority and your audience isn't much concerned with your issue, go for it: Advocate a discrepant view.

## ONE-SIDED VERSUS TWO-SIDED APPEALS

Persuaders face another practical issue: how to deal with opposing arguments. Once again, common sense offers no clear answer. Acknowledging the opposing arguments might confuse the audience and weaken the case. On the other hand, a message might seem fairer and be more disarming if it recognizes the opposition's arguments.

After Germany's defeat in World War II, the U.S. Army did not want soldiers to relax and think that the still-ongoing war with Japan would become easy. So Carl Hovland and his colleagues (1949) in the Army's Information and Education Division designed two radio broadcasts. Both argued that the Pacific war would last at least two more years. One broadcast was one-sided; it did not acknowledge contradictory arguments, such as the advantage of fighting only one enemy instead of two. The other broadcast was two-sided; it mentioned and responded to the opposing arguments. The effectiveness of the message depended on the listener. A one-sided appeal was most effective with those who already agreed. An appeal that acknowledged opposing arguments worked better with those who disagreed.

Experiments also reveal that a two-sided presentation is more persuasive and enduring if people are (or will be) aware of opposing arguments (Jones & Brehm, 1970; Lumsdaine & Janis, 1953). In simulated trials, a defense case becomes more credible when the defense brings up damaging evidence before the prosecution does (Williams & others, 1993). Thus, a political candidate speaking to a politically informed group would indeed be wise to respond to the opposition. So, *if your audience will be exposed to opposing views, offer a two-sided appeal.*

## PRIMACY VERSUS RECENCY

Imagine that you are a consultant to a prominent politician who must soon debate another prominent politician over a ballot proposition on bilingual education. Three weeks before the vote, each politician is to appear on the nightly news and present a prepared statement. By the flip of a coin, your side receives the choice of whether to speak first or last. Knowing that you are a former social psychology student, everyone looks to you for advice.

You mentally scan your old books and lecture notes. Would first be better? People's preconceptions control their interpretations. Moreover, a belief, once formed, is difficult

to discredit, so going first could give voters ideas that would favorably bias how they perceive and interpret the second speech. Besides, people may pay more attention to what comes first. Then again, people remember recent things better. Might it really be more effective to speak last?

Your first line of reasoning predicts what is most common, a **primacy effect**:

Information presented early is most persuasive. First impressions are important. For example, can you sense a difference between these two descriptions?

- John is intelligent, industrious, impulsive, critical, stubborn, and envious.
- John is envious, stubborn, critical, impulsive, industrious, and intelligent.

When Solomon Asch (1946) gave those sentences to college students in New York City, those who read the adjectives in the intelligent-to-envious order rated the person more positively than did those given the envious-to-intelligent order. The earlier information seemed to color their interpretation of the later information, producing the primacy effect.

Some other interesting examples of the primacy effect:

- In some experiments, people have succeeded on a guessing task 50 percent of the time. Those whose successes come early seem more capable than those whose successes come after early failures (Jones & others, 1968; Langer & Roth, 1975; McAndrew, 1981).
- In political polls and in primary election voting, candidates benefit from being listed first on the ballot (Moore, 2004a).
- Norman Miller and Donald Campbell (1959) gave Northwestern University students a condensed transcript from an actual civil trial. They placed the plaintiff's testimony and arguments in one block, those for the defense in another. The students read both blocks. When they returned a week later to declare their opinions, most sided with the information they had read first. What about the opposite possibility? Would our better memory of recent information ever create a **recency effect**? We have all experienced what the book of Proverbs observed: "The one who first states a case seems right, until the other comes and crosses examines."

We know from our experience (as well as from memory experiments) that today's events can temporarily outweigh significant past events. To test this, Miller and Campbell gave another group of students one block of testimony to read. A week later the researchers had them read the second block and then immediately state their opinions. The results were the reverse of the other condition—a recency effect. Apparently the first block of arguments, being a week old, had largely faded from memory.

Forgetting creates the recency effect (1) when enough time separates the two messages *and* (2) when the audience commits itself soon after the second message. When the two messages are back-to-back, followed by a time gap, the primacy effect usually occurs (Figure 7.6). This is especially so when the first message stimulates thinking (Haugtvedt & Wegener, 1994). What advice would you now give to the political debater?

Dana Carney and Mahzarin Banaji (2008) discovered that order can also affect simple preferences. When encountering two people or horses or foods or whatever, people tend to prefer the first presented option. For example, when offered two similar-looking pieces of bubble gum, one placed after the other on a white clipboard, 62 percent, when asked to make a snap judgment, chose the first-presented piece. Across four experiments, the findings were consistent: "First is best."

### **How Is It Said? The Channel of Communication**

For persuasion, there must be communication. And for communication, there must be a **channel**: a face-to-face appeal, a written sign or document, a media advertisement.

## PERSONAL VERSUS MEDIA INFLUENCE

Persuasion studies demonstrate that the major influence on us is not the media but our contact with people. Modern selling strategies seek to harness the power of word-of-mouth personal influence through “viral marketing,” “creating a buzz,” and “seeding” sales (Walker, 2004). The *Harry Potter* series was not expected to be a best seller ( *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* had a first printing of 500 copies). It was kids talking to other kids that made it so.

Two classic field experiments illustrate the strength of personal influence. Some years ago, Samuel Eldersveld and Richard Dodge (1954) studied political persuasion in Ann Arbor, Michigan. They divided citizens intending not to vote for a revision of the city charter into three groups. Among those exposed only to what they saw and heard in the mass media, 19 percent changed their minds and voted in favor of the revision on election day. Of a second group, who received four mailings in support of the revision, 45 percent voted for it. Among people in a third group, who were visited personally and given the appeal face-to-face, 75 percent cast their votes for the revision.

Although face-to-face influence is usually greater than media influence, we should not underestimate the media’s power. Those who personally influence our opinions must get their ideas from some source, and often their sources are the media. Elihu Katz (1957) observed that many of the media’s effects operate in a **two-step flow of communication**: from media to opinion leaders to the rank and file. In any large group, it is these *opinion leaders* and trendsetters—“the influentials”—that marketers and politicians seek to woo (Keller & Berry, 2003). Opinion leaders are individuals perceived as experts. They may include talk show hosts and editorial columnists; doctors, teachers and scientists; and people in all walks of life who have made it their business to absorb information and to inform their friends and family. If I want to evaluate computer equipment, I defer to the opinions of my sons, who get many of their ideas from the printed page. Sell them and you will sell me.

Lumping together all media, from mass mailings to television to podcasting, oversimplifies. Studies comparing different media find that the more lifelike the medium, the more persuasive its message. Thus, the order of persuasiveness seems to be: live (face-to-face), videotaped, audiotaped, and written. To add to the complexity, messages are best *comprehended* and *recalled* when written. Comprehension is one of the first steps in the persuasion process. So Shelly Chaiken and Alice Eagly (1976) reasoned that if a message is difficult to comprehend, persuasion should be greatest when the message is written, because readers will be able to work through the message at their own pace.

The researchers gave University of Massachusetts students easy or difficult messages in writing, on audiotape, or on videotape. The results indicated difficult messages were indeed most persuasive when written; easy messages, when videotaped. The TV medium takes control of the pacing of the message away from the recipients. By drawing attention to the communicator and away from the message itself, TV also encourages people to focus on peripheral cues, such as the communicator’s attractiveness (Chaiken & Eagly, 1983).

## To Whom Is It Said? The Audience

People’s traits often don’t predict their responses to social influence. A particular trait may enhance one step in the persuasion process but work against another. Take self-esteem. People with low self-esteem are often slow to comprehend a message and therefore hard to persuade.

