Social Psychology

Enduring Issues

- Person-Situation
- Nature-Nurture
- Stability-Change
- Diversity-Universality
- Mind-Body

To what extent does a particular behavior reflect personal characteristics like attitudes and values, versus situational ones like the behavior of others and social expectations?

Diversity - Universality
Stability - Change
Mind - Body
Nature - Nurture
Person - Situation

Social influence
Cultural influences
Conformity, compliance, & obedience

Social action
Deindividuation
Helping behavior
Groups & decision making
Theories of leadership
Cultural & gender differences in leadership

Social Cognition

The scientific study of the ways in which the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of one individual are influenced by the real, imagined, or inferred behavior or characteristics of others.

Attitudes
Components of attitudes
Prejudices & discrimination
Persuasion
Cognitive dissonance

Social cognition
Forming impressions
Attribution to internal or external causes
Ego defense
Interpersonal attraction

Social influence
Cultural influences
Conformity, compliance, & obedience
Forming Impressions

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Describe the role of schemata, stereotypes, and the primacy effect in impression formation. Explain how impressions of others can become self-fulfilling prophecies.

- **Schemata**: Organized sets of beliefs and expectations based on past experience that is presumed to apply to all members of that category.
- **Primacy effect**: When early information about someone weighs more heavily than later information in influencing one's impression of that person.
- **Self-fulfilling prophecy**: When a person's expectation about another elicits behavior from the second person that confirms the expectation.
- **Stereotype**: A set of characteristics presumed to be shared by all members of a social category.

Attribution

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Summarize the way in which distinctiveness, consistency, and consensus affect our judgment about whether a given behavior is due to internal or external causes.

**Attribution theory**: Addresses the question of how people make judgments about the causes of behavior.

**Internal**
- "He's such a careless driver. He never watches out for other cars."

**External**
- "He probably got caught in some bad traffic, and then he was late for a meeting."

**Biases**

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Explain what is meant by the statement "the causal attributions we make are often vulnerable to biases." In your answer, include the actor-observer bias, the fundamental attribution error, defensive attribution (including the self-serving bias and the just-world hypothesis).

- **Actor-observer bias**: Tendency to explain the behavior of others as caused by internal factors and one's own behavior as caused by external forces.
- **Defensive attribution**: Tendency to attribute our successes to our own efforts or qualities and our failures to external factors.

- **Fundamental attribution error**
- **Self-serving bias**
- **Just-world hypothesis**

Interpersonal Attraction

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Briefly summarize the five factors that influence attraction and the tendency to like another person.

**Distance**, **Intimacy**, **Physical attraction**, **Exchange**, **Similarity**

Attitudes
The Nature of Attitudes

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Describe the three major components of attitudes and the variables that determine whether an attitude will be reflected in behavior.

Components of Attitudes

**Evocative Beliefs**
- I think country music is better than any other kind of music.

**Feelings**
- I like country music; it’s fun and uplifting.
- I buy country music CDs every chance I get.

**Behavior Tendencies**
- The Nature of Attitudes
- LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Describe the three major components of attitudes and the variables that determine whether an attitude will be reflected in behavior.

Attitudes and Behavior

**Factors influencing the relationship between attitude and behavior:**
- Strength of attitude
- Relevance of attitude
- How noticeable a given attitude is in a given situation
- How easily the attitude comes to mind
- Self-monitoring

Prejudice and Discrimination

**Prejudice**
- An attitude
- An unfair, intolerant, or unfavorable view of a group of people
- Ultimate attribution error

**Discrimination**
- A behavior
- Unfair act or acts directed against an entire group of people or individual members of that group

Sources of Prejudice

- Frustration-aggression theory
  - Scapegoats
- Authoritarian personality
  - Rigid conventionality
- Oversimplification
  - “Cognitive misers”
- Conformity
  - In-group bias
- Racism
  - Innate inferiority

Strategies for Reducing Prejudice and Discrimination

- Recategorization
- Controlled processing
- Improving contact between groups

Attitude Development

**How we acquire our attitudes:**
- Early, direct personal experience
- Imitation
- Mass media

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Distinguish between prejudice, racism, and discrimination. Explain the role of stereotypes and the ultimate attribution error in prejudiced attitudes. Compare and contrast the following potential sources of prejudice: frustration-aggression, authoritarian personality, “cognitive misers,” and conformity. Describe the three strategies that appear promising as ways to reduce prejudice and discrimination.
Applying Psychology

What are some of the psychological forces at work in ethnic conflict?
- Propaganda
- Shared collective memories
- Personal and social identity
- Societal beliefs

Changing Attitudes

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Describe the three steps in the use of persuasion to change attitudes: attention, comprehension, and acceptance. In your description, include the source (credibility and the sleeper effect), the message itself (one-sided vs. two-sided, fear), the medium of communication, and characteristics of the audience.

To be persuaded, you must:
- Pay attention to the message
- Comprehend it
- Accept it as convincing

Communication Model of Persuasion

Four key elements involved in message comprehension and acceptance:
1. The source
2. The message itself
3. The medium of communication
4. Characteristics of the audience

Cognitive Dissonance

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Explain what is meant by “cognitive dissonance” and how that can be used to change attitudes.

- Perceived inconsistency between two cognitions, which creates psychological tension that must be resolved
- How to resolve:
  - Change one’s attitude
  - Increase the number of consonant elements (i.e., thoughts that are consistent with one another)

Social Influence

Social Influence
Cultural Influences

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Explain what is meant by the statement that “culture is a major form of social influence.” In your explanation, include cultural truisms and norms.

