

PL3105 — SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

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CONTENTS

1	Introduction	3
1.1	Social psychology, sociology, and personality psychology	3
1.2	Social psychology: an empirical science	3
2	Methodology	4
3	Social Cognition	6
3.1	Counterfactual thinking	6
3.2	Automatic and controlled processing	6
3.2.1	Heuristics	7
3.2.2	Schemas	7
3.2.3	Priming	8
4	Self	8
4.1	Knowing thyself	8
4.2	Survival for the self	10
5	Cognitive Dissonance	10
5.1	Rationalizing behaviour	11
5.2	Post-decision dissonance	11
5.3	Changing behaviour	12
6	Social Perception	12
6.1	Biases in social perception	14

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CONTENTS

7	Attitudes	15
7.1	Attitude measurement	15
7.2	Attitude change	16
7.2.1	Yale attitude change approach	16
7.2.2	Elaboration likelihood model (ELM)	17
7.2.3	Emotional factors	17
7.3	Resisting persuasion	18
8	Conformity	18
8.1	Minority influence	19
9	Group Processes	20
9.1	Group decision making	20
9.2	Cooperation & conflict resolution	22
9.3	Leadership	22
10	Interpersonal Attraction	23
10.1	Gender and cultural differences	25
10.2	Aggression	25
10.3	Prosocial behaviour	27
11	Prejudice	28
11.1	Forms of prejudice	29
11.2	Causes of prejudice	29
11.3	Consequences of prejudice	30
11.4	Reducing prejudice	30
A	Tutorials	31
A.1	Factorial design	31
A.2	Revision & replication	31
A.3	Culture	32

1 INTRODUCTION

Lecture 1
12th August 2022

Social psychology is the scientific study of the way in which people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are influenced by the real or imagined presence of other people.

Humans can be influenced by:

- **Social agents:** their words, behaviours, and mere presence.
- **Social symbols:** i.e., language and signs.
- **Objects with social meanings:** e.g., meeting room (induces a sense of competition), camping tent (induces a sense of cooperation).

Typically, the same social situation may induce different **social psychological processes** in different individuals (due to different perspectives, motivations, self-concept, etc.), leading to different **construals/interpretations** of the external reality, and thus different **ABCs** (i.e., affect, behaviour, and cognition).

The main goal of social psychologists is to understand, predict, and change humans' ABC.

1.1 *Social psychology, sociology, and personality psychology*

	Sociology	Social psychology	Personality psychology
Emphasis	Society/societal factors	Psychological processes that make people susceptible to social influence	Individual differences
Level of analysis	Groups and institutions	Individuals in the context of a social situation	Individuals

individual differences: relatively stable characteristics that make individuals different from others

1.2 *Social psychology: an empirical science*

In social psychology, we:

1. form a hypothesis, and
2. perform experiment and collect data to validate/falsify our hypothesis.

People tend to fall prey to the **hindsight bias** when studying social psychology.

hindsight bias: people exaggerate how much they could have predicted an outcome after knowing that it occurred

2 METHODOLOGY

HOMER:

- **Hypothesize:** make specific predictions of what should occur.
 - Hypotheses come from:
 1. Personal observations.
 2. Theories (i.e., explanations of why any event/outcome occurs).
 - Examples:
 - * **Just world theory:** humans are motivated to believe that the world is a predictable (and thus comfortable) place.
 - This leads to victim blaming/derogation, since we hesitate to believe that there is no just reason for others' suffering.
 - We are also motivated to believe that wealthy people obtain their wealth via just processes.
 - **Operationalization:** *observable* and *quantifiable* response used to measure a concept.
 - Examples:
 - * Operationalizing aggression: **hot sauce paradigm.**
 1. Create a situation where we ask a confederate posing as a participant to provoke an actual participant (we want to measure how much the participant would want to hurt the confederate).
 2. Participants then take turns to evaluate some (naturally unpleasant product, e.g., hot sauce), with the confederate going first. The level of hotness and the amount of hot sauce would be representative of the participant's level of aggression.
 - **Methods**
 - **Observational:** researcher observes people and makes systematic records. Examples include:
 - * **Ethnography:** observing from within a social group; often involves active participation from the researcher.
 - * **Archival analysis:** observing data already collected and documented.
- Assessment of **interjudge reliability** is important to address the subjectivity associated with observational methods.
- Limitations:
- * Some occasions are difficult to observe (e.g., helping behaviour in emergency situations).
 - * Quality of data collection is not guaranteed (e.g., social media).
 - * Helps us in understanding ABC, but not suitable for predicting or changing a situation.

interjudge reliability:
agreement between
≥ 2 people who made
independent observations.

-
- **Correlational**: researcher measures ≥ 2 variables and their relationships. We are interested in:

- * the **type** of relationship (i.e., +ve, -ve, 0).
- * the **strength** of the relationship (i.e., correlation coefficient, $-1 \leq r \leq 1$).

Method: surveys, emphasis on **random selection** to ensure a **representative sample** of the population.

Limitations:

- * Correlation \neq causation. Other possible explanations:
 - **Reverse causation** (i.e., $Y \rightarrow X$).
 - **Third variable problem** (i.e., $A \rightarrow X, A \rightarrow Y$).
- **Experimental**: consists of **IV** (i.e., variable changed by the researcher) and **DV** (i.e., variable that is hypothesized to change depending on the level of the IV).
 - * Emphasis on **random assignment** to ensure that the conditions are equivalent in all aspects except for the manipulation.
 - This controls for third variables in social settings.
 - * Additionally, IVs typically occur before the DV, so it is unlikely for reverse causation to happen.

random selection: procedure in which everybody in the population has an equal chance of being selected to participate

representative sample: group of participants that match the population in proportion of relevant characteristics (e.g., age, gender, etc.)

random assignment: procedure that ensures all participants have an equal chance of being in any condition

Lecture 2
19th August 2022

• Evaluate

- **Probability level**: the probability that results are due to chance rather than due to manipulation of the IV.
- **Internal validity**: the degree to which we can be sure that changes in the DV are due to changes in the IV.
 - * *Random assignment* helps to ensure internal validity.
 - * Some specific experimental manipulations may change variables other than the intended IV (i.e., **confounding variables**).
- **External validity**: the degree to which we can be sure that the results will hold in other settings and in other people.
 - * *Random selection* helps to ensure external validity.
 - * Some experimental manipulations may not be relevant/generalizable to real life settings (e.g., hot sauce \leftrightarrow aggression).
 - * Typically, due to costs associated with experimental design, researchers only aim for **psychological realism** instead of **mundane realism**.
 - * **Lab studies** (i.e., more control and internal validity, less external validity) are typically done before **field studies** (i.e., more external validity, less control and internal validity).

psychological realism: how similar is the psychological process to one in everyday life?

mundane realism: how similar is the experiment to real-life settings?

