Psychology

PERSPECTIVES IN HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

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CHAPTER NINE

Social Psychology: Basic Principles and Approaches

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WHAT IS SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY?

Various scholars have defined social psychology. Bartlett (1932) gave one of the earliest definitions as the systematic study of the modification of individual experience and response due directly to member- ship of a group. This definition draws attention to the 'making' of the individual by using modification. That is, as a member of a group, an individual is influenced and this group influence contributes to the individual's experience. It should be noted that as psychology deals with the individual, social psychology picks up the individual and examines such individual in his/her social context. Thus social psychology enables systematic examination of these responses and experiences which the individual has gone through.

Allport (1935) defined the discipline of social psychology as one which sets out to understand how the thoughts, feelings and behaviours of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined or implied presence of others. First, it is clear from this definition that social psychologists do not only study actual, observable behaviour but also what can be inferred about the inner lives of people; how they feel, their attitudes, opinions, how they form impressions and try to make sense of their world. Second, human experience is understood in terms of the influence of other people. We can be influenced by others not only through social influence; we may be affected by such things as our physical state of health or what we have learned and what we have eaten. The social psychologist's focus is on the vital role of social influences and relationships. We also learn that people influence others even if they are not immediately present. This is because we are aware of belonging to certain family, occupational and cultural groups as we are also aware of liking, loving, or feeling responsible to certain people in our lives. These groups and individuals in our thoughts and actions thus profoundly influence us. Another definition is that of Young (1953) which states that social psychology is concerned with the process of interaction among human beings. Young (1953) observes that the responses of one individual are the stimulus to another, which in turn responds to the first. This is illustrated by a basic model of dyad (2 person interaction A: B) in a recurring condition of inter-stimulation and response contact.

Contemporary definitions of social psychology however added a word to the various definitions, which seems to have put the discipline in a right perspective. Brehm and Kassin (1996) define social psychology as the scientific study of the way individuals think, feel, desire, and act in social situations. This definition implies that social psychology employs scientific methods of systematic observation, description, and measurement in the study and understanding of man-social environment relationship.

In sum, social psychologists study a wide range of social phenomena that are either practical or theoretical in nature. Some practical examples are why can patients not do what their physicians recommend? What kinds of decisions do groups make and which one can be improved upon? Why do people persist in stereotyping males, females, professors, students and ethnic groups regardless of the realities? On the other hand, theoretical examples are what consistencies and inconsistencies exist between people's attitudes and their behaviour? What biases operate in the perception of cause and effect in interpersonal situation?

From the stated definitions, one will realise that a formal definition of social psychology like any other field of study is a complex task, for many different factors have to be taken into account. However, our working definition will be as follows: *social psychology is the scientific field that studies the manner in which the behaviour, feeling and thoughts of one individual are influenced or determined by the behaviour and characteristics of others.* That our behaviour, feelings, and thought are often strongly affected by the actions of others is readily clear e.g., your behaviour, emotions, and thoughts would be strongly affected if while standing in a crowded motor park, one of the other passengers began shouting, 'my purse has been snatched. He has taken my purse away!' or while in an examination hall you noticed a highly respected member of the class cheating very close to you. Again, you might well experience strong reactions to this person's behaviour.

Why then do we study social behaviour? We study social behaviour because of the following reasons: First, more satisfactory knowledge can be gathered through scientific study of human behaviour. Second, because of the need for seeking accurate knowledge about social relation as such information may prove useful to individuals in the context of their daily lives. A greater understanding of our interactions with other persons may often assist us in improving the nature of our relations with others. And finally, advances in scientific knowledge are as essential as advances in technology in guaranteeing continued human survival in the decades ahead.

ASSUMPTIONS IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

The Existence of Social Expectancy

Life continuity is illustrated by the development of social expectancies. Social expectancies are the anticipations, which grow out of experience about one's own and other people's experience. Problems of various degrees arise on the mentality of the group, or the expectancy of a family or social group. Similarly the penalty of deviancy from cultural norms and expectations vary from outcast, imprisonment and death. Culture depends on the continuity of life; thus, people may be imprisoned if they do not abide by the social expectancies. From the above example, social expectancies mean that certain common laws should be adhered to.

The structure of everyday social relations depends upon a shared awareness of these regularities i.e. social expectancies are not subconscious, we are all aware of them. We share an awareness of the regularity of every event in our social life. These regularities are infused in various social roles we fulfil and the norms and values which serve as guides to conduct, whether in small groups or in the larger society such as a nation. Regularities in norms and values imply predictability of behaviour, which alone make continued relationships meaningful. "We are expected" to be able to predict other peoples behaviour while we predict to be able to control. It is the underlying regularity in a research that scientists look into; if it does not appear often enough, you cannot predict, but if it does, then you can make a definite statement about the level of probability. It is therefore part of the taste of social psychologists to study the problems that confront the individual in relation to regularities in social behaviour, values and attitudes.

Man's Possession of the Cognitive View of the World

Cultures and families have greatly affected the way of viewing the world. We all have peculiarities in the way we understand and interpret things. For example, when we say Hausas' way of life in relation to leadership. It means that Hausas have certain ways of looking at leadership, which do not necessarily mean they do not have anything in common with Yorubas and Igbos as the case may be. Thus, if the way one does things is different from the other or the way they interpret issues they may not find it easy to interact normally as a result of their differences.

The question you need to answer therefore is: Do your ways of viewing things make you a laughing

stock within the community? We ought to know that we have different ways of interpreting issues but this may be shared with other members of our family or society. When we are aware that there are many things we may do that may be misunderstood by others, we will then know how to react to others' views. We are able to develop elaborate norms, expectancies, values and regularities principally because we are endowed with cognitive and intellectual capacities, which enable us to profit from experience and so to organise ourselves effectively. A major reason why the study of human behaviour differs from the study of inanimate matters is because man possesses a highly reflective capacity.

Having conformed to social expectancies, norms, values, and regularities, we become endowed with a worldview that is closely related to the expectancies of our cultural groups and societies. It is this background that enables us to interpret events in the world and to give meaning to such events. Krech, Crutchfield and Ballachey (1962) have summarised why social psychology has to build upon a worldview. They state that, if we are to understand man's behaviour in the world of his own making, we need to know how man comes by the ideas about things, the people, which make up his world image and the principles, which govern the growth, development and interaction of these ideas. Social psychologists drive for such an understanding of man. Why is it difficult for a person to find things strange in a new place? The answer lies principally on the fact that one has not learned the worldview of the new place.

The Existence and Importance of Human Individuality

Individuality develops as a result of interaction between genetic, physical and social influences. Human individuality is a factor that is common to both the existence of social expectancies and acquisitions of a worldview. Social psychology assumes that human individuality is the building block of social life; hence social psychology has to focus on the study of the individual in society. The study of the individual in a society carries with it a probing of the many features of the social environment including the family and other social groups, which have an impact on the individual.

SOCIAL INFLUENCE

In any social context people are organised either in groups or remain as separate entities. The gregarious nature of man makes him to yield to requests and pressures emanating within his or her external environment. He implicitly or indirectly adopts changes that are symbolic in his interaction with other people. The change sometimes affects beliefs, thoughts, perceptions, motives and actions. Thus having a great influence on how one further conducts activities with the social phenomena. This analysis explains the concept of social influence.

The focus is therefore on how the presence of others affects our behaviour and other topical issues as conformity, compliance and obedience to authority. The concept of social influence has been of interest to social psychologists in their course of exploring human behaviour and answering the questions on why people behave the way they do and how they act at certain times. Social influence can be simply described as an attempt at changing behaviour and also at altering attitudes. In social psychology, the term social influence refers to any action performed by one or more persons to change the attitudes, behaviour and feelings of others. According to Pennebaker (1980), social influence could be defined as the process by which people's thoughts, actions, and attitudes are influenced or changed by members of their group.

SOCIAL FACILITATION

This is defined as any increment or decrement of individual activity resulting from the presence of another individual (Crawford, 1939). Social facilitation was brought to limelight through the work of Triplett (1898). His observation led to the question of how does the behaviour of a person who is alone changed when another person is present even when there is no direct interaction or communication between the individual involved except only the presence of another person? From his laboratory study with school children, he concluded that the most likely effect of the presence of another person was to facilitate behaviour. Triplett (1898) inferred that the bodily presence of another contestant participating simultaneously in the race served to liberate latent energy not ordinarily available. He also noted that the female students were more likely than

the males to be positively influenced by the other person.