Those with high self-esteem may comprehend yet remain confident of their own opinions. The conclusion: People with moderate self-esteem are the easiest to influence (Rhodes & Wood, 1992). Let's also consider other audience characteristic: age

### HOW OLD ARE THEY?

Social psychologists offer two possible explanations for age differences. One is a *life cycle explanation*: Attitudes change (for example, become more conservative) as people grow older. The other is a *generational explanation*: Attitudes do *not* change; older people largely hold onto the attitudes they adopted when they were young. Because these attitudes are different from those being adopted by young people today, a generation gap develops.

The evidence mostly supports the generational explanation. In surveys and resurveys of groups of younger and older people over several years, the attitudes of older people usually show less change than do those of young people. As David Sears (1979, 1986) put it, researchers have "almost invariably found generational rather than life cycle effects."

The teens and early twenties are important formative years (Koenig & others, 2008; Krosnick & Alwin, 1989). Attitudes are changeable then, and the attitudes formed tend to stabilize through middle adulthood. Gallup interviews of more than 120,000 people suggest that political attitudes formed at age 18—relatively Republican-favoring during the popular Reagan era, and more Democratic-favoring during the unpopular George W. Bush era—tend to last (Silver, 2009). Young people might therefore be advised to choose their social influences—the groups they join, the media they imbibe, the roles they adopt—carefully. In analyzing National Opinion Research Center archives, James Davis (2004) discovered, for example, that Americans reaching age 16 during the 1960s have, ever since, been more politically liberal than average. Much as tree rings can, years later, reveal the telltale marks laid down by a drought, so attitudes decades later may reveal the events, such as the Vietnam War and civil rights era of the 1960s, that shaped the adolescent and early-twenties mind. For many people, these years are a critical period for the formation of attitudes and values.

Adolescent and early-adult experiences are formative partly because they make deep and lasting impressions. When Howard Schuman and Jacqueline Scott (1989) asked people to name the one or two most important national or world events of the previous half-century, most recalled events from their teens or early twenties.

## Unit five: Social Influence

**Social Influence** can be defined as efforts by one or more individuals to change the attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, or behaviors of one or more others. For example, the colleagues have strong influence on one's work, while the friends have strong influence on one's daily life.

### Conformity:

A type of social influence in which individuals change their attitude or behavior in order to adhere or to stick to the existing social norms.

### Factors affecting Conformity: Cohesiveness, and Group Size

#### Cohesiveness and Conformity:

We are going to discuss how cohesiveness has impact on conformity. With respect to conformity, cohesiveness can be defined as the degree of attraction felt by an individual toward an influencing group.

Groups with similar attitudes are more cohesive than groups with dissimilar attitudes, successful groups are more cohesive than unsuccessful groups, and groups with clear paths to goals are more cohesive than groups lacking clear paths.

A classic finding of social psychology is that when cohesiveness (attraction) is high, pressures toward conformity are magnified. This is a basic reason why most persons are more willing to accept social influence from friends or persons they admire than from others.

### **Conformity and Group Size:**

Group size has the important effects on the tendency to conform i.e., the size of the influencing group. We are likely to conform to the opinion held by the group if the number of group members holding the same opinion is large i.e., group size is large.

## **COMPLIANCE**

In a situation when you wanted someone to do something for you, you start thinking about the tricks which you can use to get your things done. Social psychologists have put efforts to understand this process, the most frequent form of social influence. Professionals- people whose success (financial or otherwise) depends on their ability to get others to say "yes". These people include salespeople, advertisers, political lobbyists, fundraisers, etc.

### **Techniques professionals use for gaining Compliance**

**A) Tactics Based on Friendship or Liking: Ingratiation:** There are several techniques for increasing compliance through getting others to like us. This is called as impression management. These impression management techniques are often used for purposes of ingratiation i.e., getting others to like us so that they will be more willing to agree to our requests.

### **B) Tactics Based on Commitment or Consistency:**

#### **The Foot in the Door:**

A procedure for gaining compliance in which requesters begin with a small request and then, when this is granted, escalate to a larger one (the one they actually desired to be agreed). Once the target person says yes to the small request, it is more difficult for that person to say no to a larger request, because if they don't agree it would be inconsistent with the first response.

#### **The Lowball:**

It has been seen that auto dealers sometimes use the lowball technique. This involves offering an attractive deal to customers but then, after they accept, changing that offer in some way.

Rationally, customers should refuse: but in fact, they often accept less attractive deal because they feel committed to the decision of buying the car. To explain it further, in this technique, a very good deal is offered to a customer. After the customer accepts, however, something is manipulated to show that it is necessary for the salesperson to change the deal and make it less advantageous for the customer- for example, an "error" in price calculations is found, or the sales manager rejects the deal. The totally rational reaction for customers, of course, is to walk away.

Yet often they agree to the changes and accept the less desirable arrangement.

#### **Bait-and-switch tactic:**

A technique for gaining compliance in which once the customer enters the shop; items offered for sale are shown as unavailable or presented of very low quality. This leads customers to buy a

more expensive item that is available. It happens because for customers point of view, changing one's mind and reversing an initial commitment requires hard work, and many people, it appears, would rather pay a higher price than change their minds.

### **Tactics Based on Reciprocity:**

#### **The Door in the Face:**

A procedure for gaining compliance in which requesters begin with a large request and then, when this is refused, retreat to a smaller one (the one they actually desired to be agreed to). This is exactly opposite of the foot-in-the-door technique: instead of beginning with a small request and then presenting a larger one, persons seeking compliance sometimes start with a very large request and then, after this is rejected, shift to a smaller request—the one they wanted all along.

#### **The Foot in the Mouth:**

When people feel that they are in a relationship with another person—no matter how trivial or unimportant—they often feel that they are obliged to help or considerate to that person simply because the relationship exists. For example, friends help friends when they need assistance, and persons who perceive themselves as similar in some manner may feel that they should help one another when the need arises.

#### **That's-not-all technique:**

An initial request is followed, before the target person can make up or his/her mind to say yes or no, a small incentive is offered by the person who is using this tactic to sweeten the deal.

For example, auto dealers sometimes decide to throw in a small additional option to the car for e.g., free full tank fill, offer of seat cover, etc., in the hope that this will help them close the deal; and often, it really helps! Persons on the receiving end of that's-not-all technique view this small extra as a concession on the part of the other person, and so feel obligated to make a concession themselves.

### **D) Tactics Based on Scarcity:**

#### **Playing Hard to Get:**

This technique involves the efforts to increase compliance by suggesting that a person or object is scarce, rare and hard to obtain.

A study carried out by Williams and her Colleagues (1993) as quoted in Baron, R. A., Byrne, D., and Branscombe, N. R. (2006) explains this phenomenon. Professional recruiters were arranged who were interviewing students at large universities to review information about potential job candidates. This information, which was presented in folders, indicated either that the job candidate already had two job offers (a hard-to-get candidate) or no other job offers (easy-to-get candidate), and was either highly qualified (very high grades) or less well-qualified (low average grades). After reviewing this information, the interviewers then rated the candidates in terms of their qualifications and desirability, the company's likelihood of inviting them to interview, and the likelihood of considering them for a job. Results clearly indicated that the hard-to-get candidate was rated more favorably than the easy-to-get candidates regardless of their grades. However, the hard-to-get candidate who was also highly qualified received by far the highest ratings of all. Since it is persons who receive high ratings that usually get the interviews—and the jobs—these findings indicate that creating the impression of being a scarce and valuable resource

(being hard to get) can be another effective means for gaining compliance.

#### **Deadline Technique:**

This is a technique for increasing compliance in which target persons are told that they have only limited time to take advantage of some offer or to obtain some item.



