



EDO UNIVERSITY IYAMHO
Department of Sociology
SOC 214: Social Psychology



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Lectures: Tuesday, 1pm – 3pm, LC1, phone: (+234) 8039179218.
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General overview of lecture: As Humans, we are diverse and sometimes our differences make it challenging for us to get along with one another. This course is designed to examine how the presence of other people influences the behaviour of individuals and groups, and how social factors can determine whether human behaviour tends toward conflict or harmony.

Learning outcomes: At the completion of this course, students are expected to:

1. Define social psychology
2. Describe situational and dispositional influences on behaviour
3. Describe how people's attitudes are changed through cognitive dissonance and persuasion
4. Describe conformity and types of social influence
5. Describe and distinguish among prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination
6. Describe aggression, cyber bullying and the bystander effect
7. Describe conditions that influence the formation of relationships

Assignments: We expect to have 1 individual homework assignment, 1 group assignment throughout the course in addition to a Mid-Term Test and a Final Examination. Home works in the form of individual assignments, and group assignments are organized and structured as preparation for the Mid-Term Test and Final Examination. The goal is to have the students prepare adequately for the final examination.

Grading: We will assign 10% of this class grade to individual homework assignment, 10% for group assignment, 10% for the mid-term test and 70% for the final examination. The Final examination is comprehensive.

Textbook: The recommended textbook for this course are as stated:

Title: *Introduction to Psychology*
Author(s): OpenStax College
Publisher: OpenStax College
Year: 2014

Title: *Psychology and Life*
Author(s): Zimbardo P.G.
Publisher: Harper Collins, New York.
Year: 1992

Main Lecture: Below is a description of the contents:

What Is Social Psychology?

Social psychology is the subfield of psychology that focus on the influence of situation on behaviour. In other words, it is that branch of psychology that studies how situation to influence individuals' thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Broadly speaking, psychologists categorises the causes of human behaviour into two; internal factors and external factor (i.e. dispositional and situational), dispositional such as personality, or situational, such as cultural and other social influences. Using both approaches can explain behaviour. However, over reliance on dispositional explanations for behaviour is referred to as the fundamental attribution error. While other variations of fundamental attribution error are: actor-observer bias, self-serving bias and just-world hypothesis.

Self-presentation

Human behaviour is greatly determined or influenced by social roles, norms and scripts. Put differently, our shared cultural knowledge of what our roles are in relation to the prescribed appropriate behaviour determines how to act in a given situation. Appropriate or inappropriate behaviour for each role is dictated by Social norms. Appropriate behaviours in a given situation are learned by individuals by mastering the scripts of each social role.

Attitudes and Persuasion

Our feelings or evaluations toward an idea, an object or a person are referred to as attitude, which may be either positive or negative. To a large extent our attitudes and beliefs are influenced not only by internal factors, but also by external factors. Individuals to a large extent have control over internal factors unlike the external factors which are often determined by the presence of others or environmental factors. An example of internal form of attitude change is cognitive dissonance, which is the tension we experience when our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are in conflict. Individuals often change their behaviour, attitudes, or cognitions in order to reduce this tension or dissonance. Persuasion is the process of changing our attitude toward something based on communication or experience that comes from outside forces. Advertising is one of the external forces of persuasion and the features of advertising that influence our behaviours include the source, message and audience. The two primary routes to persuasion are the central route which uses facts and information to persuade potential consumers and the peripheral route which uses positive association with cues such as beauty, fame, and positive emotions.

Conformity, Compliance, and Obedience

Even in the face of inaccurate information, people can conform or tag along with a group due to the power of the situation. Two motivations drive our conformity to group norms; the desire to fit in and be liked and the desire to be accurate and gain from the group. Our behaviours are also influenced by authority figures and many people tend to obey and follow orders even when they are at variance with their personal values. Similarly, our conformity to the group can lead to groupthink or faulty decision-making process due to group members' willingness to maintain group harmony and identity. Group situations can equally improve performance on easy tasks, but inhibit performance on difficult tasks because the presence of others may lead to social loafing and makes evaluation of individual efforts difficult.

Prejudice and Discrimination

Due to the fact that individuals are diverse, we often encounter conflict when interacting with people or group who are different from each other. When people who are from a different social group or background are interacting, prejudice or negative feelings and evaluations are inevitable and these negative attitudes towards people from another social groups can lead to discrimination. Therefore, prejudice and discrimination against others from the out-group may be based on gender, race, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation or a variety of other social identities. In-group usually use out-group as a scapegoat for their frustration by blaming them for their plight.

Aggression

Aggression is action or intention that seeks to cause another person pain or harm. There are two types of aggression; hostile aggression which is motivated by feelings of anger with intent to cause another person pain or harm, and instrumental aggression which is motivated by achieving a goal and may not necessarily be intended to cause pain or harm to another person. Another form of aggression that has attained international public health concern is bullying. Bullying is repeated behaviours or action with the intent to inflict pain or harm on the victim. Bullying can take different form; physical, psychological, emotional or social abuse with negative mental health consequences. There is a newer form of bullying known as cyber-bullying takes place online where victims remain helpless because bullies may remain anonymous. Diffusion of responsibility reduce the likelihood of anyone helping despite the social norm of rendering help when there are many bystanders witnessing an emergency or event.

Pro-social Behaviour

Pro-social behaviour such as helping others out of empathy is known as Altruism. This can be contrasted with egoistic motivations. Man is a social animal and cannot live happily in a vacuum of isolation; therefore, forming relationships with others becomes a necessity for social beings to survive. However, we form relationships with people based on proximity (those who are close to us) and likes (those with whom we share similarities). Physical attractiveness is another factor that influences relationship forming even though standards for attractiveness vary by culture and gender. Individuals often use a social exchange approach to weigh the costs and benefits of forming or maintaining a relationship in order to determine whether a relationship is worthwhile.