**INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY**

**BY**

**MUHAMMAD TASIU DANSABO**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

**USMANU DANFODIYO UNIVERSTY, SOKOTO**

**AND**

**VINCENT Y. AKUBOR**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

**AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA**

**AND**

**MUHAMMAD BELLO MUHAMMAD**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

**USMANU DANFODIYO UNIVERSTY, SOKOTO**

**THE NATURE OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY**

**The Subject matter of Social Psychology**

In the early years of the development of psychology, the emphasis was on the individual. Most psychologists simply isolated the individual from others to use for tests and experiments and concluded generally that any character attributes the person displayed in the laboratory was a fair indication of how people would generally behave under any circumstances. The assumption therefore was that human personality patterns were stable and consistent. If a person felt light- hearted and could easily crack jokes in one situation, for instance, that person would remain as humorous in any other situation. If a student performed well in one examination he was expected to perform well in other examinations, and so on.

A few decades into the development of psychology, however, the influence of the social environment became apparent. Psychologists started observing that there could be considerable differences between the way people performed on tests taken in privacy in the laboratory and in the midst of other people or under different social circumstances. It then became obvious that human behaviour and human personality were not necessarily consistent. A humorous person, an intelligent student, a high tempered individual, would display those personality traits only when the social situation permits. A child may tell lies in one social situation (like in school to escape punishment) but readily owns up to his misbehavior when he is at home. The hostility of the school environment is different from the friendship and love he enjoys at home and the child is only adapting to the dictates of the situations. A person may be submissive and tolerant to provocations from those he does not have the energy to physically confront but develops strange muscles when antagonized by those he knows he can beat. This realization that human behavior and personality are not necessarily consistent led to what is known as social psychology. We may then say that social psychology is that aspect of psychology that explores the relationship between the individual’s behaviour and the specific social situation in which the individual is operating. In the words of E. Aroson (1972) social psychology is the study of the manner in which human being thinks, feels, and behaves in social situation. Godon Allport (1968) similarly described it as a discipline that attempts to understand how the thought, feeling and behaviour of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined or implied presence of others.

Social psychologists consider that much of human behaviour is both a response and a stimulus to the behavior of others. What a person does is at least determined in part- and often to a great extent – by what other people are doing or what he thinks they expect him to do. At the same time what he does helps to determine what others do. Therefore, the discipline of social psychology essentially studies how people influence, and are influenced by other people.

**Relevance of the Social Psychologist**

The social psychologist cannot claim to have ready- made solutions to any social problem. Social problems are generally complex and their solutions require integrated efforts of many practitioners including government administrators, law enforcement agents, lawmakers and other social scientists. The social psychologist, therefore, only contributes to the utilization of authority, techniques and resources of these others as they seek solution to social problems. His proper task in dealing with a social problem is to analyze, diagnose and advice with respect to only one feature of the whole problem-the behavior of the people who are involved in it. He can provide indispensable understanding, prediction, evaluation and advice.

On the whole although many more social psychologists are professionally involved with such issues as the influence of the mass media, urban disorders, poverty, racial prejudice, criminal violence, and a host of other social problems, the major focus of the discipline is on the development of theoretical ideas. According to Leonard Berkowitz, instead of concentrating on the eradication of social ills, much more time has actually been spent on the formulation, testing, and discussion of abstract conception explaining a person’s reactions to particular social stimuli under certain types of conditions (L. Betkowitz, 1980:11).

**Methods of Socio-Psychological Research**

Social psychologists employ a wide range of research methods to aid their understanding of human behavior. Two of these methods are however most favored and these include correlation and experimental research.

1. **Correlational Research**

A correlation is an indication of the degree of relatedness between two variables. The relationship between two variables may be close and positive, meaning that they both increase or decrease simultaneously. For example, one can say that there is a positive correlation between hunger and short temperedness in the sense that the hungrier one becomes the more short tempered he turns. Similarly, there is a positive correlation between IQ scores and academic performance; people who score high on IQ tests tend to get high grades and people who score low on IQ tests tend to get low grades. In other instances, the relationship between the two variables is close and negative, meaning that an increase in one variable is accompanied by a decrease in the other. There is for instance, a strong negative correlation between ageing and physical fitness. The older a person becomes the less physically fit he becomes.

Correlation does not, however, imply causality. It is only an indication that two things tend to occur together, not a cause and effect relationship. It only allows predictions about events in the sense that an occurrence of one event may likely be accompanied, negatively or positively, by the other.

In order to employ the correlational method with any degree of precision, a descriptive statistic called the ‘correlational coefficient’ is used. This is a single index number that indicates the amount of correlation between two variables. It varies between +1.00 (for perfect positive correlation) and -1.00 (for perfect negative correlation). In reality, these two extremes are rare. More common scores are midway between the two.

Correlational research is useful when the investigator is interested in the relationship between variables as they exist in natural settings. He/she may be interested in studying many variables which we can not control-for example, intelligence, sex, age etc. In correlational research we can see how these varaibles go along with or are related to other variables.

1. **Experimental Research**

This is the investigation of cause- and – effect relationship by a systematic manipulation of one or more variables and observing the effects of that manipulation on another variable. If changes in the independent variable are followed by changes in the dependent, the former is then presumed to cause the latter. That means, an independent variable, is the presumed effect.

Equally essential to this method is the control of all remaining variables so that they can not affect the relevant behavior of the subjects. This way, any effects can be attributed to the manipulated variable. An illustration of this method is an experiment involving the determination of effects of the size of student study groups and ability to solve problems. In this case, the researcher might set up several study groups that are equivalent in all respects except size and then proceed to test the efficiency of each in solving problems.

**Social perception**

Perception is traditionally concerned with the process through which we become aware of our physical world by selecting, organizing and interpreting the evidence from our senses. At any moment one is constantly and continuously confronted with varieties of stimulations. Light waves visit the eyes from all directions, sound wave engages the ears, and the nose may smell something while the skin senses remind him that the temperature is too hot or cold. Internally, the body mechanism may simultaneously alert him of hunger, thirst or sleep. Despite such variety of sensory stimulations the individual can always afford to remain unperturbed and knows exactly which stimulation to accept and which to ignore or reject. The ability to accomplish this is what has been referred to as perception. Without the ability to perceive the individual will be a restless and insane creature.

However, although it is most appropriately defined by such experiences that stem directly from sensory stimulation, a great deal of experiences closely related to perception is more remote from sensory stimulation. In other words, when one perceives any situation, the process is equally susceptible to social influences and in turn largely determines social behavior. Perception is therefore as social as it is physical. The figure of a man perceived as walking along a street on a television screen is simply an organized pattern of light and dark colors emitted by the television. That is sensory stimulation. If the same man is liked or disliked, feelings and cognitions have come into the way the man is perceived. Such cognitive and affective processes are important in social interaction. The feelings of like or dislike, love or hate, pleasure or pain and so on cannot be experienced except within a social world. They are shaped by interactions with other human beings and largely determined by personal motives and emotional states of the perceiver. When the individual is anxious or tense, he is likely to perceive people and things differently from when he is happy and relaxed. It often occurs to most people that when one is not particularly happy he is easily irritated by events and things that under normal circumstances he either does not notice or he is indifferent to. On the other hand, when he is in a happy mood even those things that easily get on his nerves or make him lose his temper becomes objects of fun. People may now appear friendlier to him, the weather may suddenly look appealing. As the old saying goes, a pessimist sees a glass that is half empty, an optimist a glass that is half full. The study of such experiences and how they come about is known as social perception. It is the study of influence of personal and social factors on experimental processes. In this respect, the social psychologist asks such questions as: Do personal motives affect perceptions and cognitions? Does society interfere with the fear-arousing stimuli? Do we distort perceptions in the direction of what we want to see? etc.

Social perception involves the perception of social processes and the objects perceived here are the perceiver’s personal relations with others including his perception of groups and social institutions. The focus of social perception is the actual process of perception-the way in which definitions of a social situation or another person come about (Mann, 1969:90).

