

**COURSE
GUIDE**

**PAD 251
INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY**

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NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction to Social Psychology (PAD 251) is a two-credit unit course prepared for the students of 200 Level Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Entrepreneurial and Small Business Management, of the National Open University of Nigeria.

The course will expose you to the nitty-gritty of social interaction within the society, so as to ensure peaceful co-existence.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS COURSE

As you begin this course, keep in mind the following questions. See if you can provide answers to them as you make progress in the course of your work. You are likely going to solve some personal problems as a result of the knowledge you are going to gain from this course.

- How do people form impressions about others?
- Is impression management likely to improve relationships?
- What are the major issues in conformity?
- How will attitudes influence people's behaviors?
- What is the major difference between compliance and obedience?
- What factors encourage aggressive behavior?
- Is man in control of whatever he does? If yes, to what extent?

This course will answer these and many more questions and equip you for effective social interaction. It is strongly recommended that you take your time and read through this guide before beginning the course.

COURSE AIMS

The main aim of this course is to introduce you to basic concepts in Social Psychology and help you understand the behaviour of the individual in the society. It also aims at giving you a better understanding of how the society influences us, and how we in turn translate these influences and act on them in relation to the people around us.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- define social psychology and related constructs
- identify factors that influence impression formation

- discover how we arrive at conclusions about the behaviours of others
- explain the process of conformity to group pressure
- describe the processes involved in attitude formation and attitude change
- explain why we form prejudices and why we discriminate
- discover the major determinants of aggression and how to manage this behavior
- discuss factors and reasons for interpersonal attraction.

WORKING THROUGH THIS COURSE

The course is made up of three modules with fifteen study units. The areas covered in this course are- definition, scope of small business, types of finances, the Nigerian financial system, success and failure of small business in Nigeria, among others.

This course guide is one of the several resource tools available to help you successfully complete this course. It contains useful information about the course; these include aims, objectives, and the nature of the materials you will be using, and how best you can make use of the materials in successfully completing this course. This course guide will also assist you in tackling the Tutor-Marked Assignment questions and guide you on how to plan your time for study.

There will be tutorial sessions as well. During these sessions, your instructional facilitator will take you through difficult areas and, at the same time, exchange ideas with you.

COURSE MATERIALS

The major components of this course are listed below.

- Course Guide
- Study Units
- Text books
- Assignment File
- Presentation Schedule

STUDY UNITS

There are three Modules in this course broken into 15 study units.

Module 1 Social Influence and the Attribution Process

Unit 1	Impression Formation
Unit 2	Impression Management
Unit 3	Theories of Attribution
Unit 4	Biases in Attribution
Unit 5	Conformity
Unit 6	Compliance
Unit 7	Obedience

Module 2 Attitudes and Persuasion

Unit 1	Attitudes Formation and Attitude Change
Unit 2	Persuasion
Unit 3	Prejudice and Discrimination
Unit 4	Stereotype

Module 3 Aggression, Pro-social Behavior and Interpersonal Attraction

Unit 1	Causes of Aggression
Unit 2	Theories and Control of Aggression
Unit 3	Pro-social Behavior
Unit 4	Interpersonal Attraction

The units in the first module focus on how we form impressions and manage them, the processes involved in making attributions about people, why we conform even when there is no compulsion from groups, the importance of belonging to groups, and compliance and obedience.

Module two dwells on attitudes, how they are formed and how to change them, how prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination affect our behaviors, and the act of persuasion.

Finally, module three will look at aggression, its causes and why we engage in aggressive behavior. It will expose you to how to interact positively with others.

TEXTBOOKS AND REFERENCES

Certain books have been recommended in the course. You should read them where you are so directed, before attempting the exercises.

ASSESSMENT

There are two aspects of the assessment of this course; the Tutor-Marked Assignments and a written examination. In doing these assignments, you are expected to apply knowledge acquired during the course. The assignments must be submitted to your tutor for formal assessment in accordance with the deadlines stated in the presentation schedule and the assignment file. The work that you submit to your tutor for assessment will count for 30% of your total score.

TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

There are fifteen study units in this course. Each unit should be completed in a week and it is expected that it will take you two hours to cover the material. A time table has been designed for you indicating the required weeks to complete the course. The recommended textbooks and study materials in the references section of each unit are meant to give you more information if you can find the materials.

There are self-assessment exercises as you go through each section within a unit; and at the end of the unit is the Tutor-Marked Assignment which is meant to help you evaluate your understanding of the material. Answer the questions and submit as indicated on the time table.

FINAL EXAMINATION AND GRADING

After successfully going through the course work, you will be examined. The written examination will make up 70 percent of the total score, while your continuous assessment through Tutor-Marked Assignment will cover the remaining 30 percent.

PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

The table below is a guide that will help you organise your time better. Study it and plan appropriately.

Unit	Titles of Study Units	Weeks/Activities	Assignments
	Course Guide	1	
Module 1 Social Influence and the Attribution Process			
1	Impression Formation	2	Assignment
2	Impression Management	3	Assignment
3	Theories of Attribution	4	Assignment
4	Biases in Attribution	5	Assignment
5	Conformity	6	Assignment
6	Compliance	7	Assignment
7	Obedience	8	TMA1 to be submitted
Module 2 Attitudes and Persuasion			
8	Attitudes Formation and Attitude Change	9	Assignment
9	Persuasion	10	Assignment
10	Prejudice	11	Assignment
11	Stereotypes	12	TMA2 to be submitted
Module 3 Aggression and Interpersonal Attraction			
12	Theories of Aggression	13	Assignment
13	Reducing Aggression	14	Assignment
14	Pro-social Behavior	15	Assignment
15	Interpersonal Attraction	16	TMA to be submitted
	Revision	17	
	Examination	18	
	TOTAL	18	

SUMMARY

The course covers diverse topics from social influence and attributions, attitudes and persuasion, to aggression, pro-social behavior and interpersonal attraction. After completing this course you should have acquired enough skills to interact with your environment effectively. Your understanding of the course is vital towards enhancing interpersonal interactions. The application of these principles to real life situations is the desired end results of this course.

MAIN COURSE

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MODULE 1 SOCIAL INFLUENCE AND THE ATTRIBUTION PROCESS

Unit 1	Impression Formation
Unit 2	Impression Management
Unit 3	Theories of Attribution
Unit 4	Biases in Attribution
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UNIT 1 IMPRESSION FORMATION

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4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Have you ever wondered why people think about you or about others the way they do, and why you think about other people the way you do? Well, we all cannot help but think in certain ways because we all need to form impressions about others. That is how we get to know them, and how others get to know about us; but are these opinions always right?

Impression formation is a process that explains how we form or develop opinions about other people; how other people look like, and how they behave. The way we see and interpret other people's behaviour help us to form opinions about them.

In this unit you will learn about how impressions are formed, the importance of first impressions in impression formation and the theories that explain how and why impressions are formed.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define impression formation and first impressions
- discuss the process of impression formation
- appreciate the importance of first time impressions
- explain why people form impressions.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Nature of Impression Formation

How one develops an opinion or an image of another person is very complicated. Sometimes, opinion can be formed by observing the behaviour of an individual. This means that, most times, we form opinions about other people with little information about them (Smith and Queller 2001: 499 - 517).

Usually, the information about other people comes from our experiences of the people. When we meet people for the first time, we begin to assess them to form our opinion about them. It is this process of assessing them that result in forming impression about them. Thus, it is assumed that forming impressions about other people does not happen at once, immediately or automatically (Fiske, 2004).

We form impressions about others in three ways:

1. through the process of **selection**. Here we pay attention to physical appearances or focus on just one aspect of their behaviour.
2. through the process of **organisation**. In this case, we try to form a complete, acceptable impression of a person.
3. through the process of **inference**. We attribute characteristics to people with no direct or immediate evidence, but may be based on stereotypes (Gross, 2005: 376).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

List the three processes involved in impression formation.

3.2 First and Lasting Impressions

First impressions are, usually, lasting impressions because they are formed quickly and are very difficult and slow to change. These impressions affect how we perceive or see people's behaviours and how we react to these behaviours. Our first impressions about people, usually, guide our future interactions with them; this is very important in developing social relation (Brehm et al, 2005).

First impressions are slow because we hold on to existing impressions to preserve a reality that agrees with our expectations. We are likely going to give meaning to new information concerning people, based on our expectations of them.

When forming first impressions, we are likely going to be influenced by the following factors.

1. Our assumptions that people we meet are going to have attitudes and values similar to our own (Hoyle, 1993).
2. Our expectations of positive or favourable information from others. This is important because negative behaviours capture our attention since we are not expecting people to act negatively towards us (Taylor, Peplau and Sears, 2003).
3. Negative behaviours carry more weight in shaping first impressions than positive information (Smith and Mackie, 2000).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What factors influence forming first impressions about people?

3.3 Theories of Impressions Formation

Scientists have used theories to answer the question of why certain events occur the way they do. Social Psychologists have also used theories to attempt to explain why impressions are formed.

3.3.1 Cognitive Theory

This theory uses basic cognitive process in explaining impression formation; it states as follows.

1. When we meet people for the first time, we do not pay equal attention to all the information about them, rather, we focus on what we view as most useful, DeBrium and Van Lange, (2000: 1188-1205).
2. We commit various bits of information into memory to be recalled at a later time, this helps us form lasting impressions.
3. Our first impressions of other people depend, to some extent, on our own characteristics. We see others through the òlens of our own traits, motives and desiresö (Vinokur and Schull, 2000). Traits are lasting personal qualities or attributes, which influence behaviour, across situations.
4. We tend to rely on information about traits, values and principles, more than on ability or competence. However, the context of meeting is important. For instance, an employer meeting an individual during a job interview session may pay more attention to information about competence and ability of the individual.

3.3.2 Central and Peripheral Traits Theory

This theory is based on Solomon Achø's research of 1946; here, there is the belief that:

1. There is a central and peripheral trait.
2. The central trait, if seen as important, can influence our perceptions of a person and can generate inferences about more traits.
3. The peripheral traits have, very little, influence or none at all on other traits, but they help in understanding the central trait.

Achø's illustration below should help us understand the above points better.

Intelligent - Skilful - Industrious – WARM (central trait) – Determined – Practical – Cautious Intelligent - Skilful - Industrious – COLD (central trait) – Determined – Practical – Cautious

If strangers are seen as WARM ó this trait can generate additional traits like generous, happy, good ónatedured, sociable, and popular, among others.

Other more recent views have shown that the meaning of our central trait can change, depending on the context within which it is used. The central trait can also be affected by what we already know about the individual. Positive or negative traits can also affect the meaning of the central trait.

3.3.3 Implicit Personality Theories

The implicit personality theories focus on the beliefs about what traits or characteristics tend to go together. These theories are based on the following assumptions.

1. When people possess certain traits, they are likely to possess others too.
2. The culture of the people can shape their beliefs or expectations.
3. There is a general tendency for people to assume that some traits or characteristics go together and can be observed in social situations.
4. Our impressions of others are based, mostly, on our implicit beliefs, more than the actual traits of these people.
5. We all have implicit ideas about names, birth order and physical appearance. Sometimes, just by introducing someone, by name, or birth order- whether first, last, or an only child in a family, is enough for us to assume some traits that agree with these.
6. We can assume what people are like, even with little or limited information.

3.3.4 Expectancy Theory

This view suggests that the impression we form about others, and the way we behave- based on this impression, is mostly influenced by our expectations. Our expectation on how an individual should be can influence our behaviour towards that person. When our behaviour towards an individual causes him/her to meet our expectation, the result is a self fulfilling prophecy. Self fulfilling prophecy means behaving in a way that encourages an expected outcome.

It is believed that we usually do things that cause others to conform to our impressions (Madon, Gyll, Spoth, Cross, and Hilbert 2003: 1188 ó 1205). When, as parents, we expect our children to behave in certain ways, they may sense this expectation and act in ways that may, likely, conform to our expectations of them.

If they sense these expectations as positive or one that encourages them or make them to excel, they are likely to put in more effort. On the other

hand, if it is sensed as negative or one that expects them not to excel, they may not put in any effort at all.

It has been found that children of mothers who expect their children to abuse alcohol are more likely to abuse alcohol later in life, than the children of mothers who did not convey such expectations (Madon et al.: 2001).

3.3.5 Primacy and Recency Effect

This theory relies on the order in which we learn things. Our first impression is affected by what we learn first about a person, which is viewed as the *primacy* effect, while what we learn later is referred to as the *recency* effect. On recency effect, the following assertions have been made.

1. When later information does not agree with earlier information, we tend to place more value on the first information describing the real person, and disregard later information.
2. People usually pay more attention to the information that comes in first when they are trying to form an impression about someone. Once they have formed an impression, other information becomes irrelevant, and they do not pay attention to them.
3. First information affects the meaning of the information that comes up later, because this information is made to agree with the first one. If our first impression about a person is a positive one, any later information, even if negative, will be made to agree with the first positive information.

Generally, it seems that primacy effect is more powerful than recency effects because the process of changing impressions is rather slow. Any information about a person is shaped by what we already know or believe about him/her - our first impression. However, there are certain conditions that are likely to influence this, these are outlined below.

- 1 It is believed that negative impressions carry more weight because this may reflect socially undesirable behaviours or traits that may be harmful or disastrous. Thus, a negative first impression may be more resistant to change than a positive one (Jones and Davis, 1965).
2. The primacy effect seems to be stronger, especially, in relation to strangers, while the recency effect may be stronger for friends or people we already know very well. Information of the past

concerning people we know well may change our perception of them.

3. Since primacy effect may remain strong, as later information is usually not accorded serious attention, people can be encouraged to pay attention to both primacy and recency information, before making any judgement (Ludin, 1957).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. Summarise the four views of the cognitive theory
- ii. What is self-fulfilling prophecy, according to the expectancy theory?

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit has shown the importance of impression formation in developing relationships. First impressions form the basis for future interactions with others. While these impressions are important, they however, can be inaccurate as explained by the theories. Care must be taken so that we do not rely too much on first impressions to explain peoples' behaviours. This will ensure that relationships are not destroyed before they mature.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit, based on a number of theories, has explained how impressions are formed, why they are formed and sustained. The views of cognitive, implicit personality theories, trait theories, expectancy theories and primacy & recency effect have been examined.

In the next study unit, we will look at the concept of impression management or self presentation, and how the behaviour of somebody can impress others or present a positive self image.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain traits in impression formation according to the implicit personality theories
2. Give reasons why first impressions are lasting impressions that are difficult to change.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 2 IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT

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- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 What is Impression Management
 - 3.2 Major Components of Impression Management
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- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

How others see us is very important to us. That is why, most of the time, we behave in a way that people will approve of. In our attempt to impress others, we are likely to manipulate how they see us. Remember that while others are forming impressions about us, we are often, consciously or unconsciously, also trying to present a good image of ourselves to them. The process we go through in order to present this self-image is referred to as impression management.

When we are regarded favourably by others, it is seen as a prerequisite for many positive life outcomes like respect, friendship, job success and romantic relationships (Learny 2004). In this unit, we will look at the major components of impression management and how self-monitoring and self-disclosure are used in impression management.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define impression management
- list the major components of impression management
- discuss self-monitoring in impression management
- explain the concept of self-disclosure in impression management.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 What is Impression Management?

Impression management, also known as self-presentation, has always been an area of interest; this is because it enhances social interaction. Impression management is the process of presenting a public image of oneself to others (Turner, 1991). It is believed that we benefit from impression management because it increases our personal wellbeing by motivating us in three ways:

1. By increasing the reward of social relationship that allows us to belong.
2. By enhancing our self-esteem. This is an effort to increase our appeal to others. Self-enhancement requires the use of some strategies; examples are as follows.
 - a. Style of dressing- to boost our physical appearance
 - b. Personal grooming
 - c. Use of positive terms to describe self in favourable manner
 - d. Sometimes, going the extra mile to enhance self-appeals.
3. By the establishment of desired identities (self-understanding).

For impression management to succeed, we need to take the role of others so that is to be able to, psychologically, step into someone else's shoes, see from their viewpoints and adjust our behaviour, accordingly (Fiske & Taylor 1991).

If we can imagine how others see us or are likely to see us, then we can make adjustments to meet these imagined views. We are always trying to correct our behaviour to be in line with these views of others.

SELF – ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- i. Explain impression management and self-enhancement.
- ii. List the three ways we are motivated in impression management.

3.2 Major Components of Impression Management

We usually take into account other people's viewpoints by adjusting our behaviours. Just how we do this has been explained by Fiske & Taylor, (1991) and Fiske (2004); the following suggestions have been made on the components of impression management.

1. **Behaviour matching:** here we act in ways that match the behaviour of our target personality.
2. **Conforming to situational norms:** every situation has its expected appropriate behaviour ó we try to adopt behaviour that identifies with the situation.
3. **High self- monitors:** those who present self in a positive way are likely to make a favourable impression.
4. **Ingratiation:** ways we appreciate or flatter others can result in favourable responses from them. This has been shown to backfire, if not interpreted well by the target person.
5. **Consistency:** once our beliefs and behaviours are perceived to be consistent, we are likely to impress others favourably.
6. **Verbal and non – verbal behaviours:** what we say and what we do should agree or match with each other. Sometimes the non-verbal, mostly body language, will give way or reveal our true feelings. If what we say does not match what our body is trying to convey, then the non-verbal is taken, seriously, as telling the true story (Argyle et al.1972; Mehrabian, 1972: 325-402).
7. **Self-promotion:** this is trying to present self in a way that will be seen by others as competent. This can result in a negative view of self by others, if interpreted as conceit or fraud.
8. **Intimidation:** this means conveying the impression that one is dangerous, sending a message of òdo not come near or you get hurtö, òdo not go against my wish or you sufferö. Most of the times, this may result in loss of credibility, if interpreted by others as empty threats.
9. **Exemplification:** a case of presenting self as worthy, moral and saintly; this may not go down well with others who may interpret this as ñholier than thouñ attitude.
10. **Supplication:** here, when one wants to be seen as helpless, the action can backfire as one may be seen as lazy or manipulative.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

List the 10 components of impression management.

3.2 Self - Monitoring

Self-monitoring refers to the level at which people rely on social situation to guide their behaviours, rather than relying on their own internal states.

We all engage in self-presentation in order to make the right impressions on others. The extent to which we exercise and exact this control will depend on our individual differences.

These individual differences in self monitoring are measured on two levels, that is, high or low.

1. **High–Self Monitoring.**

These people are interested in behaviours that are socially appropriate and will, mostly, monitor the social situation in order to know how to behave. People in this class have the following traits.

- They are experts in using facial expressions to convey their emotions.
- They are usually able to interpret non-verbal communication from others very well, and often accurately too.
- Since they are likely to behave differently in different situations, the tendency to interpret their behaviours as inconsistent is very high.