• Revise/Replicate

3 SOCIAL COGNITION

Social cognition: how people think about themselves and the social world; more specifically, how people select, interpret, remember, and use social information to make judgments and decisions.

3.1 *Counterfactual thinking*

Counterfactual thinking: mentally changing some aspect of the past as a way of imagining what could instead have taken place.

- This is one of the few conscious/controlled forms of social thinking.
- **Downward CT:** comparing the present outcome to a *worse* outcome.
 - Typically results in feelings of relief and happiness.
- **Upward CT:** comparing the present outcome to a *better* outcome.
 - Typically results in feelings of upset and regret, and *rumination*.

rumination: repetitive focus on negative things in life.

3.2 *Automatic and controlled processing*

Automatic and controlled processing differ in several aspects:

	Controlled	Automatic
Awareness	Conscious	Unconscious
Intention	Active intention	Usually occur due to processes outside of our intention
Efficiency	High effort	Low effort
Control	High control	Low/No control

Even though automatic processes may not lead to the best outcomes, they are important because:

- Processing overload may occur if everything is done consciously, since we are constantly bombarded by information despite having limited attention and mental capacity.
- They free up mental resources for more important tasks.
- They can operate very quickly and efficiently → more suitable for some situations.

3.2.1 Heuristics

Heuristics are mental shortcuts which people use to make judgments quickly and efficiently, often used as opposed to alternative, more logical ways of thinking.

- **Representativeness heuristic:** people classify something according to how *similar* it is to a typical case.
 - E.g., coin toss sequence, words starting versus ending with ‘x’, **conjunction fallacy**.
- **Availability heuristic:** people base their judgment on how easily something comes to mind.
 - E.g., frequency of car crashes versus plane mishaps.

conjunction fallacy: the belief that $P(X \in A) < P(X \in A \wedge X \in B)$.

We are more likely to use heuristics when we lack the **ability** and **motivation** to channel resources for controlled processing.

3.2.2 Schemas

Schemas are mental structures which people use to organize their knowledge about the social world around themes or subjects. Examples include:

- **Event schemas (scripts):** schemas which inform us of what to expect in a particular setting.
- Schemas of traits.
- Schemas of groups of people (stereotypes).
- Self-schemas.

Functions of schemas include:

1. **Organizational:** organize and make sense of our world.
2. **Executive:** automatically guide our affect, behaviours, and cognitions.
 - E.g., in an ambiguous situation where a random lecturer is giving a talk, descriptions of the lecturer as a “warm” or “cold” individual can influence the audience’s opinions of him.

Lecture 3
26th August 2022

Self-fulfilling prophecy describes the case where people:

1. Have an expectation about what another person is like, which
2. Influences how they act toward that person, which
3. Causes that person to behave consistently with their expectations,

thus making their initial expectations come true. E.g., bloomers in classrooms.

3.2.3 Priming

Priming: the tendency for *recently used* words or ideas to come to mind easily and influence the interpretation of new information. It can also lead to the pursuit of goals.

4 SELF

Self-concept: beliefs and thoughts we have about ourselves.

- It is a schema (i.e., self-schema; a mental representation of the self).
- Our self-concept enables us to be idiosyncratically different from others.
- We often have conflicting identities within our concept of the self, but we are typically capable of integrating them.

4.1 *Knowing thyself*

We can know one's self via:

- **Introspection:** looking inward and examining our thoughts and feelings.
 - As we grow older, there is an increase in self-awareness (i.e., thinking about the self).
 - **Self-awareness theory:**
 - * When people focus on themselves, they compare their behaviour to their internal values and standards.
 - * If upon comparison, people see that their behaviour do not meet their standards, they either:
 1. change their behaviour to match their standards, or
 2. try to escape self-focus.
 - Limitation: many psychological processes are inaccessible to introspection, and thus it may not be reliable.
- **Behaviour:**
 - **Self-perception theory:** when our attitudes and feelings are uncertain or ambiguous, we infer them by observing our behaviour and the situation in which it occurs.
 - * **Overjustification effect:** if we observe that there is a compelling extrinsic reason for our actions, we will underestimate the influence of intrinsic reasons behind our actions (and thus stop our behaviour if the extrinsic reason is removed).

- E.g., when kids are given an extrinsic reward for learning, they will think that they are learning for the sake of the extrinsic reward and not due to intrinsic reasons.
- * Choice of rewards:
 - *High* extrinsic rewards are likely to undermine initial intrinsic interest.
 - *Performance-contingent* (i.e., when somebody performs well) rewards are less likely to undermine intrinsic motivation as compared to *task-contingent* rewards.
- **Emotion:** a multi-faceted experience consisting of physiological cues, bodily cues, facial expressions, and contextual cues.
 - **Two-factor theory of emotion:** emotion consists of a two-step process in which people first experience physiological arousal, and then look to cues in their environment to explain their arousal.
 - * **Misattribution of arousal:** when arousal cannot be explained, it is misattributed to environmental cues.
- **Social comparison:**
 - **Social comparison theory:** we can learn our own abilities and attitudes by comparing ourselves to other people.
 - We typically engage in social comparison when:
 - * A certain skill or ability of ours has no objective standard, or
 - * We are uncertain about our ability.
 - Social comparison types:
 - * If our goal is to get an accurate assessment of our abilities, then it makes sense to compare ourselves to others with a similar background in the area.
 - * If our goal is to know what excellence and improve oneself is, then we are likely to engage in **upward social comparison**.
 - * If our goal is to feel good about ourselves, then we are better off engaging in **downward social comparison**.