This study led to two separate directions. The study of *audience effects* resulted from the presence of one or more passive observers. And *coaction effects* that resulted from participants working simultaneously but independently on the same task. Travis (1925) reported that performance improved in the presence of observers while Allport (1924) from his extensive experiment on coaction concluded that overt responses such as writing were facilitated in the presence of co-workers while thinking was hampered. Accumulated research evidence indicates that audience and coaction situations might either improve or impair individual behaviour. However, Zajonc (1965) suggested that response was usually facilitated by the presence of others when the behaviour was simple or well-learned while if the subject were to learn a new or novel response, the presence of others would likely interfere with his rate of acquisition.

Explanation for social facilitation

Arousal: Zajonc (1965) postulated a single underlying process named *arousal*, which can either facilitate or interfere with performance depending on the situation. Arousal is defined as a heightened state of physiological activity, which enhances the general reactivity of the individual. Thus, when behaviour is being learned, not only is the correct response present in the person's repertoire but other incorrect responses are present as well. According to Zajonc, the arousal induced by the presence of another person has two effects. First as arousal increases, the strength or vigour with which correct response is emitted increases. And second as arousal increases, the strength with which incorrect responses are emitted also increases. This means that errors will take longer time to decline in frequency, and learning will be hampered. Zajonc proposed that this reaction to the physical presence of others was innate rather than acquired.

Evaluation apprehension: Cottrell (1972) postulates that social experience created the 'drive' increasing property of the presence of others and not as is implied by the Zajonc arousal hypothesis. This information states that the presence of others is a *learned source of drive*. According to Cottrell, the evaluation apprehensions induced by the presence of others indicate the anticipation of both rewards and punishments. Geen and Ganage's (1977) investigations suggest that it is only the anticipation of negative evaluation that increases arousal. Available data contradict the contention that evaluation apprehension is necessary for the effects to occur. However, evaluation has been found to heighten arousal and facilitate dominant response tendencies.

Distraction-conflict theory: This is another explanation postulated by Sanders (1983) and his colleagues in explaining the effect of audience or coactors on arousal. According to these theorists, in the presence of others, the subjects not only pay attention to the task but to the audience or coactors as well. Distracted in this way, the subject is in a state of conflict. It is this conflict that leads to arousal which, in turn, facilitates dominant responses. Behaviour then is either enhanced or impaired depending on the nature of the task. Researchers such as Baron (1986) have suggested that it may not be the conflicting attention or arousal that is the operative factor in the facilitation of dominant responses. Baron (1986); however, noted that the presence of others could lead to *information overload*. Thus, to bring things under control the individual must concentrate harder on the task and shut out distracting cues. The effect of increased arousal in coaction is more difficult to demonstrate than in audience situation for the likelihood that feelings of competition or rivalry are also present when individuals are responding simultaneously. As with many psychological phenomena, coaction effects as well as competitive motivation may be influenced by cultural factors.

SOCIAL LOAFING

The phenomenon called "Social loafing" according to Latane, Williams and Harkins (1979) is defined as a decrease in individual effort due to the presence of other persons. This is opposed to social facilitation that states that people tend to "work harder" in the presence of others than when they are alone. Social loafing implies that collective efforts may be less efficient than individual ones. Studies show that social loafing can occur on both physical tasks, such as clapping or shouting, and on intellectual tasks

(Weldon and Gargano, 1988). Researchers have suggested various reasons why social loafing occurs. For instance, it might be due to inadequate coordination (Steiner, 1972), social evaluation (Geen, 1991), more on complex task than simple one (Jackson and Williams, 1985). More importantly, Latane (1981) stated that bystander effect and social loafing share a common cause: diffusion of responsibility in groups. He also reported that social loafing occurs in situations where individuals can 'hide in the crowd'. To minimise social loafing, Weldon and Gargano (1988) suggested allocation of specific responsibilities to individuals in a group, so that their personal contributions remain recognisable.

Social loafing has implications for the efficiency of human organisations. This is because when partners identify with each other, the common goals developed help to enhance creativity and productivity. However when *identification is lost*, even the extrinsic desire for money and success cannot prevent social loafing and a loss of quality in work results. Social loafing should not be confused with the "free rider" problem. In the case of social loafing, everyone is working or participating to some extent. On the other hand, the free rider does not contribute to the group effort but does take advantage of the outcome.

DEINDIVIDUATION

The concept of deindividuation deals with the questions of what turns a crowd into a violent mob, or makes an otherwise gentle individual join in mob lynching? Brehm and Kassin (1996) define deindividuation as the loss of a person's individuality and the reduction of normal constraints against deviant behaviour. Research findings have indicated that deindividuation is a collective phenomenon that occurs only in the presence of others and not alone (Festinger, et. al., 1952).

The process of deindividuation is explained from two major perspectives, accountability cues and attentional cues. Accountability cues refer to whether an individual is caught and made to be personally accountable for his/her deviant behaviour. Prentice-Dunn and Rogers (1982, 1983) submit that when accountability is low, those who commit deviant acts are less likely to be caught and punished, a situation

that may make inhibited behaviour appealing. In other words, accountability cues may lead to deliberate decisions to engage in forbidden behaviour because one thinks he will not be caught.

Attentional cues on the other hand focus an individual's attention away from the self. Such cues as intense environmental stimulation (e.g. disco party, sport arena, cinema, religious gathering) may decline self-awareness which will definitely lead to a change in consciousness. This according to Prentice-Dunn and Rogers (1982, 1983) is an individuated state that makes individuals to attend to less internal standards and react more to the immediate situation with diminished sensitivity to long-term consequences of behaviour. Attentional cues lead people to impulsive behaviour.

FACTORS IN GROUP DYNAMICS

Three factors are most often identified as components of social influence in group dynamics. They are conformity, obedience and compliance.

Conformity

Brehm and Kassin (1996) define conformity as the tendency to change our perceptions, opinions, or behaviour in ways that are consistent with group norms. Conformity occurs in situations in which individuals change their behaviour in order to adhere to widely acceptable beliefs or standards. For instance, you could feel very uncomfortable when you discovered that you dressed differently from other guests at a party. Thus, if an opportunity was given, you would quickly alter your own behaviour to match that of these other persons. Conformity cannot be treated in isolation from beliefs or behaviours. When one conforms, there is either a temporary or permanent alteration of beliefs, innate values or behaviour. For instance, when newly admitted students come to any higher institution such as the university, they are exposed to new lifestyles, a new value system, new norms, communication patterns and fashion. Under these circumstances, there is usually a tendency to change from what the individual is used to by following current trends. The need to change is heightened either by external pressures or the desire to enjoy acceptance from the group as well as maintaining a harmonious relationship with other members of the group. Thus, the pressure of

strong desire towards conformity seems to stem from the fact that in many situations, there are both spoken and unspoken rules indicating how we should or ought to behave. These are known as social norms, which in some cases may be quite explicit e.g. governmental laws; signs along the highways that describe the expected behaviours in foot-high letters such as turn to left. In other instances such norms are unspoken and implicit (Cary, 1978). Conformity seems to serve a useful function. Asch's (1951) work paved the way for research on conformity. Asch's (1951) study involves the reactions of a single person subject in the presence of six, seven or even eight other subjects. Crutchfield (1955) reviewed this by devising a procedure known as Crutchfield technique — it permits researchers to gather data from several subjects at once without the need for any accomplices. Crutchfield's technique involves leading subjects to believe that they will be informed about others' responses by lights on a special apparatus. In reality the experimenter ~~ls these lights and uses them to exert confor-
ιssure upon subjects.

ιwo classical studies have been used to explain one of the many reasons adduced for why people conform. People are said to conform because of *informational influence*, otherwise known as the desire to be right and *normative influence*, also known as the desire to be liked.