2. **Low Self-Monitoring.**

This is also marked by the following traits.

- These individuals are concerned about socially appropriate behaviours; they focus on themselves, and remain ~~themselves~~
- They monitor their behaviours in relation to what they need and what they are interested in.
- They are likely to be consistent in their behaviours across different situations.
- They are seen as more consistent than the high-self monitors.

The high and low self-monitors complement each other. While the high-monitors are more liable to conform to social norms and adjust to them, making room for flexibility, low self-monitors may not be flexible and will stand up against what others conform to, giving room for individual differences, which is vital for group survival.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Explain why high-self monitors are seen as inconsistent, compared to low self-monitors across situations.

3.4 Self–Disclosure

Self-disclosure refers to how much we are willing to reveal ourselves to others. This is a voluntary decision to make information about oneself

available to others; this relates to details that they, ordinarily, may not have access to at that point in time. Self-disclosure is possible through what we say and do, and also through what we do not say or do (Wiemann & Giles, 1988; Jourard, 1971).

The choice of what to disclose and what not to disclose is influenced by many factors; examples are listed below.

1. **Reciprocity:** the kind of information we disclose to someone will likely result in our getting similar disclosure from them. This agrees with the law of reciprocity which requires equal responses from others.
2. **Norms:** situations do determine, to some extent, the kind and how much of information we are likely going to disclose about ourselves; situation may also determine the appropriate information required for disclosure as well.
The information we are likely going to disclose to our doctors will be different from the information we give our religious leaders or teachers, or even our prospective in-laws etc.
3. **Trust:** how much we trust someone determines also how much we are likely to disclose.
4. **Quality of relationship:** we are likely to disclose more, in intimate relationships, than in casual ones. The level of mutual disclosure determines the direction of relationships and the duration of such relationships.
5. **Gender:** women have been found to disclose information more than men; this may explain why the relative lack of self-disclosure in men results in stress. This also prevents healthy self-expression (Jourard, 1971).

SELF- ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Explain the five factors that influence self-disclosure.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have looked at the importance of impression management in social interaction. It is necessary for people to know why they are likely to say what they have to say, and why they behave in certain ways. People need to be aware of the influences exacted by others on their own behaviours.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has considered the concept of 'impression management'. The major components of impression management, that is, self-monitoring and self-disclosure have also been discussed, in the light of current findings in this area. Note that these factors are crucial to building relationships.

In the next unit, you will get to know the causes of people's behaviours, in social interaction, as you study the concept of attribution.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain the differences between high monitors and low monitors
2. a) Why is gender an important factor in impression management
b) List the factors that influence disclosure.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 THEORIES OF ATTRIBUTION

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
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 - 3.2 Jones and Davis's Correspondent Inference Theory.
 - 3.3 Weiner's Attributional Theory of Emotion and Motivation.
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

We are all interested in understanding our own behaviour and the behaviours of others as we interact. Knowing the reasons why we act the way we do or say what we say will help us understand behaviour better.

The process of attribution is the key to explaining the causes of events or behaviours. In attribution, we try to give reasons, explain or make judgement about the causes of events or behaviours. These reasons are mostly attributed to either external or internal causes.

In this unit, we will look at the various theories that explain the causes of our behaviour and the behaviours of others.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define attribution
- explain the process involved in attribution
- describe the causes of your behaviours and the behaviours of others.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

Theories result from researches, and these provide explanations for the occurrence of events or behaviours. The theories propounded by Kelley, Davis Jones and Weiner will help us understand why we behave the way we do.

3.1 Kelley's Theories of Co variation and Configuration

The attribution process, in this context, assigns causes to our behaviours. Knowing if these causes are due to internal factors or external factors is very important; it affects the process of attribution or the way we assign these causes.

Internal causes are related to our personality traits, while external causes are seen as environmental, that is, outside the individual. We will look at the Covariation and Configuration models, separately.

1. Kelley's Covariation model

This theory suggests that when we focus on how people behave (actors), we make attributions as observers. In all social interactions, there are actors and observers, and we can assume any role, as we interact.

The Covariation model assumes that once we have the knowledge of how the actor behaves in different situations, and how others also behave in those situations or similar situations, then we can attribute the causes of present behaviours on the following information.

- a) **Consensus** – this is the extent to which others behave in similar ways with the actor, in a given situation. If our actor's present behaviour agrees with other people's behaviour, then we can say that there is a high consensus, but if others differ in behaviour to the actor, then there is low consensus. High consensus leads to attributing external causes to behaviours, while low consensus results in attaching internal causes to the behaviour in question.

To further illustrate this, if a student failed a course, for instance, now, if we know that other students also failed the course, then there is high consensus. We are likely to attribute the behaviour or event to an external cause, like, poor materials; or we can even question the competence of instructors. If on the other hand, we find out that the student is the only one that failed the course, then there is low consensus; and the likely cause will be internal factor such as the student's level of intelligence or inadequate understanding of course.

- b) **Consistency**- the focus here is on how stable the actor's behaviour is, across time or situations. Using the example above, if the said student also fails other courses in the future, there is high consistency. However, if she/he passes all future courses, the one course she/he failed is viewed in terms of low consistency.

- c) **Distinctiveness** ó this tells us how the actor's present behaviour stands out from other behaviours, in similar situations. If, from our example, we still find out that our hypothetical student also failed other courses in the same semester, then there is low distinctiveness; but if in the same semester he failed only one course, then, there is high distinctiveness.

Table 3.1 Kelley's Covariation Model Table

Consensus	Distinctiveness	Consistency	Causal Attribution
Low	Low	High	Person, Actor/internal
Low	High	Low	Circumstances/External
High	High	High	Stimulus/Target-External

Source: Kelley (1967)

From the above table, the theory suggests that we will likely make internal or external attributions about the actor's behaviour, based on the different combinations of high and low level of the casual information.

2. Kelley's Configuration Model

According to Kelley, there are situations where the observer may not be able to observe several behaviours of the actor or may not have all the three types of information as in the covariance model to use in assessing the actor. In such a case, the observer is expected to explain the behaviour, based on single occurrence or based on the present behaviour being observed.

In the case of single event attribution, a causal schema is used. Causal schemata are general ideas or already made beliefs, preconceptions, theories that explain how certain kind of causes interact to produce a specific kind of effect (Kelley, 1972, 1983; Hewstone and Fincham, 1996). Causal schemata are causal shorthand that enable us make complex inferences, easily, and within a short time (Fiske and Taylor, 1991).

In the face of little information concerning an actor, we rely on past experience or cause-effect relationship and what we have learned from others about such relationship. There are two major causal schemata- the multiple necessary schemata and the multiple sufficient schemata. According to these two schemata, there are either multiple necessary causes or multiple sufficient causes.

In **multiple necessary causes**, the causes or explanations for certain events or behaviours are many, and the absence of any one of the information can result in that behaviour not occurring. While at the same time, the presence of all of these causes may not guarantee the occurrence of the behaviour too.

For example, let us assume that for a student to pass a course, she/he must have continuous assessments, attend all lectures and participate actively in class. If the student does not meet one of these requirements, she/he is likely not going to pass the course; but note also that if she/he meets all the requirements, it is not a guarantee that she/he will pass the course. Meeting all the requirements is necessary, but it may not guarantee success, according to this view.

In the case of **multiple sufficient causes**, the causes for certain events or behaviours occurring are many, and each cause is enough to explain the behaviour. The various reasons that explain the behaviour or event are, independently, sufficient to be accepted. According to this view, each of the three reasons we have in our example explaining why the student failed the course is enough to explain the behaviour. Lack of continuous assessment is enough reason to explain failing the course, just like not attending lectures is enough reason for failing the course etc.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Explain the difference between multiple necessary causes and multiple sufficient causes of behaviour.

3.2 Jones and Davis' Correspondent Inference Theory (CIT)

This theory suggests that the target of any effective attribution is the ability to make inferences that correspond or that are in line with behaviour; that is, the intention of the behaviour and the underlying disposition of the actor. Both the behaviour and the disposition must be seen and recognised as similar. The behaviour should be made to occur by the actor, with no external influence or instructions to do so; this will enable one to make a corresponding inference.

How can we make Inferences?

1. Analysing uncommon effects

We can infer that intended behaviour agrees with some underlying disposition by **analysing uncommon effects**. This means looking at what is distinct about the effect of the choice made. Once we have many

options and decide on one, then we can compare the consequences of the chosen option to the consequences of the other option not chosen. Then what is common about the effect of the choice becomes very important.

If there are fewer differences between these comparisons, then we can infer dispositions with confidence. Also the more negative the consequences which the chosen option will throw up, the more likely we are to attach some importance to the distinctive consequences.

2. We can also look at the **actor's choice**; whether the choice or behaviour was influenced by situational or internal (free will) factors.
3. We can make inferences by concentrating on the **social desirability of the behaviour**. Once there is a deviation from what is desired or accepted, this behaviour catches our attention and hastens our impression formation, because of the distinctiveness of the behaviour. We are likely not going to engage in undesirable behaviour that will put us in bad standing with others.
4. We can infer our behaviour based on the **desirability of the behaviour being observed**.

The underlisted too can also be put into consideration.

The use of roles ó these are well defined roles that people tend to conform to; if done well, their underlying dispositions may not be evident, but if these roles are broken and the actor deviates from them, it is most likely that the actor's underlying disposition will be revealed and corresponding inferences about his behaviour will be made.

Prior expectations based on past experiences with the actor can also help us to decide if present behaviour is in line with other behaviours of the actors. Access to information on past and present disposition, will help us decide if present information will become less important or more important, depending on whether it is similar or different from past behaviours.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Briefly explain the five factors that will help us make corresponding inferences about an actor's present behaviour.

3.3 Weiner's Attribution Theories of Emotion and Motivation

This theory applies the basic principle of attribution to emotions and motivation. The theory posits that our emotions and motivation are

affected by the attributions we make. This theory puts forth three dimensions of causality namely- locus, stability and controllability. The locus dimension has it that causes of events or behaviours can be internal or external (person/situation).

The stability dimension believes that causes of events or behaviours can be permanent or temporary; while the controllability dimension sees causes of events or behaviours in terms of either being controllable or uncontrollable (Weiner 1986).

This theory believes causes are multi-dimensional; and that a combination of causes can result in emotions like anger, feelings of disappointment, anxiety, or depression which, in turn, are likely to affect motivation.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Describe the three dimensions of causality, according to this view.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Our discussions in this unit, so far, have been on the causes of behaviour, using the attribution process. Knowing these causes is very important in understanding the reason for certain behaviour. The general view that the process of attribution involves an actor and an observer is of utmost importance here; also, the fact that both must come into play during interactions is worth paying attention to. Each theory, to some extent, accounts for the various ways we make attributions in the face of information or even limited information.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, the theories of attribution have shown that the causes of behaviour are many; and through the theories of Kelley, Jones and Davis, and Weiner, we have come to appreciate the place of Covariance, configuration, correspondence, inference, emotion and motivation in explaining behaviour.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Define Kelley's Covariance and Configuration Models.
2. Explain how emotion and motivation affect interaction, according to Weiner.

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UNIT 4 BIASES IN ATTRIBUTION

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- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Fundamental Attribution Error (FAE)
 - 3.2 Ultimate Attribution Error(UAE)
 - 3.3 The ActoróObserver Effect (AOE)
 - 3.4 SelfóServing Bias (SSB)
 - 3.5 SelfóCentred Bias(SCB)
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 TutoróMarked Assignment
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Errors occur in our interpretation of behaviour, regardless of whether it is our own behaviour or someone else's behaviour that is being interpreted. When this happens, it can result in false interpretation of behaviour which may have serious consequences on forming relationships during interactions.

Bias is the tendency to favour one cause over another, when explaining some effects. Such favouritism may result in causal attributions that are different from predictions derived from rational attribution principles, like those explained in the theories of attribution (Zebrowitz: 1990).

In this unit, you will be exposed to the different types of biases in attribution, and how they affect our true assessment of events or behaviours resulting in poor relationships.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- identify the errors we make, due to our own biases
- describe the actoróobserver effect in interpreting behaviour
- explain self- serving biases and how we use them
- distinguish between selfó-serving biases and self ó centred biases
- differentiate between fundamental errors and ultimate errors of attribution.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Fundamental Attribution Error (FAE)

The *FAE* is also referred to as correspondence bias, which is the overestimation of the role of dispositional (internal) causes. This error occurs in situations where people overemphasise the internal, rather than, the external causes of behaviour. The importance of personal dispositional factors is overestimated, compared to external factors. The error is strongest in situations where there are low consensus and low distinctiveness, and where people focus on predicting the distant or future behaviours of others, rather than the present or immediate behaviours (Kelley, 1973; Nussbaum, Trope & Liberman, 2003).

Using our example of the student who failed a course, if we interpret this behaviour in terms of internal causes, then we are likely going to use explanations like, the student is not bright, or is lazy. We infer external causes when we make references to lack of textbooks, truancy, or even difficult teachers. This is usually so because internal causes are easier to observe than external causes, and we see the actor, not the external factors when we interact.

Cultural studies have revealed that attributional error may not be universal. This view categorises cultures into two broad groups, namely-individualistic and collectivistic cultures. While individualistic cultures support individual freedom and encourage people to accept personal responsibility for the outcome of events, collectivistic cultures, on the other hand, support group membership, conformity and interdependence, where personal responsibility is minimal or absent (Jellison & Green, 1981).

Collectivistic cultures are less likely to attribute behaviour to internal causes, but may see behaviour as the result of the interface between individual (internal) and situational (external) causes (Letiman, Chiu & Schaller, 2004).

Other researchers found that attributional error may not always be an error. This may be in situations where internal attribution occurs because of the availability of information, at that point in time.

Social Psychology believes that, sometimes, personality traits and other internal factors are, indeed, a reflection of the true cause of behaviour, in which case, assessment may not be regarded as an error (Sabini et al., 2001; Funder 2001b).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Explain why attributional error may not be universal and why it may not always be an error.

3.2 Ultimate Attribution Error (UAE)

Closely related to FAE is Ultimate Attribution Error (UAE); where we see people as falling into two main groups, the 'out-group', that is, those different from us and the 'in-group' - those similar to us.

This type of error affects the way we attribute positive or negative behaviours to the in-group or out-group. We are likely going to overlook negative causes of behaviour, from our in-group, than we would from the out-group. Positive causes are usually emphasised, more, from the in-group than from the out-group.

We may be quick to label negative causes of behaviour for our in-group to external causes and positive causes to internal. While for the out-group, negative behaviour will be attributed to internal causes, and positive behaviour will be seen as luck (external), and not ability or competence. This is so because little credit is given to positive behaviour for the out-group, while little blame, if any, is given to the members of the in-group for negative behaviour (Pettigrew, 1979; Fiske, 1998).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Define the out group and the in group.

3.3 The Actor – Observer Effect (AOE)

This is the tendency by actors and observers to give different interpretations concerning the same events or behaviours. When actors explain their behaviours, they tend to lean towards external causes, while observers may explain the actors' behaviours in terms of internal causes (Knobe & Malle, 2002).

Actors usually see their behaviours as responding to situations. Thus, they attribute such behaviours to external causes, while the observers see the same behaviours of the actors as intentions and dispositions, thus, they attribute internal causes to explaining behaviours.

Actors are aware of the external factors affecting their own actions, more than they are aware of such factors when assessing the actions of others. The individual (actor) is visible to us, more than the external factors which are only known to the individual.

This bias occurs because people have different information about their own behaviour and the behaviours of others.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

In your own words, differentiate between actors and observers in an interaction.

3.4 Self-Serving Bias

Sometimes attributing one's behaviour to external causes will depend on the outcome of the behaviour, whether positive or negative. We tend to take personal credit for positive outcomes, and blame external causes for negative outcomes (Moon, 2003).

There is a cognitive and a motivational explanation to self-serving bias. The cognitive view focuses on the way we process social information. We expect to succeed, thus, we are likely to attribute expected outcome to internal causes, more than to external causes. The motivational explanation holds that the need to protect and enhance our self-esteem and the desire to look good to others result in our making attribution errors- in this case, self-serving bias (Ross, 1977; Bron & Rogers, 1991).

In self-serving bias, we engage in both self-protection bias and self-enhancing bias, in order to protect our self-esteem. Self protection is seen as unrealistic optimism, which is the tendency to believe that positive events will happen to us more than to others, and that negative events are supposed to happen to 'them', not us. This unrealistic optimism distorts reality and increases risky or harmful behaviours. It also encourages one to see 'self' as, uniquely, invulnerable ó 'nothing can happen to me, I am untouchable'.

When we use self-protection bias, we blame our failures on external causes, and this protects our self-esteem. When we take credit for positive behaviours or successes, we are using self- enhancing bias to enhance our self-esteem.

The tendency for self-serving biases is stronger, when we are personally involved or when those close to us are involved. This self-serving bias-

prompting the giving of credit (internal factors) for success or positive behaviour, and apportioning blame (external factors) for failure, has been seen in most cultures. However, it is more pronounced in individualistic cultures than in collectivist cultures (Mezulis et al., 2004).

3.5 Self-Centered Bias

People are likely going to think of their personal contributions, in joint ventures, much more than others will acknowledge those efforts. This happens easily because people are able to remember their own contributions in such group work and interpret their behaviour in line with this assessment, more than their desires to distort the contribution of others (Ross & Sicoly, 1979; Fiske, 2004)

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Describe the relationship between self-protection and self-enhancing bias in explaining self-serving biases.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you must have seen that, in most interactions, the factors that come into place in explaining behaviour are many. Both the actor and observer need to be aware of their biases and be as close to reality as possible, when forming impressions or interpreting events and behaviours.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has brought to light the various biases involved in interpreting events or behaviours. These include fundamental attribution error, ultimate error, actor-observer error, self-serving and self-centred biases. Reasons for such biases have also been enumerated.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Describe the major difference between self-serving bias and self-centred bias.
2. What is the place of culture in both fundamental attribution error and ultimate attribution error?
2. Identify the major sources of error in fundamental attribution errors.

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UNIT 5 CONFORMITY

CONTENTS

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 - 3.1 Factors Affecting Conformity
 - 3.2 Varieties of Conformity
 - 3.3 Group Processes in Conformity.
- 4.0 Conclusion
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Individual behaviour is influenced by the group a person belongs to. Have you ever wondered why you prefer to go along with a particular group? In conformity, your response to social activity is indirect. The group does not need to ask that you join them, but because everyone seems to agree and act in a certain way, you are likely to join them (Lahley, 1998: 530).

Conformity is yielding to group pressure. This may take different forms, and sometimes, it can be as a result of some motives other than group pressure. Conformity is a change in belief or behaviour, in response to real or imagined group pressure. The presence of others, whether actual or implied results in conformity. We tend to do in private, what we think people should do or the right thing to do.