The same individual can be the target of both downward and upward social comparison.

 - More often than not, we develop a habit of spontaneous engagement in social comparison.
- **Social tuning:** we adopt the views of other people whom we like.
 - Additionally, social tuning also implies that people will not adopt (or possibly even go against) the views of people whom they dislike.
 - E.g., study on automatic prejudice and experimenter's likeability (Sinclair et al., 2005).

4.2 *Survival for the self*

Lecture 4
2nd September 2022

Past observations suggest that the self is developed as a means for survival in a social environment. E.g., only chimps who live in a social community were able to recognize themselves in a mirror, but not those who have lived alone.

- **Self-control** is a limited resource that gets depleted after use.
 - E.g., when our (mental) resources are depleted, our lies are less plausible and more easily detected.

Additionally, certain behaviours are more difficult to control than others.

- **Self-esteem:** humans generally have high self-esteem (e.g., when self-reporting IQ).
- **Self-presentation:** we frequently engage in **impression management** using various strategies:
 - **Ingratiation:** using flattery and praise to make us likeable to another person.
 - * Could potentially backfire in insincerity was noted.
 - * Nonetheless, we typically give it the benefit of doubt – due to our self-serving biases.
 - **Self-handicapping:** creating obstacles and excuses to avoid self-blame in the case of failure.
 - * This helps to protect our self-esteem/image at the expense of actual success.
 - * Men are more likely to engage in *behavioural self-handicapping* (i.e., “true” handicapping); women are more likely to engage in *self-reported handicapping* (i.e., “false” handicapping).

impression management:
the attempt to have others see us the way we want them to.

5 COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

Cognitive dissonance is a drive/feeling of discomfort,

- originally defined as caused by holding two or more inconsistent cognitions, and
- subsequently defined as caused by performing an action that is discrepant from one’s customary, typically positive self-conception.

There are 3 possible outcomes upon recognizing a discrepancy between our actions and cognitions/personality:

1. **Changing behaviour** (e.g., stop smoking).
2. **Changing cognition** (e.g., believe that smoking is not unhealthy).

3. **Adding cognition** (e.g., smoking is bad, but it makes people look cool).

Usually, behavioural change is the least likely outcome because it is a difficult process, and our actions may have resulted in an irrevocable damage on our self-image (e.g., shouted at parents in public).

5.1 *Rationalizing behaviour*

When facing cognitive dissonance, we may engage in various pathways to justify our actions:

- **Justification of effort:** e.g., hazing and satisfaction with a group (Aronson & Mills, 1959).
- **Justification of good deeds** (i.e., Ben Franklin effect): if A has performed some favor to B (stranger), A is going to like B more.
 - This is because there is no dissonance when we perform acts of kindness to a friend, but significant dissonance when performing acts of kindness to a stranger/enemy.
- **Justification of bad deeds:** e.g., cheating in exams.
 - This could lead to changes in our values (e.g., “cheating is actually not too bad”) and/or perceptions (e.g., treating enemies in war as subhumans/less than human).
- **Justification of rewards/punishment:** contrary to common sense, a smaller reward/punishment is more likely to bring about greater behavioural change than greater rewards/punishment (e.g., experiments on insufficient punishment in children & counterattitudinal advocacy).
 - Smaller reward/punishment → no/little external justification → cognitive dissonance w.r.t. held beliefs → behavioural change.

5.2 *Post-decision dissonance*

After making decisions, we will accentuate the benefits/pros of our chosen item/choice, and downplay the benefits/pros of the other choices.

- The more **irrevocable/permanent** the decision, the more dissonance it activates.
 - **Illusion of irrevocability:** e.g., lowballing.
 1. Salesperson gets buyer to commit/agree verbally to a deal, and then makes the deal become a less satisfactory deal.
 2. The commitment creates an illusion of irrevocability which invokes our post-decision dissonance).

- Cognitive dissonance reduces people's feeling of disappointment, but we are not aware of the process (hence, humans have an *impact bias*).
 - **Impact bias:** the tendency of overestimating the intensity and duration of one's emotional reactions to future negative events.

5.3 Changing behaviour

Lecture 5
9th September 2022

In light of cognitive dissonance, we could still attempt to change an individual's behaviour via the following methods:

- **Increase cognition:** make the behaviour inexcusable (e.g., informing sb that he cannot approach his grandchildren if he smokes, because second-hand smoking is harmful).
- **Use behaviour to fight behaviour:** e.g., by getting them to support an action in public, people will be more likely to change their original behaviour (since most people do not want to be hypocrites—by behaving in a way that contradicts what they advocated).
 - i.e., **hypocrisy paradigm**.

6 SOCIAL PERCEPTION

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

- It is essential for our survival (e.g., in distinguishing between friend vs foe, and determining an individual's underlying emotion).

The main factors influencing social perception include:

- **Appearance:**
 - E.g., having a baby face is a bane for politicians (since it makes them appear naïve, warm, and submissive, characteristics which we do not particularly desire/expect our leaders to have).
 - E.g., based on the layout of an individual's office, we would automatically infer their personality (i.e., Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism).
- **Communication:** which consists of
 - Facial expressions,
 - Postures, and
 - Tone of voice.

Research has shown that people from different cultures are able to accurately identify the 5 basic emotions—suggesting that they are universal. This could be due to:

- Vestige of evolved physiological reactions (e.g., squeezing eye-balls/narrowing nasal air passage due to disgust).
- Survival benefits due to communication (e.g., detecting anger).

However, there may be *affect blends* (i.e., mixture of emotional expressions within the same face), which could add complexity to the process of decoding. Cultural differences may also contribute to increased difficulty with decoding.

- **Internal processing:**

- **Automatic:** we rely on **implicit personality theories**, or schemas which are used to group various kinds of personality traits together.
 - * This allows us to be efficient in making first impressions.
 - * For instance, we may score different personality traits based on their positions along two dimensions, i.e., social/warmth and intellectual/competence.