Informational influence: The role of informational influence on conformity behaviour has been enunciated in the works of Sherif (1935) and Asch (1955). Subjects exposed to perceive illusions in the study conducted by Sherif (1935) were asked after series of trials to give their judgement. It was found that the answers and estimates from the subjects were very similar to those of the confederates because of the ambiguous situation. The study shows that when a situation is ambiguous and someone is not sure about what to do, the person seeks out the advice of others. Asch (1955) attempted to verify if subjects would make independent judgement or trust their own perceptions in the face of a clearer stimulus situation, even though other members of the group disagree with them. Results showed that much as the subjects seemed doubtful about answers given by the confederates who were wrong, they still conformed by choosing that answer.

Normative Influence: This is otherwise called the desire to be liked. The underlying philosophy behind this principle is that people conform to the whims of other people to gain social acceptance and approval. Keisler's (1971) definition of conformity explains the normative influence. According to Keisler (1971), conformity is defined as a change in behaviour or belief towards a group as a result of real or imagined pressure. If this is so people tend to create good impressions by engaging in certain acts, accepting group norms or standards through outward public conduct. At times this is done to avoid embarrassment. For instance, a typical traditional Yoruba person might order for fried rice and chicken to be served in an end-of-year-party. He could have done this to fulfil the obligation of observing table manners and proving that he belongs to a class of elite but given another chance he would have opted for a plate of *amala* and *ewedu* soup (one of the most cherished food of the Yoruba speaking people of Nigeria). If at all he shows keen interest in *amala*, to gain social acceptance he may as well decide to use a set of cutlery instead of bare hands to eat in the public. In summary, the more ambiguous a situation the greater the informational influence to conform to group norms, the less ambiguous the situation or task, the greater will normative influence be responsible for conformity.

Factors affecting conformity

The earlier studies by social psychologists have led to uncover different exerting variables. A few of such are presented below.

Attraction: We do not conform to just any group. We tend to conform to groups we like and to whom we compare ourselves. This is called *reference groups* in social psychology. Reference groups consist of persons to whom we are similar or to whom we would like to be similar; e.g. football players may not serve as a reference group for a surgeon. It is only when we adopt others as a reference group that we will experience pressure to conform to their norms or standard (Sakurai 1975).

Group Size: Many experiments have demonstrated that conformity usually increases as the size of unanimous majority increases, at least up to a point (Tanford and Penrod, 1984). Thus, as the number of group members exerting social influence

rises, so conformity too increases. However, further growth in the group size does not appear to enhance our willingness to "go along". Wilder (1977) hypothesises that conformity may fail to increase as group size rises because beyond some point, the persons exposed to social pressure begin to suspect collusion. It is not the number of persons exerting social influence but the number of social entities — the number of groups or individuals who are seen as being distinct and independent. Wilder (1977) concluded from his study that our tendency to conform may indeed increase as the number of persons or groups exerting social pressure upon us increase. Several researchers including Tanford & Penrod (1984); and Asch (1955) have proved that the size of a group has the capacity to influence conformity behaviour among group members.

Group Unanimity: One condition under which people conform to group influence is when there is unanimity of group opinion. Group unanimity is based on the premise that trust or correctness of the majority decreases whenever there is disagreement, even if the dissenter is less knowledgeable or less reliable than those who make up the majority. When a group has broken unanimity over an issue, it reduces an individual's reliance on majority opinion as source of information and accordingly reduces conformity.

Commitment to the Group: Forsyth (1990) posited that the strength of bonds between members of a group is of great significance in assessing group conformity. Commitment in this sense refers to all the forces, favourable or unfavourable, capable of strengthening the individual's tie with other members of the group. When positive forces exist in a group, there is usually a high morale among group members who believe in functioning as a team. Such groups are more vulnerable to conformity. The attraction that is formented in a group is for accomplishment of set goals through collective effort and the benefits that will be denied if one is not loyal to the group. Certain negative forces could as well bring about conformity to group values.

Desire for Individuality: Individual differences in conformity behaviour are better explained when people prefer to be identified separately from group opinion and group actions. Such people are said to have a sense of individuation (Maslach, Stapp and Santee, 1985, 1987). High individuated people are more likely to get what their minds ask them to, dress in a manner that is different from others, bear distinct nicknames and hold firmly to their opinions during a heated argument. At times the non-conformist does the direct opposite of what is expected by other group members. Such individual differences have been linked to the influence of culture on conformity behaviour. Cross-cultural studies by Berry, Poortinga, Segall and Dasen, (1992) showed that children reared in Western cultures which emphasise a great deal of independent behaviour and creativity are more individuated than children reared in most developing countries, where compliance and respect for groups are valued. Further research which involved a sample of subjects from some African countries including Sierra Leone, Japan and China in Asia showed a significant positive relationship between cultural orientation and conformity behaviour of subjects.

The Bases of Conformity

Why do individuals conform? Many factors contribute to our strong tendency to conform. The two most important processes are reinforcement for conforming and social comparison.

Reinforcement for conforming: most of our predisposition to conformity is a function of our background (past experience and personality). For instance, children are often rewarded with praise or approval for expressing the 'right' views held or favoured by their parents. Similarly, they are often punished for behaving in non-conforming ways. This continues throughout life. This seems to be why we show strong tendencies to 'go along' with society or members of our group. A practical implication is that if we come from a home where parents are extremely harsh and do not provide independent training, this background will most likely influence us.

Social comparison: This stems from our drive or desire to understand and evaluate ourselves. Most often, it is on the basis of information provided by those around us that we hope to learn whether we are bright or dull, attractive or unattractive, correct in our opinions or incorrect. To understand the social world around us, we must engage in social comparison. That is, we must compare our abilities and our opinions with those of others (Suls and Miller, 1977).

Social comparison can be seen in terms of personal needs. It can be seen as a way of gaining prestige and acceptance within the group and a way of increasing one's status within the group by helping group members to achieve their goals and that anxiety remains very high and uncomfortable for those who do not conform.

OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY

A system of authority is a requirement for communal living and it is only the person dwelling in isolation who is not forced to respond with the deviance or submission to the commands of others. For many people obedience is a deeply ingrained behaviour tendency. Potent impulses may override ethical training, sympathy and morality. The question of whether one should obey when commands are in conflict with conscience has long been pondered and psychologically argued. Such arguments are of great importance but they say very little about how most people behave in concrete situations and this is where Milgram's experiment comes in. Obedience is a form of social influence based upon direct commands or order. That is, it is a social influence which operates by demand. The most direct technique that one person can use to modify the behaviour of another is that of simply ordering him/her to obey. It is a less common procedure than either conformity or compliance.

Raven's (1959) identification of obedience to legitimate authority as one of the six major bases of power is particularly interesting. This is because in any society, groups or organisations, rules are made to govern or regulate peoples' conduct. People obey orders, particularly from others considered to have legitimate authority over them. However, one problem that emanates is that circumstances occur when the rules that must be obeyed because their course is from a legitimate authority are in conflict with our own beliefs and values. For example, when soldiers are asked by superior commanders to kill which may be against their will. Also policemen use torture as a technique of interrogation when ordered to do so. It has become necessary therefore for social psychologists to investigate conditions under which people will comply or resist adhering to directives or legitimate instructions that contravene their moral values or beliefs.

Milgram, a renowned social psychologist, conducted series of laboratory experiments which are reported in his works in 1963 and 1974, to ascertain conditions under which people will comply or resist instructions that contradict their beliefs or values. In an advert, subjects were invited to participate in an experiment. They were told that the objective was to investigate the effects of punishment on learning. In each experiment, volunteers were paired as "teacher" and "learner". The teacher's job was to read aloud pairs of words while the learner had a duty to memorise them. If the learner made mistakes, the teacher was to administer punishment. This experiment was designed in a manner that electric shocks ranging from 15 to 450 voltage levels were to be administered to the learner sitting and strapped on a chair. Communication between the teacher and learner was with the use of an intercom. Shocks were to be delivered on instruction. The point of the experiment was to see how far a person would proceed in a concrete and measurable situation in which he is ordered to inflict increasing pain on a protesting victim. Most bowed to social pressure time and time again. The subject "teachers" continued on this course of action despite the fact that the victim pounded on the wall as if in pain on two separate occasions.