In conformity, there is the outward expression of the norm and private acceptance. The two must agree in order for one to feel comfortable. When one outwardly conforms to what she/he does not privately accept, then one is likely to experience dissonance or disagreement. Sometimes people decide to agree with the group, just to reduce dissonance.

In this unit, the factors that influence conformity, the basis for conformity and the group processes involved in conformity will be studied.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- identify the factors affecting conformity
- appreciate the power of conformity
- explain the place of different groups in conformity
- discuss the role of values and norms in conformity
- explain the basis for conformity.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Factors Affecting Conformity

People tend to conform because factors like group size, group unity (cohesiveness), fear of ridicule, task difficulty, privacy, group norms- among others influence our individual response and behaviour in social situations.

1. Group size and unanimity (majority)

Based on experiments, it has been found that the size of a group, and the level of agreement among members affect conformity. When one person tries to influence another, the level of conformity is low, where two try to influence one person, the level of conformity rises; with three people, the level rises higher and beyond 5 people conformity level drops off, or even, decreases.

Once the majority is unanimous, the pressure to conform is high, but where one person disagrees within the group, conformity decreases. Recent findings have shown that conformity increases with group size of, up to, 8 members or more.

2. Minority influence

Though not common, it does happen that the minority in a group can influence the behaviour or the beliefs of the majority. This minority influence is usually indirect, and occurs slowly. It involves only a moderate change in the view of the majority; it is possible for an individual to resist group pressure (Peplau & Sears, 2002; David & Turner, 2000).

Also, minority position must be consistent with current trends of events, and must avoid appearing rigid and dogmatic providing room for some

degree of flexibility. This will help them not to appear hell bent on their ideas, and will encourage acceptance by the majority.

Minorities do hold strong views and are more concerned over being right. As a result, they do overestimate the number of people who share their views which is usually less than they perceive; though, in a way, this helps them to remain resolute against the position of the majority, which is usually of great benefit, in most cases.

The views of the minority may encourage the majority to access why the minorities are adamant in their views or positions and this may result in a change of position, no matter how small, on the part of the majority.

3. **Fear of ridicule.**

Usually wrong answers or inappropriate behaviour is ridiculed by others, such that when the group is wrong, the fear of being ridiculed suppresses the minority view, resulting in conformity to the group.

4. **Ambiguity of the situation (task difficulty).**

When faced with difficult tasks, people are likely going to yield to the views of the majority; even if this proposition or answer is not correct, especially if the majority feels confident that they are right. In a situation where people become uncertain, they tend to rely more on other people's opinions, thus increasing conformity to group norms.

5. **Privacy in responses.**

In the face of group pressure, it is easier for the individual not to conform, if asked to respond privately, than when asked to respond publicly. Thus, there seems to be less conformity in anonymous responses or where responses are given in private or in writing.

Anonymous responses decrease conformity, though it does not remove it or make it disappear.

6. **Group Norms**

Group norms are very powerful in influencing behaviour. People are mostly influenced by three powerful motives, such as- the desire to be liked or accepted by others, the desire to be right, with accurate understanding of the world- knowing what is right and what is wrong; and finally the desire to receive rewards and avoid punishment.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Briefly describe the six factors affecting conformity.

3.2 Varieties of Conformity

In this section, we are going to consider the varieties of conformity. We will look at two major types- normative social influence and informational social influence.

(a) Normative |Social Influence

Norms, as defined by a people, affect their behaviour. Normative social influence involves altering our behaviour to meet the expectations of others. It is also seen as the tactics of getting people to like us. Some reasons adduced for normative social influence include the following:

- The need for approval or acceptance by the group.
- The norms guarding the group dictate the behaviour of its individual members.
- Norms are societal standard or what society defines as acceptable and expects members to abide by.
- A culture that lays emphasis on the welfare of the individual over that of the group is, likely, going to have the problem of non-conformity, on the part of members, than cultures that emphasise the welfare of the group, above that of the individual.
- Some cultures in Nigeria may increase conformity on its members, compared to some western cultures. Think of your own culture; is it individualistic or collectivistic in nature?

(b) Informational Social Influence

This type of influence is based on our tendency to depend on others as sources of information about the social world. Our behaviour is mostly influenced by the information we receive from others.

The certainty about what is right or wrong reduces our confidence and motivates us towards conformity; while certainty reduces our reliance on our ability to make decision and reduces our likelihood to conform. We are likely to be influenced for the following reasons:

- The belief that others have some bits of information that we do not have, so we conform or agree to go along.
- If our need for direction and information is met, we are likely to conform.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Give reasons why people are likely going to conform, according to the normative social influence view.

3.3 Group Process in Conformity

Risky shift ó this is the phenomena where the group is likely going to advise the individual to take risks, more than the average individual advice of its members. There are factors that may predict how risky or cautious these group advices will be, these are listed below.

Group polarisation ó it has been found that discussions between group members with similar attitudes, in order to reach difficult decisions, strengthen the individual inclinations of the members (Cooper et al., 2004). The group can take extreme decisions than the mean of the individual members position, which can be towards a riskier or more cautious direction. Group polarisation can be as a result of any of the following.

- Exchange of information ó usually relevant information from members may result in supportive arguments beyond what the individual had thought of ó example of informational social influence.
- Definition of the identity of the group, compared to other groups- normative social influence.
- Social categorisation process which occurs in three steps:
 - Seeing self as a member of a group (the in group)
 - Identify these in group characteristics as different from the out group.
 - Stereo- typing self as a member of the group (Cooper et al., 2004)

Group think ó a mode of thinking in which the desire to reach unanimous agreement overrides the motivation to adopt proper, rational decision making procedures (Janis 1971, 1982).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Describe the steps involved in the social categorisation process.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The information given above has shown that for an individual to survive in a society, there is the need to, positively, conform to some societal norms. The society and the groups must deliberately choose to set standards that are progressive for her members. Norms must be re-evaluated, from time to time, in order to maintain positive conformity especially for younger population or members.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have seen that individual behaviour is affected by the behaviour of the group. We have also considered group size, unanimous groups, group sanction, social influence and group process as factors that influence conformity were presented.

In the next study unit, we will look at the concept of compliance and how group pressure can affect behaviour of the individual in the society.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Describe the effect of group polarisation in conformity.
2. Define and explain the factors involved in normative social influence.

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UNIT 6 COMPLIANCE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Principles of Compliance
 - 3.2 Techniques in Compliance
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 TutoróMarked Assignment
- 7.0 References /Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Have you ever noticed that people respond to requests better than they do to demands? Compliance involves direct request from one person to another or from a group to another. In compliance, people yield to this request, which is different from conformity where there is no request, yet one feels the need to conform.

A request places less demand on the individual and gives room for the liberty to comply or not. Behaviour comes as a result of compliance to a request, which, in most cases, is seen as coming from a peer or a friend. In this unit, you will be taken through the principles behind compliance and the techniques used in compliance.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the place of friendship in compliance
 - explain the concept of scarcity and reciprocity in terms of compliance
 - describe how authority and social validation influence compliance
- discuss the various techniques in compliance.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Principles of Compliance

There are many techniques for gaining compliance. Usually, these techniques can be through requesting, selling or convincing. These techniques are all based on the following principles.

- **Friendship/Liking**

There is a higher likelihood of our responding to request from friends or people we like more than to non-acquaintance or people we do not like.

- **Commitment /Consistency**

Once we have taken a position or once we are committed to certain action, it is easier for us to comply with the request that agrees with our position.

- **Scarcity**

We appreciate and value what is scarce or not readily available and are likely going to comply with requests that focus on scarcity than those that make no reference to scarcity. This is seen as a once in a lifetime opportunity.

- **Reciprocity**

We tend to be more comfortable giving back to those who have given to us than given to those to whom we have no obligation. We are more likely to comply to requests from those groups of persons who have given to us before, agreeing with the notion that "one good turn deserves another". It is assumed that unsolicited gifts force the receiver to reciprocate in line with implied or stated requests (Tourangeau, 2004).

- **Social Validation**

Requests for actions that agree with the norm accepted by all are likely to be complied with than those that deviate from what is acceptable. What we do and think about must agree with what others are doing or thinking. Knowing that others have done the same or complied, will spur the likelihood to also comply.

- **Authority**

It is easier to comply with requests from someone of a higher authority or who appears to have authority over us or more than we do.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

List the five principles of compliance.

3.2 Techniques in Compliance

Based on the principles above, the following techniques are used in compliance.

(a) Ingratiation techniques

This is getting others to like us so that they will be more willing to agree to our request based on the principle of friendship or liking. Impression management techniques are also used here to achieve ingratiation or increase compliance. Some ingratiation techniques include the followings.

- **Flattery** ó praising others. This could backfire if taken as insincere by the receiver.
- **Improving appearance** ó physical attractiveness has been shown to succeed as compliance agent
- **Positive non-verbal cues** – smiles, handshakes, head nods, sitting next to someone, all send signals that are positive in nature.
- **Small favours for target persons** ó increases the likelihood to comply.
- **Incidental similarity** ó similarities in names, birthdays and towns are likely to increase the tendency to comply with the person's requests.
- **Cooperation with others** ó showing them that you are on their side may make them comply.

(b) Foot – In – The – Door (FITD) Technique

In this technique, requests begin with small ones, and when granted, larger ones are presented, usually the desired request. In this case, the chance of compliance is increased after the initial small request for compliance has been successful. Most free samples or free trials in commercials for products capitalise on this technique.

The catch word is that once you accept the free sample, it becomes easier to request that you buy the product. This technique induces increased compliance; because it relies on the principle of consistency, where refusing the larger request will not be consistent with our first behaviour of complying with the small request. It has been found also that when people comply with a small request, it leads to their complying with larger ones for the following two reasons.

- People find it easier to comply with requests that cost little in terms of money and input.
- People feel committed to the cause or issues involved when they comply with smaller requests (Burger and Guadagne 2003).

(c) **Door – In – The – Face (DITF) Technique**

Door-in-the-face is another way of obtaining compliance that is almost the opposite of the *FITD* technique. Here, one begins with asking for a big favour or making an almost impossible request that is likely going to be turned down. Once request is denied, the person making the request agrees that it is excessive or asking for too much, and compromises by making a smaller request – usually this smaller request is what the individual really wanted initially. The idea is that when the first request is compared with the second one, the individual is likely going to comply with the second, partly because there was a promise in middle ground so to speak, and also that seemed more reasonable than the first (perceptual contrast).

Note that if the second request is presented without the first one, it is more likely that the request will not result in compliance. The approach relies on the reciprocity norm or principle. The first technique slams the door in the face of the person requesting.

Finally, *DITF* compliance is emotional because when the first large request is turned down, we feel bad – negative emotions or guilty, so we look for ways to reduce these negative emotions in order to feel comfortable. Thus, the second request provides the opportunity to make amends; thus, we are more likely to make use of the chance to make up and relieve our guilt or negative emotions (Miller, 2002).

(d) **That – is – not – all techniques**

In this form of gaining compliance, an initial request is followed by an extra incentive, before the target person is able to make any response. The extra incentive in this technique is an effective means of increasing the chance of others saying 'yes' or complying with various requests.

(e) **Playing- hard - to – get techniques**

This technique suggests that a person or object is scarce and hard to obtain or get at. We tend to place more value on what is rare, scarce or not available. Thus, we are ready to go the extra mile or put in more effort to obtain the items. This technique is used in the area of romance, job hunting and marketing.

Playing hard to get increases the desirability of the individual item or request to the point where the receiver's choice of compliance is higher than it will be, if the request or item is available or not scarce.

(f) **The fast approaching – deadline technique**

Still using the scarcity principle, the fact that we place more value on what is scarce is the deadline technique. Here, a time frame is attached to a behaviour or item beyond which it is assumed that it will not be available. This technique increases compliance when the target person is told that he/she has limited time to take advantage of some offer or to obtain some items or agree to some requests.

Usually, this is a sales strategy that works well for people in business with the sole intention of busting sales rather than the claimed notion that stock will run out. This message of deadline still has indirect condition that implies a rise in price if the deadline is missed; this is not usually the case, though. In fact, most times, the price goes down after enough sales.

(g) **Low – Ball (LB) Approach**

This technique tries to obtain (one oral/ verbal) commitment to do something, after this commitment has been made; the cost of fulfilling the commitment is increased. This process of gaining compliance has a deal or an offer to make it less attractive to the receiver after he/she has accepted the deal or offer. Success of this technique is dependent on the importance the individual places on the initial commitment, because he/she feels obligated to keep the promise even when conditions that led to the commitment no longer exist or doing so might cost more than it was planned for. (Burger & Cornelius 2003)

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Explain the six ingratiation techniques used in compliance.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have seen that for compliance to succeed, the individuals concerned must make the interaction less stressful, and allow each other appreciate the quality of the product. Where the need to comply is seen as a must, it gives the individual a feeling of insecurity

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has given you an insight into the principles and techniques used in compliance. The principles of friendship/liking, commitment, consistency, reciprocity, social validation and authority have all been incorporated into the techniques used in getting people to comply.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Compare playing hard to get technique with the fast-approaching deadline technique.
2. List six principles and seven techniques used in compliance.

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UNIT 7 OBEDIENCE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Reasons for Obedience
 - 3.2 Factors that Affect Obedience
 - 3.3 Resisting Destructive Obedience
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 TutoróMarked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Have you ever wondered what will happen if you disobey those in authority? While we may not think twice disobeying our friends, it is a difficult matter altogether dealing with people in authority.

Obedience leads to a change in behaviour as a result of response to a demand, usually, from those in authority or authority figures (Blass 2004). To what extent can we be affected by demands from others? Can these demands influence us to hurt others?

In this unit, you will learn why people obey; you will also be able to identify the factors that result in obedience, the destructive aspects of obedience, and how we can resist destructive obedience.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define obedience and authority figures
- explain the reason behind obedience
- explain destructive obedience
- discuss how to resist destructive obedience.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Reasons for Obedience

Milgram's experiments on obedience in which twenty six of his forty participants obeyed the experimental instruction all the way, upon the administration of up to 450 volts maximum shock (electric) level to the learner was an amazing account of how far people can go, even if reluctantly, to obey those in authority despite their own misgivings about the effect of the obedience.

The high rate of obedience noticed by Milgram was attributed to the following factors.

1. The presence of the perceived authority figure

This ensured obedience in two ways, as listed below.

- **Diffusion of responsibility**- the belief that the authority figure is ultimately in charge relieved the person from following orders, from taking personal responsibility for his/her actions.
- **Agents of force**- they tend to intimidate us into following orders. Fear of the consequences of disobedience may lead us to obey orders.

2. The timing of the request made

If people are not given time to think through what is being demanded of them, they are most likely to obey more than those who have time to think over the demand. It has been found that once people do not have time to think through a demand, they become more vulnerable to persuasive attempts.

3. Graduation of demand

This refers to demand from the less stressful to the more stressful one or from a small demand to more demanding one. One is obeying increasing demands.

In our example, if the demand for 450 volts was made at the onset, not many people would have obeyed. But starting with 15 volts and adding to that gradually narrows the gap between the less to the highest volts, making obedience more rational than it would have been.

Increasing the shock level, gradually, is a good example of the foot in the door technique in compliance. Once there is a commitment in terms of administering the lesser shock, then, chances of obeying further instructions to administer higher shocks becomes much easier.

4. Psychological distance

Our obedience will depend on how we feel between our actions and the result of those actions. It also means the degree to which we can dissociate ourselves from the consequences.

5. Socialisation

We learn from our parents, teachers and older siblings as we grow up. It is assumed that obedience is also learned and may become a difficult habit to resist (Brown 1986).

6. Social situations

Social roles place certain individuals at advantage in relationships; examples are the parent-child, teacher-student, doctor-patient, employer-employee roles where the parent, teacher, doctor, employer have power more than the child, student, patient and employee in this relationship or settings respectively. How society empowers these groups when interacting can increase or reduce the power these authority figures have. If these roles are changed, will the use of power also change? It is most likely to be no.

SELF – ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Explain six reasons why people obey.

3.2 Factors that Affect Obedience

In addition to the reasons why people obey, according to Milgram's experiment, the following factors are also listed as affecting obedience or influencing people to obey.

- **Status and prestige of authority figure**

The following forms of social power influence people to obey, for the following reasons.

- **Expert social power**

The authority figure is able to command obedience because it is believed that this person is knowledgeable and a responsible expert.

- **Legitimate social power**

This person can influence others to obey because it is assumed that he/she has the right or legal authority to give orders (Blass & Schmitt, 2001).

- **Behaviour of others.**

If other people in a similar situation disobey orders or demands, chances are that others will do likewise. If demands are made to a group and some members do not obey these demands, the level of obedience for the group will drop or decrease.

- **Personality characteristics.**

Not everyone is obedient to authority in the same way; but authoritarian personalities are prone to following authority figures without questioning.

SELF – ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Briefly state the three factors that affect obedience.

3.3 Resisting Destructive Obedience

Obedying orders or demands from authority figures have been shown to be very destructive where the recipient is destructive. Where the recipient is expected to obey before complaining, sometimes they do not have time to reflect on these demands or orders but follow through immediately. Some strategies have been suggested to help people resist the effects of destructive obedience.

- **Personal responsibility**

It is believed that those exposed to taking commands from authority figures are also responsible for any harm inflicted or produced. This means that there is a shift from those in authority assuming responsibility for those obeying authority figures.

- **Destructive commands should be seen as inappropriate**

Beyond certain points, total submissions to destructive commands are inappropriate. Here, models acting roles of rejecting commands should be made available.

- **Question authority figures.**

When motives and reasons behind certain commands are questioned by those receiving such commands, this reveals a lot that can make these authority figures rethink and re-evaluate their actions. Note that authority figures have the power to command obedience but that this power is not irresistible.

Though most authority figures have the machinery to enforce obedience, and resisting may be very dangerous, it is however not impossible. Most challenges to authority figures cost a lot, but people have tried and won and have also changed the course of history, thereby improving the quality of life of their fellow human beings. People like Mahatma Gandhi of India, Martin Luther king Jnr. of USA and Nelson Mandela of South Africa among others are examples of people who have dared to challenge authorities in their times and changed the course of history for their people, and for humanity.

- **Know that authority figures have to command blind obedience.**

Knowing that authority figures can command such blind obedience from subordinates can help people to prepare ahead of time on how to react during such occasions. Individuals can resist blind commands and help others do likewise, if armed with the requisite knowledge.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

List the five strategies people can employ in resisting destructive obedience.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt that authority figure is a major factor in obedience and compliance. You have to note that society also accepts this and does little to discourage it, so that the individual remains in a subordinated relationship. However, he/she must be empowered to use strategies that will help, especially, in handling destructive obedience, while not underestimating the authority figure.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you are now aware of the fact that authority figures do command obedience and that they can use their authority to inflict pains or harm on others, by enforcing destructive obedience. The reason why people obey and find it difficult to disobey authority has been made known to you too; the strategies for resisting destructive obedience or harmful commands have also been enumerated and discussed.