Advertisements using this deadline techniques state a specific time limit during which an item can be purchased for a specific price. After the deadline runs out, the ads suggest, the price will go up. Of course, in many cases, the sale is not a real one, and the time limit is bogus. Yet many persons reading such ads believe them and hurry down to the store in order to avoid missing a great opportunity.

### **Other Tactics for Gaining Compliance: Complaining and putting others in a Good Mood: Complaining:**

In the context of compliance, expressing discontent, dissatisfaction, resentment, or regret as a means of exerting social influence on others. Complaining involves expressions of discontent or dissatisfaction with one self or some aspect of the external world, and often such statements are simple expressions of personal states ("I feel lousy!") or comments on the external world ("Wow, is it cold today!"). Sometimes, however, complaining is used as a tactic of social influence: "Why didn't you take out the garbage like you, promised?" "We always see the movie you want; it's not fair," Statements such as these directed toward the goal of getting the recipient to change his or her attitudes or behaviours in some manner.

**Putting Others in Good Mood :** People's moods often exert a strong effect on their behaviour. And, it seems, this principle also holds with respect to compliance. When individuals are in a good mood, they tend to be more willing to say "Yes" to various requests than when they are in a neutral or negative mood.

## **OBEDIENCE**

Obedience occurs when people obey commands or orders from others to do something. Obedience is less frequent than conformity or compliance, because even persons who possess authority and power generally prefer to exert it through the velvet glove-through requests rather than direct orders. Business executives sometimes issue orders to their subordinates; military officers shout commands that they expect to be followed without questions; and parents, police officers, and sports coaches, to name a few, seek to influence others in the same manner.

### **Destructive Obedience: Its Social Psychological Basis**

Why does such destructive obedience occur? Why were subjects in various experiments- and many persons in tragic situations outside the laboratory- so willing to this powerful form of social influence? Following factors play role in it-

1. In many life situations, Transfer of responsibility is the underlying phenomenon. "I was only carrying out orders" is the defense mechanism many offer after obeying harsh or cruel directions. In view of this fact, it is not surprising that many tended to obey; after all, they are not held responsible for their actions.
2. Persons in authority often possess visible badges or signs of their status. These consist of special uniforms, insignia, titles, and similar symbols. Faced with such obvious reminders of who is in charge, most people find it difficult to resist.
3. If there is anticipation that targets of influence might resist, then there is gradual intensification of the authority figure's orders.

Initially command or request is made for comparatively mild action but later it is increased in scope and dangerous or objectionable behaviours are expected. For example, police are first ordered to question, threaten, or arrest potential victims.

Gradually, demands are increased to the point where these personnel are commanded to even kill unarmed civilians.

4. Events in many situations involving destructive obedience move very quickly: demonstrations turn into riots, or arrests turn into mass beatings-or murders-suddenly. The fast pace of such events gives participants little time for reflection: people are ordered to obey and-almost automatically, they do so.

## **Unit Six: Interpersonal Relations**

### **6.1 Pro-social behavior**

These are the actions that are described as prosocial behavior. It refers to actions by individual that help others with no immediate benefit to helper; such actions are very common in our social life. People who engage in such behaviors do not gain anything in return.

#### **WHY PEOPLE HELP – MOTIVES BEHIND PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

**Empathy – Altruism:** It refers to putting oneself in other's shoes. Understanding the situation from other's perspective. According to this perspective we help others because we experience empathy towards them; we want their plight to end.

**Negative State Relief Model:** According to this model we help either because our actions allow us to reduce our own negative feelings. These negative feelings are not necessarily aroused by emergency situation. We engage in prosocial act as a way to improve our own negative mood. In such cases unhappiness leads to prosocial behavior. In such situations empathy may be there or not.

**Empathic Joy:** Helping behavior has been explained by Empathic Joy Hypothesis (Smith, Kealing & Stotland 1989). This theory suggests that helper responds and helps victims not because of empathy but because he wants to accomplish something and doing so is rewarding. The argument goes like this if we help people only for empathy, then they would not be concerned about feedback.

**Competitive Altruism:** According to this view people help others because in doing so their status and reputation is enhanced. Thus, the benefits incurred are larger than the cost of the prosocial behaviour. Those people who help others get higher status because society will always prefer to have people who engage in prosocial behaviour. If helping person has higher status then such a person may be well compensated for engaging in prosocial action. They are not only treated as a star but they may have entire buildings named after them. The best example is dead diction centre at Poone, Yerwada, named after P.L. Deshpande, the famous Marathi author.+++++

**Kin Selection Theory:** Helping ourselves by helping people who share our genes.

The Kin Selection Theory (as given by Cialdini Brown Lewis & Neuberg (Pinker 1997).

From the evolutionary perspective the main goal of all the organism is passing our genes to next generation. Therefore, we are more likely to help others to whom we are closely related rather than those to whom we are not related.

#### **Crucial Steps Determine Helping and Non-Helping :**

Latane and Darley (1970) proposed that likelihood of a person engaging in prosocial is determined by series of decisions that must be made quickly by those who witness an emergency. When we are suddenly and unexpectedly faced with an emergency situation that is difficult to interpret, before acting we must first figure out what if anything is going on and what we should do about it. This requires series of decisions that will determine whether we will help a person. The following factors determine the helping behaviour during emergency.

**1. Noticing or failing to notice that something unusual is happening.** In our day to day life we are thinking about something and concentrating on something else. For example when you are traveling by a local train, you hear a noise and hear that someone is having a problem of breathlessness. We may not notice, maybe we are in sleep or deeply engrossed in some thinking, concentrating on something else. Here we may fail to notice that something unusual is happening. In everyday life we ignore many sights and sounds that are not relevant to us, and may not notice the emergency situation.

**2. Correctly interpreting an event as an emergency** – Even those who pay attention to an emergency situation have incomplete information about what is happening? Most of the time whatever is noticed may not be always an emergency. Whenever potential helpers are not aware of what is happening, they are likely to hold back and wait for further information. It may be that when Genovese was murdered, people around could not understand what was happening, when they heard the screams it was felt that a man and a woman were possibly having a fight. The situation itself was quite ambiguous for those who were possibly having a fight. The situation itself was quite ambiguous for those who were witnessing it. In such situations people tend to accept the interpretation that is most comfortable to them.

It is observed that when there are many witnesses for a given incident. The help may not be given because of diffusion of responsibility, like when there are so many people who can help why me? Help is generally not given in such a situation with the fear of being misinterpreted by people generally, when we are uncertain about the situation and our actions we end up doing nothing.

**3) Deciding that it is your responsibility to provide help :** Building catches a fire, cards collide, in this situation etc., take the lead. But when the responsibility is not clear, people assume that someone must take responsibility. But when no one is present, the lone bystander has to take the responsibility.

**4) Deciding that you have the necessary knowledge and skills to act :** Prosocial behaviour cannot occur unless a person knows how to become helpful. Some emergencies are sufficiently simple; almost everyone knows how to become helpful. But when emergencies require a special help only some of the bystanders can be of help. e.g. Good swimmer can help a person, who is drowning or a doctor can help a patient with heart problem.

**5) Making final decision to help:** During emergency situation help is given to a person, only when a bystander makes a decision to help. Many times helping behaviour may be inhibited by potential negative consequences of the behaviour. Fritzsche and others held that a helper engages himself in cognitive algebra where he weighs positive and negative consequences of it.

To summarize, deciding whether to help or not to help is not a simple process. It requires a series of decisions to be taken by the helper.

## **6.2 Aggression**

Aggression is one of the most potential dangers to mankind. It is a greatest stumbling block for one's self development and growth. Aggression and violence have been experienced by almost all societies and times. The two world wars, terrorist attacks, racial conflicts, communal clashes, etc., have gradually increased over the years. Whether aggression is manifested by individuals or groups (including nations), it is the most destructive force in social relations and consequently an important social issue. A major concern in either individual or group aggression is its origin.