Unlike person perception which is more specific and focuses on the judgment of the individual, social perception it can, and often does, change the other person (the perceived) merely by the act of judgment itself. According to Tagiuri and Petrullo, through his own presence and behavior in the perceptual situation of the other, the perceiver may alter the perceptual characteristics of the person whose state he is trying to judge. For instance, a harsh personnel officer interviewing an applicant for a job may make the applicant extremely nervous even though he is usually a calm person. This implies a double interaction between perceiver (personnel officer) and perceived (applicant) in which the latter starts to think he has in some way annoyed the interviewer and as result becomes nervous.

**2.1.1 Fundamental Processes Affecting Perceptual Response**

Secord and Beckman (1964) identify four basic processes that affect perceptual responses. These are the selectivity of perception, frequency of previous experience, positive and negative reinforcement and contemporary determinants.

1. **Selectivity of Perception**

Human perception is a selective acceptance of some and the rejection of other objects that constantly bombard the sense at a time. Only a small portion of the stimulus energies reaching sensory receptors are translated into experience at any given moment. The human system is such that can accept and process a limited amount of information at a time and whatever stimuli it selects depends on either the nature of the stimuli itself or the perceiver’s built-in tendencies. In other words, while some stimuli (like moving things, change, contrast, etc.) can compel attention on their own accord, the perceiver may voluntarily select which stimuli to respond to based on his interests, emotional state or personality traits.

After the selecting, the perceiver groups or organizes aspects of the stimulus field in a way that he can perceive the object (or objects) against a background. These principles of selecting and grouping find expression in human social interaction and can be used to explain most social-psychological issues and problems. Let us assume for instance, that a certain ethnic group in Nigeria is widely believed to possess such negative traits as arrogance, obsession for meat, proneness to aggression and blind solidarity with their fellow tribesmen. Whoever holds firmly to this belief is already prejudiced and the tendency is for him to selectively observe and note behavior incidents that demonstrate those preconceived ideas about that ethnic group when he interacts with a member of the group.

**(ii) Frequency of Previous experience**

The previous experience of the perceiver with particular stimuli affects the way they are perceived in any contemporary situation. Familiar words when presented under a light that is relatively dark will usually be more easily recognized than less familiar words presented under the same light. It is therefore apparent that the more frequently a person has experienced a particular stimulus response sequence under conditions that facilitate learning, the greater the probability he will respond in a similar manner when the stimulus is again presented. On the whole, the manner is which we arrive at our perceptions is generally regarded as a form of information processing in which both short-term and long-term memories play a part. Kagan and Haveman (1968: 301-302) elaborated on this point thus:

we seem to hold the evidence of our senses in short memory, then call on the information stored in long term memory to help find some kind of organization and make an interpretation.

A commonly held view among many psychologists today is that we have stored in our memories a general typical idea of stimuli we have often encountered. That means we all have models or prototypes of anything we have ever seen-from objects , artifacts to human face- and when we encounter a new stimulus we can identify it immediately because it resembles the prototype. Mankind may have developed the most sophisticated piece of computer machine but there has not been, and may never be, any hardware as complicated and sophisticated as man himself.

**(iii) Positive and Negative reinforcement**

Certain learning experiences either decrease or increase the probability of occurrence of response. If responses are followed by negative (or punishing) consequences under certain circumstances, the strength of a response predisposition may be reduced. If, on the other hand, responses are followed by positive consequences, response disposition may increase. For example, if one attention-commanding stimulus comes with undesirable reinforcement (e.g. pains, other discomforts) it is more likely to be ignored on later occasions for substitutes that are accompanied by more positive reinforcements.

**(iv) Contemporary determinants**

Previous experiences with particular responses determine its likely occurrence at a given moment but it is by no means the only factor that influences perceptual response. Certain contemporary factors prevailing at the moment of perception like hunger, fatigue, anxiety, etc. are equally capable of predisposing the organism to make certain responses. This is known as ‘response salience’ in distinction to ‘response disposition’ in previous experience. A person in an anxious state, for instance, might avoid certain perceptions which would under normal circumstances readily engage his attention. The news of an accident involving a woman’s husband might instantaneously alter the awareness of a visiting friend or a boiling pot of soup.

This is interference, a decrease, on response salience. Response salience may also be facilitated if a particular perceptual response is enhanced by contemporary factors. A frightened person, for example, is more likely to perceive fearful objects; a hunter who has just perceived an antelope among some distant trees is likely to anticipate seeing another.

In any given stimulus situation, the readiness with which a particular response will occur is a function of both contemporary factors and previous experience of the perceiver with that response. Therefore, the response in a particular situation depends on both response salience and response disposition.

* + 1. **Person Perception**

For majority of people the most fascinating objects of perception in our environment are other people. Our opinions and feelings about other people dominate our everyday conversations. As we daily interact with other persons we frequently assess their intentions and motives with respect to us. We judge whether or not a person likes us, and our judgment of his feeling guides our own behavior towards him. Most people also make assumptions and judgments about the personality of others everyday with little or no evidence. There is a common tendency, for instance, to evaluate the character of others on the basis of physical appearance even before we personally interact with them. What is responsible for this tendency to form basic impressions about others? Why do we find some people immediately appealing and others repulsive? Why do we sense positive or negative vibration from complete strangers? These are some of the puzzles Social Psychologists try to unravel in the study of person perception.

By way of definition we may say that person perception refers to the process by which impressions, opinions and feelings about other persons are formed. Social psychologists are interested in person perception mainly because of its relevance for understanding human interaction. Since interaction is mediated by the feelings, thoughts and perceptions that individual have about each other, these subjective processes must be taken into account. Person perception is particularly important to understanding the interaction processes of communication, influence, and change. Perception of others is not merely an idle curiosity, it is a necessity. Prediction of the behavior of others (and subsequently a definition of our bearing from them) becomes possible only if we have understood and can explain their behavior.

For example, it is not enough to observe that your room-mate in the hostel wears shower cap to lectures instead of scarf. You want to attach some meaning to that behavior, to know what such unusual behavior says about her personality. Is she so mean as to economize the use of head –ties? Is she genuinely ignorant that wearing a shower cap to class is improper, or is she a person who is indifferent to social convention? Your ability to judge this helps you to predict what she may do in other circumstances and this gives you control over your dealings with her. If, for instance, you establish that she is economizing the use of her head-ties you will be less inclined to borrow her comb because you would have concluded she is a close-fisted and callous person. If on the other hand she is found to be ignorant about the proper use of the item you are more likely to feel more secure and sympathetic with her rather than fear and despise her. An accurate assessment of others therefore makes for a more definite and meaningful mode of interaction.

**Clues to the personalities of others**

There are two major sources through which the personalities of others are judged. These include appearance and behavior.

**Appearance**

At times we know something about a person even before we meet him or her. We may know about a lecturer’s reputation as a hard marker or a lenient person before registering for his course. Usually, however, we have little or no prior knowledge about someone we are meeting for the first time. In that case how do we assess him? What criteria do we use to form impression about him?

First, there are those who hold that personality is determined almost entirely by the genetic constitution. This group is represented by people like E. Ketches, and W.H. Sheldon and their major argument is that there are fixed physical characteristics which influence personality, and that the relationship between physique (stature) and personality is assumed to be due to a common hereditary base. Put in another way, what they mean is that the way genes combine into a nuclear cell at the moment a child is conceived determines all the hereditary aspects or characteristics of an individual. These hereditary aspects on the other hand, include sex, appearance, limits of intelligence and temperament.

Let us pause a little to explain what genes are. Genes are units of chromosomes (those innate human potentialities that control heredity). The human body is made up of millions of minute particles called cells and the nucleus of each cell is said to carry chromosomes. These chromosomes incidentally carry the genes and vary from one individual to the other in structure and more importantly in potentialities contained within them. It is quite a mysterious biological phenomenon but what we know is that these substances are all present in a single sperm cell and when a child is formed he has acquired the genes from both parents to form his own.