In the next unit, attitude formation will be considered, including why we form attitudes and the processes involved in attitude formation. Meanwhile, take note of all the basics of interaction that you have been exposed to here.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Compare the effect of the presence of perceived authority figures and social situations as factors responsible for high rate of obedience, according to Milgram.
2. What strategies can help an individual resist destructive obedience?

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MODULE 2 ATTITUDES AND PERSUASION

Unit 1	Attitude Formation and Attitude Change
Unit 2	Persuasion
Unit 3	Prejudice and Discrimination
Unit 4	Stereotypes

UNIT 1 ATTITUDE FORMATION AND ATTITUDE CHANGE

CONTENTS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Attitudes describe our feelings, thinking and behaviour, whether positively or negatively, towards objects or stimuli. It can be a mixture of beliefs that are informed by the knowledge we have of the world, our sense of values of what is good, desirable, and worthwhile and the meaning we attach to events, objects and people.

We are always trying to make sense out of our world by relating with people daily. What informs our choice is usually related to the way we evaluate objects or stimuli. Our evaluation could result in forming attitudes of like or dislike for objects or persons. (Zimberdo & Leippie, 1991). We begin to form our attitudes through direct and indirect experiences or by listening to the experiences of others as told by them. In this unit, you are going to be exposed to the components of attitude, why attitudes are formed and how they can be changed.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain attitude as described by the three components of attitudes
- describe how attitudes are formed
- explain why attitudes are formed
- explain how attitudes can be changed.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Components of Attitudes

Attitudes have been defined as the evaluation of the various aspects of the social world. It is generally believed that attitudes have three components, namely- the cognitive, the affective and the behavioural. The cognitive component is made up of thoughts and beliefs about attitudinal objects. The affective (emotional) involves our feelings about the objective, which could be that of frustration or anger. The behavioural (action) reflects a tendency to act in certain ways towards an attitudinal object.

Attitudes serve the following functions, as we continue in our attempt to evaluate and understand the social world.

- **Knowledge function**

Attitudes aid our interpretations of new information and influence our acceptance or rejection of the attitudinal object based on the favourability of the attitude. If new information agrees with our attitudes (consistence), then, it is seen or interpreted as reliable; and if not consistent it is seen or interpreted as unreliable.

- **Identify function (value expressive)**

Attitude allows us to express our core values and beliefs; it enables us to express ourselves, and it gives us a sense of personal integrity.

- **Self esteem function**

Once people are able to maintain particular attitudes, this can help enhance their feelings of self worth.

- **Ego – defence function**

This offers self protection from unwanted information about self, through claiming certain attitudes. It also helps to protect us from accepting personal deficiencies.

- **Adjustment function**

Favourable responses from others encourage acceptable attitudes and become associated with important rewards like acceptance and approval. This can be expressed publicly.

- **Impression motivation function**

Attitude is used to influence others to have a positive view of ourselves. This motivation can result in a shift in the attitude we express. (Katz, 1960; Shavitt 1990).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

List the three components of attitudes and the six functions they serve.

3.2 Attitude Formation

We develop attitudes as we interact with people. Parents and siblings may be our first contact, and later, teachers, peers, friends, and colleagues, among others. They all influence the formation of attitudes. The following explanations on how attitudes are formed have been suggested.

- **Direct instruction**

Reading instructions or information, especially from others, can influence the attitude we form towards an event or an object. If we are told that we will enjoy an event, we may develop a positive attitude towards that event and evaluate it as worthwhile, even before we experience the actual event.

- **Pairing events or objects with positive ones (classical conditioning).**

Once an object is associated with positive outcome, this object becomes highly rated. Classical conditioning is able to change the way we feel about certain things. This form of learning can result in emotional and psychological responses. It has been noted that association with positive

objects reinforce attitude formation more than the association with negative objects (Olson & Fazio, 2001).

- **Reinforcement of positive behaviour (operant conditioning).**

Behaviours or events that elicit positive responses or are reinforced, positively, are most likely going to be repeated. Operant conditioning is the form of learning where rewards strengthen attitudes, and punishment weakens attitudes. This conditioning requires that the individual comes in contact with the attitudinal object in question, and only after receiving either reward or punishment, will an attitude be formed concerning the event or object.

Most of what we like or dislike is reinforced by people we meet, resulting in forming attitudes towards these events, objects or behaviours. This agrees with the exposure effect view by Zajonc (2001b), where he asserts that frequent exposure to an event or object helps people to form attitudes toward the object or event.

- **Role models by others (people of significance)**

Usually, we prefer to agree with those we like or those we look up to. They could be our parents, siblings, teachers, colleagues, leaders, friends, clergy, and public figures among others. Once they act as models, we follow their leading. In the absence of direct contact or experience, we can form attitudes similar to the attitudes of the models. Our attitudes are usually similar to those that are close to us or those we love. (Rohan & Zanna, 1996; Kowalski & Kowalski, 2003).

- **Genetic influence**

It is believed that genetic potentials inherited from parents are crucial to attitude formation, even though what we learn from parents and others (environmental) play a more prominent role in attitude formation. Concepts or new words are taught by parents along with explanations or warnings that reflect formed attitudes that are likely going to be passed on to the child. (Rohner Schwarto, 2001).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Briefly describe five explanations for attitude formation.

3.3 Attitude Change

Based on the explanations on how attitudes are formed, can these developed attitudes be easily changed? The following theories tell us how.

- **Cognitive consistency theories**

Different experiences and additional or new information can influence us to change our attitudes. This is because we like to balance our attitudes and behaviour so that they do not contradict each other. Cognitive consistency is the desire to avoid contradictions between our attitudes and behaviours (Festinger, 1997).

Consistency is likely when thoughts and feelings are in agreement, or when our behavioural components agree with our subjective norms. Disagreement between attitudes and subjective norms may cause us to behave differently in the way that is inconsistent with our attitudes (Ajzen, 2001).

- **Cognitive distance theory**

This view proposes that we are likely going to be motivated to change our attitudes and/or our behaviours once there is an uncomfortable physical state called dissonance. Dissonance is the state of unease or a state of being anxious due to the fact that our behaviour is contrary to our self concept i.e. who we are (Aronson, 1998).

Dissonance comes from within; it is how we feel and evaluate our actions and behaviours with what we believe that motivates us to change. This type of attitude change has nothing to do with outside influence. The motivation is to stop this bad or unpleasant feeling leading to attitude and a change in behaviour (Wood, 2000).

Inconsistency is removed in three ways ó

- Change the behaviour
- Change the attitudes
- Bring new beliefs and attitudes to bear on the situations.

Any of these three ways, if employed, will reduce dissonance and restore a state of consonance, where there will be no contradictions or inconsistency between attitudes and behaviour. When we engage in public behaviour, it is easier to change our attitudes (privately held) to be consistent with this behaviour (Stone & Copper, 2001).

- **Self- perception theory**

Daryl Ben (1967) suggests that instead of inconsistency in behaviours, certain situations do arise where people are not really sure of their attitudes. In this case, changing attitudes to be consistent with behaviour is not as a result of inconsistency, discomfort or anxiety, but as a result of reflecting on one's behaviours, and inferring what attitudes must be. Attitudes can be adjusted to match behaviour, sometimes, even when there is no reflection on that behaviour.

- **Congruity theory**

This theory suggests attitude shift within the individual, instead of similarities and inferences between people. One may have attitudes that are likely going to shift in the direction of agreement or congruence. Negative attitudes towards drug abuse may shift mildly if those we love are involved. Our attitudes towards our loved ones will be less positive; and towards drug abuse less negative. If we do not love them then, it may not affect our attitude to drug abuse much. Greater shift is likely towards a milder attitude.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Compare cognitive consistency theory with cognitive dissonance theory.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have been exposed to the process of evaluation of information that helps to form or change attitudes. These formed or changed attitudes are important, and usually reflect in behaviours. For an individual to express agreement between behaviour and attitudes, these processes must be experienced, either directly or indirectly.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have been taken through how new information is used by an individual to form or change his/her attitudes and also influence behaviour. The various theories explaining these processes of forming and changing attitudes have been explored.

In the next unit, you will be examining persuasion, the factors responsible for persuasion, the theories of persuasion and the methods of resisting persuasion.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain the six functions of attitudes.
2. Describe the principles of operant and classical conditioning, as they relate to attitude formation and attitude change.

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UNIT 2 PERSUASION

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Theories of Persuasion
 - 3.2 Factors that Affect Persuasion
 - 3.3 Resisting Persuasion
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 TutoróMarked Assignment
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Attitudes are formed from birth, and the formation process continues for as long as we remain alive. These attitudes are also the target of change. The act of trying to change our attitudes by others is called persuasion. We are confronted daily, with activities or events initiated by individuals or groups, all aimed at persuading us to change our attitudes.

Think of your day- to-day activities- starting from morning, how many bill boards, sales men, hawkers, friends, and family members have you come in contact with? These interactions, in most cases, are all attempts at persuading you to change your attitude towards something or someone.

We are all potential agents of persuasion, as long as we have some views and ideas to share with others. The usual intention is to get our audience to see our point of view, to agree with it or accept it. The use of various kinds of messages in an effort to change other people's attitudes is persuasion.

In this unit, you will come to appreciate the power that others have in persuading us to change our attitudes. You will also be exposed to the processes of persuasion, the factors that affect persuasion, and the effectiveness of persuasion.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define the communicators and the audience in persuasion
- explain the place of message in persuasion
- identify the factors that affect persuasion
- describe how we can resist persuasion
- discuss the theories of persuasion.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Theories of Persuasion

The following theories focus on how messages are processed before persuasion takes place.

1. Systematic processing theories

These theories focus on the detailed processing of the content of the message by the recipient. Hovland et al. (1953), propose that there is a sequence of processes that makes messages persuasive, any error of omission or mix-up will make persuasion impossible. These processes include:

- attentiveness
- comprehension of the content
- acceptance of conclusion

McGuire (1969), corroborating the above, identifies the following as being crucial to the persuasive process:

- attentiveness
- good understanding of the message (comprehension)
- acceptance of the message
- retention
- resultant reaction/action, as a result of the message

If any of the above steps is omitted, the sequence will be broken making persuasion attempt ineffective.

2. Elaborate Likelihood Model (ELM)

This model proposes that if one is able to, critically, evaluate the logic of persuasive arguments, and also able to generate counter arguments, then the less likely he will be persuaded. The ability to access and generate counter arguments will depend on the type of thinking one is engaged in. When presented with persuasive arguments, we process them using any of the routes to persuasion discussed below:

- **Central route to persuasion**

Here, one must have both the motivation and time to think critically about the logic of the argument. This makes us less susceptible to persuasion.

- **Peripheral route to persuasion**

When we are motivated and/or do not have time to evaluate the arguments presented to us critically, especially when we are listening and doing another thing at the time, we are not able to generate effective counter-argument. This will make us susceptible to persuasion (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; Stephenson, Benoit & Tshida, 2001).

3. Heuristic – systematic persuasion model (Chaiken, 1987)

Heuristics are shortcuts to problem solving that do not always lead to the right answers. The above theory states that people who process on the peripheral route often use heuristics as logical thought (Drake et al 1998). The use of heuristics can result in people using superficial aspects of the argument that is not related to the logic of the argument to be persuaded.

The audience might allow things like physical beauty, popularity of the communicator rather than the quality of argument to persuade them. The attitude formed using peripheral route does not last and do not predict behaviour like those formed during the central route. (Chaiken 1987; Fazio 1990).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Describe the sequences of processing persuasive messages according to Hovland et al and McGuire.

3.2 Factors that affect persuasion

In persuasion, we have the source (communicator) and the recipient or receiver (audience) using the message as the tool (what). Usually, if one can answer the question- "WHO said WHAT to WHOM, with WHAT effect?" Then persuasion has been effective or successful. For communicators, the following factors will be considered in persuasion.

- **Credibility of communicators**

Experts and people who seem to know what they are talking about are likely to be more persuasive than non experts. Also members of our in-group are usually assessed as more credible than those of the out-group.

- **Physical attractiveness of communicators**

Once the source of the message is from an attractive communicator, the product or object of persuasion becomes associated with the attractiveness portrayed. Advertisers use attractive models to associate their products with such beauty. It is implied that the use of such products will result in the same physical attractiveness of the models.

Attractive people are likely going to be able to persuade us well, especially if we are processing information using the peripheral route where we are likely going to concentrate on the superficial qualities of the speakers, rather than actually evaluating the quality of the arguments. (Eagly & Chaiken 1975; Petty, Cacioppo & Goldman 1981).

- **Appearance of the message**

When messages are designed to change our attitudes, they may not succeed compared to those that are not intended for that purpose. When messages or arguments presented do not look like attempts to persuade us, we are likely going to be persuaded by them (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Prior warnings help build our resistance to persuasion.

- **Use of distraction in persuasion**

Distractions may make the audience more susceptible to persuasion than having the audience pay full attention to the message.

- **Adoption of a two –sided approach by the communicator**

This approach is effective where the audience holds contrary views or attitudes to persuasion. Here, both sides to the arguments are presented

with emphasis on refuting the side the speaker is opposed to ; this gives the audience a sense of satisfaction allowing the speaker to reinforce his/her position in order to be able to persuade the audience.

- **Fast and slow communicators**

The audience is likely to perceive the credibility of the speaker better if he/she speaks rapidly, because it is believed that those who speak rapidly are good at persuasion than slow speakers (Miller et al., 1976).

- **Confidence of the communicators**

If the speaker appears to be very confident as he/she speaks, regardless of the validity of what is said, he/she is likely to persuade the audience more than a less confident communicator.

- **Age and persuasion**

Younger people are likely going to be persuaded to change their attitudes easier than the older ones, because adults are more resistant to change their attitudes.

- **The audience**

Some people can easily be persuaded than others.

The young can be easily persuaded compared to the adult.

Those who use the **peripheral route** for processing information may be easily persuaded than the users of the **central route**.

Females may be persuaded more easily than males etc. Knowing your audience is important in persuasion.

The following variables are equally central to the process of persuasion.

(a) Intelligent Quotient (IQ)

People low in *IQ* may be easily persuaded compared to those with moderate to high *IQ*, because they lack the cognitive ability to critically analyse messages and generate counter arguments. In some cases, people with high *IQ* may be easily persuaded than those with low *IQ*, especially, if the persuasive message requires complex analysis which those with high *IQ* can easily appreciate (Rhodes & Wood 1992).

(b) Self-esteem

Here, those with moderate self-esteem are easily persuaded than those with either low or high self-esteem (Rhodes & Wood, 1992). Those with low self-esteem may be easily distracted and not able to concentrate on the persuasive message, resulting in their inability to process the arguments well, and leading to a failure of persuasion. On the other hand, those with high self-esteem have a lot of confidence in their own opinions; and even when they appreciate and comprehend the arguments, they are not likely going to yield easily to persuasive arguments.

(c) Age

Young people try to develop attitudes they will hold on to as adults, so while trying to develop their own attitudes, they become vulnerable to persuasive attempts. The older we are, the less vulnerable we become to persuasive attempts (Krosnick & Alwin, 1989).

(d) Mood

The mood of an audience will determine if they can easily be persuaded or not. People will always want to maintain a happy mood; thus, they will not likely, analyse persuasive messages critically, and may use the peripheral route and analyse messages based on superficial qualities of the speaker. People who are good looking or smart, but not in a happy mood will use the central route to analyse persuasive messages; they may be easily persuaded because the message must be logical for them to appreciate (Bless, Bohner, Schwarz & Strack, 1990).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Summarise all the factors that affect persuasion for the audience.

3.3 Resisting Persuasion

Why do most attempts at persuasion fail? Due to our attitudes concerning the issues that have been formed, we are more likely to resist any attempt at persuading us to change these attitudes. The following factors explain why we are able to resist most systematic efforts aimed at persuading us.

- **Reactance**

Here, we react in the face of mounting pressure to persuade us to change our attitudes on some issues. We do so in order to protect our personal freedom. As the pressure to persuade us rises, we begin to experience a degree of resentment and anger that is likely to influence us to take the opposite views to those the speaker presents or is attempting to persuade us to adopt. The effect is a negative change in attitude. It is believed that in an attempt to change ourselves, strong persuasive messages in favour of attitude change may produce greater opposition, than when moderate or weak persuasive messages are presented (Fuegen & Brehm, 2004). The strong motivation to react comes to play when the individual perceives that the persuasive message is a direct threat to his/her freedom.

- **Forewarning**

This is the advantaged knowledge we have that the persuasive message is targeted to change our attitudes towards certain issues. Do you think that knowing ahead of time that your parent, sibling or friend is coming to convince you on an issue prepares you to resist? In a way, this may be true; this is because it gives you the chance to be armed in the following ways.

1. **Opportunities to formulate counter arguments**

Our counter arguments reduce the effect of the messages on us, and give us time to recall facts that may come to disprove some aspects of the persuasive message, thus reducing the likelihood of our being persuaded.

2. **Opportunity to make positive attitude change**

Here, if individuals have the foreknowledge of a speaker's intention, it may help them to make a shift in the positive direction before they receive the persuasive message. This way, they can convince themselves that they have given in to change, not because they want to, but that they have allowed it to show themselves as not gullible or easily influenced (Quinn & Wood 2004).

3. **Selective avoidance**

This is a tendency to direct attention away from information that has the potential to change existing attitudes. Such avoidance increases resistance to persuasion. People can decide to ignore or avoid

information that does not agree with their views, and these include persuasive messages. If they do not pay attention to the message, their chances of analysing and becoming persuaded by the message is reduced.

This also means that we are likely going to pay full attention to persuasive messages that agree with our views. When we ignore certain messages and pay attention to others, we are engaging in selective exposure. When we select what to focus our attention on, our attitude is likely to remain, mostly, intact for long periods of time.

4. Defending our attitudes

People usually provide their own defence against attempts to persuade them by arguing against views that contradict their own (Eagly et al., 1999). People do also, process carefully, counter attitudinal inputs and argue actively against them, rather than ignore them. This helps in resisting persuasion.

5. Inoculation against “bad ideas”

People can be inoculated against persuasion by presenting to them views contrary to their own, alongside arguments refuting these counter attitudinal positions. When counter-arguments against opposing views are presented, people become motivated to generate additional counter-arguments of their own, which will make them more resistant to any attitudinal change.

