Introduction to social psychology

Definition

- Social psychology is the scientific study of how people think, influence, and relate to one another.

- Social psychology is a discipline that uses scientific methods in "an attempt to understand and explain how the thought, feeling and behavior of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined or implied presence of others" (Gordon Allport, 1985).

- 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,).

What differentiates Social Psychology from other disciplines?

- Focus on social nature of the individual person

- Two assertions
- Person is influenced by social environment Individual actively construes social situations – we do not respond to environments as they are but as we interpret them to be.

Defining Social Psychology

Social Cognition

- The ways in which people think about other people

Social Interaction,

- The positive and negative aspects of people relating to others

Social Influence

- Social influence is the process by which attitudes, perceptions and behaviors can be affected by the real or implied presence of others.

Categories of Social Influence

Social Norms

- Rules or standards that are understood by a group and that guide behavior without the force of laws.

Conformity

- Changing one's behavior to match the responses or actions of others (no pressure necessarily)

Compliance

- Changing one's behavior in response to a direct request

Goals of Social Influence

People yield to social influence to achieve one or more of three basic goals:

- to choose correctly and behave effectively (to be right)
- to gain social approval (to be liked)
- to manage self-image

Social Norms

- Social norms – rules and standards that are understood by a group and that guide behavior without the force of laws

- Emerge out of interaction with others
- May or may not be stated explicitly
- Sanctions are not legal but come from disapproval within social networks

conformity

- Change own position to a contradictory position because of presence of others

- Perceived or real pressure

- Why do people conform?
- To be right
- To be like
- To clarify who we are

Factors that influence conformity

- Unanimity of majority
- Group cohesion (may lead to groupthink)
- Private responses
- Prior commitment
- Task difficulty
- Size of group

Compliance

- Particular kind of response – acquiescence - to a request
- Changing one's behavior as a result of other people directing or asking for change
- May be implicit or explicit

Principles that increase compliance

- **Authority Rule**
    one should be more willing to comply to the suggestions of a legitimate authority

Social Validation rule
    one should be more willing to comply to a request if it is consistent with what similar others are thinking or doing.

Scarcity Rule
    One should try to seek those opportunities that are scarce or dwindling
    ▫ Psychological reactance
    ▫ Censorship

- **Affiliation Rule**

    one should be more willing to comply to a request of friends or other liked individuals
Physical attractiveness, similarity, liking, compliments, cooperation

Reciprocity

    effective societies depend on the obligation of an individual returning the form of behavior that he or she has received from another

Consistency Rule

    after making a commitment to a position, one should be more willing to comply to a request that is consistent with that position

Social loafing and social facilitation

- Social facilitation and social loafing are two closely related terms. Both are based on the influence of others' presence in our performance and both are a part of group behavior.

- **Social facilitation** is when others' presence facilitates or affects our performance, in a good or bad way.

- This concept was given by is a theory which states that a person's performance depends a lot on somebody else' presence. Depending on the situation, the task he is given – simple or complex, will decide if his performance becomes better or worse in the presence of people.

Examples

- In your class, when you were asked to solve an **easy problem** on the board, in front of other students and the teacher, you were pretty confident about yourself and it didn't require much of your attention and focus. You solved it correctly and maybe in less time than required. Here you performed better.

- **2.** In your class, when you were asked to solve a **complex problem** on the board, in front of other students and the teacher, you probably got scared to get up and go towards the board, thinking you might make a mistake. However, you still managed to gather all your strength to do so.

  When you reached the board, two things were bothering you:
- How to solve this complex problem?
- What will happen if I'm unable to solve it? What impression would it make on the teachers and the students? What if they laugh at my stupidity?

Social loafing

- The tendency for people to put less effort into a simple task when working with other on that task.

Examples.

- People think their contributions might not really matter in a group of brilliantly working people, and so they either tend to pretend they work, or just don't get into anything, quietly taking credits for group performances. But they forget that a group was made to give better performances with a mix of everybody's efforts.

- People just take advantage of others in a group, not helping them out with work, instead leisurely spend their time on works of their inter

- **Attributions** are inferences that people make about the causes of events and behavior. People make attributions in order to understand their experiences. Attributions strongly influence the way people interact with others.

Types of Attributions
- Researchers classify attributions along two dimensions: internal vs. external and stable vs. unstable. By combining these two dimensions of attributes, researchers can classify a particular attribution as being internal-stable, internal-unstable, external-stable, or external-unstable.