Aggression is behavior, verbal or physical, intended to physically hurt or harm in some other way another person or thing.

Aggression is defined as behavior aimed at causing harm or pain, psychological harm, or personal injury or physical distraction. An important aspect of aggressive behavior is the intention underlying the actor's behavior. Not all behaviors resulting in harm are considered aggression. For example, a doctor who makes an injection that harms people, but who did so with the intent of preventing the further spread of illness, is not considered to have committed an aggressive act.

## **PERSPECTIVES ON AGGRESSION**

The term Perspective means viewpoint. Perspectives on Aggression mean different viewpoints on aggression or theories of aggression. It deals with the views of different researches as to the reasons concerning why human beings aggress against others. There are many different perspectives on aggression. The three most common perspectives are as follows:

- The Role of Biological Factors: From Instincts to Evolutionary Perspective.
- Drive Theories: The Motive to Harm Others.
- Modern Theories of Aggression: The Social Learning Perspective and The General Aggression Model.

**1. The Role of Biological Factors: From Instincts to Evolutionary Perspective:** One of the important debatable issues has been what role do instincts or genetic factors play in aggression. One view holds that human beings are genetically programmed for aggression and violence.

**Views of Sigmund Freud:** One of the earliest instinct theories was given by Sigmund Freud which held the view that human violence stems from built-in (i.e., inherited) tendencies to aggress against others. He held the view that human aggression is instinctive. Freud believed that the individual has two basic instinctive drives:

- Eros (or libido or life instinct) and Thanatos or death instinct.

He called the instinct to live and obtain pleasure libido and gave the name Thanatos to the death drive. When it dominates, the result is self-punishment and suicide.

According to this viewpoint aggression springs mainly from a built-in fighting instinct that humans share with many other species. Presumably, this instinct developed during the course of evolution because it yielded many benefits. For example fighting serves to disperse populations over a wide area, thus, ensuring maximum use of available resources. And since it is often closely related, such behaviour often helps to strengthen the genetic makeup of a species by assuring that only the strongest and most vigorous individuals manage to reproduce.

**Konrad Lorenz on Aggression:** Konrad Lorenz held the view that instinct to aggress is common to many animal species. Lorenz, however, differs from Freud, since he states that aggressive behaviour will not occur unless it is triggered by external cues.

**Instinct view Rejected by Social Psychologists:** Most Social Psychologists rejected the instinctive theories of aggression. According to them it is difficult to give a genetic explanation of human aggression because aggression in human beings is expressed in many different forms, how can such a huge variation be caused by genetic factors. Secondly, the genetic theory of aggression is weak because all societies are not equally aggressive. The frequency of aggressive actions varies tremendously across human societies, so that it is much more likely to occur in some than in others. Do biologically inherited tendencies toward aggression actually exist among human beings? Most social psychologists doubt that they do, primarily for two important reasons:

(i) First, they note that instinctive view such as the one proposed by Freud and Lorenz is somewhat circular in nature. These views begin by observing that aggression is a common form of behaviour. On the basis of this they then reason that such behaviour must stem from universal built-in urges or tendencies.

Finally, they use the high incidence of aggression as support for the presence of such instances and impulses.

(ii) Second, and perhaps more important - several findings argue against the existence of universal, innate human tendencies toward aggression. Comparisons among various societies indicate that the level of at least some forms of aggression varies greatly.

The present day Social Psychologists generally conclude that genetic and biological factors play little if any role in human aggression.

**Evolutionary Perspective :**Evolutionary perspective to a great extent believes that human aggression is adaptive in nature and that aggressive acts help individuals to preserve their genetic material. Studies of mate selection among human beings as well as aggression among animals have revealed that aggression confers many evolutionary advantages among individuals of a given species and help them to successfully survive and adapt to their environment.

**2. Drive Theories: The Motive to Harm Others:** Drive theories suggest that aggression originates from external conditions that give rise to the motive to harm or injure others. In other words drive theories suggest that various external conditions (frustration, physical pain, loss of face) serve to arouse a strong motive to engage in harm producing behavior and such aggressive drive, in turn then leads to the performance of overt assaults against others. One important drive theories of aggression was presented by Dollard et al., called as Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis.

**Frustration Aggression Hypothesis:** This hypothesis was proposed by Dollard et. al.,(1939), at Yale University. They stated that aggression is always a consequence of frustration and that frustration always leads to some kind of aggression. In short, it held that frustrated people always engage in some type of aggression and that all acts of aggression result from some type of frustration.

Critics have objected to both the portions of the frustration aggression hypothesis.

- First, it is now clear that frustrated individuals do not always respond to thwarting with aggressive thoughts, words or deed. Rather, they may actually show a wide variety of reactions, ranging from resignation and despair on the one hand to attempts to overcome the source of their frustration on the other. In many cases, it appears that, the most likely reaction to powerful frustration is depression not overt acts of aggression (Bandura 1973).

Second, all aggression does not result from frustration. People aggress for many different reasons and in response to many different factors. For example boxers hit and sometimes injure their opponents because it is a part of their job to do so, not because they are frustrated. Soldiers often attack and kill others out of a sense of patriotism or simply because it is their duty. Public executioners as well as hired assassin regularly kill individuals they do not know simply because they are being paid to carry out these actions. Thus, all aggression is not a result of frustration.

Social Psychologists have largely rejected this theory.

**3. Modern Theories of Aggression: The Social Learning Perspective and The General Aggression Model:** The two most well know modern theories of aggression are the social learning perspective and The General Aggression Model. We would discuss each of these briefly.

**i. The Social Learning Perspective:** This is one of the most popular theories of aggression. According to it aggression, like other complex forms of social behaviour, is largely learned. The theoretical position that aggression is learned social behaviour has been presented in the writings of Bandura (1973), Baron (1977) and Zillmann (1979). The social learning theories have basically attempted to see how social models lead to aggression. They have studied the effect of viewing violence, especially televised violence.

The social learning view of aggression also states that through direct and vicarious experience we also learn.

- How to attack others (For, e.g., through guns, blows, sticks, etc.).
- Which persons or groups are appropriate targets for aggression?
- What actions by others either justify or actually require aggression retaliation and.
- What situations or contexts are ones in which aggression is appropriate or inappropriate.

Social learning perspective suggests that whether a specific person will aggress in a given situation depends on many factors, including an individual's past experience, the current rewards associated with past or present aggression and attitudes and values that shape an individual's thoughts concerning the appropriateness and potential effects of such behaviour.

**ii. The General Aggression Model:** The general model of aggression was presented by a group of researchers, chief among them is Anderson (1997, 2002). According to this model aggression is a result of combination of two factors: (a) situational factors and (b) personal factors. We would discuss each of these briefly:

**a) Factors relating to the current situation (situational factors):**

- Frustration.
- Some kind of provocation from another person (e.g., insult),
- Exposure to other people behaving aggressively (aggressive models – real or those shown in the media),
- Anything that causes individuals to experience discomfort – such as high temperature, dentist injection / drill, extremely boring lecture.

**b) Factors relating to the people involved (personal factors):**

These factors include individual differences of different types which we find among people. Some of the personal factors that can cause aggression in us are as follows:

- Traits that predispose some individuals towards aggression (such as high irritability, antisocial personality, impulsivity, etc.).
- Attitudes and belief about violence (e.g., believing that it is acceptable and appropriate).
- A tendency to perceive hostile intentions in others' behavior and
- Specific skills related to aggression (e.g., knowing how to fight or how to use various weapons).