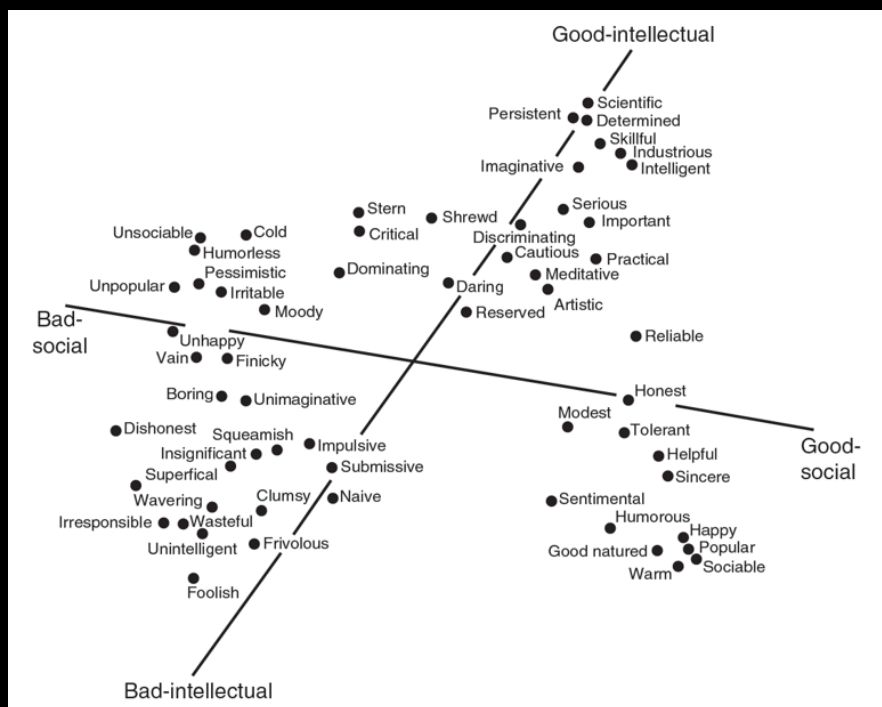


Figure 1: Trait adjectives in a multidimensional scaling solution of social (warmth) and intellectual (competence) dimensions.

- **Controlled:** we also rely on a two-step **attribution process**:
 1. Making an automatic inference about the actor's personality.
 2. Making a controlled correction by considering situational influences.

Kelly's covariation model: states that to form an attribution about what caused a person's behaviour, we systematically note the pattern between the presence or absence of possible causal factors, and whether the behaviour often occurs.

Typically, the second step requires both *motivation* and *ability*; without our attention and sufficient mental resources, we will not make the controlled correction.

For an action, there are generally 3 possible attributions:

1. **Actor:** i.e., the individual performing the action.
2. **Target:** i.e., the recipient of the action.
3. **Context.**

Based on **Kelly's covariation model**, we form attributions based on several types of information:

1. **Consensus:** do other people react to the target in the same way as the actor? (no → low; yes → high)
2. **Distinctiveness:** does the actor react in the same way to different targets? (no → low; yes → high)
3. **Consistency:** does the actor behave the same way to the same target across various situations? (no → low; yes → high)

Generally, the following holds:

- * CSS ↑, DTT ↑, CST ↑ → behaviour occurs due to the target.
- * CSS ↓, DTT ↓, CST ↑ → behaviour occurs due to the actor.
- * CSS ↑, DTT ↓, CST ↓ → behaviour occurs due to the context.
- * CSS ↓, DTT ↑, CST ↓ → behaviour occurs due to the target-actor relationship in a particular situation (e.g., the actor has a favor to ask the target).

6.1 Biases in social perception

- **Cognitive biases:**

- **Fundamental attribution error (FAE):** the tendency to overestimate the extent to which people's behaviour is due to internal, dispositional factors and to underestimate the role of situational factors.

- * **Internal attributions:** something innate about the person, e.g., attitude, character, or personality.
- * **External attributions:** the situation an individual is in.
- * FAE (correspondence bias) occurs due to **perceptual salience**; our attentional focus is often on the person, rather than on the surrounding situation (i.e., situational factors are less salient).
- * **Actor-observer effect:** we also have a tendency to attribute others' behaviour to internal causes, but our own behaviour to situational factors.

- **Motivational biases:**

- **Self-serving attributions:** people's explanations that credit their failures to situational factors, and successes to internal factors.

perceptual salience: we place greater weight on what is most noticeable.

-
- * Protects self-esteem, maintain positive self-regard.
 - * Favourable self-presentation.
 - **Defensive attributions:** explanations for behaviour that avoid feelings of vulnerability and mortality.
 - * E.g., *just world theory/belief*: perception that good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people.

7 ATTITUDES

Lecture 6
30th September 2022

Attitudes refer to our evaluations of people, objects, and/or ideas. They may originate via nature (i.e., genes) and/or nurture (i.e., social experiences).

Attitudes can be formed as a result of our ABCs.

- **Cognitively-based** attitudes: based on people's beliefs about the properties of an object.
- **Affectively-based** attitudes: based on people's feelings and values about an object. This can be developed via:
 - **Classical conditioning:** pairing of UCS (e.g., smell of mothball) with CS (e.g., presence of grandmother).
 - **Operant conditioning:**
 1. Voluntary response is performed.
 2. Response results in reward/punishment.
 3. Response increases/decreases correspondingly.

Typically, affectively-based attitudes:

- do not result from a rational examination of issues.
- are not governed by logic.
- are often linked to people's values.
- may contradict the same individual's cognitively-based attitudes.
- **Behaviourally-based** attitudes: based on observations of how one behaves toward an object.
 - Typically formed when there is no other salient cue to explain one's behaviour.
 - Contains little cognitive and affective biases.

7.1 Attitude measurement

Attitudes can be measured:

- **Explicitly:** e.g., direct questions, surveys, etc.

- **Implicitly:** e.g., Implicit Association Test (IAT), facial electromyography (EMG).