SELF - ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Explain, in not more than two sentences, the first theory of persuasion discussed.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt that the act of persuasion is complex and unique. The actors are all expected to participate actively, if persuasion is to succeed. Sincerity and integrity of both the givers and the receivers of the persuasive messages go a long way in helping this process. Attention must therefore be given to details with a focus on increasing the ability to persuade our social world, towards improving it positively.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you are now conversant with the various factors involved in persuasion. The various theories of persuasion and reasons why persuasions can be successful or resisted by the recipients have also been highlighted.

In the next unit, you will be studying different ways of processing information; especially their role in identifying the groups we belong to and those we do not belong to. We will also study how prejudice affects our behaviours towards the differing groups.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. How is the elaborate likelihood model different from the heuristic systematic model of persuasion?
2. Explain the first six factors that affect persuasion.

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UNIT 3 PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Definition of Prejudice
 - 3.2 Theories of Prejudice
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 - 3.4 Reducing Prejudice
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

We all want to belong to one group or another or be identified with certain groups and not others. Does belonging to groups have consequences other than just being part of them? We belong to certain groups not by choice, while we have the choice to belong to others. To be born white, or black or Caucasian, male or female is not something you have power over, it is a natural occurrence that is not within your control.

One is likely to feel favourable toward the group she/he belongs to (in-group) and feel otherwise towards another group he/she does not belong to (out group). This type of feeling (a component of attitude) is **prejudice**. It is usually directed to specific out-groups or social groups. The negative or positive attitude towards members of specific out-groups results in our interpreting or processing information about the groups differently.

The way we treat people because they belong to certain groups, thus making them to be targets of prejudice, is termed **discrimination**.

In this unit, our focus will be on prejudice and discrimination, the feeling and acting components of attitudes, their origins and how they affect our evaluation of social groups. The rationale behind the attempts to reduce prejudice and discrimination will also be examined.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define prejudice and discrimination
- list the causes of prejudice
- explain the influence of gender on prejudice
- appreciate the concept of discrimination.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Definition of Prejudice

Prejudice means pre-judgement, usually based on limited knowledge and little contact. Prejudice is a negative attitude towards an individual simply because she/he is a member of a group (Brislin, 1993; Dion, 2003). Prejudice is a largely negative attitude that is formed and unfairly applied to all members of a group, regardless of the individual characteristics or uniqueness of members.

Allport (1954) defines prejudice as “An antipathy based on faculty and inflexible generalisation, directed towards a group as a whole, or towards an individual because he is a member of that group. It may be felt or expressed”. Another definition by Baron and Byrne (1991) states that prejudice is an attitude, (usually negative) toward the members of some groups based solely on their membership in such group. Zimberdo and Leippe (1991) define prejudice as:

“a learned attitude towards a target object that typically involves negative affections dislikes or fears, a set of negative beliefs that support the attitude and a behavioural intention to avoid, or control or dominate, those in the target group.”

Prejudice is seen as an extreme attitude comprising of cognitive, affective and behavioural components; with prejudice further denoting the cognitive and affective components, while discrimination denotes the behavioural component.

Allport (1954) proposes the following five steps in the components of prejudice.

- 1 Anti-location ó hostile talk, verbal denigration and racial jokes.
- 2 Avoidance ó keeping a distance without actively inflicting harm.
- 3 Discrimination ó exclusion, which could be from basic necessities like housing, employment, civil rights etc.

- 4 Physical attack ó violence against person and property.
- 5 Extermination ó indiscriminate violence against an entire group which can be in form of genocide.

Prejudice is not personal and not directed to the individual based on his characteristics but solely based on his membership of the specific group.

Information that concerns targets of prejudice is mostly given more attention or is processed more carefully than the information gotten that is not related to the target of prejudice. (Blascovich et al., 1997; Hugenberg & Bodenhausen, 2003).

When prejudiced persons are in the presence of the individual or when they are thinking of the members of the group they dislike, prejudice, as an attitude, is reflected in the negative feelings or emotions experienced (Brewer & Brown, 1978; Vanman et al., 1997).

Prejudice may be associated with specific inter-group emotions like fear, anger, envy, guilt or disgust, and the discriminatory action that is likely to follow will depend on what emotion underlies the prejudice.

Anger, for instance, may result in an attempt to harm, while guilt and disgust may give rise to the tendency to want to avoid the out-group; while fear and envy may result in defensive reaction to protect the in-group (Glick, 2002; Mackie & Smith, 2002; Branscombe & Miron, 2004; Newbers & Cottrel, 2002).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Identify the five components of prejudice, as proposed by Allport.

3.2 Theories of Prejudice

The cause of prejudice and its prevalence have been explained by the following theories. Remember, theories are the answers to our questions on issues that concern the why of behaviour (and in this case, prejudice) based on research evidence.

1. Social identity theory

This view is concerned with the consequences of seeing the self as a member of a social group and identifying with it. This tendency to divide the social world in terms of *öusö* (in-group) and *öthemö* (out-group) affects the way we perceive groups in general. Thus, this theory suggests that people like to feel positively about their in-group, and their

self-esteem depends on their ability to identify these groups and belong to them.

It is believed that the value we place on our in-group and the bias towards the out-group have bearings on prejudice, since we are most likely to think favourably of our in-group, and not mostly so about the out-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Oakes et al., 1994; Spears, Doosje & Ellemers, 1999).

It is possible for groups to feel favourably towards other groups, rather than their own and reduce prejudice, especially if they feel secure in their groups and the superiority of the group is not threatened (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000).

2. Cognitive theories

The social cognitive processes that people use in dealing with and explaining their understanding of the world may lead to prejudice. This is because we meet many people in various situations that result in diverse behaviours, and we are not likely going to remember all of them, so we use cognitive shortcuts to organise and make sense of these experiences that try to explain our social world (Fiske, 1998).

We are likely to begin the cognitive process by grouping all people we meet into social categories or groups. This is followed by perceiving members of each group as possessing similar characteristics. Any distinct behaviour from the individual members of the group may lead to generalising this behaviour to the group, which may lead to developing prejudice towards the group.

The feeling is that all members of the same group share the same beliefs and values, differently from members of other groups (Dovidio, Kawakami & Gaertner, 2000; Anthony, Cooper & Mullen, 1992; Dion, 2004; Hamilton Sherman, 1994).

3. Learning theories

Prejudice can be learned, just like we learn other attitudes. This learning can come from parents, peers, siblings or popular people we admire, as we listen to them. In this kind of learning, negative attitudes towards people or groups we have not met or that we have met briefly can occur (Rohan & Zanna, 1996; Smith & Mackie, 2000).

4. **Authoritarian personality theory**

The motivation to enhance self-esteem, sense of security and meet certain personal needs has encouraged and exposed people to prejudice. According to Theodore Adorno et al., (1950) and Attemeye (1996), people with the personality trait known as authoritarianism are likely to exhibit prejudice more. The authoritarianism trait has three elements namely:

- acceptance of conventional or traditional values.
- willingness to follow orders from authority figures, without questions.
- the inclination to act aggressively towards individuals or groups identified by authority figures as threats to the values held by their in-group.

It is believed that those with authoritarian personality become prejudiced as a result of the frustration they experienced as children, which must have mostly been harsh, punitive, and disciplinary, with little affection.

They usually have high opinions of their parents, but harbour unconscious hostility that may be displayed against minority groups which are likely to become the target of authoritarian hostility.

They have very little insight and generally feel threatened by other groups and may project onto them their own unacceptable and anti-social impulses, while their prejudice serves as a defence of ego.

5. **Realistic conflict theory**

This theory is of the view that prejudice comes from competition for scarce resources that result in conflict; it proposes that this conflict, among groups, motivates the development of prejudice (Levine & Campbell, 1972).

When competing for jobs, which are usually few, for instance, issues like gender, race, class, and ethnicity may come into play, and biases coming from our perception of these groups may affect selection and encourage prejudice.

6. **Motivational theory**

This motivational theory holds that most people whether authoritarian or not are motivated to identify with their own group (in-group), which they are likely going to see as better than other groups (out-group). As a

result of this, members of the in-group mostly see all members of other groups as less in other qualities than their in-group members, and sometimes treat them badly (Prentice & Miller 2002; Jackson 2000).

7. **Relative deprivation theory**

Based on the frustration aggression hypothesis, the theory postulates that when there is discrepancy between actual attainment and expectations (referred to as relative deprivation), thus falling short of expectations leading to acute deprivation which is usually what the people believe they are entitled to.

The right to shelter, food, employment, better wages and safety among others, have been issues that have caused friction between leaders and their followers. Most aggressions towards the authority had been as a result of the perceived deprivation of what the citizens see as their entitlement.

8. **Social Identity Theory (SIT)**

The focus of this theory is the minimal group effect in developing prejudice. The suggestion is that individuals seek to achieve or maintain a positive self-image through personal identity and social identity.

While personal identity includes those unique personal characteristics and attributes, social identity revolves around the group, giving the individuals a sense of who they are, based on the group they belong to.

These social identities are mainly based on the number of groups we belong to. If the image of the group is positive, it may result in their positive social image and, by and large, positive self image.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Describe the authoritarian personality theory.

3.2 **Discrimination and Prejudice**

Just like attitude, prejudice may not always be reflected in overt behaviours. Most negative attitudes arising from prejudice are not expressed publicly, perhaps, due to social pressure, laws, and fear of retaliation. However discrimination is still being expressed in subtle or disguised forms – old fashioned racism, which has now been replaced with racism, a more subtle form of discrimination or prejudice in action.

This racism is prejudice concealed from others in public places but is expressed when the opportunity is right or when it is safe to do so, which is discrimination.

The important difference between prejudice and discrimination is that while prejudice is an attitude, discrimination is a negative behaviour directed at members of a group, usually out-groups; and mostly, discrimination results from prejudice.

SELF - ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Explain the major difference between prejudice and discrimination.

3.3 Reducing Prejudice

Prejudice seems to cut across cultures and even continents; thus, the need to tackle prejudice headlong, and reduce its effects on society has become everybody's concern. It is the responsibilities of all interested parties to find out ways of reducing prejudice. Some strategies have been suggested to this effect.

- **Learn not to hate**

From the theory on learning, prejudice is acquired through learning from people of significance in the society. What we learn is often based on ignorance or misinformation as regards the characteristics of the people in the out-group (Davidio, Gaertner & Kawaskami, 2003).

It is also believed that what is learned can also be unlearned, prejudice inclusive. Most of the learning on negative attitudes is rewarded with approval, love and praise and even acceptance. This strategy requires parents or others to teach their children less biased views.

Due to the fact that parents and elders are highly prejudiced themselves, the first step is to direct attention at their own prejudice before teaching the children or younger ones. A reminder of the high cost of holding these attitudes to these parents can also help modify their views on prejudice.

Parents and other reputable people are interested in impacting their children positively; and focusing on these issues can discourage them from insisting on such harmful attitudes and also help them shift from transmitting prejudiced views to their children. Teachers, leaders and others can be effective in influencing those under them using this technique.

- **Jigsaw technique**

A teaching strategy by Elliot Aronson (1997) requires children from different ethnic groups to work as a team to complete a task like reporting about a famous person in history. Each child is asked to learn and provide a separate piece of information about the person. Result showed a marked prejudice towards other group by children involved in this Jigsaw and other cooperative learning experiences (Aronson, 1997).

- **Encourage contact**

The contact hypothesis by Allport (1954) suggests that prejudice can be reduced substantially, by increasing the degree of contact between different groups, as supported by the following facts.

- a) Contact helps in recognising similarities between the groups, and if increased or done frequently, can change the categorisation of *öusö* versus *öthemö*
- b) Contact between groups, or knowing that there is contact can provide signal that the group is not an *öanti* out-group *ö* as initially viewed.
- c) Friendship is likely to develop which will make it explicit that members of the out- group do not dislike members of the in-group which reduces inter group anxiety.
- d) Anxiety generated when out-group is thought of is also reduced by contact between the groups (Pettigues & Tropp, 2003).

- **Re-categorisation**

This is a strategy that results in a shift in the boundaries between the individual *ö* in-group (*öusö*) and some out-group (*öthemö*). This shift or re-categorisation now places individuals from the out-group to be viewed as belonging to the in-group which means they will begin to be viewed positively.

Imagine a situation where a competition between departments begins with the six departments in the faculty of social sciences namely- Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, Economics, Accounting and Management. Assume that at the end of the competition one of the departments will represent the faculty against other faculties in the university; at the beginning of the competition, individuals will see their team as an in-group *öusö* and other departments as the out-group *öthemö*. If Psychology department, for instance, emerges the winner and moves to represent the faculty, the departmental boundaries will now shift to the faculty and it is likely that the six departments will see

themselves as the in-group *öusö*, which will smoothen the relationship between these groups.

Gradually if the department wins at the faculty level and will now represent the university, the boundary will shift further to include the whole of the University as the in-group *öusö*.

- **Common in-group model**

According to this idea of categorisation, the experience of distinct groups working together towards achieving shared goals will help this group see themselves as a single social entity or unit. Hence, feelings of bias or dislike towards former out-group are likely to fade away along with prejudice.

- **Use of guilt in prejudice reduction**

The idea is that individuals, who belong to groups, should be made to share in the guilt of their group's action, even where the individuals did not participate. Collective guilt, as a result of actions of other members of the group, can be used as a means of reducing prejudice. Once it is assumed to be effective, the individuals are confronted with the harm that their in-group's prejudice towards an out-group has produced (Branscombe, Doosje & McGarty, 2002).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Mention the five strategies that can be used to reduce prejudice.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The concern of the society is peaceful coexistence; and prejudice, in most cases, has been used negatively to cause disunity or encourage group distinction. Our focus therefore, as you would have seen so far, should be on mastering the technique of reducing prejudice and discrimination and redirecting our present generation to a future that has less prejudice.

5.0 SUMMARY

You have learnt that prejudice and discrimination are attitudes that can be changed, and should be changed. In this unit also, you have been exposed to the causes of prejudice and discrimination as well as the strategies you can employ to reduce them.

In the next unit, a related attitude-stereotype, which is caused by prejudice, will be examined.

6.0 TUTOR–MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Define prejudice and discrimination.
2. Compare the in-group with the out-group as stated by the social identity theory of prejudice.

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UNIT 4 STEREOTYPES

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Stereotypes
 - 3.2 Gender and Stereotypes
 - 3.3 Reducing Stereotypes
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Think of the groups you have ever joined. As a member, do you think you are like other members of your group? This may not be so. No two people are exactly alike, not even identical twins. So why do people make assumptions and generalisations about a group, as a whole, just from the little they know about the individuals in that group? These over simplified perceptions, are called stereotypes.

The word stereotype was coined by Lippman (1922) and he defines stereotypes as 'picture in our head'; stereotypes are considered the cognitive (thinking) components of attitudes toward a social group which consists of beliefs about what the group is like.

Stereotypes come from the word 'stereos' which means 'solid or hard'; it also refers to a metal plate used in printing. Things printed from the same mould can be said to be stereotypes. Since it is not possible to have people coming from the same mould, we can assume that stereotypes about people means we are ignoring individual differences and environmental influences as we try to understand the individual in the group or see the individual as distinct from the group he belongs to. Stereotypes act as theories guiding or selecting what to attend to; and it influences how we process social information.

In this unit, a clearer distinction between stereotypes and prejudice will be drawn; reasons for stereotypes and how we can reduce stereotyping will also be explained.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define stereotypes
- explain reasons for stereotypes
- explain the relationship between stereotypes and gender
- describe the strategies of reducing stereotypes.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Definition of Stereotypes

In dealing with people, it is difficult not to make generalisations mainly because the demand on us will be more in each new situation without generalisation. Though accurate generalisation helps us to save time and enables us make informed judgements or take decisions about the individual or group, inaccurate generalisation will affect us and our relationships negatively.

Forming impressions about strangers based on stereotypes uses the category-driven method of processing which is the easiest, least strenuous route; but to rely on their unique characteristics is a more strenuous route that uses the attribute-driven processing method (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990).

Stereotypes involve assigning someone to a particular group, bringing into play the belief that all members of the group share certain characteristics (stereotypes) and inferring that a particular individual must possess these characteristics. While stereotypes may be valid for the group, it may not be applicable to a given individual. Most stereotypes involve ethnocentrism - the belief that other cultures may be inferior to one's culture.

Lippman (1992) describes stereotypes as selective, self-fulfilling and ethnocentric; it relies on a "very partial and inadequate way of representing the world". However, he went further to argue that stereotypes serve an important practical function. He posits that:

"The real environment is altogether too big, too complex and too fleeting for direct acquaintance. We are not equipped to deal with such subtlety, so much variety, so much permutations and combinations. And although we have to act in that environment, we have to reconstruct it on a simpler model before we can manage it."

The above views also agree with those of Allport (1954) and Brislin (1981). They believe that stereotypes are "categories about people" and that "categories and stereotypes are shortcuts to thinking", respectively. Stereotypes are also seen as resource saving devices simplifying the processing of information about other people.

Brislin (1993), suggests further that "stereotypes should not be seen as a sign of abnormality, but that they reflect people's need to organise, remember and retrieve information that may be useful to them as they attempt to achieve their goals and meet life's demands".

Other definitions seem to imply that stereotypes can have both positive and negative attributes about social groups, See table below.

Table 4.1 Source : (Gross R., 2005)

Tagiuri, 1969	The general inclination to place a person in categories according to some easily and quickly identifiable characteristics such as age, sex, ethnic membership, nationality or occupation, and then to attribute to him qualities believed to be typical to members of that category.
Brown, 1986	A shared conception of the characters of a group.
Oakes et al., 1994	The process of attributing characteristics to people on the basis of their group membership
Hogg & Vaughan, 1995	Wildly shared assumptions about the personalities, attitudes and behaviour of people based on group membership, for example, ethnicity, nationality, sex, race and class
Fiske ,2004	÷ . . Applying to an individual, one's cognitive expectancies and associations about the group. As such stereotypes represent one specific kind of Schema . . . ÷

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Identify the importance of stereotypes according to Lippman, Allport and Brislin.

3.2 Gender and Stereotypes

Issues on gender do come up frequently because these groups have been here with us since man and woman came into existence. That there are differences is not in doubt, but the issue borders on the extent to which we are willing to go to encourage assumed differences. We have come to agree that stereotypes are traits, but we can include other variables like physical appearance, preferences and behaviour.

These traits or characteristics can be either negative or positive attributes, accurate or inaccurate assumptions, and can be accepted or rejected by members of the stereotyped group. Gender stereotypes are beliefs about the characteristics of women and men that contain both positive and negative traits.

Female Traits	Male Traits
Warm	Competent
Emotional	Stable
Kind/Positive	Tough/Coarse
Sensitive	Self-confident
Follower	Leader
Weak	Strong
Friendly	Accomplished
Fashionable	Non-conforming
Gentle	Aggressive

Fig.4.2: Some common traits (stereotypes) associated with women and men (Source- Deaux & Kite, 1993; Eagly & Mladinic, 1994; Fiske et al 2002).