If the child lives to be a parent he/she donates the same to his/her own offsprings and the process continues. So, it follows that children of the same parents i.e. same father and mother have identical genes and are regarded as the closest of all human relations. Therefore physiologically your closest blood relation is your brother or sister (not half brothers or sisters). Of course, in real life some other things determine who should be close and who should be far. In African societies, children of polygamous families are expected to regard one another as equally yoked irrespective of where the different mothers come from. That is why you often hear people saying ‘blood is thicker than water.’ What that means is that genetic relationship is much more wholesome and should command more respect and allegiance that social relationship.

Now let us go back to what we were saying. We observed that the way the genes from a man and a woman combine into nuclear cell at the moment of conception determines all the hereditary characteristics of an individual. What are these hereditary characteristics? They are, once again, sex appearance, intelligence and temperament.

In relation to sex what we mean is that whether a child becomes male or female depends on the strength of either the X- or Y- chromosomes present in the sperm cell. If it is X- that first unites with the female egg the child becomes male. If it is Y that first unites a baby girl results. It is interesting in that case to note that the sex of the child is determined entirely by the man. The woman only has an egg that is basically neutral and only waits to be germinated by the X or Y. Men who go about blaming their wives for failing to give them male children are acting in dangerous ignorance.

On appearance, the particular combination of genes also determines one’s probable appearance. By appearance we mean our physical features whether we are tall or short, plump or skinny, dark or fair, relatively good looking or ugly, and so on. Of course one is not pretending ignorance of the equally important effects of prenatal and environmental factors on one’s stature, weight, muscular development and all those other attributes but the genetic factor at birth is much more fundamental (or is strongest) in the determination of our physical appearance. So, if for instance, you take a new born pygmy baby from the forests of Congo to rear him in Yoruba land he would be effectively socialized into Yoruba ways of life; no miracle can increase his height by even a millimeter. He will remain the dwarf like his parents, relations and ancestors in Congo.

On limits of intelligence, even though the issue remains controversial, the genetic constitution is believed by some to be responsible for one’s intellectual success or failure. It follows then that a child born of parents who are slow learners, of short memories will most likely grow up a dullard. Similarly, if parents are endowed with certain potentials, chances are that their offsprings will inherit them with little or no conscious efforts to learn that thing. That is why for instance, one often finds that certain gifts or talents run in families – a musician producing generations of musicians, charismatic personalities giving birth to radicals and revolutionaries, etc. the same principle applies to temperament.

Therefore, although basic habits, skills, style of interaction and all other factors that combine to build the personality are unique to people as individuals, they are like their brothers, sisters and other close relations because of genetic potentialities which they share in common.

The second major factor in personality development is what we may refer to as patterns of stimulation or variations in infant nurturing. In recent years scientists have come to believe that the very early care of infants has tremendous consequences for their personalities. Infant nurturing has therefore been suggested as responsible for universal human nature. Charles Cooley speculated that it is because infants in most societies experience fondling, petting and frustration in the intimate interaction of the family group that we can feel empathy for those from different cultures- put ourselves in their positions and understand their emotions and sentiments.

Therefore, from all indications an intensive emotional relationship and a tender loving care in early childhood are as important as food to the health and survival of a child. One may not realize it but studies have shown that the way an infant is treated within the first couple of months after birth has tremendous impacts on the kinds of human being he/she eventually becomes. Such apparently insignificant things as the way a mother holds the child, the way she feeds her not necessarily the kind of food she gives the child, the way she changes the napkins (also not necessarily the type of napkins she uses), the time and manner in which the child is weaned and several other aspects of early care are all very important because it is the child’s first experience of another organism and of the world around him. The necessary organs may have developed enough to enable direct, logical and conscious interpretation of a stimulation but all normal human beings, irrespective of age, have what we call instincts. The instinct is a potentiality found within the subconscious and this is what makes it possible for one to sometimes know and interpret a situation without clear physical signals. And so the character or the type of infant care, the nature of a child’s immediate social environment whether it is warm and loving or cold and mechanical, considerably affects the child’s formation of personality.

If the care is one of love, affection, warm and soothing environment the child will most likely grow up to be somebody with a sense of security, and somebody capable of understanding and sharing such sentiments as love, sympathy, envy, pity, etc. On the other hand, most of those in our social environment that are completely self centred, incapable of loving or sympathizing with others, those we discover as lacking internalized standards of right and wrong and sense of guilt were most likely born into very cold, mechanical, hostile environment. In other words, people we generally identify as devoid of conscience are old victims of the ailment we call marasmus. Therefore, inadequate primary group relationships during infancy (especially the lack of a warm nurturing mother) produce what psychologists call psychopathic personality.

It was found out that all of the prison children survived the first year while 30% of those in excellent home died. After 2-3 years, it was found also whereas the prison reared children were normal or superior in height, weight, ability to walk and communicate; those in the excellent nursing home were below normal.

Another major factor in the formation of personality is culture. According to L.N. Munn and Le Vine in the Fundamentals of Human Adjustment (1961) personality traits and overall patterns of personality are greatly dependent upon the cultural matrix in which the child develops.

As the child develops, cultural influences are focused on him through the various socializing agencies. At home the parents and the community reflect the cultural patterns and values of their own society as they have learnt. By so doing a pattern is set for the child to follow and this does much to influence his conduct and attitude toward himself and others. The formation of character or attitude therefore has a lot to do with one’s cultural background. That is why for instance we do not expect an Eskimo to behave like a person reared by the Masai of South Africa.

Although we quite often judge people’s personality on the basis of physical appearance, this impression may alter as we have opportunity to observe the person’s behaviour in due course. As a matter of fact some of our most significant and detailed information about other people come from the clues their behaviour gives us. A body of propositions known as “attribution theory” explains how people attribute personality traits to others on the basis of how those others behave. The theory attempts to attribute the behavior of people to some underlying motive or other causes. Supposing we are waiting for an elevator in a group of people and somebody suddenly steps on your foot. How you react depends on your interpretation of the person’s motive. If he feels sorry and apologizes you will probably dismiss it as just an accident and forget about it immediately. If, however he feels unconcerned and turns hostile because you complained you will doubtless be angry. Whichever of the two reactions you have made is a judgment. You have decided that stepping on your foot was inadvertent, unfortunate and regretful or a deliberate attempt to hurt you what you decide then makes a tremendous difference in the way you act and the way you act depends on the motive you attach to that behaviour.

Attribution theory is believed to be the brain child of Fritz Heider and in his various writings on the subject he explained that people naturally desire to be able to structure their environment so that they can obtain the best possible outcomes from it.

Two other factors, though not frequently cited, are also considered sources of personality judgment. These are what Belkin and shydell (1979) refer to as “body- talk” and “eye to eye”. With respect to body talk they explained that we position our bodies in various meaningful ways in order to leave certain impressions of ourselves with others, and at the same time, we pay attention to the positions of others with whom we are interacting so as to gain information about their state of mind. For instance, if the person with whom we are interacting leans towards us we take it as an indication that he or she likes us whereas if the person moves his or her body away from us we get the opposite impression.

Affection or liking for a person can also be inferred from a high-level of eye contact. Studies have shown that a reasonable level of eye contact with a person creates the impression of likeness for the person (Belikin and Skydell, 1979:396). However, too much contact may be regarded as a sign of unfriendliness or may cause others to feel uncomfortable, because it is contrary to the norm of respecting another person’s privacy. Staring at someone for a long time, for instance, may create as much of a negative impression as avoiding all eye contact.

We have so far discussed factors influencing perception which are peculiar to the stimulus person or the person being perceived. These are essentially significant attributes of the person that help shape the way others see him. There are however factors internal to the perceiving person which influence perception. The most significant of these are needs and values, and stereotypes.