Past research has found that there is generally a small consistency between our explicit and implicit attitudes for socially sensitive topics (e.g., ageism). However, the consistency between explicit and implicit attitudes is much stronger for non-sensitive topics (e.g., cats vs dogs). This could be due to:

- **Self-presentational concerns:** i.e., we are unwilling to present ourselves in a negative manner.
- We may be **genuinely unaware** of our true attitudes.

7.2 Attitude change

7.2.1 Yale attitude change approach

The **Yale attitude change approach** studies attitude change as a communication process that involves who, what, and whom. Factors increasing the success of persuasion include:

- **Who** (persuader):
 - Speaker's **credibility**.
 - Speaker's **attractiveness**.
- **What** (message):
 - Messages which are not perceived to be a **blatant attempt at persuasion**.
 - **Two-sided messages:** i.e., messages presenting both pros and cons.
 - **Sequence of message presentation:**
 - * If no delay between receiving message and making judgment: better to present later, due to the **recency effect** (i.e., ideas who were just presented remain salient in memory).
 - * If a delay is present: better to present first, due to the **primacy effect** (i.e., arguments likely to be rehearsed more often; more rehearsal → better memory → stronger persuasion).
- **Whom** (target/persuadee):
 - People who are distracted.
 - People who are low in intelligence.
 - Young adults (i.e., ages 18 - 25).

While YACA provides a list of features affecting persuasion, it does not elaborate on the underlying process of persuasion, and does not point out which are the most important (under different circumstances).

7.2.2 Elaboration likelihood model (ELM)

The **elaboration likelihood model (ELM)** states that attitude changes can occur via either:

1. **Central route:** when people pay attention to the *merits of the argument* and elaborate upon information they receive.
2. **Peripheral route:** when people do not consider the merits of the argument carefully, but are influenced by *irrelevant cues* (e.g., credibility/attractiveness of the speaker).

Typically, we would pick either the central or peripheral route based on a number of factors:

	Central route	Peripheral route
Ability	Low distraction	High distraction
Motivation	High personal relevance	Low personal relevance

The consequences of attitude change differs across routes as well.

	Central route	Peripheral route
Durability	Attitude change lasts over a longer time	Attitude change lasts over a shorter time
Resistance	Attitude is resistant	Attitude is not resistant
Predictability	Attitude predicts behaviour	Attitude does not predict behaviour

A sister model to ELM is the **heuristic-systematic model of persuasion**, which states that individuals can process messages in one of two ways: either **heuristically** (i.e., via the peripheral route) or **systematically** (i.e., via the central route).

7.2.3 Emotional factors

- **Fear-arousing messages:** persuasive messages that attempt to change people's attitudes by arousing their fears.
 - Work due to 2 reasons:
 1. Get people to pay attention to our arguments.
 2. Instill a negative attitude toward the topic of the message.
 - However, fear-arousing messages may backfire, and are typically only effective when:
 1. They are accompanied by specific instructions.
 2. They are not too threatening; else, people may engage in denial.

- Emotions may also serve as a basis for **heuristic thinking** (i.e., lead to attitude change via the peripheral route).
 - E.g., “if I feel good, I must like it” heuristic.
- Emotional messages are most effective when there is a match between the nature of the attitude (i.e., affectively-based) and the choice of advertisement.

7.3 Resisting persuasion

- **Attitude inoculation:** attitudes can be resisted in a similar manner as the process of vaccination:
 1. Weak counterattitudinal arguments provided to target.
 2. Target generates defensive arguments against the counterattitudinal arguments.
 3. Target becomes more resistant to strong counterattitudinal arguments in future.

Implication: if we want to persuade somebody, we should give our strongest argument at the first possible opportunity, to prevent the activation of attitude inoculation.

- **Reactance theory:** when people feel their freedom to perform a certain behavior is threatened, an unpleasant state of resistance is aroused, which they can reduce by performing the prohibited behavior.
 - E.g., if product placement goes over the board, the audience may react against such blatant attempts at persuasion (i.e., intentionally avoid such products).

8 CONFORMITY

Lecture 7
7th October 2022

Conformity is the tendency to change behaviours or thoughts in ways that are consistent with group norms (i.e., do what other people are doing). Group norms influence individuals via two distinct pathways:

- **Informational:** arises from the need to be accurate.

Informational influence is increased by the following:

1. **Ambiguous situations:** the more important accuracy is, the more effective informational influence is.
2. **Crises:** the more emotion/panic-inducing the situation is, the more effective informational influence is.
3. **Expertise:** if others are perceived to be experts, the more effective informational influence will be.

- **Normative:** arises from the need to be accepted.

Latane's social impact theory highlights the factors affecting normative influence:

1. **Strength:** how important to us is the group?
2. **Immediacy:** how close is the group to us in space and time during the attempt to influence us?
3. **Number:** how many people are there in the group?
 - Notably, social influence increases as the number goes up to 5.
4. **Allies:** how many allies do we have?
 - Notably, if our ally count increases from 0 to 1, the likelihood of conforming to the group norm drastically decreases.

Other factors affecting the effectiveness of normative influence include:

- **Culture:** collectivistic cultures are more susceptible to group norms and normative influences than individualistic cultures.
- **Individual differences:** e.g., gender and self-esteem, but the effect is generally small.

Informational	Normative
Private acceptance: voicing out an opinion due to one's acceptance of an idea.	Public compliance: voicing out an opinion due to the responses of other individuals.
The more important an issue, the higher likelihood of conformity.	The more important an issue, the lower likelihood of conformity.

Norms can also be categorized into two distinct types:

- **Descriptive norm:** how others behave in the situation.
- **Injunctive norm:** how others approve or disapprove certain behaviours.

Typically, injunctive norms have a greater effect on normative social influence.

8.1 *Minority influence*

Minority influence occurs when the group's majority changes their behaviour to be consistent with minority members. This is more likely to occur when:

1. The minority has **idiosyncratic credits** (i.e., tolerance points a member earns from the group for having conformed in the past).
2. The opinion is consistent (i.e., does not change with time).
3. Informational influence is employed.

obedience: the performing of actions in response to the direct orders of an authority or person of higher status.

Aside from the aforementioned factors, *obedience* may be another reason for minority influence. The factors affecting obedience are similar to the factors affecting the effectiveness of normative influence.