- **Culture dictates:**
  - How you dress
  - What you eat
  - Your personal space preferences

- **Cultural truisms:** Beliefs or values that most members of a society accept as self-evident

- **Norms:** Shared ideas or expectations of how to behave

Conformity

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Compare and contrast conformity, compliance, and obedience. Describe the factors that influence conformity behavior. Distinguish between the foot-in-the-door technique, lowball procedure, and the door-in-the-face effect as ways to get compliance. Describe the factors that influence obedience.

Two sets of factors influence the likelihood that a person will conform:

- **Characteristics of the situation, including:**
  - Size of the group
  - Degree of unanimity
  - The nature of the task

- **Characteristics of the person, including:**
  - Attraction to the group
  - Expected future interaction with its members
  - Having low status
  - Desiring greater acceptance

Asch’s Study

Social Influence Across Cultures

“In collectivist cultures, community and harmony are very important. Thus, you might suspect that members of collectivist cultures would conform more frequently to the will of a group than would members of non-collectivist cultures. In fact, psychologists have found that levels of conformity in collectivist cultures are frequently higher than those found by Asch...”

— Page 474 (Ciccarelli & White)

Compliance

- Foot-in-the-door
- Lowball
- Door-in-the-face

Obedience

- Change of behavior in response to a command from another person, typically an authority figure
Social Action

**Deindividuation**
LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Explain how deindividuation and the snowball effect can contribute to mob behavior.

- **Deindividuation**: A loss of personal sense of responsibility in a group
- **Snowball effect**: When one dominant and persuasive person can convince other people to behave in a certain way, and those other people then, in turn, convince others to behave in a certain way

**Helping Behavior**
LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Explain the role of the following factors in influencing helping behavior: altruism, the bystander effect, the ambiguity of the situation, and the personal characteristics of bystanders.

Helping behavior is influenced by two sets of factors:

- **Those in the situation**:
  - Presence of other people (see next slide)
  - Ambiguity
- **Those in the individual**:
  - Personal characteristics of bystanders (i.e. empathy, mood)

**The Bystander Effect**
A person is less likely to offer assistance when other potential helpers are present.

**Groups and Decision Making**
LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Describe the process of polarization in group discussion. Identify the factors that affect whether a group is likely to be more or less effective than individuals acting alone.

**Polarization**: Shift in attitudes by members of a group toward more extreme positions than the ones held before group discussion
- **Risky shift**: Greater willingness of a group than an individual to take substantial risks

**The Effectiveness of Groups**
Factors that influence the effectiveness of groups:

- Whether the requirements of the task match the skills of the group members
- The ways in which group members interact
- Group size
- The cohesiveness of the group
Groupthink

A process that occurs when the members of a group:
• Like one another
• Have similar goals
• Are isolated, leading them to ignore alternatives and not criticize group consensus

Leadership

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Compare and contrast the following theories of leadership:
• Great-person theory
  – Result of personal qualities and traits that qualify one to lead others
• Right-place-at-the-right-time theory
  – Emerges when the right person is in the right place at the right time
• Fielder’s contingency theory
  – Transactional view
    • Task-oriented or relationship-oriented leader
  – Nature of task, relationship of leader with group, leader’s power
• Sternberg’s systems approach to leadership
  – Effective leadership = the synthesis of wisdom, intelligence, and creativity

Culture and Gender Differences in Leadership

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Briefly summarize cultural and gender differences in leadership.

Collectivist cultures
• Less clearly defined roles of leadership than in U.S.
• All members see themselves as working together to accomplish the group’s goals

Female leaders
• Have effectively combined task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership styles
• Are often more effective because they are more democratic, collaborative, and interpersonally-oriented

Lecture Activities

Get into small, all-female or all-male groups. Create a list of factors that are most important in your initial and long-term attraction to others.

Counting Dots

Number your paper from one to five. You will be presented with 5 slides, each of which comprises a configuration of dots. You will attempt to guess the number of dots on each slide. The number of dots will be different on each slide. Each slide will be shown for 3 seconds, following which you will have 3 seconds to write your guess. Good luck!
<<Get ready>>

Write your guess now.

Write your guess now.
1. Determine whether you are an under-estimator or an over-estimator by adding up all of your guesses to determine whether you are under or over 210.

2. If you are an over-estimator, list three personality traits of an under-estimator. If you are an under-estimator, list two personality traits of an over-estimator.

3. Consider the following questions:
   - What kinds of traits did you list for those in the other group?
   - Did you list any negative traits for those in the other group?
   - What does this activity suggest about implicit personality theories and the formation of stereotypes?
Attitude Survey
For each of the three attitude items below, indicate your response on a scale of 1 to 5 (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree).

1. Poverty in our country is a serious problem.
2. Pollution is one of the biggest issues confronting today’s world.
3. Freedom of speech is one of the most important rights that we have as Americans.

(Survey continued on next slide)

Attitude Survey (continued)
For each of the following questions, indicate your response with “Yes” or “No.”

1. Do you personally do anything to lessen poverty in our country (e.g., donate money to a shelter or charitable organization)?
2. Do you personally do anything to lessen pollution (e.g., vote for “green” political representatives, support recycling in your community, make fewer trips in your car)?
3. Do you personally exercise your freedom of speech (e.g., actively participate in town meetings/protests, write to your congressional representative)?

Who are a few non-conformists that have made a positive and lasting difference in the world?

Applying Consumer Psychology
Get into groups and come up with an original, real-world example for two of the compliance techniques discussed in your text.

Acknowledgments