1. **Needs and Values**

We have already indicated that our perception of objects may be affected by our bodily and psychological need. This phenomenon, called perceptual accentuation- the tendency to see what you are looking for even if it is not really there extends to the realm of person perception. Our values can distort our perceptions of people as well as of objects, and our needs can lead us to pay special attention to those characteristics of other people that are relevant to those needs. For instance, women are commonly perceived more as sex objects than intelligent and creative human beings. This is because they satisfy the physical and sexual needs of men and are seen to have the monopoly of doing so. All over the world the common tendency is to project the beauty and sex appeal of the woman rather than her intellectual and emotional capacities.

1. **Stereotypes**

When we meet somebody for the first time, our reactions and our judgment of him are often determined by what we have already heard or some long held beliefs about him. Such preconceptions, biased attitudes (referred to as stereotypes) influence our perceptions of people. Social psychologists define a stereotype as a widely shared, over simplified belief about some group of people. Although such beliefs usually have little basis in reality, they exert a strong influence on our impressions not only of other people but also of ourselves.

**Impression Formation: Inference Processes**

A commonly held view among social psychologists is that when people form initial impression of other people upon first encounter a number of inference processes or inference rules come into operation. Some of the most significant of these rules (which may also be called uniform processes because of their wide applicability) include temporal extension, resemblance to familiar person, inference through analogy and categorization.

**(i) Temporal Extension**

Leon Mann describes temporal extension as the tendency for the judge to regard a momentary characteristic of the person as if it were an enduring attribute. (Mann, 93) For example, a smile on the face of the stimulus person means that he is constantly good- tempered and easy going or because he is seen unshaven it is assumed that he is always careless of his personal appearance. Temporal extension based on limited samples of behaviour from different situation leads to some wide discrepancies between judges in perceiving a person.

**(ii) Resemblance**

Sometime someone we meet reminds us of someone else we know well, and we attribute the characteristics of that person we know well to the stranger. On many occasions, we do this without being aware of the connection between the person currently being perceived and our familiar quittance. In psychoanalytic theory this process is termed transference. This concept emphasizes the extent to which certain other persons are unconsciously perceived as having the attributes of one’s father or mother.

**(iii) Inference through analogy**

Inference through analogy occurs when judge generalizes from the person’s dress, face and speech to his personality (as earlier mentioned). This is referred to as metaphorical generalization (Secord and Backman, p. 65). A poor dresser is likely to be regarded as uncultured, uncivilized; man with an athletic build maybe judged as more energetic and forceful.

**(iv) Categorization**

This involves the perceiver classifying aspects of the person being perceived into familiar categories. Since it is impossible for the perceiver to respond to all the aspects of a person he resorts to a classification system. More specifically, he uses available information to place the person in a category associated with certain personality attributes. For example, one may infer from the way a person speaks English that he/she is Yoruba and because Yoruba people like organizing parties, the person must be a fun lover. Categorization often leads to error because of false stereotypes, or may help in deriving an accurate judgment if the stereotypes are well founded.

**Characteristics of Stereotyping**

Stereotyping has three basic characteristics: the categorization of persons (as earlier mentioned), a consensus on attributed traits, and a discrepancy between attributed traits and actual traits.

1. **Categorization of persons**

This means selecting certain attributes out of several in order to identify various categories of persons. It means grouping people on the basis of special attributes. For example categorization on the basis of sex can include all men, or all women: on the basis of age could be all adolescents, all women in menopause, all octogenarians, etc; on the basis of race could include all blacks, white or pale skin, Caucasoid, etc., on the basis of ethnic group could include all Yoruba, all Efik, etc. Membership in a category (or group) is sufficient to evoke the judgment that the person possesses all attributes belonging to that category.

1. **Consensus on Attributed Traits**

The class of person having some form of common identification is thought to share certain personal attributes. Those who believe that this exists are in reasonable agreement with each other on the identifying characteristics of the category of stereotyped persons and also on the attributes they possess.

1. **Discrepancy between attributed traits and actual traits**

The third characteristic of stereotyping is that there is often a discrepancy between attributed traits and actual traits. Almost always, stereotypes are at least partly false. False stereotype is one that is either oversimplified or absolutely baseless. There are always the possibilities of individual differences among members of the stereotyped group but what usually happens is that when provided with an ethnic identification and no other information, the perceiver is forced to ignore individual differences and to respond to the group as a class of persons.

**2.1.4 Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Discrimination.**

Prejudice is defined as an intolerant, unfair or unfavorable attitude toward another group of people. It is an attitude that predisposes a person to think, perceive, feel and act in favorable or unfavorable ways towards a group or its individual members. Whether or not a prejudiced individual will actually behave in accordance with his attitude depends on situational and other factors.

Thus the term prejudice stresses the perceptual, cognitive, and emotional content of the individual’s internal predispositions and experience. It does not necessarily imply that behaviour is congruent with such experience. For example the notion that blacks are inferior to white is prejudice. This supports the stereotypical beliefs that blacks are lazy unintelligent, sloppy and pleasure loving. The stereotype in turn leads to discrimination (which is defined as unfair or of least basically differential treatment of members of one group in comparison with members of another group). One could therefore simply describe discrimination as the overt or behavioral expression of prejudice; it is the categorical treatment of a person because of his membership in a particular group.

**The Nature of Attitudes**

Attitude is defined as certain regularities of an individual’s feelings, thoughts, and predispositions to act toward some aspect of his environment. The three elements of this definition- feelings, thoughts, and predispositions imply that attitude has affective, cognitive, and behavioral components respectively.

Part of the important psychological characteristics we acquire through socialization is a set of very strong opinions and techniques that we think of as principles that guide our conduct. This is what social psychologists call attitudes. We have favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward concrete and physical objects like hair style, children, old people, rich and poor people or toward such abstract entities as secularism, regional economic cooperation, global disarmament, legalization of abortion, foreign aid, etc, things that are not concrete and cannot be physically experienced. We may on the other hand have attitudes towards very personal things like our complexion, the length of our limbs, and so on.

Generally, we can have attitude toward all kinds of issues, institutions and things in our environment. One may be tempted to equate or substitute attitude with opinion. One can have opinion about issues and things as we said but attitudes represent far more than ordinary opinion. Attitudes are deeply ingrained in us; they more or less constitute a basic part of our personality and are powerful forces in directing our behaviour. It is, as we have noted, a combination of three vital elements. It is affective in the sense that it has to do with feelings and emotions. That means you cannot afford to be passive or indifferent about certain issues and things. It is mainly that component of attitude that distinguishes it from opinion or belief. A belief is merely the cognitive acceptance of what is presumed to be matter of fact. People who hold this belief are neither for or against and in the likely event of evidence to the contrary the holder of that belief will not hesitate to change his opinion. If for example you now believe that the world is round, if new scientific discovery tells you tomorrow that it is no more round, that it is now spherical you will change your opinion or belief. But your attitude to something is much more resistant to change because of the emotional overtones.

Attitude is equally cognitive. Cognition is described as a collection of facts and beliefs. And so your attitude is an embodiment of your beliefs and convictions about that thing.

Predisposition as a component implies a behavioral involvement in your attitude. When you have a feeling, emotion, thoughts and beliefs about something you can physically demonstrate your concern for it. So your action to substantiate your feelings and beliefs constitute your predisposition.

Let us illustrate the three components by an individual’s unfavorable attitude towards ECOMOG as a regional cooperation. The affective component of the individual’s attitude is his vigorous emotional feelings against ECOMOG, which is readily manifested any time he hears that another batch of military personnel is being drafted to Liberia. He feels angry when he comes across people defending and arguing in favor of the exercise. He is always emotionally disturbed any time further efforts are made to intensify the operation. That is how it affects his feeling – an aspect of his attitude.

The cognitive component of his attitude consists of his ideas and beliefs about ECOMOG. He may believe, for instance, that Nigeria and indeed all the countries involved are wasting their countries resources on matters that do not concern them; that it is immoral to mediate in the internal affairs of another country; and so on. In this case, he rationalizes his objection to the exercise by advancing logical and well – informed arguments.