Moreover, 'when the experiments were repeated in Germany, Italy, South Africa, and Australia, the level of obedience was invariably somewhat higher than was found in investigation reported in America. The experiment in Germany found 85% of his subjects obedient'. It has been argued on theoretical ground that, all people or everybody harbours deeply aggressive instinct continually pressing for expression and that experiment, provides institutional justification for the release of these impulses. Milgram concluded against this argument that the ordinary person who shocked the victim did so out of a sense of obligation and impression of his duty as a subject and not from any peculiarly aggressive tendencies.

Milgram (1965) added, 'this is perhaps the fundamental lesson of our study: "normal" ordinary people simply doing their job without any particular hostility on their part can become agents in a terrible destructive process.' That is, the "normal" people can be led to perform destructive acts when exposed

to strong pressure from a legitimate authority. Moreover, even when the destructive effects of their work become clear and they are asked to carry actions incompatible with the fundamental standards of morality, relatively few people have the internal resources to resist authority.

The essence of obedience is that a person comes to view himself as the instrument for carrying out another person's wishes and therefore no longer regards himself as responsible for his actions. Once this critical shift of viewpoint has occurred, all of the essential features of obedience follow.

Regarding the effectiveness of authority to induce obedience, Milgram's research revealed the following variations: (a) that the experimenter's physical presence has a marked impact on his authority. Kilham and Mann (1974) found for instance that obedience dropped drastically when orders were given by telephone as compared to when the person giving the order is present. (b) he found that conflicting authority paralyses action and (c) that, the rebellious action of others severely undermines authority.

It can be concluded that it does not take an evil person to serve an evil system. Ordinary people are easily integrated into malevolent systems. Our awareness of this fact is the first step towards our liberation from the perils of obedience. Milgram himself had unfortunately given blind obedience to the authority of science and put subjects through the process of psychological stress. It could be suggested that if he had not obeyed the authority to some extent, he would not have made a breakthrough in this area of research. This therefore creates a vicious cycle, for, to bring about the findings as important as Milgram's study, one has to indulge in the product of stress. This is because to attain necessary scientific knowledge, a few people have to suffer a little pain.

DECISION-MAKING — CHOICE SHIFT

How does decision-making in group affect one's decision? It is often said that no one man should be left with the responsibility of launching nuclear weapon or declaring a war. The implication being that such a decision should be left to the sanity and conservatism of a group. On the other hand, it has been pointed out that no one man ever lynched or

mobbed another man. It is always a group action or a mob action. Consequently, it has long been thought that groups tend to be more conservative than the individual members. In other words, groups have a dampening impact upon boldness, creativity, innovation and daring. In fact, Whyte, Jr. (1956) published a book, *The Organization Man,* in which he suggested or recommended that the administrator who wants a conservative advice should ask a committee rather than an individual. Stoner (1961) in a study on comparison of individual and group decisions involving risk, revealed that people tend to make more daring decisions when they are in a group than when they are alone. This phenomenon is termed the *Risky Shift.* The risky shift hypothesis states that "groups" will make decisions that involve higher degree of risks than do the decisions that the individual in the groups would make alone. The other side of this is what is called *cautious shift.* Cautious shift hypothesis states that in making decisions involving widely held values that support caution, the group as a whole will tend to be more conservative than the average individual member. Both the *risky* and *cautious shifts* are known as *choice-shift.* They were both originated by Stoner in 1961. Stoner's study revealed that people tend to make more daring decisions when they are in a group than when they are alone. This shifting in a group's decision-making towards either greater risk or greater caution depends largely on the cultural values involved. That is, the type of risk prevalent in one's social setting. It is noteworthy to know that a decision under risk involves choosing between more certain, less attractive alternative and less certain, more attractive alternative. Risk in general increases with the size of the stake and decreases as the probability of obtaining a gain becomes less with increase in the price.

Explanation for Choice Shift

A good many explanations have been advanced to account for the risky shift effect. One such explanation is called "value hypothesis". This is advanced by Brown (1965) and since modified and expanded by Pruitt (1971) and, Morgan and Aram (1975). According to this view, daring and risk-taking are highly valued behaviour in Western culture. People want to be as risky as their peers but in group

discussion some people find that they are not really so risky as they would like to believe, consequently they shift to a riskier option. On some tasks, however, people do not shift in a risky but in a cautious direction.

Release theory is advanced by Pruitt (1971b). This theory suggests that conflict exists when we are asked to make decisions. On one hand, risk-taking appears attractive since it implies that we are confident of our ability to cope with the environment. On the other hand, we find a cautious approach compelling because of the value attached to moderation and being reasonable. According to release theory, the risky shift occurs in a group decision because the discovery of another person who endorses high risk takes the more cautious group members from their social constraints. That is, it gives them the courage of their conviction so to speak.

COMPLIANCE

Hardly a day passes when we are not exposed to many requests from others. Friends and members of our families request favours. Agreeing to such requests is called compliance. It should be noted that one of the most common forms of social influence is the attempt to gain compliance through direct request. First, request could be presented in an open and direct manner. And if one is fortunate, they may produce the desired effects. In many other cases, persons attempting to gain compliance try to load the dice in their favour before making specific requests. That is, they take several preliminary steps to increase the chances that their wishes will be granted. Milgram (1974) shows that people can be induced to comply with the directives of authority even when the behaviour required is against their wishes and values. In our day to day experience, the pressure to conform or comply is more subtle yet powerful that we cannot resist. Baron and Byrne (1977) define the term compliance as a response to a direct attempt to influence someone by means of a request. The question to be answered is through what social operation could compliance be increased?

Effects of Guilt and Principle of Making Restitution to the Injured

Arousal of guilt can lead to increase in compliance.

For instance, when an individual harms another person without the aim of doing so, such individual may sometimes experience strong feelings of guilt. When people feel guilty because they have done something that they consider wrong, they generally will try to do something that reduces the guilt feeling. They may perform a good act to balance a bad act. According to Baron and Byrne (1982) one important way in which one could accomplish this was by complying with request from the person one harmed. Many persons make use of such tactics as anguished tears, heart-rending looks, and playing the role of a martyr as a means for obtaining their way from others. Children are often masters of this art and employ it to wrap their parents around their tiny "helpless" fingers. Adults too often use guilt as a means of obtaining their way. For example, a parent or spouse sometimes remarks, "After all I've done for you ..." immediately before making some requests. Attempts to minimise a negative aspect of the guilt arousing situation may lead to compliance with an appropriate request. Researchers such as Freedman, Wallington, and Bless (1967); McWillen (1971) and Wallington (1973) indicated from their studies how subjects have been induced to experience guilt in several different ways. For example in these studies subjects have been made to lie to an experimenter and so ruin the experimenter's study. Then their willingness to comply with request from others was measured. In almost all cases persons induced to feel guilt showed greater compliance than those in control groups not made to experience guilt. Additionally, findings suggested that subjects are more willing to help, not only this individual but also, others not directly involved in the situation. They are willing to make amends for their harmful actions in many different ways not simply in a manner that directly "rights" the wrong they have done.

The success of guilt as a technique of social influence stems from causing others to experience highly unpleasant feelings. It is a tactic we should all be reluctant to use.

Similarly, common sense tells us that if we make restitution to the injured or victims we feel better. However, the principle of making restitution does not appear to be the motivation behind compliance behaviour. Experiment by Freedman, Wallington and Bless (1967) demonstrated compliance effects even

when someone who lacks knowledge of the subject's transgression makes the request. Indeed, evidence suggests that a person who does harm may be even more inclined to help someone who is not the victim. While continued contact with the victim apparently results in uncomfortable feelings of obligation or serves as an unpleasant reminder of the harm the subject inflicted. In fact, Regan, Williams and Sparling (1972) found that guilt does not merely make people more compliant with the requests, guilty people seek out ways to lessen their guilt by voluntarily engaging in a good deed.

To classify the role of compliance as a means of social influence, French and Raven (1959); Raven, (1992) identified six types of resources that can be used by a person to influence other people. One of such resources is reward. People that play the role of hired assassins do this act because of the rewards expected. Such rewards act as great reinforcement for compliance. A smile, a peck or a complementary remark could be all it takes from a lover to his partner for an outing.