9 GROUP PROCESSES

Lecture 8
14th October 2022

Humans have an innate need to be unique and a need to belong. In addition to satisfying our need for belonging, groups have several other functions:

- They dictate social norms, through informational and normative influence.
- They also dictate social roles, via shared expectations about how certain individuals are supposed to behave.

When we are in a group, some changes may occur to our individual behaviour:

- **Social facilitation:** occurs when the presence of others increases arousal, such as by:
 1. Creating (non-social) distractions.
 2. Making us more alert, due to our concern about the intentions and behaviour of other people.
 3. **Evaluation apprehension:** we are anxious about being evaluated by others.

Arousal increases the dominant response, and thus it increases performance only when the task is easy. When the task is hard, performance decreases instead.

- **Social loafing:** occurs when the presence of others causes relaxation instead of arousal, due to reducing evaluation apprehension.

This results in a reduction in performance when the task is easy, and an increase in performance when the task is hard instead.

- **Deindividuation:** the loosening of constraints on behaviour when people are in a crowd, leading to impulsive and deviant acts.
 - When people are in a group, the likelihood that somebody is singled out and held responsible is low, thus this makes people less self-conscious/aware of their internal standards of behaviour.
 - Deindividuation also increases one's obedience to group norms.

9.1 Group decision making

When making decisions in a group, **process loss** is likely to occur, due to several aspects of group interaction which inhibits good problem solving.

Specifically, people have a tendency to seek agreement and solidarity rather than accuracy, described as **groupthink**.

Some symptoms of groupthink include:

1. **Interpersonal pressure:** direct pressure to perform, and to reach a unanimous decision.
2. **Self-censorship:** members refrain from confiding to other members their private doubts and uncertainties concerning the actions of their group.
3. **Biased perceptions of the outgroup:** creation of stereotyped images of outsiders.
4. **Mindguards:** members of the group whom in an attempt to preserve the central group idea, omits any information which may cause doubts to arise within the group, and applies pressure to any dissenting members.
5. **Illusion of invulnerability:** members may develop the perception that their group is performing well.
6. **Illusion of unanimity:** members assume that all other group members are in acceptance of the situation, since everybody censored their own dissension.
7. **Illusion of morality:** members may lose sight of their personal moral principles.
8. **Defective decision-making strategies.**

Antecedents to groupthink include:

- High cohesiveness.
- Pressure to conform to the group.
- Authoritative leader.
- Stress.
- Unwillingness to revisit previous points.
- Low likelihood of alternative views, which leads to poor decision-making procedures.

As a result of groupthink, the following consequences may arise:

- Incomplete survey of available options.
- Failure to examine risks associated with the favoured alternative.
- Poor information search.
- No contingency plans.

To minimize groupthink, some strategies which can be employed include:

- Seeking anonymous opinions within the group.
- Seeking outside opinions.
- Have somebody play the devil's advocate (i.e., someone who pretends to be against an idea/plan that is supported by the majority, in order to make people discuss and consider it in more detail).

In addition to groupthink, group decision making could also result in **group polarization** (i.e., the tendency for groups to make decisions that are more extreme than the initial inclinations of its members). Some reasons for this include:

1. **Persuasive arguments interpretation:** each member has arguments that the other has not considered.
2. **Social comparison interpretation:** trying to lean more towards the extreme as compared to other members.

9.2 Cooperation & conflict resolution

In some situations, the individually-best strategy may not be the collectively-best strategy (in fact, it may be the collectively-worst strategy, e.g., prisoner's dilemma—the *dominant strategy* is the collectively-worst). Likewise, the collectively-best strategy may be the individually-worst strategy.

To increase cooperation between different parties, some measures which could be taken include:

- Framing of the problem (e.g., Wall Street game vs community game).
- Adopting a *tit-for-tat strategy*.
- Make decisions as an individual, rather than as a group (cf. **discontinuity effect**).

discontinuity effect: it is far more likely for two individuals to be cooperative than for two groups to be cooperative.

On the other hand, the presence of *threat* increases conflict (e.g., when participants are allowed to use gates on the Acme-Bolt game).

9.3 Leadership

The **contingency theory of leadership** seeks to uncover whether leaders come in different types, and whether certain types of leaders are more effective than others. One distinction separates task-oriented and relationship-oriented leaders:

- **Task-oriented:** gets the work done.

- **Relationship-oriented:** maintains good group/inter-member relationships.

The effectiveness of a leader differs with the amount of situational control people have in a situation.



- **Low control:** people tend to look for someone to lead them during a crisis, prioritizing tasks over relationships.
- **High control:** people tend to care more about what needs to be done, prioritizing efficiency over relationships.
- **Moderate control:** people are able to devote some time and attention to maintaining and developing relationships.

Female leaders often face the issue of losing either their leadership qualities or gender identity.

- If female leaders behave **communally** (i.e., consistent with their gender role), they would be considered to have fewer leadership qualities.
- On the other hand, if they behave **agentically**, people may fault them for not behaving in accordance to their gender role.

10 INTERPERSONAL ATTRACTION

Lecture 9
21st October 2022

There is a universal, cross-cultural consensus on physical attractiveness:

- Females: large eyes, small nose, prominent cheekbones, small chin, narrow cheeks, high eyebrows, and large pupils.
- Males: large eyes, prominent cheekbones, and big chin.

There are several evolutionary reasons for this universal consensus:

- Baby face: having large eyes, small nose, and a small chin induces a feeling of warmth and nurturance, due to evolutionary advantages (e.g., develops in us a tendency to take care of our young).

- Prominent cheekbone: indicator of sexually mature adults.
- Symmetrical faces: indicator of good genes.

Physical attractiveness increases attraction due to the **what-is-beautiful-is-good stereotype**: the belief that physically attractive individuals also have desirable personality characteristics (e.g, sociable, mature, assertive/sensitive). However, inferred characteristics may differ across cultures, due to cultural differences in perception of virtue, e.g.:

- Individualistic cultures (e.g., U.S.) are more likely to associate physical attractiveness with personal strength.
- Collectivistic cultures (e.g., South Korea) are more likely to associate physical attractiveness with honesty.