The behavioral component consists of action tendencies and these are inferred from what he says he will do and what he actually does to demonstrate his objection to ECOMOG. He may, for instance, mobilize people who share his sentiment to stage a demonstration to Aso Rock. He may embark on the publication of his views by writing articles, distribution of leaflets denouncing the policy, arranging press conferences and even making BBC to grant him an interview. All these show his predispositions towards the ECOMOG issue.

From what we have said so far one might be tempted to conclude that an attitude is used to predict behaviour, or that a person’s behavior is necessarily an indication of his/her attitude.

**Functions of Attitudes**

In what he calls the functional approach to the study of attitudes, Daniel Katz (1960) has proposed four different personality functions that are served by the maintenance and modifications of social attitudes. These functions include: adjustment, value expression, knowledge and ego defense.

In the adjustment function it is explained that the holding of attitudes leads to rewards or the avoidance of punishment. In this case, the individual strives to maximize rewards and minimize penalties. He is therefore motivated to adopt attitudes which will gain for him the social approval and esteem of friends, family and colleagues. For example, a habitual rascal or a policeman who relishes hostility will really find avenues to express his desires by adopting negative attitude toward, say, motorists and because some of his colleagues share similar values he also enjoys some form of social approval of his attitudes.

In the value expressive function the individual derives satisfaction from expressing attitudes appropriate to his personal values and his concept of himself. These are integrated systems of attitudes which are learned in childhood on the basis of identification with parents and other significant figures. Religious, patriotic and ideological beliefs and values are usually based on this function.

Therefore, we not only adopt some attitudes to adjust to some of our instinctual drives like seeking pleasure and avoiding pain; some attitudes follow from the desire to maintain a consistency in some of our long held beliefs, values and practices. In this case, we try not to rationalize the right and wrong and, in fact, in most instances it is impossible to do so. What we struggle to achieve here is to keep the tradition we have imbibed and have grown up with. Children of racist whites in South Africa right from the day they are born continue to be told that the blacks are inferior and should be treated as such. If you were reared in that custom and fed with such negative indoctrinations you are most unlikely to see the blacks as social equals even as an adult. And that is how such negative attitudes as racism, sexism (the idea that females are sub-human and mere sex objects), religious fanaticism, etc. develop. Racists, male chauvinists and religious fanatics are therefore people who have an unflinching desire to express their values.

The knowledge function of attitudes means that there is the need to understand, make sense of, and give adequate structure to the universe or one’s surrounding. Some attitudes are needed to adequately deal with situation and to structure experience meaningfully. Attitudes that cannot help to adequately deal with new and changing situations are discarded. For example, part of one’s positive attitude to physical exercise is because it helps to shed weight and maintain a trim figure. But if in the long run you are told that people who engage in physical exercise are prone to heart attack that may make you to review your belief in the efficacy of physical exercise as a means of weight shedding. Your attitude to physical exercise is therefore based on the need to understand, make sense of and give adequate structure to that phenomenon.

The mechanisms by which the individual protects himself from the tensions and anxieties associated with unacceptable motives and fear-arousing threats are known as ego defense mechanisms. We sometimes refuse to accept the truth not because we are convinced it is not the truth but because it makes life more uncomfortable for us. A few years ago one professor in the Department of Biochemistry, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria delivered a paper at a conference in which he claimed to have discovered that ‘*garri’* is dangerous to health and that those who are fond of ‘*eba*’ should know they are gradually digging their graves. Instead of accepting that well- grounded discovery and reviewing their opinions about *garri* people started making all kinds of cynical remarks about him and some even nicknamed him ‘*garri prof*.’ This shows that some of our attitudes to issues follow from our desire to defend our ego. Another good example can be cited of the current campaign on AIDS. These are obviously fear- arousing threats and they produce tensions and anxieties, especially among those who find it extremely difficult to do some of the things we are advised to do (or not to do ) in order to stay away from AIDS. In spite of all available evidences some people still refuse to accept that AIDS is a reality and they could easily fall victims if they continue to indulge in indiscriminate sex or oral sex and so on. They refuse to acknowledge those basic but unpleasant truths about their vulnerability to the disease because it hurts their ego and it takes excitement out of their lives. People show similar attitudes to facts about death, weakness, insecurities, illness, unemployment, crime and war. That is how you find smokers ignoring threats of lung cancer, power drunkards ignoring threats of sanctions and coups, etc. Generally, the fear- arousing communications, because they conjure up dangers that are horrible to contemplate, often produce defensive reactions rather than attitude change.

**Theories of Attitude Formation**

How are attitudes formed? Why do you have negative attitudes toward your room mate? Is it because of some disgusting habits he often shows? Is your support for legalization of abortion based on the activities of quack doctors? Do you believe you are short and that makes you unhappy? Most people rationalize their attitudes by associating it with the object in question. They believe that attitudes have their origins in the objects themselves. Studies, however, suggest that this may be only part of the actual process through which attitudes are formed. In developing an attitude we are influenced by many factors via: our emotional associations, our expectations of rewards and punishment, our desire to emulate the attitudes of those we adore and respect, our need to establish some degree of consistency between what we say we believe and what we actually do. This relationship between attitudes and other variables is explained by a set of theories. There are many but we shall consider the reinforcement and cognitive consistency theories. Others include the social judgment theories and functional theories.

**Reinforcement theories**

Most of our firmly held persistent attitudes towards every day matters like family, money, education, authority, work, politics and religions are so much part of us that they seem indelibly stamped on our personalities; and because most of them are learnt quite early explains why there are die-hard liberals and conservatives, staunch Christians or avowed free thinkers, committed polygamist or sworn monogamist, etc. Part of the explanation for these attitudes can be found in the reinforcement theories of learning-classical and operant conditioning. Essentially, the theories hold that many attitudes are formed because of the rewards or punishment associated with them.

On classical conditioning, psychologists have demonstrated that attitudes develop in the same way that dogs learn to salivate at the sound of a bell in the Ivan Pavlov’s experiment. For example, an unconcerned security man who sits by the door of the students’ common room where you spent all your night as a stranded new student in the first semester may never impress you again in life even if he becomes a man of God tomorrow. Similarly, you might be warmly drawn to those ideas you hear in courses taught by attractive, jovial lecturers. Classical conditioning is therefore a means of attaching a positive or negative emotional reaction to some object(s) without a corresponding set of cognitive beliefs.

While classical conditioning involves involuntary reflex responses such as the emotions of fear or pleasure, operant conditioning involves voluntary behaviors on the part of the subject. It is based on the assumption that people tend to repeat behaviors that result in something desirable and tend not to repeat behaviors that result in something undesirable. The subject in that case is attempting to obtain some reward or avoid some punishment. Attitudes too can be learned or formed through expectations of rewards or punishment. Consider a situation where you do not particularly like your new pair of suit. If your friends and others whose opinion you respect keep admiring the dress and commending it, you will most likely begin to believe that it is one of your best dresses. That means the reward of praises and admiration you enjoy any time you wear the dress has conditioned you to adopt a positive attitude towards it. When children are praised or reprimanded for doing certain things the idea is to encourage and build acceptable attitudes.

**Cognitive Consistency Theories**

One of the most dominant features of human thought and behavior is the tendency to be consistent. Our affection for a person is usually paired with desirable traits of him, and we resist anything that will change that image. Our beliefs are equally consistent with our behavior most of the time. If you believe in democracy you will always detest the idea of military government. One is therefore continuously seeking to maintain a balance or consistency in thoughts, feelings and behavior. The process by which this consistency is achieved is the central theme of most cognitive theories of attitude formation and change.