According to the General Aggression Model, these situational and individual (personal factors) variables lead to overt aggression through their impact on three basic processes:

**i) Arousal:** They may increase physical arousal or excitement.

**ii) Affective States:** They can arouse hostile feelings and outwards signs of these (e.g., angry facial expressions) and

**iii) Cognitions:** They can induce individuals to think hostile thoughts or can bring beliefs and attitudes about aggression to mind.

## **THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF VIOLENCE (AGGRESSION): SOME USEFUL TECHNIQUES:**

Prevention and control aggression is a well-planned strategy. Since aggression originates from a complex interplay of external events, cognitions and personal characteristics, it can be prevented or reduced. Some important techniques for preventing and controlling aggression are as follows:

1. Punishment
2. Self-regulation
3. Forgiveness
4. Non-violence
5. Other methods of reducing aggression

We would discuss each of these briefly.

**1. Punishment:** Punishment can be defined as delivery of aversive consequences. It is a major technique for reducing aggression. People who are given punishment:

- Are made to pay fines
- Put in prison
- Placed under solitary confinement
- Receive physical punishment for their aggressive acts, etc.

It is a common belief among the members of the society that those individuals who have indulged in acts of aggression need to be punished. The amount of punishment people receive should be matched to the magnitude of the harm they have caused. For example breaking someone's arm should deserve less punishment than permanently harming them or killing them.

In addition, the magnitude of punishment should take into account the extenuating (mitigating or justifying) circumstances. For example, was there some good reason for indulging in aggressive actions such as self-defense or was it an act of hostile aggression. The main aim of punishing the individual who have indulged in acts of aggression is to deter him/her from engaging in such acts in the future. Secondly, aggressive acts which are hard to detect, for example, that involve hidden or covert forms of harming others, should be strongly punished because only strong punishment will deter people from engaging in actions they believe they can get away with. Parents as well as social institutions resort to punishment to control children's aggressive behaviour and aggressive activities of the criminals. Punishment is assigned in proportion to the extent of seriousness of the aggressive behaviour. It is true that punishment is sometimes quite effective. Results of several studies conducted with children suggest that the frequency or intensity of such behaviour can often be considerably reduced by even mild forms of punishment like social disapproval.

**Conditions necessary for punishment to be effective:** In order for punishment to be effective several conditions as follows must be met.

- (a) Punishment must follow objectionable behavior immediately or at least quickly. In other words punishment must be delivered promptly.
- (b) It must be of sufficient magnitude to be aversive to the recipient.
- (c) There must be clear contingency between individual behaviour and punishment.
- (d) Punishment must also be certain, i.e., the probability that it will follow aggression must be very high.
- (e) Punishment must be strong, i.e., strong enough to be highly unpleasant to potential recipients.
- (f) Punishment must also be effective.

**2. Self-regulation:** Self-regulation refers to internal mechanism for controlling aggression. It involves displaying self-control and restraints. It refers to our capacity to regulate many aspects

of our behaviour including display of overt aggression. Self regulation involves the use of cognitive effort to control aggression. Changing one's cognitions and attributions about a given event can lead to reductions in aggression.

**3. Forgiveness :** Forgiveness can be defined as giving up the desire to punish someone who has hurt us and seeking, instead, to act in a kind and helpful ways towards them.

Forgiveness helps to reduce subsequent aggression and retaliation.

**4. Non-violence:** It is an important principle of peace that has been a part of the Indian philosophy and has been advocated by Lord Buddha, Mahatma Gandhi and others. Non-violence helps to reduce aggressive acts. In public life, especially protests against the authorities, non-violence plays an important role.

**5. Other methods of reducing aggression:** Many different methods of reducing aggression are available. These include as follows:

- a) Catharsis
- b) Cognitive Intervention Strategies
- c) Exposure to Non-aggressive models
- d) Training in Social Skills

We would discuss each of these briefly.

**a) Catharsis:** It refers to a view that if individuals give vent to their anger and hostility in relatively non-harmful ways, their tendencies to engage in more dangerous types of aggression will be reduced. In other words catharsis hypothesis, as presented by Dollard et al (1939), states that providing angry individuals with the opportunity to "blow off steam" through vigorous but non-harmful actions will:

- Reduce their level of arousal, and
- Lower their tendencies to engage in overt acts of aggression.

**b) Cognitive Intervention Strategies:** By cognitive intervention strategies we mean various forms of perception, thoughts, reasoning or inferences that will help us to change our ideas, behaviour or outlook with respect to aggression. There are many cognitive intervention strategies.

(i) One type of cognitive intervention strategy is *our attributions concerning a given event*. Attributions often play a major role in determining reactions to provocation. If we decide that provocation from another stems mainly from internal causes (e.g., his or her motives and intentions) we are much more likely to grow angry and respond aggressively than if we conclude that these actions stem largely from external factors beyond his or her control. This fact in turn points to an intriguing possibility "perhaps aggression can be reduced in many situations by conditions encouraging individuals to make such external attributions". In short, if persons exposed to provocation can be induced to interpret provocative actions by others as stemming mainly from external causes, later aggression may be greatly reduced.

(ii) Another cognitive intervention strategy is to *help an individual to overcome his/her cognitive deficit*. Very often, when we become angry our ability to evaluate the consequences of our actions is reduced. Helping the individual to overcome his/her cognitive deficit will help to reduce aggression to a considerable extent. Two important procedures that will help us to overcome cognitive deficits are as follows:

- **Pre-Attribution:** Attributing annoying actions by others to unintentional causes before the provocation actually occurs. For example, before meeting with someone you know can be irritating, you could remind yourself that she or he doesn't mean to make you angry—it's just the result of an unfortunate personal style.



- **Prevention of Rumination:** Another technique involves preventing yourself—or others—from ruminating about previous real or imagined wrongs (Zillmann, 1993). You can accomplish this by participating in pleasant, absorbing activities that have no connection to anger and aggression, for e.g., watching a funny movie or television program to solving interesting puzzles. Such activities allow for a cooling-off period during which anger can dissipate, and also help to reestablish cognitive control over behavior.

(iii) Still another cognitive intervention strategy includes **apologies and offering good excuses**. By apologies we mean admissions of wrong doings that include requests for forgiveness. Offering good excuses also helps to reduce anger in others. Good excuses are ones that make references to factors beyond the excuse-giver's control.

**c) Exposure to Non-aggressive Models:** Aggression results due to exposure to aggressive models. Similarly, exposing individuals to non-aggressive models can lead to decrease in aggression. Research studies by Baron and associates (1972) have shown that individuals exposed to the actions of nonaggressive models later demonstrated lower levels of aggression than persons not exposed to such models. Research has shown that it is very useful to plant nonaggressive models in tense and threatening situations. Their presence will help to reduce aggression and violence.

**d) Training in Social Skills:** One of the reasons why individuals indulge in aggression is that they lack some form of social skill. There is a communication breakdown. Research has shown that individuals, who lack the social skill of communication, self expressions are insensitive to the feelings and emotions of others and are likely to become more aggressive. Helping such individuals to learn appropriate communication skills, to learn expressive modes of frustration and to become sensitive to emotional feelings of others will considerably help to reduce aggression.

## 6.3 Stereotype, Prejudice and Discrimination

**Stereotype** - A conventional, formulaic, and over simplified conception, opinion, or image.

A partiality that prevents objective consideration of an issue or situation. A preconceived opinion; bias; sentence passed before proper examination of the circumstances. Stereotypes can be either positive ("black men are good at basketball") or negative ("women are bad drivers"). But most stereotypes tend to make us feel superior in some way to the person or group being stereotyped. Stereotypes ignore the uniqueness of individuals by painting all members of a group with the same brush.