Door-in-the Face-Technique

This is another technique of compliance which is used in our daily life transactions. The first request is made so extreme that the people might be tempted to slap the requester's face before a second request which is seen as considerably reasonable is made. It is the opposite of the foot-in-the-door technique. It is applied, when an individual first makes a very large request, before such individual makes subsequent smaller requests. It is used in our daily life transactions. If one wants to settle a pressing issue with ₦500, one may request for ₦1000 from a friend who eventually may release ₦700 or ₦500. In haggling commodities at the market, the seller adopts this technique. He calls a very high price and may end up settling for less than the initial price. The foot-in-the door and door-in-the-face techniques could be used at different occasions depending on the expected outcome. Ehigie and Babalola (1995) reported that this technique has shown to be effective as a result of reciprocal concessions and self-presentation. For instance, to be effective, the door-in-the-face approach must involve two requests by same person. This approach also works if there is a relatively short interval between the first and second requests. In contrast the foot-inthe-door technique is a way of increasing compliance by inducing a person to agree first to a small request. The foot-in-the-door approach may succeed even if the first and second requests are separated by days (Seligman, Bush and Kirsch, 1976).

The-Low-Ball-Technique

This is also another compliance technique. This approach is based on the proposition that once an individual has agreed to carry out an act such individual will still comply with further requests, even if the act is made more costly. In other words, it is a tactic in which a person is asked to agree to something on the basis of incomplete information and is later told the full story. Essentially, in low-ball approach, the person is tricked into agreeing to a relatively attractive proposition, only to discover later that the terms are actually different from those expected. Research has shown that we make commitments without actually knowing the implications. When eventually the implications are made it is hard to renege on our commitments. When the opinions of students were sought by Galdini, Cacioppo, Bassett and Miller (1978) about their participating in an experiment, only 25% of those who were told that the experiment would start as early as 7.00 in the morning complied. But 55% of those that were not told of the actual timing of experiment agreed to come on request. This technique is clearly deceptive though Burger and Petty (1981) reported that it can be effective.

That's-Not-All-Technique

Burger (1986) made this technique popular. It is a very useful sales strategy. That's-not-all approach consists of offering a product to a person at a high price. The person is prevented from responding for some few seconds before the deal is enhanced with addition of another product or price reduction. For instance, University of Ibadan Ventures may decide to float a computer-training week in collaboration with Faculty of the Social Sciences. Students may not be interested in registering but if a deal like free lunch (snacks) is introduced, there is increased tendency for students to participate. The cost of the lunch could even be part of their registration dues but the students could comply because they see the free

lunch as an expected reward. The effectiveness of this approach lies on two possible explanations. First, the norm of reciprocity which is based on the principle that people may feel under some obligation to reciprocate gifts, favours and concessions such as additional product mentioned later, the lunch pack in our example above. The second is the effect of different anchoring points in attitudinal judgement. Attitudinal judgement may occur when an individual has a vague notion regarding a reasonable price for the product or when the reduction in price falls within the individual's attitude of acceptance.

In conclusion, it has been shown that external pressure increases compliance. However, there are limits to these approaches. Such limits can be classified into three: knowledge of technique, commitment and reactance.

Limitations to External Pressures in Compliance

Knowledge of techniques: Many people these days resist patronising fast foods, soft drinks or alcoholic beverages because they have understood that the gimmicks used in adverts are very unrealistic.

Commitment: People who are committed to the use of a particular product find it really difficult to give it up.

Reactance: Psychological reactance is the tendency for people to become motivated to maintain a position when they sense that a freedom is threatened. Brehm and Kassin (1996) submitted that psychological reactance often triggers attitude change in a direction opposite to the one advocated even when the speaker's position is consistent with one's own. Brehm (1966) opined that people do not comply or yield to pressures as a way of asserting their personal freedom of action. This explains why the instruction "do not urinate here" is defaulted in many places. In fact, some people will remove the "do not" sign, so what will be left is "urinate here". Though people have been warned over and over again about the adverse effects of cigarettes and alcoholic consumption they still smoke and drink.

INTERPERSONAL PERCEPTION

Clearly, perception is an important dynamic for individuals that want to avoid making errors when dealing with other people. This problem is made even more cumbersome by the fact that different people may perceive one person quite differently. Therefore, it is important for us to understand our own perceptions as well as those of other people. Thus, we use whatever information that is available to form these impressions of others which now determine the decisions we make about their personalities or predictions and about the kinds of persons they are. The study of interpersonal perception has been given many names ranging from person perception, assessment of empathic ability to judge others, social perception, and interpersonal behaviour. In spite of the variety in names, researchers take as of central importance the accuracy of such perceptions and predictions. The paradoxical stability and variability of human behaviour from which so much knowledge of man is informed brings into focus the issue of accuracy. The accuracy or inaccuracy depends on a number of factors including the direction and precision of our inter-communication; the nature of the feedback from such communication and the harmony or conflict that may characterise groups and organisations.

Interest in interpersonal perception was awakened by the fact that a lot of attention had, from inception of modern psychology, been given to how man perceives his non-human world but not enough to how he perceived himself or his fellow. Allport (1961) made the following distinctions between interpersonal perception ("the process of perceiving persons") and what may be described as perception of things. According to Allport, the process of perceiving persons is both like and unlike all other perceptual processes; the chief difference is, that human object, unlike purposes, their animation, their intentions towards us, and their relative unpredictability.

Tajfel (1969) stated further that person perception is mainly a domain of evaluative judgement while the perception of the physical aspect of environment is confined to responses, which appear factual to the perceiver. Tagiuri and Petrullo (1958) were more specific about person perception. The term person perception occurs whenever the perceiver regards the objects as having the potential of representations and intentionality. Indeed when we speak of person perception or of knowledge of persons we refer to the observations we make about intentions,

attitudes, ideas, emotions, abilities, purposes, and traits that are so to speak inside the persons. We seldom describe the share sequence of the bodily movement of the person; rather we say a person is friendly, fearful, boastful, hesitant, aggressive.

Facet of our experience of other people

The first facet relates to the fact that we perceive other people as similar to ourselves. Hence, we are pushed to infer that they possess attributes, which we are aware of in ourselves. In particular, we perceive others as possessing emotional state. For example we perceive them as feeling angry, happy or sad. If we perceive a particular characteristic often enough in a person, we go on to label the person as having that characteristic as an enduring one. The second facet is that we perceive other people as causal agents. We see them as potential causes of their behaviour. They may intend to do certain things such as attempting to cause certain effects and because of this we consider them capable of varying their behaviour to achieve their intended effect. Our perception of other people's intentionality leads us next to organise the behaviour of other people into intent-act-effect segments, which form perceptual units. Accordingly, when we perceive a particular intent on several occasions, we are inclined to perceive the other person as having an enduring personality characteristic.

Factors Influencing Person Perception

A person or an individual is influenced by many factors. These include a number of situational factors as well as tendencies for organising perceptual data. A number of situational factors have the potential of influencing a person's perceptions. Among the situational factors are the characteristics of the perceiver, the characteristics of the person being perceived and the situational context within which the incident occurs.

The personality, past experience, values, habits, needs and attitudes of a person may all influence the perceptual process of another person. Someone with a strong need for money or wealth, for example, will perceive another person as being rich or poor. By the same analogy, a person with negative attitudes towards fat people, extroverts or smokers may look for cues in his/her perception of another person as either slim or robust, noisy or quiet, smoker or not. These and other personal factors will affect what a person gives attention during perception of another individual.

The other person's physical attributes, appearance, and behaviour also influence how the person will be perceived. We tend to notice the physical attributes of a person in terms of age, sex, height, and weight, just to mention but a few. For example, when we meet a very young person who is attempting to exert authority in a situation, we tend to perceive him/her differently from when an older person is doing exactly the same thing. Personal attire and appearance are also important factors in our perception of another person. These characteristics lead us to form strong enduring impressions. That is why if two people meet just for a second, they will have formed an impression about each other. Their subsequent contact will lead them to form better and sound impressions that will determine how they will behave toward each other, how much they will like each other, whether they will relate to each other often or not. Such characteristics of the perceived, can and do influence how one person perceives another and the situation in which they are involved.

The context in which we are presented with another person like physical, social and organisational settings or events can also influence our perception of that individual. When we meet somebody wearing a dress that reveals virtually every part of the body in an office environment, we form an impression of the individual as being irresponsible. But if it were to be in a university campus or party hall, we perceive the person as fashionable or sophisticated. Such background features of the situational context are additional factors that can affect how a person can perceive and form impressions of another person.