The first of these theories is the Cognitive Balance Principle. This is the earliest and simplest formulation of the cognitive theories and is found in Heider’s balance theory. It deals with states of balance or imbalance which exist between three elements, say M (the person) N another person and X (the object, idea or issue). What are the attitudes of two friends, M and N towards issue O? A balanced state when their attitudes toward the issue are similar, i.e. they both like or dislike the attitude object. If one of them likes but the other dislikes it, there will be imbalance, and the resultant feelings of strain will induce pressures toward change in the direction of balance. It implies then that people always seek harmony among their various attitudes and beliefs.

The second theory – the Cognitive Dissonance Principle- is based on an assumption similar to that underlying the balance principle namely, that people try to avoid cognitive inconsistency; according to Leon Festinger (1957) who first proposed the theory, whenever we find ourselves in a situation in which we hold two contradictory cognitions about our own attitudes, beliefs or behaviors, we are thrust into a state of psychological distress known as dissonance. Because this state is uncomfortable even painful, we naturally attempt to rid ourselves of it and re-establish internal harmony. Leon Mann (1969) lists four cases of cognitive dissonance arising from each of the principal sources of inconsistency.

* 1. Logical inconsistency: E.g. you like to go to heaven but you fear to die. If going to heaven means that you must first die then there is inconsistency in your logic of heaven and death.
  2. Cultural norms and mores: E.g. you believe it is wrong to wear bathroom slippers to class but you wear it to class.
  3. Opinion inconsistent with action: E.g. you believe in democracy and swear to advance its cause, but use every means at your disposal to frustrate the processes of democracy.
  4. Past experience: E.g. the smell of ‘suya’ always stimulates your appetite but here is a plate of ‘suya’ and you do not feel like eating.

The states of cognitive dissonance is uncomfortable because it arouses psychological tension and therefore attempts are made to reduce it by changing either or both cognitions or adding new ones. In the above examples, you could modify or add cognitions as follows:

1. You hope that heaven will be somewhere on earth and you may simple migrate their.
2. You stop wearing slippers to class.
3. You step aside and allow pro-democracy movements pursue their ideals.
4. You now say that you only sometimes feel hungry for ‘suya’.

The theory of cognitive dissonance has wide applications. For instance, it has been used to explain why when people publicly say or do something contrary to what they privately believe they often shift their attitudes to make them conform to their public stance. What is most surprising is that quite often the less incentive people have to express the contradictory view the more likely they are to change their original attitudes. Apparently, the lower the incentive, the greater the dissonance created and therefore the greater the need to restore a state of cognitive consistency.

**SOCIALISATION**

**What is socialization?**

In physiological sense, a new born baby is a complete human being but socially that baby is nothing more than just a bundle of biological substance whose only claim to superiority over the flowers in the garden or the chicken in the poultry is that it is capable of making interpretable noises. When it is hungry or thirsty it screams in a particular way. When it fells too cold or too hot it cries in another particular way. Generally, every baby cry has a specific meaning but it is only pediatricians who can interpret them. At least that is what they claim but whether the claim is valid or not, it is generally known that the infant is completely helpless and has to depend totally on others for its needs. However, by the time this baby becomes a teenager all those physical and social incompetences have become history because he must have learnt so many things and has become fully human. He must have learnt two or more languages and can now communicate with others orally instead of crying. He also by now knows that the sun always rises in the morning and sets in the evening and that since he must rest as long as the sun remains set, he tries to play as much of the roles society demands of him within the period the sun is up. In other words, as the child grows into adulthood he gradually learns and internalizes a lot of empirical facts about his physical and social environment; he gradually learns and internalizes a variety of skills and bodies of knowledge; he acquires attitudes and values some of which relate to moral standards and etiquette. Of course, quite naturally by the time he becomes an adult he has decided who is a friend and who is an enemy, etc.

This process of social learning as the child grows up is what we call socialization. We may say therefore that socialization is the process by which beings that are biologically human become socially human. Put more broadly socialization is the process by which man acquires behavior patterns and builds self identity, irrespective of stage in life. That implies that socialization does not end with the transformation of the child into an adult. It is a life- long process because even as adults one constantly learns to take on behaviors appropriate to the expectations associated with new positions they may occupy in a group, in an organization or in society at large.

Let us take an example of a baby girl. At birth the only thing that differentiates her from a baby boy is their sex organs. All other things are the same including the way they cry and suck their mothers’ breasts. But the processes of socializing them into the different gender classes begin immediately after. The girl is dressed differently from the boy. She is later given a different set of toys from that of the boy and is constantly reminded of her gender type and the type of roles she is going to play for the rest of her life, like mothering and home-making.

When she grows into a young girl and is waiting to be married the girl plays several specific feminine roles in the home and outside; she is taught how to cook, how to look after the baby even though she is not taught how to have one. As a single girl she enjoys considerable degree of liberty to adopt a life style in dressing, recreational activities, choice of social groups, etc. (as long as she does not embarrass too many people) but the moment she becomes a wife and mother there is a limit to which she can continue to be fashionable and free to engage in certain activities, protect certain values and interests. She now discards some of these activities and behavior and starts learning to adopt new ones that are more appropriate to the expectations associated with her new status. Similarly, when she becomes an old woman (and probably a grandmother) her role in the family and the society assume a new definition. Her values change and she undergoes another round of transformation and a different form of socialization. Even if she still desires fashionable appearance, loves parties and such other youthful excitements she would find it extremely difficult to continue to engage in them because people are likely to see her as irresponsible and as someone refusing to accept that she is old.

Therefore, as long as one is alive and interacts with other members of the society he is continuously socialized because that is the only means by which he acquires the knowledge and competence to deal with the demands and expectations of new positions he continuously plays throughout life.

**4.02 Processes and Agents of Socialization**

Socialization is different from other processes of change for two reasons: (1) it involves changes in behavior and attitudes that originate from the interaction with other persons; (2) it occurs through learning. For instance, the ability to speak languages, how to dress, observance of etiquette, etc, cannot take place in the absence of interaction with others. It is a gradual learning process. It is therefore impossible to socialize one-self. There must exist structures to actualize the learning process and these structures are what we call agents of socialization.

There are three major agents of socialization. These include the family, the peer group and the mass media.

**The Family**

A complete process of socialization involves satisfying both the physical and social needs of the child, and in most societies of the world it is the responsibility of the family to satisfy these needs. This is the first important family role in socialization. Physical needs refer to food, water, shelter, clothing, clean and warm environment, physical contact with adults. Social needs on the other hand include conscious communication with others, awareness and benefits of cultural values, norms, beliefs, sense of security and emotional stability. The point simply, is that no child can be effectively socialized in the absence of a balance between the physical and social needs of that child. There has to be sufficient amount of each before the processes of socialization is completed. In other words, it is not enough to provide sufficient physical needs without giving the child a sense of security, sense of belonging and emotional stability. If all these needs are not sufficiently met by either the correct amount or right types of socializing agents, the child’s growth may be permanently damaged. This explains why babies in orphanages, social welfare centers, etc, are often mentally and physically retarded in growth. Children in such places may be the best fed, best clothed, enjoy the best medical attention and may never lack physical needs, but there is usually an extreme lack of human contact and attention. Studies have shown that this lack of parental love and affection and insufficient human contact results in a disease called ‘marasmus’. Children suffering from the disease may not have any physical impairment but they are usually dull, moody, mournful and withdrawn. Such children grow into adults as social misfits, lacking the ability to freely associate with people.

The second significance of the family as a socialization agent can be seen in its role as a model and a source of imitation to the child. Most social learning, both for adults and children, is through imitation rather than direct teaching. By watching adults the child typifies and categorizes things he does not experience directly. This way the child can elaborate direct experiences and repeat behaviors easily. Children imitate the language, values, goals, morality and general behavior of parents. However, habits formed through imitation are subject to constant attack from new experience. As the child encounters new spheres of influence from the socializing agents some of the habits and ideas learned from parents do change. The child may be taught one thing at home but on getting to school he is told either by the teacher or friends that his parents were wrong. Friends may even urge him to do things forbidden by the parent. In both of these situations, the influence of the parents is weakened and the child may not fully internalize any value because he is not sure which ones are most valuable.