Women are viewed as kind, nurturing and considerate on the positive side, while on the negative side they are viewed as dependent, weak and emotional. Men also have both positive and negative traits and are viewed as decisive, assertive and accomplished on the positive side, and aggressive, insensitive and arrogant on the negative side.

Generally, the use of warm for women gives people a positive feeling about women. This positive feeling, however, is not enough when it comes to women in positions of authority. Suffice it to say that women suffer more than men from any violation of these stereotypes.

All over the world, women are making positive impact in various areas of life; but the struggle for women to survive in a male dominated world

is still attributable to stereotypes and the generalisations we make about women that affect them and their struggles in society.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

List five stereotype traits attributed to women and men.

3.3 Reducing Stereotypes

Stereotypes of certain groups are so negative, pervasive, and have existed for so many generations that they can be considered part of the culture into which most children are socialised (Brislin, 1993).

Suppressing stereotypes may not be an effective means of reducing stereotypes; the better option will be getting people to have insight into their stereotypes, see through them and understand them. This is an effective means of reducing stereotypes in adults who are expected to relate this new perception to their children or to younger people under their care.

Note also that stereotypes differ from in-groups to out-groups. There is the tendency to see members of our in-group as being different from one another or more heterogeneous (known as in-group differentiation); on the other hand, it is possible to see members of the out-group as all alike or more homogeneous (known as out-group homogeneity). So changing or reducing stereotypes will largely depend on whether we are dealing with members of an in-group or those of the out-group.

Two methods of reducing stereotypes have been suggested, let us look at these one after the other.

1 Learn to “just-say-no”

It is believed that we acquire stereotypes through learning by association, between certain characteristics and various racial or ethnic groups. This view suggests that it is possible to break the stereotype habit by learning to say *ōnoō* to the stereotype trait associated with specific groups. If the process of saying *ōnoō* to a stereotype traits is repeated, the reliance on stereotypes can be reduced (Kawakami et al., 2000).

2 Social influence

Social norms suggest that attitude expression is supported by the rule guiding the group or society. Stereotypes that seem to be wildly shared

within members of the group influence the expression of prejudice. Thus, reducing stereotypes must target members of the in-group.

In addition, stereotype attitudes held by individuals are influenced by early experiences and current information; so it is expected that part of the current view will reflect the view of other members of their group who are mostly respected or admired by the individual.

It is assumed that if the view of the individual is very far from those of the group, and that the group represents what the individual likes, and is made up of people admired and respected by the individual, then these stereotypes can be reduced as the individual makes allowances to accommodate popular views thus reducing stereotypes.

SELF -ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Give three reasons why reducing stereotype is likely going to be difficult.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have been exposed to the fact that stereotypes- as attitudes- are formed through experiences that result in our defining the social world according to these stereotypes. Our relationships can be destroyed, if destructive stereotypes are allowed to guide our actions. What the individual accepts as the norm is largely passed on to him/her by the group. It is hoped that society will focus on reducing stereotypes by re-evaluating its views from time to time and teaching the younger ones to form attitudes that are not loaded with stereotypes.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have been exposed to the concept of stereotypes, how they are formed and sustained. The influence of culture and gender in stereotyping and strategies required to reduce stereotypes have also been explained.

In the next unit, issues of aggression and how they affect our interaction in the social world will be examined.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Define stereotypes according to Lippman, Brislin, Oakes et al. and Fiske.
2. Describe how you can reduce stereotypes in your people.

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MODULE 3 **AGGRESSION, PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND INTERPERSONAL ATTRACTION**

Unit 1	Causes of Aggression
Unit 2	Theories and Control of Aggression
Unit 3	Pro-social Behaviour (helping behaviour)
Unit 4	Interpersonal Attraction

UNIT 1 **CAUSES OF AGGRESSION**

CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
3.1	Social Causes of Aggression
3.2	Personal Causes of Aggression
3.3	Environmental and Situational Causes of Aggression
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
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1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

Think about the things that get you really angry. You will be surprised to note that it is not really big or major things or issues that annoy you. It is mostly the minor, small, sometimes irrelevant things that get on your nerves. How you react to such provocations, whether minor or major, will determine the extent to which you are likely going to express your aggression.

Aggression is seen always as involving physical or symbolic behaviour with the intention of harming someone. The reasons for being aggressive are many; usually, it may either be to satisfy some needs (known as **instrumental aggression**), or it can arise out of a desire to hurt someone (known as **hostile aggression**). Note that there is usually an object of aggression which can be an individual or a group.

Aggression can also be natural or pathological. Natural aggression, sometimes known as positive aggression, is mostly directed at self-defence or other form of social injustice; while pathological aggression comes from within- as a result of frustration. This is mostly hostile in nature, and comes with the intention to harm someone.

In this unit, we will focus on the social, personal and environmental/structural causes of aggression.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define aggression
- identify the personal causes of aggression
- explain the environmental causes of aggression
- describe the social causes of aggression.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Social Causes of Aggression

Most of the time, the actions of others or what they say can arouse aggressive feelings in us. Similarly, some happenings or events that do not give us the freedom to act the way we want may lead to aggression. Some of the major social causes of aggression are listed below.

1. Frustration

The view that aggression is always a consequence of frustration and that frustration always leads to some form of aggression has been advanced by Neal Miller, John Dollard et al., (1939) in their popular frustration-aggression hypothesis. Frustration leading to some forms of aggression does not always find expression at the source of frustration. Sometimes the aggression is redirected, transferred or displayed to a lower target or another target at an opportune time.

2. Direct provocation

Physical or verbal provocation is a strong cause of human aggression. Provocation is actions by others that tend to trigger attention from the recipient, often because these actions are perceived as stemming from malicious intent. Once people are at the receiving end of aggression, the tendency is to return as much aggression as was received or more, especially if we are sure that the other party was out to harm us in the first place. There are three types of provocation:

- i. **Condescension** involves the expression of arrogance or disdain by others (Harris, 1993).
- ii. **Harsh and unjustified criticism**- if criticism is directed at attacking the person and not the behaviour, it can provoke aggression (Baron, 1993).

- iii. Derogatory statements about families- here, most people may tolerate attack on their persons, but may not stand insults or attacks directed at members of their families.

3. Heightened arousal

Heightened arousal - in the form of emotions can result in the expression of aggression in response to provocation, frustration or other factors. According to the excitatory transfer theory, physiological arousal tends to die slowly, and a portion may persist, and continue to be carried from one situation to another.

Usually the presence of this stored or repressed emotional arousals- termed residual arousal, may or may not be noticed by the individual; but it is likely going to be attributed to present source of irritation (Zillman, 1983, 1988, 1994; Tayler et al., 1991).

4. Exposure to media violence

Media violence is the depictions of violent actions in the mass media. Exposure to, or witnessing aggression, results in the expression of aggression and violent behaviour by viewers. The portrayal of violence by the media seems to strengthen beliefs, expectations and other cognitive processes related to aggression.

The effect of media violence is real and has implications on the society in terms of safety and the well being of victims of aggressive actions. High level of aggression is common among people who view violent films or programmes (Bandura, Ross & Ross, 1963; Busshman & Huesman, 2001).

Other findings reveal that the more violent films or television programs people watch as children, the higher the rate or level of their aggression as teenagers or adults, and also the more they are likely to be arrested for violent crimes. These findings were replicated in other countries like Australia, Finland, Israel, Poland and South Africa with similar results. This means that exposure to violence through the media results in aggression, and this cuts across cultures. Recent works have revealed that aggression does not only come from watching violent films, but it can also come from news programs, violent lyrics in popular music, and violent video games, among others (Anderson, Carnegie & Eubanks, 2003; Anderson et al., 2004).

5. Pornography and aggression

Pornography is erotic material viewed in any of the media. The correlation between the viewing of pornographic films or erotic materials and several forms of anti-social behaviour has been established. Most child molesters and rapists confirm that these crimes were committed immediately after viewing erotic materials (Silbert & Pines, 1984; Marshal, 1989).

Men high in promiscuity and hostility who view pornography are associated with sexual aggression more than men low in promiscuity and hostility who view pornographic materials (Malamouth et al., 2000). Aggressive pornography is associated with violence against women. Most men who are likely to abuse women may also be those who view a lot of pornography.

6. Sexual jealousy

Real or imagined infidelity occurs across societies. The culture of honour views infidelity by women as threatening to male honour and do lead to drastic responses. In some cultures, if a female child is found to be a victim of abuse, leading to loss of virginity, her family may respond with violence, to protect the family honour. In cultures of honour, jealousy becomes a very powerful cause for aggression than in other cultures (Blass et al., 1992; Vandello & Cohen, 2003; Puente & Cohen, 2004; Packer, 2004).

7. Cultural factors in aggression

Cultural beliefs, norms and expectations in a given culture suggest that aggression is appropriate or even required under certain circumstances. Some cultures emphasise what is called 'cultures of honour' where there are strong norms, suggesting that aggression is an appropriate response to insults to one's honour. Sexual jealousy is an avenue where the norm to one's honour comes to play.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Define, in one sentence each, the seven causes of aggression.

3.2 Personal Causes of Aggression

Some personal characteristics make certain people more vulnerable than others in the expression of aggression. While some may remain calm in the presence of provocation and frustration, others easily react aggressively to the slightest provocation or frustration. Some of the

traits or personal characteristics likely to play key roles in explaining aggression are as follows.

1. The type *A* behaviour pattern

People exhibiting the type *A* behaviour pattern usually have high levels of competitiveness, time urgency and hostility. When you meet people who are extremely competitive, always in a hurry and especially irritable and aggressive, then you are interacting with people with the type *A* behaviour pattern (Glass, 1977; Strube, 1989).

The type *A* behaviour pattern persons are the opposite of the type *B* behaviour pattern group. The type *B* group are usually not competitive, not always fighting the clock, and do not easily lose their tempers. The type *A* group are usually aggressive compared to the type *B* groups in most situations (Baron, Russel & Arms, 1985; Carver & Glass 1978).

The type *A* behaviour pattern individuals engage in hostile aggression with the intention of inflicting harm or injury on their victims, and are more likely to be engaged in child abuse and spouse abuse, while the type *B* individuals are more likely to engage in instrumental aggression and their goal usually is not to cause harm but achieve other goals like receiving commendation or gain control.

2. Hostile attributional bias

This involves perceiving evil intent in others. Hostile attributional bias refers to the tendency to perceive hostile intentions or motives in the actions of others, when these actions are ambiguous.

How we evaluate and interpret the cause for other people's behaviours determine our reaction. If their behaviours are perceived as hostile and intentional or provocative, then it is likely that these will result in aggression. Actions are usually dependent on our attributions concerning the exhibited behaviour.

People high in hostile attributional bias, mostly, do not give people the benefit of doubt, and they are likely to assume that any provocative behaviour by others is intentional; and so, they react aggressively in response.

3. Narcissism and aggression

Narcissism refers to excessive self-love; it means holding an exaggerated view of one's own qualities or achievements. Persons high in narcissism do react to slight overtures from others or from feedbacks that attack their self image or ego.

The opinion narcissists have of themselves are unrealistically high; and any attempt at building the self-esteem of young people to the point where they develop this unrealistic high opinion of themselves increase their potential for violence.

4. Sensation seeking and aggression

Sensation seeking and impulsivity are likely to go together for someone who likes taking risks and looking for excitement. Such people may be more aggressive than others for the following reasons.

- i. People high in sensation seeking and impulsiveness experience anger and hostile feelings more than others.
- ii. They may have low threshold for anger, and their emotions are easily aroused.
- iii. They may view aggressive exchange with others as exciting and dangerous, and when bored, may seek new experiences that may lead them to entertain hostile thoughts (Zuckerman, 1994).

In addition to the points above, Joireman, Anderson and Strathman (2003) have suggested the following tendencies, related to aggression, for people high in sensation seeking.

- i. Attraction to aggression ó eliciting situations.
- ii. They are more likely to experience anger and hostility.
- iii. They are likely to focus on the immediate, rather than the delayed consequences of their behaviour
- iv. They tend to show both physical and verbal aggression at a higher level compared to others.

5. Gender and aggression

Like all other issues, are there any gender differences in aggression? To some extent, yes; there is sufficient research to support the view that males are more aggressive than females. That is, there is higher incidence of aggressive behaviour in males than females (Harris, 1994). Males are likely to perform aggressive actions and serve as target for such behaviour, which usually continues all through life, though it may vary in size and across situations as follows.

- There is a gender difference in the absence of provocation than in its presence. Here, males more likely to be aggressive against others even when not provoked in any way, but with provocation, gender differences disappear. Once provoked, we assume that men and women respond in similar ways.
- Size and direction of gender differences vary with types of aggression. Males, for instance, engage more in direct aggression, like physical assault, pushing, shoving, shouting, and insults. While females engage more in in-direct aggression where their actions are concealed from the victims and may come in form of gossiping, spreading rumours, telling others not to associate with intended victims and making up stories.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What are the major differences between the type A behaviour pattern and narcissism in the expression of aggression?

3.3 Environmental/Situational Cause of Aggression

Factors relating to the environment or situations within certain contexts do result in aggression; let us consider the following situations.

1. Climate and aggression

The relationship between climate and aggression has been studied extensively. Findings are that heat increases aggression; but beyond some level, the reverse may be the case, with aggression decreasing as temperature rises. High temperature makes people very uncomfortable and tired, or fatigued and not likely to engage in aggressive behaviour for the following additional reasons.

- High temperature reduces aggression for both provoked and unprovoked persons, because for one who is hot, focus will be on reducing this discomfort rather than engaging in fights with others.
- Hotter years are associated with higher rates of violent crimes. Heat has been linked to aggression in these ways:
 - people get hot and become irritable and may lash out at others
 - exposure to high temperature for long makes people become uncomfortable, and focus shifts to making self comfortable.

2. Air Pollution and aggression

Chemical changes in the air are likely to result in aggression. Let us look at some examples.

○ Ethyl mercaptan

This is a mild unpleasant pollutant common in urban areas; this has been associated with aggression. People have been found to be more aggressive when exposed to air that contains this chemical (Rothan et al., 1979).

- **Ozone** level in the air increases the frequency of aggressive disturbances.
 - i. Non smokers have been found to be more aggressive breathing **smoke– filled - air** compared to clean air (Zillman, Baron & Tambori, 1981).
 - ii. **Lead** - a connection between long term exposures to toxins like lead and incidences of aggression has been established (Needleman, 1996).

3. Noise

An unwanted and uncontrollable sound has been associated with the display of aggression, especially, when the noise is unpredictable and irregular (Bell et al., 2000; Grein & Mc, 1984).

4. Living Arrangements

Buildings with few tenants or residents are less likely to provoke aggressive behaviours from tenants compared to tenants of crowded apartment or buildings. This is because crowding tends to result in physiological tension which may make people irritable, uncomfortable and likely induce negative feelings. This tension or arousal can make people like each other less and become more aggressive.

Behaviour problems among juvenile delinquents have been shown to have direct bearing on the living conditions of these young ones residing in crowded slums (Ray et al., 1982; Bell et al., 2000).

5. Alcohol and aggression

Alcohol consumption, especially in large quantities, has been found to be responsible for high level of aggressiveness in those who take it, as opposed to those who don't take alcohol. This effect of alcohol on users

has been attributed to reduced cognitive functioning and social perception. Alcohol has been found to impair or distort higher order cognitive functions like the evaluation of stimuli and memory.

Alcohol also has the effect of reducing user's ability to process positive information about someone he/she does not like, in the first instance, or one that is viewed in negative terms (Bartholow et al., 2003).

Alcohol also causes loss of inhibition, resulting in susceptibility to taking unreasonable risks, which may induce aggressive behaviour, at the slightest provocation.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Describe briefly the chemicals that can induce aggression due to air pollution.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, it has been made known to you that the causes of aggression are as many as the different types of aggression that are even known. Understanding aggression and their causes should be the focus of society and those at the helm of affairs in any nation. While aggression may be positive and desirable in some instances, the negative and undesirable aggression that seems to rear its head in most interactions should be tackled and society made to emphasise positive aggression.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has exposed you to the many causes of aggression. The roles of social, personal, environmental/situational factors in aggression have been, extensively, made clear to you too.

In the next unit, theories that explain aggression and how to reduce aggression will be our focus.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Describe the three types of direct provocations one is likely to experience during an interaction.
2. Contrast the type *A* and the type *B* pattern found in people who engage in or experience aggression.

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UNIT 2 THEORIES AND CONTROL OF AGGRESSION

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Genetic and Biological Theories of Aggression
 - 3.2 Drive Theories of Aggression
 - 3.3 Modern Theories of Aggression
 - 3.4 Reducing Aggression
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 TutoróMarked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we are going to continue our study on aggression with a review of available literature on the theories of aggression and techniques for controlling or reducing aggression.

Our understanding of the reason why normal human beings can turn into destructive machines through the expression of aggression, and the ability of this knowledge to provide guides into how to prevent or reduce this tendency is the greatest service to humanity that social psychologists have done through various researches.

The fact that aggression in any form is usually directed toward harming or causing injury to another person, who in turn is motivated to avoid such treatment, means aggression is not desirable. There is an innate aggressive response to provocation or frustration that is expressed or released only in the presence of an appropriate target.

If aggression is not expressed or released, it could be displaced on undeserving or inappropriate victim who is likely going to result in further aggression by the new target. This circle should be broken and aggression reduced to the minimum.

In this unit, all that you need to know concerning aggression and the necessary steps required in preventing or reducing aggression will be revealed and explained.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define aggression
- explain aggression in the light of the genetic and biological theories of aggression
- describe the process involved in controlling aggression.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Genetic/Biological Theories of Aggression

Are we by nature programmed to react aggressively to frustrations or provocations from others? Are there genes responsible for aggression in humans? The struggle to survive requires, to some extent, that a human being should be aggressive and able to defend himself. Perhaps the following biological theories will throw more light on this.

1. Instinct theories

- **Freud's psychoanalytic approach (Freud, 1923)**

Freud was able to distinguish between his earlier view on life instincts, like sexuality (libido) and the death instinct (Thanatos). The death instinct (Thanatos) is in-born, it is a destructive tendency directed against the self. This self directed aggression conflicts with the self preservative need of life instinct.

According to Freud, this self destructive instinct (which is innate) is so strong that it has to be redirected toward some outward object or another person rather than self. This aggressive energy can also be redirected positively into activities like sport, or physical occupations.

- **Instinct theories -Lorenz ethological approach (Lorenz, 1996)**

Lorenz defines aggression as 'the fighting instinct in beast and man which is directed against members of the same species'. This approach views aggression as instinctive in all species. In the face of scarce resources for survival- like food and shelter, aggressiveness becomes necessary and important in competing for these limited resources of basic survival.