The concept of *self-fulfilling prophecy* can help explain why people's attractiveness helps perpetuate the aforementioned stereotype (e.g., better behaviour when interacting with a more attractive woman).

Generally, more attractive people are deemed to be more successful in life (e.g., happier, higher income). Aside from physical attractiveness, other factors which could increase one's attraction include:

1. **Proximity**: proximity between individuals.

- *Proximity effect*: the more we see and interact with people, the more likely they are to become our friends.
- The proximity effect is likely to occur due to the *mere exposure effect*: i.e., the more exposure people have to a stimulus (even without any interaction with it), the more positively it is evaluated.

2. **Similarity**: we like others who are similar to us, in terms of:

- Personality.
- Opinions.
- Interests.
- Appearance.

There are several reasons why similarity leads to attraction:

- (a) We perceive that if people are similar to us, they will like us.
- (b) Similarity suggests that we are right (and we like to feel that we are right).
- (c) When someone disagrees with us, we assume they possess negative characteristics.

3. **Reciprocity**: we like others who like us in return.

- Notably, reciprocity is more important than physical attractiveness and similarity in determining attraction.

10.1 *Gender and cultural differences*

In general, females find emotional cheating (e.g., emotional intimacy) more intolerable than physical cheating (e.g., sexual relationships), whereas males find physical cheating more intolerable. This is due to the asymmetrical cost of reproduction for each gender:

Females	Males
Reproduction is costly.	Reproduction is low-cost and is a short-term burden.
Purpose of reproduction is to ensure survival of offspring.	Purpose of reproduction is to ensure dissemination of genes.
Prefers partners who can provide resources and support needed to raise a child.	Prefers partners who are capable of reproducing successfully (i.e., physically attractive).

Culture may determine the gender differences in mate preferences (e.g., the gender that approaches the other is likely to be less pickier). In general, men tend to be the initiators, thus they are less picky; however, if women are made to be the initiators instead, men were observed to be more picky than women. This is because people who are being approached are put in a position of power, and they have the ability to choose between alternatives.

10.2 *Aggression*

Aggression is defined as an act **intended** to **harm** another person who does not want to be harmed (i.e. there is an emphasis on *intention* and *outcome*).

Different types of aggression include:

- **Hostile aggression:** aggression that stems from feelings of anger, and aimed at causing pain.
- **Instrumental aggression:** aggression as a means to some goal other than causing pain.

There are several myths about aggression:

1. Aggression is innate.

- According to Bandura's **social learning theory**, we learn social behaviour (e.g., aggression) by observing others.
- Whilst we are intrinsically built with the capacity for aggression, whether we do it depends on our social experiences and social situation.

2. Males are more aggressive than females.
 - Across multiple cultures, males are found to be more physically aggressive than females.
 - However, gender differences in mean aggressiveness only differ slightly.
 - Additionally, females exhibit greater **relational aggression** (e.g., social exclusion, spreading of rumors, etc.).
3. Severe physical punishment can reduce aggressive behaviour.
 - In adults, severe punishment may serve as a deterrent to aggressive behaviour, when the following factors hold:
 - Punishment promptly follows behaviour.
 - Punishment is certain (i.e., no opportunity for escaping/facing alternative punishments).
 - However, in children, severe punishment is likely to backfire, due to social learning.
4. Catharsis: the notion that “blowing off steam” relieves built-up aggressive energies, and hence reduces the likelihood of further aggressive behaviour.
 - While catharsis may help to blow off some steam in the short term, it leads to increased aggressive tendencies in the long run.
5. Media violence increases actual violence.
 - Whilst there is a strong correlation between the two, aggressive personality is likely to be a moderating variable.
 - Experimental studies illustrated that active playing, but not mere watching, of violent media increases actual violence, and the effect is strongest on those who already have an aggressive tendency.
 - In the short-term, media violence results in physiological arousal and excitement, and increased accessibility of aggressive acts.
 - In the long-term, media violence results in reduced empathy (due to numbing and dehumanizing), and increased propensity for violence due to social learning.

To reduce/diffuse aggression, we could:

- Raise our self-awareness, e.g., by journaling.
- Apologize to people whom we have offended.
- Build empathy.

10.3 Prosocial behaviour

Lecture 10
28th October 2022

Prosocial behaviour is defined as a behaviour performed with the goal of benefiting another person (similarly, there is an emphasis on *intention*; however, the recipient need not be aware about the intention of the actor).

There are several reasons why people help others:

- **Social exchange theory:** helping only happens when people weigh the rewards and costs of helping, and when the rewards are greater than the costs of helping.
 - Rewards include any form of benefit, e.g., praise, personal satisfaction from seeing others in a better state, etc.
- **Empathy-altruism hypothesis:** if we don't feel empathy, we help due to self-interests (i.e., in line with the social exchange theory); if we feel empathy, we help due to altruism/reasons other than self-interest.
 - **Empathy:** the ability to put oneself in the shoes of another person, and to experience events and emotions in the way that person experiences them.
 - Factors promoting empathy include:
 - * Personal relationships: e.g., friends, relatives.
 - * Group membership: i.e., we have greater empathy towards the ingroup (compared with the outgroup).
- **Situational factors:** e.g.,
 - **Rural vs urban areas:** people receive far less help in urban areas as compared to in rural areas (cf. *urban overload hypothesis*).
 - **Bystander effect:** the presence of other people inhibits helping behaviour; the more bystanders there are, the less likely any one of them is willing to help.

Five steps to helping during an emergency; psychological obstacles may be present at each of these steps, and they tend to reinforce each other.

1. Notice the event; obstacles include:

- **Urban overload hypothesis:** people who live in cities are bombarded with stimulation, and will keep to themselves to avoid being overwhelmed.
- **Hurry:** people in a hurry are less likely to help.

2. Interpret as emergency; obstacles include:

- **Pluralistic ignorance:** people mistakenly believe that no one is worried about the situation (especially in ambiguous situations, observing inaction suggests to others that the situation is non-urgent).