The way in which we organise information that is available to us further influences how we form impressions about the other person. There are four organising tendencies that influence a person's perception or the process of our impression formation of another person. Some of the potent aspects of first impression are discussed below.

First, evaluation, it involves issues of whether we like or dislike people, what we have heard about them

will determine other subsequent traits we may attribute to them, i.e. he may seem quiet, wicked or harsh. In other words, the evaluative dimension is the most vital of a small number of basic dimensions that organise these unified impressions of others. The basic dimensions involve three underlying aspects, which account for most ratings: evaluation (handsome — ugly), potency (powerful — weak), and activity (dominant — docile). Thus, whenever we place a particular person or object on these three dimensions, additional ratings could yield only little information. During perception, evaluation is the basic underlying dimension, with potency and activity playing minute roles. An individual laces on this dimension, a lot of other perceptions of himself or herself. These perceptions tend to cloud our memories making a positive or a negative impression in one context to stretch to most other situations, and seemingly to other unrelated features. But generally, information with negative connotation seems to be more potent in this regard than positive information. In impression formation, negative information tends to weigh more heavily during formation of an overall impression of a person.

Most times during our encounter with other people, we tend to perceive others on numerous traits like, he is dirty, slim, timid, and cheap in appearance. These are separate pieces of information, which we must organise to form a simple overall impression. Two basic approaches on this issue are learning and other cognitive factors. In this simplest form, the learning approach stipulates that individuals combine information in a rather mechanical, simple-minded fashion, without putting in much thought. It means that people form impressions without reinterpreting or analysing available information very much. In other words, when we receive positive or negative information or idea about a person, we tend to fashion our impression of the person accordingly — positive or negative.

In situations where we have both favourable and unfavourable impressions of a person, the averaging principle comes into play. This means assigning values to traits, which the individual may be perceived to possess. The positive traits (i.e. beautiful, helpful, and friendly) are given greater values than negative traits (i.e. ugly, dirty, and crafty). The *average values of the positive and negative traits*

form the overall impressions. However, there are those that recommend that inferences are formed on the basis of an additive principle. It means that people integrate different pieces of information by cumulating scale values rather than averaging them. For instance, I had liked a lecturer very much (+7) but then I learned something new about him that was only slightly favouravble, such as: he is 'strict' (+2). According to the averaging principle, I should like him a little less as a result of the average (+4.5) which is lower than the original evaluation (+7). But using the additive principle, I should like him more, because adding any additional positive information to an already positive impression should make it even more favourable.

Figure-ground principle is a very crucial principle of perception and it proposes that individuals focus their attention on those aspects of the perceptual field that stand out — the figure — rather than to the background or setting — the ground. Thus, in impression formation, the main implication is that we rely only on the salient cues of the perceived person. Why do we pay much attention to one cue as opposed to another? It is because many distinguishable objective conditions make cues stand out. These are: brightness, noisiness, motion, or novelty as proposed by Gestalt principles of objective perception. A girl with bright leaf green head-tie stands out in a group of girls, the green head-tie being her most salient feature. A man who gets up during church sermon screaming and leaves the church draws our attention because the church is quiet and stationary. Therefore, anything that makes a cue objectively unusual in its context makes it subjectively more salient and more likely to be noticed.

Gestalt is the organisation of pieces of information into a coherent whole rather than simply another isolated trait to be averaged into the processing that is not mechanical, but involves an attempt to perceive some coherent meaning in the stimulus object. People are trying to develop meaningful impressions out of the information they gathered about another person (or event, or any other thing). People do not consider and perceive each separate piece of information in isolation but tend to come to form an impression about another person as a whole.

We do not react to salient stimuli in isolation; we

immediately and consciously perceive stimuli as part of some group or category. For instance, when we see students of a university, we usually categorise them into members of social groups: 'Born Again', cult boys or girls, bookworms, homeboys and girls, and 'NFA' (no future ambition). This categorisation or grouping process is immediate and spontaneous, and does not take any time or thought. Most often we tend to categorise people on the basis of natural similarities in appearance; i.e. 'men' or 'women', 'boys' or 'girls' on the basis of their physical features, usually sex and culturally defined differences in appearance — hair length, body shape, dressing pattern etc. We also tend to compare people or objects with the prototype of the category. A prototype is an abstract ideal of the category. Though at times some categories require definite instances of the categories we tend to have actually encountered. In some instances, we categorise people or objects by checking if they resemble the exemplars that we reserved in that category. We use prototypes for categories, groups, and situations about which we have an iota of information, and we use both exemplars and prototype for categories about which more information is available to us.

Schemas is a more complex arrangement of cognition, which is regarded as an organised, structured set of cognition. It involves some knowledge about the object, some relationships among different cognition about the objects, and some specific examples. Schemas, generally, share common characteristics (structural) which tend to have impact on processing, but not their content. Schemas enable us to process ambiguous bodies of information by reducing and arranging them. They can assist us to recollect, organise details, fasten up processing time, fill in spaces in our knowledge, interpret and evaluate new information. Our perceptions of new information are altered to make them consistent with what we already know. For instance, if we think a person is 'friendly', we are more likely to relate to him and interpret his behaviour as reflecting that friendliness. There are what we call person schemas, which are structures about people and can focus on a particular person. This schema might involve such components as his being forceful, cunning, callous about his policies and insensitive to the suffering of the people. But this can only be schema when we

perceive these attributes as relating to one another.

The person schemas can also centre on certain types of people. For instance, our schema of a 'dictator' might involve such factors as 'commanding', forceful', and 'self-centred'. Our reasons for establishing schemas for other people is to assist us generate information about them and regulate our subsequent social interactions with them. We also have role schemas which represent the organised, abstract concepts we have of people in a particular role, such as chief, police or artist, though, these schemas are unrealistic. Other schemas tend to focus on groups. The most familiar is the group stereotype that attributes particular traits to a certain group of people. These traits (stereotypes) will be schematic if each perceived feature is part of a coherent underlying structure about the group. At times, people also have schemas for events, or standard series of events which sometimes are called script. A script is a standard sequence or behaviour over a length of time. Thus, the relevance of a script is in its boundedness in time; its causal flow (early events cause later ones), and in its being a simple, coherent, perceptual unit.

Distortions in Person Perception

The complexity of the perception process should not deny its significance to us. Perception influence our view of people and events, and it influences the person's responses to us. Other people, in turn, draw their impressions of us from their perception of how we behave in our day-to-day situations. It is thereby essential for us to understand the perception process and recognise how it can affect both ourselves and other people in our impressions formation. A better perceptual understanding of distortions can help us to succeed in mastering this challenge. Some perceptual distortions of special significance to person perception are halo effects, selective perception, expectancy (motivated perception), positivity bias, negativity, non-verbal leakage, and self-presentation.

Halo effect occurs when one attribute of a person or situation is used to develop an overall impression of the individual or situation. This is a process of generalisation from one attribute to the total person or event.

Halo effects are common occurrences in our

everyday lives. When meeting a new person, for example, one trait, such as a pleasant smile, can lead to a positive first impression of an overall 'warm' and 'honest' person.

Selective perception is the tendency to single out for attention those aspects of a person or situation which reinforces and are consistent with existing beliefs, values and needs. We can encounter difficulties by either being inappropriately jammed into a selective perception or by being unable to handle the 'clash' between alternative selective perceptions in situations or people. In any case, we must verify whether or not situations and individuals are being selectively perceived. The simplest way to do this is to gather additional opinions from other people. If these opinions are contradictory, an effort should be made to check the original impressions. This tendency towards selectivity is one that we must be able to control in terms of our own behaviour as well as recognise in the behaviour of others.

Expectancy is the tendency to create or find in another person or situation that which you expected to find in the first place. Expectancy is sometimes referred to as the 'Pygmalion effect'. Pygmalion was a mythical Greek sculptor who created a statue of his ideal and then 'made her come to life'. Expectancy can have at times both positive and negative results for us. Sometimes, we are propelled to hold certain beliefs about another person which tend to activate us to search selectively for information or cues that will support the beliefs we want to hold. Though this occurs when the other person tends to manifest just the same pattern of behaviour or actions in all situations.