Lorenz also believes that aggressive energy builds up and must find some outlet to be discharged. In line with the evolution view, aggression comes from inherited fighting instinct which means that only strong males will have mates and pass their genes onto the next generation (Lorenz 1966, 1974).

2. Brain and aggression

People may inherit certain temperaments like impulsiveness that may make aggression likely (Rowe, Almeda & Jacobson, 1999). The following areas of the brain have been associated with aggression.

- **Limbic system**

The amygdala, hypothalamus and related areas; damage to these parts can result in defensive aggression that may include heightened aggressiveness to non-threatening stimuli or decrease responses that would inhibit aggression (Anderson & Bushman, 2002a; Coccaro, 1989; Eichelman, 1983).

- i. **Cerebral Cortex** ó the pre-frontal area of the cortex responsible for the metabolism of glucose does so more slowly in murderers (violent aggressors) than non murderers. (Raine et al., 1994)
 - ii. **Hormones** - testosterone ó masculine hormone present in both males and females, but more in the male. Aggression increases depending on the level of testosterone in the blood stream.
- High levels of testosterone have been found in criminals who commit violent crimes than those who commit non-violent crimes.
 - High levels of testosterone are also found in murderers who knew their victims and plan their crimes beforehand.
 - Exposure to high levels of testosterone during pre-natal development (where a pregnant mother was given testosterone to prevent miscarriage) will induce aggression compared to those not so exposed (Dabbs & Dabbs, 2000; Pope, Kouri & Hudson, 2000; Yates, 2000; Dabbs, Raid & Chancc, 2001; Ziema ó Davis & Sanders, 1991).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Describe the major differences between Freud's and Lorenz's theories of instincts in explaining aggression.

3.2 Drive Theories

Drive theories suggest that aggression comes from external conditions that arouse the motive to harm or injure others. External conditions, especially frustration, are believed to arouse strong motives to harm others. These perspectives negate the views proposed by theories on instincts by Freud and Lorenz; the components of the drive theories include the following.

- **The Frustration – Aggression Hypothesis (FAH)**

Dollard et al., (1939), suggest that frustration leads to the arousal of a drive with the goal of causing harm to some persons or objects. This theory claims that aggression is always a consequence of frustration and, the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggressions. Dollard agrees with Freud that aggression is an innate response, but adds that aggression is triggered only by frustrating situations and events.

Berkowitz (1998), modified this hypothesis. He proposes that stress, in general, rather than frustration in particular may be responsible for the readiness to act aggressively by the individual. With this readiness in place, cues in the environment associated with aggression can result in aggressive behaviour. Things like guns, knives, violent television scenes, and people arguing can become cues that can trigger aggressive response.

Also, Berkowitz posits that negative affect or unpleasant emotion is the direct course of aggression. The stronger the negative affect the stronger the readiness to act or behave aggressively. Finally, he believes that negative affect can be aroused by pain, and that pain can result in more aggression toward others.

Marcus ó Newhall et al., (2004), and Fiske (2004), are of the views that displaced aggression is usually directed at an innocent, weaker target or third party, especially where the agent of frustration and provocation cannot be attacked directed. It is also seen as an attempt to have control over someone in a weaker position.

The *FAH* has been rejected by social psychologists as false, but it still enjoys widespread acceptance outside the field.

- **Aggressive – Cue Theory (ACT)**

Berkowitz (1966) argues that frustration results in anger, rather than aggression. According to this cuearousing theory, frustration is psychologically and physically painful, and what is painful can lead to

aggression. Certain cues are needed in order for this anger or psychological pain to be converted into actual aggression. These cues are environmental stimuli that involve the aggressive behaviour of the frustrating object or person. These environmental cues can result in aggression when they are associated with aggression or when they remind the aggressor of the unpleasant experiences.

This view assumes that mere physical presence of weapons may result in increased aggressive action, even when the weapon is not used to perform the aggressive actions. Both Berkowitz (1968), and Fiske (2004), all agree that guns can stimulate violence and provoke aggression simply by being there.

- **Zilman's Excitation Transfer Theory (ETT)**

Zilman (1982), proposes that arousal from one source can be transferred and can result to some other responses. When aroused, aggression may be heightened if the aroused person is exposed to react aggressively. The arousal is usually wrongly attributed to the aggression provoking event and not to the correct source.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Briefly explain the two views in the frustration aggression hypothesis model.

3.3 Modern Theories of Aggression

Earlier theories focus on either instincts or drives as the motives for aggression. Modern theories look at the diverse areas of psychology in order to comprehend this complex human behaviour. Social learning theories ranging from observation to rewards and punishment all contribute to the development of aggression model.

1. Social Learning Theories (SLT)

In line with what obtains in other forms of behaviours, aggressive responses are also learned either through direct experiences or the observation of model behaviour. People who behave aggressively, like characters on the television, in movies, videos games, newspapers and the like, model aggressive behaviour and also provide the material required for learning.

This theory is of the view that the individual's past experiences and current rewards are related to past or present aggressive behaviour, attitudes and values- mostly cultural- that shapes thoughts concerning

aggressive behaviour and its acceptance which results in learning (Bandura 1965, 1973 & 1993). Some of what are learned is as follows.

- Ways of seeking to harm others
- Identifying which persons or groups are appropriate targets for aggression
- Types of actions by others that justify aggressive responses
- The situation or context in which aggression is permitted or approved.

Some examples of learning theories applicable here include the following.

- i. **Observational learning** ó which uses imitations- is known as the reproduction of learning through observations.
- ii. **Vicarious reinforcement** ó this refers to learning that takes place through our seeing others being rewarded by aggressive behaviours.

2. General Aggression Model (GAM)

A newer perspective that builds on the learning theory is the modern theory of aggression that suggests that aggression is triggered by a wide range of input variables that influence arousal, affective states and cognition (Gross R., 2005). There are two major types of input variables that explain the chain of events that occurs which eventually leads to aggression; these are situational and personal factors.

Situational factors can include variables like frustration, insults from others, exposure to aggressive modelling, any event or person that causes discomfort like temperature, air pollution among others. The personal factors include individual differences, traits and characteristics, attitudes and beliefs about violence.

These variables can result in aggression through their impact on the following three basic processes.

- Arousal ópossible increase in physiological arousal or excitement.
- Affective states ó possible arousal resulting in hostile feelings and their outward signs.
- Cognitions- these include hostile thoughts, and bring to mind beliefs and attitudes about aggression.

This theory provides evidence to support the view that the individual is óprimedö for aggression through repeated exposure to aggressive stimuli

that strengthen beliefs, attitudes, schemas, and scripts associated with aggression. This can result in aggressive response from the individual, through the activation of either the situational or personal variable.

3. Cognitive Nero-association theory

This view proposes that cues present during aggressive events may become associated in memory with thoughts and emotions experienced during the event. If in real life or through films, one witnesses violence like shooting scenes and guns, this may be associated with emotions like anger, fear, hurt and humiliation. This can become cues (physical or pictures) later for remembering the violent scenes and for aggressive behaviour to be activated (Anderson, Benjamin & Bartholoco, 1998).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Discuss the roles of observational and vicarious reinforcement in learning and aggression.

3.4 Reducing Aggression

We do not all like pain and aggression which usually inflict physical or emotional pain on the victim, and even the aggressor in some cases. This pain can also be shared or felt by distant relatives of both parties involved in aggressive behaviours. Some of these negative responses to frustrations or provocations are associated with many causative factors; reducing aggression will also require strategies that are unique to these factors.

1. Punishment

Punishment is the delivery of aversive consequences in order to reduce aggression. Usually society, group or even individuals decide what punishment is appropriate for any aggressive behaviour, which can be in form of fines, imprisonment (execution) and so on.

The following reasons have been advanced for the effectiveness of punishment.

- **Punishment is supposed to pave way for the amendment of harm caused**

Society or group determines what standards should be in place, and when individuals violate these standards they are punished accordingly. The punishment received should be enough and match the harm caused. It is advised that the reason for aggressive behaviour should be

determined, so that punishment is not meted out to a justified or õjustifiableö aggression like selfödefence or saving family honour.

- **Punishment should deter future occurrence of such aggression**

Punishment must be strong, timely and related to the offence. When there is time lapse between the aggression committed and the punishment meted out, the behaviour may not be corrected because the aggressor may not associate the behaviour with the present punishment.

In most cases, punishment has been shown to be effective and should be used more often. For punishment to reduce aggressive behaviour, four basic requirements must be met.

- i. Punishment must be prompt
 - ii. Punishment must follow the aggressive behaviour
 - iii. Punishment must be strong
 - iv. Punishment must be perceived by one being punished as justified or deserved.
- **Reduce aggressive behaviour when aggressive offenders are put in prison**

This helps reduce aggressive behaviour in the following ways.

- i. Dangerous people are removed from the society, future victims are protected from possible harm.
- ii. Additional act of aggression is also reduced. Most crimes are likely to be repeated, so putting aggressor in prison removes the opportunity to repeat the crime, and reduces another aggression on the same or other victim.

2. Cognitive intervention

Both aggressors and victims are required to make efforts at reducing aggression, and some ways that have been suggested are as follows:

- Use of apologies - the admission of wrong doing by the aggressor has been shown to diffuse aggression.
- Use of pre-attribution ó attributing annoying actions from others to un-intentional causes before the occurrence of the actions or provocation, can help protect the victim of aggression, and reduce aggression through likely retaliation.

- Preventing self or others from dwelling on past real or imagined wrongs. Use distractors like reading, playing, watching television, exercise etc.

3. Forgiveness

In most cases of aggressive behaviour towards us, revenge seems to be the appropriate response. But usually, revenge results in retaliation which encourages a vicious circle of aggression.

Forgiveness ó giving up the desire to punish or seek revenge from those who have hurt us, and acting kindly and being helpful to them can reduce aggression. The act of given up the desire to punish others alone reduces aggression, and even promotes our physical wellóbeing. The closer we are to our offenders, the more beneficial it is to forgive them (Karremans et al., 2002).

Some personal traits like agreeableness and emotional stability have been used to explain why other people are able to forgive more easily than others. These individual differences suggest that people higher in agreeableness have a tendency to trust others and want to help them, while people higher in emotional stability show low vulnerability to negative moods or emotions. To be able to forgive, the following techniques have been used.

- **Empathy – putting self in other person’s place.**
Try to understand the feelings, emotions and circumstances that warranted the offender to harm you.
- **Make generous attributions** about the causes of the offender’s behaviour.

Agree that they had a good reason for doing what they did, even though it hurts.

- **Avoid ruminating.** Once you have dealt with past problems, they are over. Do not bring them to bear on present issues or persons, and focus on other important issues (Mc Cullagh et al., 2001).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

List the four basic requirements that must be met for punishment to be effective as a means of reducing aggression.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have been made to know that aggression is a way of expressing stored up frustrations or provocations. This unit has also considered possible theoretical explanations for aggressive behaviour, and also the ways of reducing aggression. Agencies and institutions charged with the duty of reducing aggression in the society will require lessons like the ones taught in this unit to improve their skills to be effective. As you would have discovered, this unit and related ones have tried to bring to the fore all that is required to effectively understand and reduce aggression, so that our society can be a better place to live in.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has exposed you to the current trend of studies on aggression using the theories of aggression. You have been taken through the drive, modern and genetic/biological theories of aggression; ways of reducing aggression have also been highlighted.

In the next unit, we will look at pro-social behaviour or helping behaviour. This has to do with why we do or do not help people.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Briefly describe the two major areas in the brain that can induce aggression if damaged.
2. Identify three reasons why imprisonment, as a form of punishment, can reduce aggression.

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UNIT 3 PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (HELPING BEHAVIOUR)

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Bystander Intervention
 - 3.2 Factors in Helping Behaviour
 - 3.3 Basic Motivation in Helping Behaviour
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you are going to be taken through helping behaviour, a major form of pro-social behaviour. Pro-social behaviour focuses on behaviours that are intended to be of benefit to others, which may include helping, comforting, cooperating, sharing, showing concern, defending, donating, and reassuring. What benefits others can change with time and place, and will depend also on our definition. This action may not provide any direct benefit to the person helping, and may require the individual to make some sacrifice. Any act intended to benefit another person is helping behaviour.

Are we by nature programmed to help? What are some of the reasons that may influence our behaviour? Can we help strangers and those who are familiar to us equally? Are there individual differences in helping behaviour? Why are some people ready to help while others remain apathetic in similar situations?

In this unit, as you are going to see, we will answer these questions and more, as we focus on issues like bystander intervention, factors in helping behaviour and the motivation behind helping behaviour.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define pro-social and helping behaviour
- explain the reason behind bystander intervention
- explain the factors that are associated with helping behaviour
- describe the motivation behind helping behaviour.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Bystander Intervention

We learn early in life to help others. These may vary from culture to culture, where some cultures may support rewards for helping others, while some may encourage the behaviour without the expectation of any reward. The presence of others, when help is required, may affect the individual willingness to help in emergency situation.

Latene and Darley (1970) are of the view that the chances for people to engage in pro-social act of helping others require series of activities which must include the following:

- notice that something is wrong
- define it as a situation that requires help
- decide on whether to take personal responsibility
- implement the decision to intervene.

1. Notice that something is wrong or unusual

Emergencies usually occur when we least expect them. This means that we are mostly not prepared to respond immediately partly because we are not sure of what to do, or we have not fully appreciated the extent of the emergency. Since there are so many activities going on around us, we may not pay attention to all of them, this may include emergencies.

Our mood affects how we notice events in our surrounding. People in good moods pay attention to others which makes them more likely to help (Dovidio and Penner, 2004). People in deep thought or who are not in good mood may not be able to concentrate or pay attention to events or others and may just be unable to notice when anything unusual happens and may not be able to help.

People who are too busy may be preoccupied with what they are doing, that they may not be able to notice any unusual things happening around them. Milgram (1970) opines that urban dwellers may restrict attention to personally relevant events, and may not notice strangers and their needs as way of coping with stimulus overload in their environment.

This view was supported by the works of Heade and Yousif (1992) & Yousif and Korte (1995) who found urban dwellers to be less likely to help, compared to rural dwellers. We can infer from their study of different countries that, urban centres are made up of more strangers than the rural settlements. People in rural areas are few and know themselves better.

2. Define what is happening as a situation that requires help

Even when we are able to notice that something is not right or is unusual, we may not be able to help if our definition of the event is not associated with an emergency. Interpreting the event as an emergency requires that we have all the information we need to evaluate the situation. In most cases, we are left with little information, or distorted information that leaves us confused about what is happening, and this reduces our willingness to help.

Our ability to interpret emergencies correctly helps us to respond quickly and decisively to them. The presence of others, have been found to affect the individual's willingness to help, due to what is referred to as pluralistic ignorance. This is the tendency of the individual surrounded by strangers to hesitate and not help in emergency, but rely on these bystanders for information (which in most cases is not accurate) and uses this to justify his/her failure to offer help. However, if this individual is surrounded by friends, he/she may communicate more and the inhibiting effect will be less (Latene and Darley 1968; Rutkowski, Gruder and Romer, 1983).

Evidence has shown that when people are alone they may be able to define events as emergency faster, and even respond or decide to help immediately. Two friends may also respond faster while two strangers may not respond at all or do so slowly (Latene and Rodin 1969).

3. Deciding whether to take personal responsibility

Accepting personal responsibility, on the part of an individual, will be less likely in the presence of many bystanders. The phenomena is also known as bystander effect which means diffusion of responsibility-which is the denial of personal responsibility, believing that someone else may do what is necessary or right. When an individual is alone as a bystander, he can take responsibility, and act because the options are few or none at all.

4. Deciding on the type of help to give

The bystander's competence to help in a given situation can go a long way in deciding to help, whether alone or in the presence of other bystanders. When we know that some bystanders are competent to help more than ourselves, the more likely for diffusion of responsibility to increase. If, on the other hand, the individual bystander believes he/she is more equipped to help, the chances of helping will increase, and he/she will likely do so, immediately, regardless of other bystanders.

Sometimes, it is not apathy that inhibits bystanders from helping; it may be the issues of competence- where he/she may, sincerely, want to help but is not competent to do so.

5. Implementing the decision to intervene

This is the point at which the bystander decides to finally engage in a helping act. Once all the hurdles from the four steps have been crossed, this remaining step may be hampered by our fear of the potential consequences of our behaviour if we fail. Here, one must weigh the positive against the negative effects of helping, and depending on the outcome, a decision whether to help or not is taken at this final stage. (Fritzsche, Finkelstein and Penner, 2000).

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

List the four steps or series of decisions that must be taken by the bystander before help can be given during emergency.

3.2 Factors in Helping Behaviour

In addition to the bystander effect, some situational, emotional and personality factors, among others, will be looked at as they either enhance or inhibit our helping behaviours.

1. Situational factors

- **Helping those we like**

Those we like are mostly family members or friends, and most of what we have discussed so far centred on helping strangers. The following reasons have been given for why we tend to help generally.

- i. Age and race ó similarity of a stranger to you in terms of age and race may increase your likelihood to offer help.
- ii. Physically attractive victims receive more help compared to unattractive ones.
- iii. Women in distress are more likely to be helped by men. This could be due to gender difference, sexual attraction or because women are more willing to ask for help more than men.
- iv. Holding similar values encourages helping behaviour.

The evolutionary theory is of the view that we are likely to help family members because this behaviour will contribute to the survival of our prehistoric ancestors (Buss, 2003).

Family ties: evidence show that people are likely to donate organs to family members than to strangers. While some views may see this behaviour in terms of greater attachment or a stronger sense of social obligation to relatives than to strangers or others, the evolutionary view will see the case of one donating to a family member to save life, as helping to ensure the survival of the genes shared with the family member who receives the organ.

- **Helping those who mimic us**

Mimicry is the automatic tendency to imitate the behaviour of those we come in contact with. This tendency can also be unconscious. Mimicry has been seen to enhance liking and results in increased helping behaviour by those who have been mimicked. This helping behaviour is not only offered to those who mimicked them but extended to others too (Van Baaren et al., 2004).

- **Helping those who are not responsible for their problem**

We may find that it is easier for people to help accident victims and people we evaluate as victims of brutal attacks, because our attribution to their problems will be that they were not responsible for these problems. To the accident victims we may attribute their problem to rough driving, bad car or bad road. Generally, people are less likely to help those they believe to have caused their problems or are responsible for their problems (Higgins and Shaw, 1999; Weiner, 1980).

- **Exposure to pro-social models**

The bystander, who offers to help, provides a model for other bystanders, and is likely to increase helping behaviour in these bystanders. Other findings are that modelled helping behaviour on television, unlike the modelling of negative behaviour such as aggression on television has increased the helping behaviour of viewers.