**The Peer Group**

Peer group generally refers to a group of social equals. In the peer group the individual associates with others who are approximately of one’s own age and social status. How does the peer group influence the socialization process?

(1) At the childhood level, the peer group introduces the child to impersonal authority. By this it means that at this stage the child enjoys a new kind of freedom -freedom from the subjective views, opinions, decisions and authority of the family.

In the family authority is usually vested in the parents as persons, and they determine what is right and wrong. The child looks unto them as the only source of direction and whatever they say or do is taken as final. But the moment the child starts going to school and becomes a member of a play group a new kind of environment has opened and for the first time his independence from subjectivity is assured. Some of the lessons he has already learnt now become objects of challenge from peers and instructors but more importantly because he now operates in the midst of social equals the peers who cannot impose their own values on him as his parents, he begins to decide things on his own; he begins to develop an objective mind; conceptualizes and rationalizes issues and events without referring to the opinion of anybody. With time his own personality emerges.

(ii) Within the peer group the child test the limits of adult tolerance with reduced fear of parental reprisal. Within the peer group the child finds it easier to experiment things he avoids when with the parents. That means the peer group provides a condusive environment to satisfy the child’s curiosity. There are so many lessons one needs to learn, which the parents would not teach you either out of ignorance, or negligence or both. For example, even some highly educated parents even in modern period find it abnormal to educate their children on matters relating to sex and other moral issues, they only wait to complain and denounce when the child gets into trouble in the course of seeking the knowledge elsewhere. But then the desire to know how to deal with one’s sexuality is natural and parents need to handle it as seriously as any other lessons taught to a growing child; and because parents shy away from it the child has no other alternative than to turn to peer immunity to find out some of these things. So, depending on the type of parents and the type of society, peer group plays a very significant role in child upbringing and the development of personality.

(iii) The peer group may or may not support adult values; however it is one of the most effective agencies for the transmission of adult values. The peer group has unanimous capacity to transmit given social values more easily than any of the other agencies of socialization. The other way the peer group influences the socialization process is that it acts as a powerful force for conformity. Like any other socializing agency the peer group represents a system of rewards and punishments, of approval and disapproval. It rewards the skills of sociability and rejects the personality that disrupts the flow of good feeling and smooth personal relations.

At any stage of human growth in present day society, people look primarily to their contemporaries for guidance and direction. Modern man values most the judgment and approval of others in his environment. The most important values to modern man are the typical values of the peer group. The peer group is therefore now seen by some social scientists as the most important socializing agency.

**The Mass Media**

Communication media can be categorized into two- the electronic and print. Electronic media includes such items as the television, internet, handset, video and the radio while under the print media we have such things as newspapers and magazines. To what extent do these organs of communication influence the process of socialization? Compared to the family and the peer group, the mass media is a very significant agent of socialization.

In our local context there is serious impact the internet, the handset, radio and television make on the behavior and / or habits of a growing child. This is because; most houses and school nowadays have access to such gadgets. The other way through which the mass media affect socialization in this part of the world is through the print media. The current indiscriminate publication and importation of pornographic photographs, obscene stories and what the management of these media house call sex education, is shaping the perception of the youth as they grow into adulthood. Traditional values of chastity, moral purity and uprightness is gradually being regarded as outdated, primitive. Curiously enough such Hausa novels as *Zabin Allah, 'Yantatun Mata, Babban Mace Hakima, Alkawari da ciwo* etc are so popular with youth especially the females. Most of the youth who are engaged in reading these novels hardly concentrate on their academic activities; as a result may likely fail in their examinations. As these youth failed examinations, the tendency for them to proceed to higher levels is reduced, the implication of which is the possibility of many of them becoming criminals, nuisance, thugs etc. as they have no high educational qualification to be useful to the society and be self reliant (Dansabo, 2011).

**Adult Socialization**

We have so far concentrated on the socialization of the child by the agencies of the family, the peer group and the mass media. The emphasis has been on the child because knowledge of how the child acquires basic habits helps us to understand not only how they develop into adults but also the relationship between the success of an individual and his childhood experiences and opportunities. Socialization at the childhood level is therefore considered more crucial. By middle to late adolescence individuals have acquired adult interactional competence. Basic habits are already formed and the personality is built.

This, however, does not mean that growth has stopped. Socialization continues throughout life but after adolescence the rate begins to decrease. Adolescence is a stage where learning is rapid and basic but by the time the individual gets into adulthood he is no longer able to acquire new way or undergo fundamental personality changes. Socialization at this stage takes a new form. Old typification structures (already formed habits) are consolidated but they keep receiving and organizing new information.

As you finish school, get employed and change environment, get into new social circles, and start bothering about such life contingencies as marriage, parenthood, divorce widowhood, financial success or loss of jobs, old behavior patterns and orientations tend to either break up completely, restructured, or re-integrated with values and life style. Therefore, over the total life span individuals change their attitudes, values, behavior, and self – conceptions as they assume new roles and undergo new experiences. Adult socialization can be gradual and partial. This is what we refer to as continuing socialization. Where however the change is basic and drastic, (like abandoning one way of life for another) we call that re – socialization. Important examples of re – socialization include brain – washing, rehabilitation of criminal to godly way of life, etc. In this case, the aim is to remake the person over in fundamental ways and to affect a break with the past.

**Factors in Personality Development**

We have so far considered the factors and agencies that socialize individuals in society and among other things we have been told that even though socialization features quite prominently in the early stages of human growth, it is a life- long process because as long as one is alive he will continue to take on behavior that corresponds with or isappropriate to the expectations associated with new positions he may occupy in a group, in an organization or in society at large. As one graduates from infancy to adolescence, singleness to married life, from parenthood to grandparenthood, some aspects of his attitudes and values have to change in accordance with the dictates of the new statuses and new roles. Put a little more philosophically, we can say that life as a whole is one long induction course. The difference between that course and the one the student undergoes and hopes to undergo later in life is that in the school of life one never really graduates. We all live to exchange one mistake for another, learn one lesson today only to modify and even entirely change the lesson tomorrow until the body becomes too tired to worry about mistakes and lesson.

However, whether socialization continues or not after a given period of time in the life of the individual he is so socialized, so molded in a particular way that a unique identity of the person emerges. At this point we say that the individual has acquired a personality. In other words acquisition of personality begins when some aspects of the individual’s behavior would become relatively consistent and enduring and one can now easily point out the similarity between that person and others who possess the same attributes and at the same time distinguish between that individual and some others who have different attributes. Such things as character, temperament skills, style of interaction, etc readily stand out as parameters which we easily tell the similarities or differences between individuals.

Therefore, personality is the sum- total of special attributes found in every person. It is not an evaluative term to describe people’s worth as some people often regard and use it. It is quite common to hear people remarking that this or that person has personality, by which they mean that the person being referred to has same positive qualities or qualities that make his presence felt by others or make him popular and attractive. In the same way, some are formed of saying he has no personality when they want to say that the person does not command respect, is dull, unsociable and generally uninteresting. All this is wrong because personality is not what some people have and others have not. It is not another name for beauty, charisma, celebrity status, political power, financial affluence or whatever qualities we find flamboyant and attractive in personalities and that makes us stand out as unique individuals.

**Social Influence**

The central question about how humans differ and how they are alike form the basis for social influence Myers, 2010 argued that: “Two perspectives dominate current thinking about human similarities and differences: an evolutionary perspectives, emphasizing human kinship, and a cultural perspective, emphasizing human diversity…” (p. 158)

The quotation above attempted to answer the question on how people are influenced by human nature and cultural diversity. Nearly everyone agrees that we need both nature and culture to be alike and to be different. People all over the world are social. We join groups, conform, and recognize distinctions of social status. Everywhere, humans prefer living with others in families and communal groups to living alone.