- **Internal vs. External**
- Attribution theory proposes that the attributions people make about events and behavior can be classed as either internal or external. In an **Internal**, or dispositional, **Attribution**, people infer that an event or a person's behavior is due to personal factors such as traits, abilities, or feelings. In an **External**, or situational, **Attribution**, people infer that a person's behavior is due to situational factors.

- **Example:** sana car breaks down on the freeway. If she believes the breakdown happened because of her ignorance about cars, she is making an internal attribution. If she believes that the breakdown happened because her car is old, she is making an external attribution.

- **Stable vs. Unstable**
- When people make a **Stable Attribution**, they infer that an event or behavior is due to stable, unchanging factors. When making an **Unstable Attribution**, they infer that an event or behavior is due to unstable, temporary factors.

- **Example:** Ali gets a D on his sociology term paper. If he attributes the grade to the fact that he always has bad luck, he is making a stable attribution. If he attributes the grade to the fact that he didn't have much time to study that week, he is making an unstable attribution.

Attitude

- An attitude is a hypothetical construct that represents an individual's degree of like or dislike for an item.

- Attitudes are generally positive or negative views of a person, place, thing, or event this is often referred to as the attitude object

- **Positive attitude.** The predisposition that results in desirable outcomes for individuals and organizations.

- **Negative attitude.** The tendency of a person that result in an undesirable outcome for individuals and organizations

- Every attitude has three components that are represented in what is called the **ABC model of attitudes**: A for affective, B for behavioral, and C for cognitive

- **Affective** component refers to the emotional reaction one has toward an attitude object.

- **Behavior** refers to the way one behaves when exposed to an attitude object

- **cognitive** component of attitudes refers to the beliefs, thoughts, and attributes that we would associate with an object

Stereotypes

- generalized beliefs about a group of people

- **Stereotyping**. when one assigns the same characteristics to any person in a group, regardless of variation of the members of that group

- Stereotypes can have dramatic effect on the process of person perception.

- Stereotypes are widely held beliefs that people have certain characteristics because of their membership in a particular group.

- The most stereotypes in our society are those based on gender, age, and membership in ethnic or occupational groups.

- People who subscribe to traditional gender stereotypes tend to assume that women are emotional, submissive, illogical and passive, while men are unemotional, dominant, logical, and aggressive.

- Age stereotypes suggest that elderly people are slow, feeble, rigid and forgetful.

- Positive stereotype
- Negative stereotype

- **An implicit stereotype** is the unconscious attribution of particular qualities to a member of a certain social group.

- **Explicit stereotypes** are the result of intentional, conscious, and controllable thoughts and beliefs.

- **Gender stereotypes:** "Gender stereotype is belief about the personal attribute of females and males." Types of Gender Stereotypes: The stereotype begins since a baby.

- **Female Stereotype:** If baby was girl, their tendency are more to girlish thing like wear pink clothes, toys like a Barbie doll.

- **Men stereotype:** From the beginning, since they were small boys are taught to be tough, to be protective and to defend themselves.

- Stereotype is the reflection on how people see members of different groups' actually behaving, stereotypes change should occur when the relation between the groups is changing and altered.

- Stereotypes offer a shortcut for meaning as they convey a lot of information quickly. They condense complex information into character who is easy to recognize and easy to deal with. They are often minority groups.

- The importance of conceptualizing and examining stereotype formation, maintenance and change at the level of social networks and how this can add to our overall understanding of

Prejudice

- The word comes from the Latin "pre" (before) and "judge".
- Prejudice :is a negative emotional attitude held toward members of a specific social group.

- An **example of prejudice** is someone thinking poorly of another person for his belonging to a certain race, or for having different religious beliefs

- Different types of prejudice

Racism.
is the attitude that people
of a certain race are inferior.
People with this attitude
tend to treat people from
this supposed inferior race
badly.

Religious prejudice:
        Although all religions teach about love, some
times their attitudes towards other religions are
prejudice. This comes from an opinion that their
religion is superior.

Ageism: some elderly people feel they are discriminated against (as do some young people) due to their age.

Social: this is usually against those who are poor

- **Linguistic discrimination.**

Individuals or groups may be treated unfairly treatment based solely on their use of language such as an accent, the size of vocabulary (whether the person uses complex and varied words), and syntax. It may also involve a persons ability or inability to use one language instead of another