One of the factors that influences how we actively organise information about another person into a more integrated impression is the individual goal in person perception. For instance, when we anticipate to interact with another person, it tends to create very different social goals than when we are simply trying to learn about them. There is evidence from research findings that people recollect more and arrange information differently if they expect to interact with someone in the future. Though, we may have a goal of forming an accurate impression, the need to be accurate usually creates more extensive and biased information gathering. And at times we use our own affective dispositions as basis for predicting other people, and this can lead to systematic errors, especially our own internal state. For instance, when we are activated, we tend to see other people in a more perfect manner than when we are docile (Stangor, 1990).

Another factor is mood which can influence how another person is perceived (Erber, 1991). This is because, when we are in a good mood, we tend to perceive another person more favourably than when we are in a bad mood. In short, the process of arranging information about a person most times depends largely on expectancy or expectational factors. These may involve certain goals which have an affective state, or a motivation to harbour a particular belief about another person.

Positivity bias is a form of general evaluative bias in person perception which tends to lean toward positive evaluations of other persons. They are more in occurrence than negative ones. Therefore, positivity bias is the tendency for positive evaluations of other individuals to be greater than their negative evaluations. In many different cultures, positive words are frequently said than negative words i.e. pleasant ones. And a good number of events are evaluated 'above average' most of the time which means that pleasant events are thought more rapidly than are unpleasant ones. But Sears (1983) added that a special positivity bias in our evaluations of other people is the person-positivity bias. That is, individuals feel greater similarity to any other person they evaluate than they do to inanimate objects and hence the extension of a more generous evaluation.

Negativity effect is the process of attaching greater importance to negative information than positive information in determining our final integrated impression. Meaning that a negative trait affects an impression most times than a positive trait, for individuals are more comfortable with negative evaluations than positive ones as negative traits have what is called 'black sheep' effect (Anderson, 1965). The reason being that negative traits are more or less frequent, hence they are distinctive. During ordinary perceptual process, a negative trait stands out. This may have made people to pay considerable attention to those negative qualities like deformities, and assign them greater values.

Non-Verbal Leakage: when we are communicating with others, there may be need for them to

deceive us with what they say. They do this without recognising that we may not pay much attention to what they say, but rather to what they do with their body (through non-verbal communication). These non-verbal cues which tend to reveal their true emotions even when they are successful in lying verbally is what Ekman (1971) called non-verbal leakage. Their true emotions tend to 'leak out' even when they may try to conceal them. For instance, an accused may say she/he is not afraid to make a statement at the police station, but will be trembling and sweating profusely more than usual, which are actions that often indicate fear. People who are lying often betray themselves through paralinguistic expressions of anxiety, tension, and nervousness. Paralanguage or paralinguistic expressions are diversions in speech other than the actual verbal contact which tend to carry a lot of meaning. These diversions in speech are pitch of the voice, loudness, rhythm, and inflection. For instance, it is possible to notice when a person is lying by noting the pitch of his voice. This was confirmed by series of research findings which revealed that the normal pitch of the voice is greater particularly when a person is lying than when he or she is telling the truth. Though, one cannot detect just by listening to the tone of voice because the margin between telling the truth and lying is very minute, but the difference can easily be noticed with the aid of electronic vocal analysis.

The concept of leakage suggests that some non-verbal channels leak more than others because they are less controllable. Some research findings have confirmed that the body tends to show deception than the face. This is because like the body, tone of voice is much difficult to check than facial expression. The theory of leakage stipulates that when individuals are trying to cover something, they may be able to check their verbal content and facial expressions moderately, still their deception may leak out through their bodily gestures and paralinguistic cues. When a person is communicating information verbally, the individual is aware of what he/she is saying. The person then rectifies statements that may not relay positive meaning for favourable impression.

Self-presentation is the control of non-verbal behaviour in a way to communicate the appropriate impression one hopes to exhibit in a social setting with others. The aim of such non-verbal control may sometimes be deceptive, though it may merely be to convey an impression to another individual that represents how we actually feel; for instance, when somebody is narrating his/her ordeal to us, we usually nod or show serious facial expression just to give the individual the impression that we understand him/her. We are very conscious not to laugh or engage in trivial activities during this period the person is conveying the message to us. This non-verbal behaviour of not laughing but rather wearing a serious face or nodding is learned from childhood, and shaped through constant practice. Hence, we can easily do it unconsciously in our adulthood. This pattern of conveying emotions to others through cultural norms is what Ekman (1971) called *display rules*. These display rules regulate how emotion should be communicated and conveyed. People most often regulate their non-verbal behaviour in a manner that enhances the agreement between the self-presentation and how they really think about themselves (Swan, 1984; De Paulo, 1992).

Attribution is one of the central concerns of social psychology. Researchers in this area are interested in knowing why events unfold in the observed sequence. Emphasis is also on situational context as well as influence of others in observed behaviours, seeking to know the motives behind people's behaviour. Thus, attribution is defined as the process of inferring the characteristics or internal state of others from their overt behaviour.

Fundamental Concepts in Attribution

Heider (1944) advanced three points about how people understand their social environment, viz:

1. People perceive behaviour as being caused.
2. It is important to understand people's perception, this is consequent upon (i) characteristics of the perceiver, (ii) features of the behaviour perceived, and (iii) the social context in which behaviour takes place.
3. The locus of the causes of behaviour is perceived to be with the person, the situation, or some combination of both.

THEORIES OF ATTRIBUTION

Several theoretical approaches have been used to explain the process of attribution; prominent among the theories are the causal schemata model, covariation model and correspondent inference model.

Causal Schemata Model

This was propounded by Kelley (1972), and is used when we have information about a person behaving on only a single occasion; attribution in this case is dependent upon knowledge of how people behave in general. The discounting principle is employed to arrive at a conclusion as to the cause of a particular behaviour, this means the likelihood of some other factors causing the behaviour are not considered if one factor is known to be present. To make this kind of attribution, we draw heavily on stereotypes and implicit personality theory.

The Covariation Model

According to Kelley (1967), using this model requires much information about the person and how others behave in similar situations. The covariation principle states that people attribute behaviour to factors that are present when behaviour occurs and absent when it does not (Brehm & Kassin, 1996). To make attribution using this principle three information are essential: consistency, distinctiveness and consensus.

Consistency information is concerned with whether or not the individual behaves in a similar or consistent manner at different times to the same persons. The behaviour is said to be high in consistency if similar behaviour has been enacted in the past and low if it has not been. Distinctiveness information is about how the person has behaved with other people: behaviour is considered highly distinctive when one has not behaved in a similar manner before and low when the person behaves in that way with other people. Consensus information is concerned with how others behave: if other people are found to behave in a similar way then there is consensus, if not, there is no consensus. Generally, research has indicated that people people follow the logic of covariation when they make attribution (Cheng & Novick, 1990; Forsteling, 1992).

Correspondent Inference Model

This model states that we make inferences about a person when his or her actions are freely chosen, unexpected, and results in a small number of desirable effects (Jones & Davis, 1965). This is concerned solely with understanding when and under what circumstances people make internal attributions; it is the attempt to account for how the behaviours and intentions behind behaviour correspond to stable and enduring aspects of personality.

In making attribution using this model, two factors are taken into consideration, non-common effects and social desirability of the behaviour. Non-common effect is about the distinctive features of the behaviour; when behaviour deviates from the norm it tells us more about the actor than when it is in conformity with the norm or expected by the society. The social desirability or outcome of the behaviour is also important in this model: people who perform socially desirable acts reveal little information about their personality, since such behaviour does not distinguish one person from the other.

In correspondence inference model, internal attribution is made when behaviour is both low in social desirability and there are few non-common effects.

Attribution Biases

The assumption underlying attribution theories is that people make attribution in a logical and rational way. But in reality, do people actually make attributions according to these prescriptions or they are subject to bias and error in the perception of causes of behaviour? Biases in attribution include: fundamental attribution error, actor/observer differences and self-serving bias.

Fundamental attribution error: this error was named by Ross (1977). It is the tendency to underestimate the importance of situational determinants and overestimate the degree to which actions and outcomes reflect the actor's disposition. The errors arise because forces in the situation are often ignored.