**Prejudice** – A prejudice evolves from a stereotype. Prejudices can be positive as well as negative. Positive stereotypes can also lead to discrimination but largely not as harmful as negative. Based on our stereotypes if we start forming hostile or negative opinions of others or when a person dislikes another for no good reason, or has formed a hostile opinion of someone before even getting to know them it is prejudice. It is in other words a negative judgment or opinion formed about an individual or group without knowledge of the facts.

**Discrimination** -- Treating people in a less favorable way because they are members of a particular group. Discrimination is prejudice in action. Let us take a concrete example

For instance you perceive 'A' community as violent because of stereotyping. You might not show your hatred with words, but your prejudice is there and when you take a negative action you discriminate. For instance you are the boss of a company and a person from that

A community applies for a job you already have a prejudice against them and so you might not select the candidate even if he/she is meritorious. This is discrimination. So you see how the three terms described above are interrelated.

Thus there is a relationship between stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination. Prejudice and discrimination occur with respect to differences in race, ethnicity, gender, language and a variety of other social categories.

Thus, stereotypes and prejudice is a wide spread phenomenon, present in all societies of the world. Our society often innocently creates and perpetuates stereotypes, but these stereotypes often lead to unfair discrimination and persecution when the stereotype is unfavorable. **Social perception** involves the development of an attitude towards another person or group of persons.

- **Stereotypes:** *Beliefs* about members of a specific group.
- **Prejudice:** Negative *feelings* towards members of a specific group.
- **Discrimination:** Negative *behaviours / actions* directed at members of a specific group.

## NATURE AND ORIGINS OF STEREOTYPING

From where does stereotype and prejudice emerge? Why do they exist? Why do people even today carry stereotypes leading to prejudice and discrimination? There are many possible sources from where this stems.

**1. Direct inter-group conflict (competition as a source of Prejudice):** It is sad but true that people want and value most good jobs, nice homes, high status, which is always in short supply. This fact serves as the oldest explanation for stereotypes and prejudice. This is the realistic conflict theory, the view that prejudice stems from direct competition between various social groups over valued commodities and opportunities.

**2. The social learning view:** A second explanation for the origins of stereotype and prejudice is straightforward. It suggests that prejudice is learned and that it develops in the same manner and through the same basic mechanisms as other attitudes towards social groups because we hear such views expressed by parents, teachers and others and because they are directly rewarded for adopting such views. Another reason is also conformity with social norms or with groups to which they belong. The development of stereotype and prejudice comes from this tendency. "If the members of my group dislike them, then so should I."

**3. Social categorization: Us versus-Them Effect:** A third perspective on the origins of stereotyping and prejudice begins with this basic fact that people generally divide the social world into two distinct categories Us and Them—social categorization

**In-groups us** and the **Out group is them.** Persons in the in group are perceived favorably while those in the latter are perceived more negatively. This tendency to make more favorable and flattering attributions about members of one's group than members about the other group is known as the ultimate attribution error. Research evidence shows that individuals seek to enhance their self-esteem by identifying with some special groups. And so the final result is inevitable, each group seeks to view itself better than the rivals. Thus, one of the important source of stereotyping and prejudice is to divide our world into two opposing camps.

**4. Out group Homogeneity Effect:** Tendency for social perceivers to assume there is greater similarity among members of out groups than among members of in groups. Sometimes we come across statements like you know what they are like? "They are all the same if you have met one you have met all" this means members of out group are more similar than the in group.

## **TECHNIQUES TO COUNTER PREJUDICE AND ITS EFFECTS :**

Given that prejudice is common in all human societies and exerts damaging effects both on the victims and on those who hold such views, the important question to address is 'Is it possible to remove prejudice? What steps can be taken to do this?'

Considering the growing prejudice among people over religion, region, language, race, it seems almost like prejudice is inevitable. But stereotyping and prejudice can be definitely reduced to a large extent by becoming aware and educating ourselves. And with concentrated multi-pronged approach we can do many things to counter prejudice.

**1. Teaching children Acceptance Instead of Bigotry (narrow mindedness):** Homes and schools are places where children learn to get their generalizations leading to stereotypes. It is the responsibility of parents, teachers to bring their children up with acceptance and positive attitudes towards other groups and be role models. Because often the attitudes and prejudiced notion are not necessarily taught but 'caught' from adults and the environment the children operate in. There is sufficient evidence, today that teachers can be victims of bias and prejudice and can reflect in their classrooms.

**2. Teaching children from an early age to respect all groups:**

We must teach children, including ones very different from their own - prejudice can be nipped in the bud or at least curbed.

Valuing Diversity is very important. Ethnocentrism should be discouraged. The education of young children should promote respect for a multicultural society and tolerance and acceptance virtues that need to be developed quite consciously.

**3. Increased Intergroup Contact:** This is based on the **Contact hypothesis**: the theory that direct contact between hostile groups will reduce prejudice. Recent findings indicate that if people merely know that friendly contacts between members of their own group and members of various **out groups** (groups in which we do not belong) is possible, their prejudice towards these groups can be sharply reduced.

However, there are some conditions like the groups interacting must be roughly equal in status, the contact situation must involve cooperation and not competition. They should work towards shared goals and the setting should help them understand each other better. In short, direct intergroup contact can be an effective tool to combat cross-group prejudice.

**4. Recategorization: redrawing the boundary between 'Us and Them':** Once individuals mentally include people, they once excluded from their **in group** (groups in which we belong) within it, prejudice toward them may disappear. Reminding people that they are part of large groups - for instance, that they are all Indians, Americans Canadians or even human beings - can help accomplish this kind of categorization.

**5. Undermining-Stereotypes:** Stereotypes suggest that all persons belonging to specific social groups alike - they share the same characteristics. Such beliefs can be weakened if people are encouraged to think about others as individuals not simply as members of social groups. Also, some evidence suggests that affirmative action programs in schools and colleges, offices may actually encourage positive perceptions and the persons who benefit from them will look at people and events more objectively. This will serve to counter prejudice by undermining (deflating) stereotypes. There must be an effort to look down upon people with prejudiced attitudes.

**6. Reducing Prejudice through Cognitive interventions: Weakening stereotypes:** Stereotypes involve **category-driven** processing -- thinking about others in terms of their membership in social categories or groups. Stereotypes can be reduced if persons can be made to engage in **attribute-driven** processing-- thinking about the unique characteristics of individuals and objective judgment.

**7. Cooperative activities:** Cooperative activities such as teambuilding exercises, workshops involving games that help to remove bias and prejudice should be carried out in schools, colleges, work places, etc. It is a good way to reduce animosity and bitterness that stems from low self esteem and stereotyped attitudes. Thus, non-competitive contact between in and out groups on terms of equal status and the pursuit of common.

## **Unit seven: Group Process**

Groups are a fundamental part of social life. As we see they can be very small - just two people - or very large. They can be highly rewarding to their members and to society as a whole, but there are also significant problems and dangers with them. All this makes them an essential focus for research, exploration and action.

### **Defining 'group':**

As researchers turned to the systematic exploration of group life, different foci for attention emerged. Some social psychologists, looked at the ways in which, for example, working in the presence of others tend to raise performance (Allport 1924). Others looked at different aspects of group process. Kurt Lewin (1948), for example, found that nearly all groups were based on interdependence among their members – and this applied whether the group was large or small, formally structured or loose, or focused on this activity or that. In a famous piece Lewin wrote, 'it is not similarity or dissimilarity of individuals that constitutes a group, but interdependence of fate'. In other words, groups come about in a psychological sense because people realize they are 'in the same boat'. In part differences in definition occur because writers often select those things that are of special importance in their work and then posit 'these as the criteria for group existence'. This said, it is possible, as Jarlath F. Benson has done, to identify a list of attributes:

- A set of people engage in frequent interactions.
- They identify with one another.
- They are defined by others as a group.
- They share beliefs, values, and norms about areas of common interest.
- They define themselves as a group.
- They come together to work on common tasks and for agreed purposes.