There are thus varied explanations on how humans differ and are alike. These include genetic, evolutionary and behavioral explanations. The genetic explanation is of the belief that universal behaviors that define human nature arise from our biological similarity. To support this assertion Myer (2010) contends that “we not only share certain food preferences but we also share answers to social questions such as, whom should I trust and fear? Whom should I help? etc”. Evolutionary psychologists contend that our emotional and behavioral answers to those questions are the same answers that worked for our ancestors.

On culture and behavior Myer (2010) opined that our most important similarity, the hallmark of our species, is our capacity to learn and adapt. To him, evolution has prepared us to live creatively in a changing world and to adapt to environments from equatorial jungles to arctic ice field. In a nutshell, the cultural perspective highlights human adaptability. Human natures are alike, said Confucius; it is their habits that carry them far apart. However, cultural diversity of our languages, customs, and expressive behaviors is socially programmed, not hardwired (Myers, 2010: 160). Despite the diversity in cultures, cross-cultural psychologists see an essential universality (Lonner, 1980).

There is no doubt that western psychologists have attempted to answer the question on how people differ and how they are alike, outlining the genetic, evolutionary and behavioral aspects of social influence. There is thus however, a disjuncture with the creator as observed by Utz (2011): “Islam, as a way of life, outlines a comprehensive model of the human being that incorporates the spiritual, psychological, emotional and social aspects. From its teachings, we discover that at the core, we are spiritual beings who need to cultivate a connection with our creator, Allah” (P. 25). This is not to discount the development and progress of science, but rather to put in its proper perspective.

**Aggressive Behavior**

We are continually reminded of the aggression and violence that surrounds us. Some of us are victims of physical assault, abuse, rape or verbal aggression by strangers, friends, partners, relatives or family.

Most of us are aggressive from time to time and some find pleasure in playing aggressive games; shooting, fighting. It is not surprising then that virtually all of us feel that our behavior is constrained in various ways by aggression.

Aggression is part of the human condition, but many people feel that the world is each year becoming a more aggressive place. There is little doubt much of the feeling that aggression and violence are on the increase can be attributed to the fact that more people are more frequently exposed to a greater number of more vivid reports of violence.

Aggression is an integral part of human nature. Indeed, some theorists have claimed that aggression is a basic human instinct, an innate fixed action pattern that we share with other species. It is therefore an inevitable/ inescapable aspect of our lives.

**Defining Aggression**

Psychological definitions are to an extent determined by theoretical perspectives. The concept presents a special problem to social psychologists. There is little consensus within or across the sciences about the components of aggression. For example, one researcher may define aggression using physical parameters- pushing, striking while another may add other features –threatening speech, verbal insult. To an extent, what is considered aggressive is determined by the social and cultural characteristics of the perceiver. There are cultures and sub-cultures that regard violence as ordinary and even necessary.

There is no shortage of social psychological definitions of aggression. Here are a few:

* Behavior that results in personal injury or destruction of property (Bandura, 1973).
* Behavior intended to harm another of the same species. (Scherer et. al. 1975).
* Behavior directed towards the goals of harming or injuring another living being who is motivated to avoid such treatment.
* The intentional inflictions of some form of harm on others (Baron and Byme, 2000).

**THEORIES OF AGGRESSION**

Explanations of aggression fall into two broad classes, the biological and the social. Our interest in Social Psychology favors a focus on social factors. However, interest in the biological dimension cannot be ignored. After all, violence is a reaction of bodily system.

**BIOLOGICAL EXPLANATIONS**

The starting point for these explanations is that aggression is an innate action tendency. Although modification of the consequent behavior is possible; aggression is an instinct: i.e. a pattern of response that is genetically predetermined.

**PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORY**

Freud, 1930 proposed that human aggression stem from an innate ‘Death instinct; Thanatos, that is in opposition to a life instinct, Eros. Thanatos is initially directed at self-destruction, but later in development it becomes redirected outwards at others. Freud’s background as a physician heavily influenced his theorizing, and his notion of Thanatos was partly a response to the large scale destruction of the 1st world war. Like the sexual urge which stems from Eros, an aggressive urge from Thanatos builds up from bodily tensions and needs to be expressed. It is essentially a one factor theory; aggression builds up naturally and must be released. These ideas were later revised by theorist known as Noe-Freudians, who viewed aggression as a more rational, but nonetheless innate, process whereby people sought for healthy release for primitive instincts that are basic to all animal species.

**ETHOLOGICAL THEORY**

In the 1960s three books made a strong case for the instinctual basis of animal behavior: A threat display is a fixed- action pattern triggered by an appropriate releaser. Intra-species aggression in animals is often limited by appeasement gestures. Lorenz’z on Aggression (1960), Ardrey’s the territorial imperative (1966) and Morris the Naked Ape (1967). The general perspective that underpins this explanation is referred to as ethology, a branch of biology devoted to the study of instincts, or fixed-action pattern, among all members of a species when living in their natural environment.

Like the neo- Freudians, ethnologists stressed the positive, functional aspects of aggression, but they also recognized that, while the potential or instinct for aggression may be innate, actual aggressive behaviour is elicited by specific stimuli in the environment known as the releasers (specific stimuli in the environment thought by ethnologist to trigger aggressive responses).

**SHORT COMINGS OF BIOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS**

Generally, biological explanations of aggression have considerable appeal picking up as they do on the popular assumption that violence is part of human nature. Broadly speaking however the view among most social scientists questions the sufficiency of the explanation of aggression when it is based totally on the cornerstone of instinct.

**SOCIAL AND BIOSOCIAL EXPLANATIONS**

Few social psychologists favor theories of aggression defined in terms of an instinct preferring instead to emphasize learning process and factors within the social context that appear to be linked to aggressive behaviour.

**FRUSTRATION AND AGGRESSION**

In its original form, the frustration aggression hypothesis linked aggression to an antecedent condition of frustration. It derived from the work of group of psychologists at Yale University in the 1930s.

**SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY**

This view is championed by Bandura and he argued that human social behaviour is not innate but is learned from appropriate models. Modeling here means the tendency for a person to reproduce the actions, attitudes and emotional responses exhibited by real life or symbolic model also called observational learning.

**NEO-ASSOCIATIONISTS**

Views of aggression according to which mass media may provide images of violence that later translate into anti-social acts. According to neo-associationists, real or fictional images of violence that are presented to an audience can translate later into anti-social act.

**FRUSTRATION-AGRRESSION**

The anthropologist John Dollard and his psychologist colleagues proposed that aggression was always caused by some kind of frustrating events or situation; conversely, frustration invariably leads to aggression. Recently, this reasoning has been applied to the effects of job loss on violence and the role of social and economic deprivation in ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia. Frustration aggression theory had considerable appeal in as much it was decidedly different from the Freudian approach.

**PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

Prosocial behaviour as a broad category refers to acts that are valued positively by society- simply contrast it the antisocial behaviour. In our culture, helping others is socially valued. Wape (1972) defined prosocial behaviour as behaviour that has positive social consequences and that contributes to the physical and psychological wellbeing of another person. It can be further defined as voluntary and having the intention of being of benefit to others (Eiseberg et-al 1996).

**Why do people help?**

Biological position is that just as humans have innate tendencies to eat and drink so they have innate tendencies to help. This explanation of helping arises primarily from evolutionary social psychology.

- Social explanation: learned through socialization.

i. Giving instructions: Telling children to be helpful to others thus increase helpfulness.

ii. Using reinforcement

iii. Exposure to models (observational learning)

iv. Attribution processes (Just world hypothesis)

Attributions about the person in need are also important and are likely to influence whether help is offered. According to learner, people need to believe that the world is just a place where we get what are deserved.

**Why do people act prosocially?**

Batson (1994) has distinguished four quite different motives.

1. Egoism- Prosocial behaviour contributes to the welfare of the actor exchange -give to take.
2. Altruism- Prosocial behaviour contributes to the welfare of other people.
3. Collectivism: Welfare of social group eg one’s family, ethnic group or country.
4. Principalism- Prosocial acts follow from a moral principal such as the greatest good for the greatest reward/status.

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