3. Accept personal responsibility; obstacles include:
 - **Diffusion of responsibility:** the belief that others will or should take the responsibility for providing assistance to a person in need.
4. Decide on appropriate form of assistance; however, we may not always know how to provide the most suitable form of assistance.
5. Implement the action; obstacles include:
 - Costs of perceived danger/hassle.
 - **Audience inhibition:** reduced helping due to concern of how we will look to others.

The obstacles present at the first two steps result from informational influence, whereas obstacles present at the last three steps arise from normative influence.

To increase helping, we can:

- Educate individuals about the bystander effect (which subsequently reduces their susceptibility to the effect).
- Work of each of the aforementioned factors, such that each obstacle is eliminated.

11 PREJUDICE

Prejudice is a hostile or negative attitude toward people in a distinguishable group, based solely on their membership in that group. It consists of 3 components:

- **Cognitive:**
 - **Stereotype:** generalization about a group of people, in which certain traits are assigned to virtually all members of the group, regardless of actual variation among the members.
 - * Stereotypes help us organize and figure out the world.
 - * Stereotypes may be formed via:
 1. **Confirmation bias:** more attention paid to stereotype-confirming evidence → increased rehearsal → better remembered.
 2. **Illusory correlation:** tendency to see relationships/correlations between events that are actually unrelated (esp. when the events or people are distinctive).
 3. **Subtyping:** when confronted with contradictions to one's stereotype, we mentally create a subcategory to accommodate the exception without changing the overall stereotype.
 4. **Self-fulfilling prophecy.**

They are usually formed out of necessity, due to our limited cognitive resources.

- **Emotional:** when stereotypes are falsified, prejudice may still linger emotionally.
- **Behavioural:**
 - **Discrimination:** may be overt or covert (e.g., microaggression).

11.1 *Forms of prejudice*

1. **Blatant racism:** i.e., uncensored racism.

Modern racism: outwardly acting unprejudiced, while inwardly maintaining a prejudiced attitude.

2. **Hostile sexism:** stereotypical views of women which suggest that they are inferior to men.

Benevolent sexism: idealized views of women as weak, pure, etc., which may appear chivalrous.

3. **Implicit prejudice:** e.g., we may inevitably inherit certain cultural norms, even if we are explicitly against these norms.

Explicit prejudice.

11.2 *Causes of prejudice*

1. **Cognitive perspective:**

- **Ingroup bias:** we tend to like members of the ingroup more than members of the outgroup.
 - Other than resource allocation, people also tend to judge their ingroup as more physically attractive, more intelligent, and having higher integrity.
 - This is likely because we often see groups that we are part of as an extension of ourselves.
- **Outgroup homogeneity:** tendency to assume that there is greater similarity among members of the outgroup than members of the ingroup.
 - **Cross-race effect:** typically, it is easier to recognize members of our own race. This could be due to:
 - * **Perceptual:** people are more experienced at recognizing their own race.
 - * **Social cognitive:** when defined as “they”, we tend to assume similarity and pay less attention to the subtle differences.

Lecture 11
4th November 2022

- **Ultimate attribution error:** cognitive bias where negative outgroup behavior is more likely attributed to factors internal and specific to the actor, such as personality.

2. Economic perspective:

- **Realistic conflict theory:** limited resources lead to conflict between groups, and result in increased prejudice and discrimination.
 - Competition translates to stereotypes which do not matter in the competition (e.g., ugly), and which does not necessarily make sense (e.g., “crafty and stupid”).
 - Competition causes us to propagate the stereotype to every single member of the group (rather than just the individual whom we are competing with).

3. Motivational perspective:

- **Just-world belief:** we tend to conclude that the victim is at fault, in order to arrive at the conclusion that our world is just.
- **Justification-suppression model:** there are two countervailing forces (i.e., an urge to express prejudice and a need to maintain a positive self-concept).
 - Constantly suppressing our prejudice requires a significant amount of energy; thus, we are constantly on the lookout for justifications for expressing our prejudice.

11.3 *Consequences of prejudice*

- Confirmation bias.
- Illusory correlation.
- Self-fulfilling prophecy.
- Subtyping.
- **Stereotype threat:** experiences of anxiety due to the fear that one’s behaviour may confirm to the cultural stereotype. E.g., women and math, African Americans and academics, etc.

11.4 *Reducing prejudice*

- **Desegregation:** segregation results in unequal treatment.
- **Contact hypothesis:** if we can ensure that members of different groups have the following conditions during contact, it is highly likely that prejudice would be reduced.

1. Common goals.

-
2. Mutual interdependence.
 3. Informal contact.
 4. Multiple contacts.
 5. Equal statuses.
 6. Social norms of equality.

A TUTORIALS

A.1 *Factorial design*

- **Main effect:** are the means different at different levels of the IV?
 - Main effects are independent from each other.
- **Interaction effect:** does the (main) effect that is proposed depend on the levels of the other IV?
 - Heuristic: when the lines on the DV/IV graph intersect → there is an interaction effect.
 - When interaction effects are present, interpret main effects with caution.
- **Simple main effect:** what is the effect of IV_1 at each level of IV_2 ?

A.2 *Revision & replication*

- **Revise:** used to
 1. Increase power of IV.
 2. Increase sensitivity of DV.
- **Replicate:** used to
 1. Improve *external validity* (i.e., can the results be generalized to the population?)
 2. Improve *internal validity* (i.e., are the effects observed due to the manipulation of the IV, and not due to confounding variables?)

Can be done by repeating study with:

- a different population.
- different IV(s).
- different DV(s).

A.3 Culture

Western	Asian
Independent self: thinks about one's self in terms of one's own actions, feelings, and thoughts.	Interdependent self: thinks about one's self in terms of one's relationships with other people, and of others' actions, feelings, and thoughts.
Analytic thinking: focus on the properties of objects without considering their surrounding context.	Holistic thinking: focus on the properties of objects in relation to the surrounding context.
Higher tendency to fall prey to FAE, due to tendency to overestimate the extent to which people's behaviour is due to internal, dispositional factors and to underestimate the role of situational behaviours.	Lower (but non-zero) likelihood of falling prey to FAE.

* * *