### **Group Formation**

Well functioning groups do not just form out of the blue. It takes time for a group to develop to a point where it can be effective and where all members feel connected to it. Bruce Tuckman has identified four stages that characterize the development of groups. Understanding these stages can help determine what is happening with a group and how to manage what is occurring. These four group development stages are known as forming, storming, norming, and performing as described below and the skills needed to successfully guide a group through these stages are described.

**1. Forming:** This is the initial stage when the group comes together and members begin to develop their relationship with one another and learn what is expected of them. This is the stage

when team building begins and trust starts to develop. Group members will start establishing limits on acceptable behavior through experimentation. Other members' reactions will determine if a behavior will be repeated. This is also the time when the tasks of the group and the members will be decided.

**2. Storming:** During this stage of group development, interpersonal conflicts arise and differences of opinion about the group and its goals will surface. If the group is unable to clearly state its purposes and goals or if it cannot agree on shared goals, the group may collapse at this point. It is important to work through the conflict at this time and to establish clear goals. It is necessary that there should be discussion so everyone feels heard and can come to an agreement on the direction the group is to move in.

**3. Norming:** Once the group resolves its conflicts, it can establish patterns of how to get its work done. Expectations of one another are clearly articulated and accepted by members of the group. Formal and informal procedures are established in delegating tasks, responding to questions, and in the process by which the group functions. Members of the group come to understand how the group as a whole operates.

**4. Performing:** During this final stage of development, issues related to roles, expectations, and norms are no longer of major importance. The group is now focused on its task, working intentionally and effectively to accomplish its goals. The group will find that it can celebrate its accomplishments and that members will be learning new skills and sharing roles. After a group enters the performing stage, it is unrealistic to expect it to remain there permanently.

When new members join or some people leave, there will be a new process of forming, storming, and norming engaged as everyone learns about one another. External events may lead to conflicts within the group. To remain healthy, groups will go through all of these processes in a continuous loop.

When conflict arises in a group, do not try to silence the conflict or to run from it. Let the conflict come out into the open so people can discuss it. If the conflict is kept under the surface, members will not be able to build trusting relationships and this could harm the group's effectiveness. If handled properly, the group will come out of the conflict with a stronger sense of cohesiveness than before.

### **Social Facilitation: Performance in the Presence of others**

Allport referred to the effects on performance of the presence of others as social facilitation, because it appeared that when others were present performance was enhanced. Researchers today refer to social facilitation as inhibition, a phrase that more accurately reflects the complex effects of presence of other persons.

#### **Zajonc's Drive theory of Social Facilitation: Other persons as a source of Arousal**

An implication of Zajonc's reasoning is the drive theory of social facilitation. It suggests that the mere presence of others is arousing and increases the tendency to perform dominant responses. Many studies soon provided support for Zajonc's theory. Individuals were more likely to perform dominant responses in the presence of others than when alone and their performance on various tasks was either enhanced or impaired depending on whether these responses were correct or incorrect in each situation.

#### **Social Loafing: Letting Others Do the Work When Part of a Group**

Social Psychologists refer to reduction in motivation and effort when individual's work collectively in a group compared to when they work individually or as independent coactors as social loafing. The social loafing effect has been demonstrated in many experiments. For

example, on one of the first, Latane, Williams and Harkins (1979) asked groups of male students to clap or cheer as loudly as possible at specific times, supposedly so that the experimenter could determine how much noise people make in social settings. They performed these tasks in groups of two, four or six persons. Results indicated that although the total amount of noise rose as group size increased the amount of each participant dropped. In other words, each person put out less and less effort as group size increased.

### **Decision Making by Groups**

Groups are called upon to perform a wide range of tasks, everything from conducting surgical operations through harvesting the world crops. One of the most important activities they perform is decision making. The process through which individuals or groups combine and integrate available information in order to choose one out of several possible courses of action.

### **The Nature of Group Decisions**

Important decisions are rarely left to individuals. They are usually assigned to groups and highly qualified groups at that. Different kinds of decisions in many different contexts groups show a pronounced tendency to shift toward views more extreme than the ones with which they initially begin. This is called group polarization. It is the tendency of group members to shift toward more extreme positions than those they initially held as a result of group discussion. Not only does the group shift toward more extreme views, individual group members too. The term group polarization does not refer to a tendency of groups to split apart in to two opposing camps or poles on the contrary it refers to a strengthening of the groups initial preferences.

### **Deindividuation**

At times group situations may cause people to lose self-awareness, resulting less of individuality and self-restraint. Social facilitation experiments show that groups can arouse people. Results of such experiments indicate that people tend to commit acts that range from a mild lessening of restraining to impulsive self-gratification. For example, in an incident, 200 University of Oklahoma students gathered to watch a disturbed student threatening to jump from a tower. They began to chant "Jump. Jump ....." The student jumped to his death (UPI, 1967). The incident described is provoked by the power of the group. Groups sometimes generate a sense of excitement of being caught up in something bigger than one's self. In such group situations people are likely to abandon normal restraints to lose their sense of individual identity.

Leon Festinger and Albert Pepitone and Theodore Newcomb, (1952) termed the above as deindividuation. It refers to the loss of self-awareness and evolution apprehension, occurs in group situations that foster responsiveness to group norms, good or bad.

### **Group polarization**

Studies of people in groups have produced a principle that helps to explain the good and bad outcomes produced by groups. Group discussion often strengthens member's initial inclination.

### **The Case of the "Risky Shift**

This refers to the group-produced enhancement of members preexisting tendencies, a strengthening of the members' average tendency, not a split within the group. Research literature from by James Stoner (1961) who tested the commonly held belief that groups are more cautious than individuals. He posed decision dilemmas in which the participant's task was to advise imagined characters how much risk to take. Results revealed that risky shift occurs not only when a group decides by consensus but also when individuals alter their decisions. After several years of study, Stoner discovered that risky shift was not universal.

### **Group Polarization experiments**

Dozens of studies confirm group polarization. Moscovici and Zavalloni (1969) observed that discussion enhanced French Students initially positive attitude toward their president and negative attitude toward Americans. MititoshiIsozaki (1984) found that Japanese university students gave more pronounced judgments of “guilty” after discussing a traffic case. Markus Brauer and his co-workers (2001) found that French students dislike for certain other people was exacerbated after discussing their shared negative impressions.

### **Group Think**

The tendency of highly cohesive groups to assume that their decisions can't be wrong, that all members must support the group's decision and ignore information contrary to it. This is referred to as group think. A strong tendency for decision making groups to close ranks cognitively around a decision assuming that the group can't be wrong that all members must support the decision strongly and that any information contrary to it should be rejected.

### **Conclusion**

When two or more people join together with common goals, act interdependently with social relationship and recognizing each other groups reformed. It is inevitable that each one are members of so many groups. All the groups influence the behavior of individuals. Groups at times facilitate the members' performance as well as hinders. Remaining in groups serve lot of purpose for individuals. The groups mask the individual's identity. Again, when people join together individual thinking reduces groupthink increases. Due to this individual's decisions are influenced by the groups ideas.

## **Unit Eight**

### **Theoretical perspectives in group dynamics**

#### **Introduction**

In this unit you will be introduced with the different types of theoretical perspectives of groups and group dynamics. Here, the perspectives are provided here dividing into two broad categories: Psychological Theories and Sociological Theories. The first part deals with the psychological perspectives on groups and these are motivational and emotional perspectives, behavioural perspectives, system theory perspectives, cognitive perspectives and biological/evolutionary perspectives. At the last it will deal with the sociological theories and these are such as classical theory, social exchange theory and social identity theory. Hence, this unit in general focuses about the explanation of groups and group dynamics from different perspectives.