2. Emotional factors

Emotional states have been associated with helping behaviour just like any other form of behaviour. Positive or negative emotions have their effects on the helping behaviour of the individual.

- **Positive emotions**

People are likely to help when in a good mood rather than a bad one. Pleasant fragrance makes people feel better and improve helping

behaviour. Lemon or floral odour has been found to increase the willingness to help. Other findings are that people in good moods may not engage in helping behaviour, especially, if it means doing something difficult and unpleasant (Rosenhan, Salovey and Hargis, 1981).

- Negative emotions

An individual in a negative mood is less likely to help others. Since unhappy people are pre-occupied with their own problems, they are less likely to engage in any helping behaviour. However, in cases where helping is likely to improve one's mood and make him feel better, helping behaviour is more likely when one is in a bad mood compared to a neutral mood. This negative emotion must not be too intense, the emergency not complicated, and if helping will be interesting and satisfying not dull and unrewarding (Amato, 1986; Cialdini, Kenrick and Bowman, 1982; Cunningham et al., 1990).

3 Personality and pro-social behaviour

- Altruistic personality

Multiple aspect of the personality is necessary for pro-social behaviour, and altruistic personality is high on five dimensions found mostly in people who engage in pro-social behaviour during emergencies. The personality characteristic or disposition includes empathy, belief in a just world, and acceptance of social responsibility, having an internal locus of control and not being egocentric. These five dispositions are listed below.

i. Empathy

Empathy is rare among people high in aggressiveness, but people who engage in helping behaviour are higher in empathy than those who do not. Empathic people are usually described as responsible, socialised, conforming, tolerant, self-controlled, and highly motivated.

ii. Belief in a just world

People high in helping behaviour believe the world to be fair; and behaviour is rewarded if good, and punished if bad. They also believe that helping others is the right thing to do and not expect anything in return; but that helping also results in benefits for the helper for his/her good work.

iii. Social responsibility

Those who help also believe that each person is responsible for doing his/her best in helping people in need.

iv. Internal locus of control

We have a choice of which way to behave, either to maximise good outcomes or minimise bad outcomes. People who do not help have external locus of control and see outcomes in terms of pure luck, fate or people in high places.

v. Low egocentrism

Altruistic people tend not to be self-absorbed and competitive.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

List all the five dispositions that are likely to be shown by people with altruistic personality.

3.3 Basic motivation in helping behaviour

The reasons people can be motivated to engage in pro-social behaviour are many and most theories focus on the people's desire for rewards and the avoidance of punishment. Is it then rewarding to help, and does punishment follow the lack of engagement in helping behaviour? The following views have been put forth to explain why people are motivated to help.

- **Empathy – altruism hypothesis**

This view proposes that some pro-social behaviour are motivated mainly by the desire to help someone in need, and by the fact that it feels good to help. Altruistic people are willing to help, even when the cost is high because they have empathy for the individual in need. Increased information or additional information increases empathy which influences helping behaviour. Another view is that the desire to help can also come from our need to relieve ourselves from the additional information received which is seen as a selfish reason.

When many people need help, it is not possible to feel empathy for all of them. In some cases empathy reduces with large numbers of people. The individual usually will decide on helping one person from the group-known as selective altruism. Most organisations involved in charity work use photograph of one person or child to arouse empathy so that

help can be directed towards this individual. Generally, altruistic behaviour results in positive emotions. Helping make us feel good.

- **Negative – state relief model**

Here, altruistic behaviour can result in the individual feeling bad after perceiving a person in need, and will want to help just to relief this bad feeling. Improving negative mood becomes the reason for wanting to help someone in need. One may not need to feel empathy before helping.

- **Empathic joy hypothesis**

The view here suggests that the individual is likely to help because the reward of accomplishing something is expected. The individual will feel joy and have a sense of satisfaction for making some positive impact on the lives of people. The motivation to help is really the positive emotion anticipated at the end by the helper. This requires feedback from the victim who has been helped. The combination of empathy and expected feedback increased helping behaviour more than either empathy or expected feedback alone.

- **Arousal – Cost – Reward (ACR) model**

This model was introduced and revised by Piliavan et al., (1969, 1981,) to cover emergency and non-emergency helping behaviours. This mode identified two distinct concepts, namely:

- arousal as the basic motivational construct which is an emotional response to the need of others. The motivation is to relieve unpleasant experiences that come from the distress aroused by the victim's need for help.
- cost-reward involves the cognitive processes used to assess the cost of helping or not helping. Cost for helping may include time lost, effort, risk or danger to self, embarrassment, interference with ongoing activity, mental stress. The cost for not helping may be feelings of guilt, blame from others, self-blame from knowing that another person is suffering. Rewards here for helping may include fame, gratitude from victim and relatives, self satisfaction, avoiding guilt, money. This cost-reward may vary from person to person, and even from situation to situation for the same person.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Explain, in not more than two sentences, the basic difference between the empathy-altruism hypothesis and empathy joy models in helping behaviour.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have been exposed to the reasons and motivation behind bystander's pro-social behaviours. You will always come across people in need, so decision to help or not will have to be made on a daily basis. Society must make pro-social behaviour rewarding and less tasking for people, so that relief for those in dire need will be available. Activities aimed at motivating and increasing empathy should be the focus of society; and pro-social behaviour should be encouraged by all.

5.0 SUMMARY

The unit has shared with you the reasons for pro-social behaviour, factors that enhance pro-social behaviour and the basic components of pro-social behaviour.

In the next unit, you will be taken through the final topic of this course. You will be exposed to interpersonal attraction ó what it is, why we are attracted or not attracted to each other and how we can improve on this aspect of social interaction.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Give four reasons why people are likely to help, according to the situational factors of helping behaviour
2. What decisions must bystanders make before they are able to help during emergencies?

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UNIT 4 INTERPERSONAL ATTRACTION

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Internal Determinants of Attraction
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- 4.0 Conclusion
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Having gone this far, you will agree with me that we have come a long way. You have learnt about concepts like impression formation, impression management, attitude formation, attitude change, conformity, compliance, obedience, prejudice and aggression among others. We have also focused on group formation- our reasons for joining or not joining certain groups, what ensures that we remain in certain groups and are certain to leave others.

In this unit, you will be acquainted with the interactions that take place among group members; you will be exposed to what attracts them to each other and how these attractions influence behaviours and aid social interaction within the groups. Interpersonal attraction relies on your ability to make accurate judgement about the people you are attracted to. Given the complex nature of man, to understand an individual, you must look at various attributes of man, like physical, psychological, emotional and even the influence of the environment, among others.

Positive attraction is assumed to pave way for increased interaction between people, which is expected to bring them closer to each other, and even graduate to a lasting relationship. What makes us feel good about another person is very important in attraction.

Are the popular sayings that 'birds of the same feather flock together' or 'opposites attract' true? In this unit, you will look at these sayings closely, and also examine the factors that determine interpersonal attraction. The reasons why you are likely to perceive others favourably or unfavourably, and remain drawn to them or withdrawn from them will also be studied.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define interpersonal attraction
- assess the internal determinants of attraction
- explain the external determinants of attraction
- discuss the interactive determinants of attraction.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Internal Determinants of Attraction

We are always interacting with other people. It is almost as if our lives depend on these interactions. Our psychological well-being will be enhanced if the need for affiliation and emotional needs are satisfied. Some internal determinants of attraction are listed below,

1. Need for affiliation

Defined as the basic motive to seek and maintain interpersonal relationship, affiliation is seen as an adaptive response that increases the chances of survival and reproduction. Infants are born with this desire that motivates them to seek contact with their interpersonal worlds, and are predisposed to prefer focusing on faces compared to other stimuli (Baldwin, 2000; Mandloch et al., 1999).

- **Individual differences**

People differ in the strength of their need for affiliation. These needs can either be explicit or implicit. Those high on explicit need to affiliate are usually more sociable and affiliate easily with many people; while those high on implicit need do withdraw or do not interact that much. Generally, the difference in the need to affiliate results in individuals seeking social contact that is unique and optimal for them; which means they may prefer to be alone some of the time, and be with people at other times (O'Connor & Rosenblood, 1996).

- **Situational influences**

External events are likely to elicit an increased need to affiliate, though on a temporary basis. During disasters, it has been noticed that people prefer to be together and comfort one another, even if they are strangers. Since they share a common problem, the need for contact is likely with this group than with others (Schachter, 1959)- misery doesn't just love any kind of company, it loves only miserable company.

For people in need of affiliation, their main reason is that affiliation provides the opportunity for social comparison. There is the need for cognitive clarity and emotional clarity aroused in these situations that will require the individuals to want to know what is going on and make sense of their current feelings (Gump & Kulik 1997; Kulik, Mahler & Moore 1996).

2. Affect and Attribution

Affect reflects a person's emotional state, both positive or negative feelings and moods. Emotional states influence what we perceive, our thought processes, our motivation, decision making, interpersonal attraction. Affect has two characteristics, namely:

- intensity (strength of the emotion)
- direction (positive or negative)

We can feel both positive and negative effects, simultaneously. This has significance because we can be motivated by positive effect to explore and discover our environment, while a negative effect at the same time will warn us to be cautious, vigilant, alert and watch out for danger which helps us to prepare for retreat (Cacioppo & Bernstein, 1999). Both positive and negative effects are important in our evaluations, with any of them dominating in different settings or situations (Eiser et al., 2003; Gable, Reis & Elliot 2000).

- **Effect of emotions on attraction**

Direct effect of emotions on attraction is seen when what people say or do makes you feel good or bad. The tendency is to like those who make us feel good and dislike those who make us feel bad (Ben-Porath, 2002; Shapiro, Baumeister & Kessler, 1991). Associated effect of emotions on attraction refers to when an individual is present at the time that one's emotional state is aroused by an event or someone. This individual is likely going to be associated with this feeling and is likely going to be evaluated positively or negatively, based on the dominant emotion. This is in line with the principle of classical conditioning which proposes that neutral stimulus, when paired with a positive stimulus, is evaluated positively compared to when this neutral stimulus is paired with a negative stimulus (Olsen & Fazio 2001).

Laughter and liking- when people laugh together, interaction is smoothened. Humour is pleasant and it provides a safe avenue for people to deal with each other. Laughter strengthens social bonds and serves as a social lubricant that softens interpersonal behaviour (Johnson, 2003; Selim, 2003). Laughter, according to Fraley & Aron

(2004), is not at all a bad beginning for a friendship, and in addition, among strangers, laughter serves as a distraction from the discomfort of the interaction and creates a perception of new perspective on the situation (self - expansion).

Manipulation of Affect- when the right emotions are aroused, people can be influenced to behave in certain ways. In fact, to get people to do most things will require some amount or doses of manipulation. In an attempt to make us buy a product, there is an indirect attempt to make us dislike the alternative or other options. Even though these manipulations are often subtle, they are nevertheless effective. People use smiles, positive words or even negative words, among others, to manipulate others and influence their behaviour. Usually, relatively uninformed audience can easily be manipulated.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Summarise the direct and associated effects of emotions and attraction.

3.2 External Determinants of Attraction

Our physical environment presents us with planned or accidental opportunity to come into contact with one another. Physical proximity increases chances for contact, and first impressions of each other is mostly determined by already formed beliefs, attitudes or stereotypes about observable factors like race, gender, physical appearance, accent and height among others. Let us look closely at some of these physical factors.

- **Proximity – physical closeness**

Contact allows us to become acquainted with someone and this enables us to decide who to like or dislike. Physical distance or proximity exposes individuals to repeated contact and the possibility of developing mutual attraction. Repeated exposure to a new stimulus results in an increased positive evaluation of the stimulus (Zajone, 1968).

New or first contact is met with mild discomfort, but repeated exposure reduces negative emotions and increases positive emotions, especially, if there is no harmful consequence as a result of the exposures.

Familiarity increases while uncertainty reduces indicating that these repeated contacts are safe (Zajone, 2001; Lee, 2001). Familiar face elicits positive effect, evaluates positively and activates facial muscles and brain activity in ways that are associated with positive emotions. Positive emotion (Affect), in turn, elicits perception of familiarity

(Harmon & Jones & Allen, 2001; Monin, 2003). Once you do not dislike an individual from the onset, a liking for that person will increase with more contacts (Brehm et al., 2005).

- **Physical attractiveness**

Physical characteristics are important factors in attraction, especially during the early stages of a relationship. Similarity in physical attractiveness results in committed relationships that may lead to a permanent arrangement like marriage, according to the matching hypothesis (Yela & Sangrader, 2001). Physical appearance is very vivid and easily seen compared to attitudes and values.

The definition of physical beauty differs from culture to culture and from one individual to another. Men generally emphasise physical attractiveness, facial beauty more than women while, women are more concerned with, stature, height, muscular body among others in judging physical appearance in men.

Positive stereotypes about attractiveness are universal, but the specific content of these stereotypes depends on what is valued most by the culture. It is believed that attractive people are more confident, interesting, sociable, exciting, and sexy, well adjusted, more successful, masculine (men), feminine (female) than unattractive people. Most of the above stereotypes are incorrect.

Physical appearance has also been associated with being popular, having high self-esteem probably due to the fact that people tend to act favourably towards attractive people which in turn affects them positively.

A few negative assumptions about attractive people also exist. Females are sometimes seen as vain and materialistic, if physically attractive. The political ambitions of females have been affected because these women are seen as too feminine while the too masculine males are accepted politically into various offices.

- **Mode of dressing**

The way people dress, as well as choice of colour affects attraction. Bright colours have been associated with what is good while dark colours are associated with what is bad (Meier, Robinson & Clore, 2004).

- **Perceived age**

Perceived age also has an effect on attraction. Youthful appearance is associated with immature characteristics, though associated with some positive characteristics like honesty, sincerity and trust (Zebrowitz et al., 2003). Handsome or beautiful people with what is termed 'baby faces' may be at a disadvantage, regardless of their actual ages, as they may be seen as youthful in appearance & known as the baby-face-effect. They are usually assessed as immature and not likely to be trusted with responsibilities or even be seen as leaders. A youthful walking style attracts more positive response than elderly style, regardless of gender and actual age (Montepare & Zebrowits & Mc Arthur 1988).

- **First names**

What is in a name? You may ask. The answer is & there is a lot. Names share a wide range of positive and negative stereotypes. A first name that is attached to a popular individual becomes associated with that popular individual's characteristics, and this stereotype is transferred to all those who share that name. Initial or first impressions are sometimes based on a person's first name.

Assume that you have just been asked to choose a name for your nephews or nieces, which of these names are you likely to choose?

Nephew & John, Musa, Kanu, Olusegun, Yakubu, Yunasa, Bode, Okoro
Oladimeji, David

Niece -- Gloria, Asabe, Kande, Tolu, Dora, Turai, Nneka, Yemisi,
Patricia

Now, whatever your choices are, you need to ask yourself why you made these choices, Maybe some of these names remind you of some popular people, or they are used by certain ethnic groups to which you belong.

Male names	Female names	Attribute about the individual
Alexander Otis	Elizabeth Mildred	Successful Unsuccessful
Joshua Roscoe	Mary Tracey	Moral Immoral
Mark Norbert	Jessica Harriet	Popular Unpopular
Henry Ogden	Ann Freda	Warm Cold
Scott Willard	Brittany Agatha	Cheerful Not cheerful
Taylor Eugene	Rosalyn Isabella	Masculine Feminine

Figure 4.1: *Stereotypes – First Names (Source: Based on information in Mehrabian & Piercy, 1993).*

SELF – ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

List the five external determinants of attraction.

3.3 Interactive Determinants of Attraction

The need for affiliation, positive affect and physical proximity all help in forming interpersonal relationships. Once we have been drawn to the individual using the above parameters, we now turn to communication in interpersonal relation. Through communication, we will most likely discover our degree of similarity and how far we are willing to show mutual liking by what is said and what is done.

- **Similarity**

Are birds of the same feathers likely to flock together? Sir Francis Galton (1870, 1952) suggests so, through his work on married couples. He found that spouses resemble each other in many ways. Friends and spouses were more similar, not by chance (Hunt, 1935).

People who discover that they are similar will like each other, because of this similarity. Similar attitudes increase attraction which may also include similarity in beliefs, values and interests. This is true for male and female regardless of age, educational, cultural differences (Byrne, 1971).

Proportion of similarity ÷ the number of the specific topics two people may express similar views on, divided by the total number of topics shared, can now be used to determine or predict their attraction to each other. The higher the proportion of similarity, the more the chance of their attraction to each other. People have, over and over again, shown a preference for people they are similar to than those they are not similar to (dissimilarity).

Similarity results in positive effect while, dissimilarity results in negative effect. According to Newcomb (1961), and Heider (1958), balance theory- a state of balance which is emotionally pleasant, occurs when two individuals like each other and discover that they are similar. A state of imbalance occurs when two people like each other and discover they are dissimilar in some ways. Imbalance is emotionally unpleasant. In this case they are likely going to:

- induce one of them to change
- misperceive the dissimilarity
- decide to dislike each other

And non-balance occurs when two people dislike each other. They become indifferent to the similarities or dissimilarity between them.

- **Mutual liking**

This is the intermediate step between initial attraction and establishing an interpersonal relationship. When positive evaluation is communicated through what is said or done by each interacting party, this results in an added mutual experience through the realisation of mutual liking by them.

Positive Experience: Sometimes the first sign of attraction may be non-verbal. Just sitting next to someone in class, in a hall or an open space might convey liking which is a positive indicator of the person's feeling about the individual. This liking leads to proximity.

We all appreciate positive feedbacks, so when we meet people who genuinely share our likes and dislikes and can communicate same, it becomes very easy for us to like them and they in turn like us ÷ so that the liking becomes mutual.

In a sense, the dislike could be mutual if people do not seem to agree on anything and do have more diverse views on a wide range of subjects, topics or issues. Negative feedbacks in this case will result in less contact or staying apart ÷ thus reducing the possibility of developing a lasting relationship.

SELF – ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

How does the proportion of similarity affect interactive attraction?

4.0 CONCLUSION

The possibility of forming lasting relationships has been highlighted to you in this unit. Society and cultures should focus on the factors that have positive impact on interpersonal attraction and encourage repeated contact among her members so that social interaction will improve and negative stereotypes and prejudices are reduced to the barest minimum, if not eliminated.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has taught you all you need to know about effective social interaction and interpersonal attraction. Without positive interpersonal attraction, other forms of social interaction may be adversely affected. The factors responsible for increase or decrease in interpersonal attraction have also been dealt with extensively.

It is believed that all the issues raised so far would have answered most of your questions on how the individual should function in society, and how mutual coexistence can be enhanced. You are to put to practice, in your own little way, all that you have come across in this course so that our society can be better than it is now.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Briefly explain the effect of affect on attraction.
2. How is the need for affiliation important in explaining attraction?

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