Researchers have developed many theories about groups and their dynamics. Some of these theories are relatively narrow, for they focus on some specific aspect of groups. Others, in contrast, are far broader in scope, for they offer general explanations for groups across a wide

variety of times and contexts. It is to mean that some of them are very specific and others are too abstract. These theories, despite their variations, often share certain basic assumptions about what processes are more important than others, the types of outcomes they explain, and the variables that are most influential. Under here, we are going to discuss the following five theoretical perspectives.

## **8.1 Psychological Perspectives**

### **8.1.1 Motivational and Emotional Perspectives**

Why do some groups struggle against adversity, whereas others give up after the first setback? Why do some people shy away from groups, whereas others join dozens of them? The answers to these “why” questions often lie in people’s motivations and emotions. **Motivations** are psychological mechanisms that give purpose and direction to behavior. These inner mechanisms can be called many things—habits, beliefs, feelings, wants, instincts, compulsions, drives—but no matter what their label, they prompt people to take action. **Emotions** often accompany these needs and desires; feelings of happiness, sadness, satisfaction, and sorrow are just a few of the emotions that can influence how people act in group situations. The words motivation and emotion both come from the Latin word *movere*, meaning “to move.”

There is the concept of group affective mode. Jennifer George’s (1995) theory of **group affective tone takes** a more emotion-focused approach to explaining group behavior. George posits that groups, over time, develop a tendency to display collective mood states. This general affective tone is not tied to any specific aspect of the group’s activities or to any one individual, but rather pervades all the group’s day-to-day activities.

### **8.1.2 Behavioral Perspectives**

Many theories about groups draw on the seminal work of psychologist B. F. Skinner (1953, 1971). Skinner’s **behaviorism** was based on two key assumptions. First, Skinner believed that psychological processes, such as motives and drives, may shape people’s reactions in groups, but he also believed that such psychological processes are too difficult to index accurately. He therefore recommended measuring and analyzing how people actually behave in a specific context rather than speculating about the psychological or interpersonal processes that may have



instigated their actions. Second, Skinner believed that most behavior was consistent with the law of effect—that is, behaviors that are followed by positive consequences, such as rewards, will occur more frequently, whereas behaviors that are followed by negative consequences will become rarer.

John Thibaut and Harold Kelley's (1959) **social exchange theory** extended Skinner's behaviorism to groups. They agreed that individuals he domestically strive to maximize their rewards and minimize their costs. However, when individuals join groups, they forego exclusive control over their outcomes. Groups create interdependence among members, so that the actions of each member potentially influence the outcomes and actions of every other member.

### **8.1.3 Systems Theory Perspective**

A **systems theory** approach assumes groups are complex, adaptive, dynamic systems of interacting individuals. The members are the units of the system, who are coupled one to another by relationships. Just as systems can be deliberately designed to function in a particular way, groups are sometimes created for a purpose, with procedures and standards that are designed with the overall goal of the system in mind. Groups can, however, be self-creating and self-organizing systems, for they may develop spontaneously as individuals begin to act in coordinated, synchronized ways. Just as a system receives inputs from the environment, processes this information internally, and then outputs its products, groups gather information, review that information, and generate products. Groups are also responsive to information concerning the context in which they operate and their impact on that context, and will adapt in response to feedback about the efficacy of their actions.

Systems theory provides a model for understanding a range of group-level processes, including group development, productivity, and interpersonal conflict. **Input–process–output models of group productivity**, or I–P–O models, are systems theories that emphasize inputs that feed into the group setting, the processes that take place within the group as it works on the task, and the outputs generated by the system.

### **8.1.4 Cognitive Perspectives**

A group's dynamics, in many cases, become understandable only by studying the cognitive processes that allow members to gather information, make sense of it, and then act on the results

of their mental appraisals. When people join a group for the first time, they immediately begin to form an impression of the group. This perceptual work prompts them to search for information about the other group members, rapidly identifying those who are outgoing, shy, and intelligent. Group members also search their memories for stored information about the group and the tasks it must face, and they must retrieve that information before they can use it. A group member must also take note of the actions of others and try to understand what caused the other member to act in this way. Thus, group members are busy perceiving, judging, reasoning, and remembering, and all these mental activities influence their understanding of one another, the group, and themselves.

John Turner's (1991, 1999) **self-categorization theory**, or SCT, offers a cognitive explanation for a range of group processes, including intergroup perception and stereotyping. This theory explains the cognitive mechanisms that work to align people's self-conceptions with their conception of the groups to which they belong.

### **8.1.5 Biological Perspectives/Evolutionary Perspective**

One biological perspective—**evolutionary psychology**—argues that these processes may be genetically determined; part of the species' biological programming that has evolved through natural selection. This perspective argues that in the last 15 million years, the human species has evolved socially as well as physically. Those individuals who were even slightly genetically predisposed to engage in adaptive social behaviors tended to survive longer, so they were more successful in passing their genes along to future generations.

**Evolutionary psychology** offers insight into a range of group processes, including affiliation, intergroup conflict, and aggression. For example, why do so many groups include the role of leader, even when the group members are fully capable of organizing themselves? Evolutionary psychology suggests that leadership, as a process, likely evolved over time to help relatively small groups of people cope with extremely difficult, life-threatening circumstances. Facing problems of survival, group members needed a way to coordinate their activities and manage the inevitable conflicts that erupt in any group.

## **8.2 Sociological Theories**

Man is a social animal; it is not possible for him to live in isolation. He needs people around and hence lives in a society. When he lives in a society he follows some rules and regulations and norms of the society. In this scenario general sociology comes into being. Sociology is very closely related to Psychology though they differ in some areas. What makes sociology a science was its scientific research focus on humanity.

Sociology may be defined as the study of social relationships, social action and social culture. Areas of study in general sociology ranges from the analysis of brief contents between an individual on the street to the study of global social process. Sociology is classified as a behavioral science in academic discipline

Theories of social change in general, are concerned with the explanation on the sources of social change, the time span of the change and the effect of the change on the changing unit. Theories in rural sociology were all concerned with the problems of social order and social change. Based on the above, different schools of thought emerged which were later grouped into two large camps; consensus or equilibrium school (comprises of evolutionary and functional theories) and conflict camps. Social change is the process by which attraction occurs in the structure and function of a social system. Social system, in this definition, may be a group, a community, a city, a region or a nativity. Social changes affect the society as well as the individual. At individual level, it is concerned with how individual learns of innovation, what motivates him to change, how to adjust to change and the societal personal factors affecting social change. It is on these premises that various schools of thoughts and theories emerged as theories of social change.

As applied to group development, group dynamics is concerned with why and how groups develop. Theories of group development.

### **8.2.1 Classic Theory**

This theory was developed by George Homans and he posited that groups develop based on activities, interactions and sentiments. The theory indicates that, when individuals share common activities, they will have more interaction and will develop attitudes towards each other.

### **8.2.2 Social exchange theory**

This theory stipulates that individuals form relationship based on the implicit expectation of mutually beneficial exchanges based on trust and felt obligation. Thus, a perception that exchange relationships will be positive is essential if individuals are to be attracted and affiliate with a group.

### **8.2.3 Social identity theory**

Simply put, this theory suggests that individuals get a sense of identity and self-esteem based upon their membership in salient groups. The group may be demographically based, culturally based or organizational based. Individuals are motivated to belong to and contribute to identity groups because of the sense of belongingness and self-worth membership.