Actor/Observer Differences: this is the tendency for people to attribute their own behaviour to situational causes and the behaviour of others to personal factors. The difference between actor and observer is explained in two ways. One, people have

more privileged information about themselves than about others (Prentice, 1990). Two, observers focus attention on the actor whose behaviour they try to explain while actors must attend to the situation that guides behaviour (Brehm & Kassin, 1996).

Self-Serving Bias: in this kind of bias, people tend to attribute causes to their own and others' behaviour in such a way as to enhance their abilities and/or preserve their self-esteem. For example, people tend to attribute success to their personal characteristics, efforts, abilities (internal attribution), while they attribute failure to situations, task difficulty and ill-luck.

ATTITUDE

The Concepts of Attitude

Attitude, according to Allport (1954), is the primary building stone in the edifice of social psychology. Without guiding attitudes, the individual is confused and baffled. If one encounters a novel situation which one has not developed a ready-made attitude towards, one becomes confused on how to approach such situation. Therefore, some kind of preparation, through the acquisition of attitudes, is essential before a human being can make a satisfactory observation, pass a suitable judgement or make any but the most primitive type of response. Attitudes determine for each individual what he will see and hear, what he will think and what he will do. Attitudes are means by which we find our way around in an ambiguous universe. Fundamental cognitive processes are influenced by attitudes (cognitive processes which include processes of perception, judgement, memory, learning and thought). To understand human individuals and social behaviour, one needs to realise the bases of attitude, the formation, the expression and functions it serves the individual.

Allport (1935) defined attitude as a mental and neutral state of readiness organised through experience, which exert a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations. Whereas, Kretch and Crutchfield (1948) stated that attitude can be defined as an enduring organisation of motivational, emotional, perceptual and cognitive processes with respect to some aspect of the individual's world. Attitude towards objects or

entities may be acquired or learned through: exposure to the object of the attitude; interaction with others holding the attitude; and deep-seated personality dispositions including one's value arising out of one's upbringing and family structure.

Major Components of Attitudes

Literature on attitude indicates that there are three major components of attitude; these are the cognitive/knowledge component, the emotional component and the behavioural component.

The cognitive component of attitude has to do with what one thinks, believes, or his thought about an attitude object. It helps us to understand the world and put it in a coherent view, based on an individual's need to understand the world and to give structure and order to the environment. The emotional component otherwise referred to as affective component deals with how one feels, emotional feelings connected with the beliefs. The behavioural component on the other hand is readiness to respond in a particular way to attitude objects, how one tends to act out one's thought and emotions. It is important to note that these components are not independent of one another; they are rather linked in such a way that the three must be present for an object to be considered an attitude object.

The Functions of Attitude

There is no attitude one has that does not serve a particular function in one's life. The functions that attitude serve fall into several categories. This is because the complexity of human motivation involves various kinds of social goals which may be served at one time or another. Katz (1960) studied the different kinds of function served by attitudes by stressing the psychodynamic factors, especially of a motivational kind with which attitudes are connected. The reason why people hold their attitude as they do according to Katz (1960) are of the level of psychological motivations and not of the accidents of external events and circumstances. To him, unless we know the psychological need, which is met by holding an attitude, we will be in a poor position to predict when and how such attitude should be changed. Basically, there are four functions that form the motivational basis for holding attitudes.

Essentially, the instrumental function refers to the favourable responses the individual achieves from his associates by manifesting acceptable attitudes. Attitudes, which serve the adjective function, may be the means for reaching the desired goal. In general then, attitudes may be rewarding because they yield social rewards including approval from others or because they are somehow related to the rewards.

They allow the individual to protect himself from acknowledging his deficiencies. The mechanism of denial, which is a form of avoidance, permits the individual to defend his self-concept. For example, attitude of prejudice helps to a considerable degree to sustain the individual self-concept by maintaining a sense of superiority above others. Through the value expressive function of attitude, the individual achieves self-expression in terms of those values which are most cherished by him. While the ego defensive functions may mean the individual holds back self-knowledge, the value expressive function, seeks only to express and acknowledge his commitments. In this instance, the reward to the person may not be so much a matter of gaining social support as it is one confirming the more positive image of his self-concept.

In regard to knowledge function, Katz says that people seek a degree of predictability, consistency and stability in their perception of the world. Knowledge represents the cognitive components of attitudes, which gives coherence and direction to experience. Attitudes serve knowledge functions, by providing ready-made structures into which incoming information can be organised. A man who has a set of attitudes about objects in his world has in effect a series of categories for processing information. He knows how to respond, how to think and how to feel. He need not continually go through an entirely new reappraisal process but rather can slot new information into existing modes.

The motivational functions so far presented must be understood to be interrelated rather than segmented, because a given attitude may simultaneously serve several functions. On the other hand, arousing and changing attitudes require different kinds of appeal, corresponding to the primary function served by the attitude. In general, the function of attitude focuses primary attention on the individual and his underlying psychological needs.

Attitude and Attitude Change

An emerging consensus in the definition of attitude is that it involves the categorisation of a stimulus along an evaluative dimension based on cognitive, affective and behavioural information. The cognitive approach consists of the thoughts the person has about a particular attitude object, including facts, knowledge, and beliefs. The affective (or evaluative) component consists of the person's emotions and affects towards the object, especially positive or negative evaluations. The behavioural component consists of the person's tendency to act regarding the object. This three-component definition of attitude is what most social psychologists share at present.

Originally, it was simply assumed that people's attitudes determine their behaviour but many instances in which behaviour does not follow from attitudes have declined this premise. Perhaps, the most influential effort to generate and test a general theory of attitude-behavioural links is Fishbein and Ajzen's theory of reasoned action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977). This theory and other major researches have listed conditions under which greater or lesser degrees of consistency between attitude and behaviour can be obtained. These include the strength of the attitude to behaviour, salience of attitude and situational pressures.

An attitude does not necessarily remain the same. In many cases, our attitudes change over time when repeated exposure to a message or communication occurs. A change in attitude can either be spontaneous or persistent. Spontaneous attitude change occurs when a review and rehearsal or cognition takes place. In this case, thinking about the attitude object tends to make the attitude more extreme (Tesser, 1978). Thus, if you spend more time thinking about your friend you will tend to like him/her better because you may remember additional qualities or enjoyable experiences you shared. Persistence of attitude change over time, on the other hand, to some extent, depends on retention of the details of argument and more importantly, on events that occur after the communication.

Research on attitude generally has focused on three areas of attitude change, these are:

1.   *Source + Communicator*: this is concerned with where the message comes from, when

the source of a communication is an expert in that particular field then the likelihood of the message changing attitude will be high. People tend to view experts as credible sources when it concerns their field. Also, when the source of a message is similar to us, attractive or possesses power attitude change is likely.

2. *Communication:* this refers to the message itself, how is the message stated? Messages can take several forms, some may appeal to emotions while some appeal to reason; they can be one-sided or present the two sides of an issue. Whichever form messages take research has shown face to face interaction to be more persuasive. Also, the following were found to influence attitude change: (i) fear arousal influences persuasiveness (appeal to emotion), a message with moderate fear is most likely to change an attitude. (ii) The degree of commitment to an opinion will affect attitude change, the greater the commitment, the less effective persuasion will be. (iii) Inoculation against persuasion will lead to resistance to change. (iv) Two-sided messages but leaning to one side will influence attitude change.

3. *Target Audience:* who is listening to the message? The characteristics of the audience and the social setting also have implication for attitude change. People with low self-esteem are more likely to change easily when exposed to new information while a relaxed well-fed state can as well make people more receptive to information.

THEORIES OF ATTITUDE

Several theories representing different theoretical orientations and emphasising different factors in attitudes and attitude change have been helpful for understanding where attitudes come from and how they can be changed.

Learning Theory

The learning approach which began at Yale University with the work of Horland and Associates (Horland, Janis and Kelley, 1953) during the 1950s is based on the assumptions that attitudes are learned and, are therefore, acquired through the same process as other habits. We learn the feelings and values associated with the information and facts learned about various attitude objects. Thus, through association, reinforcement and punishment and imitation we learn different attitudes and according to this theory, message learning and transfer of affect are the two main methods through which attitudes may be acquired and changed.

Cognitive Consistency Theory

This theory which is the second major framework for understanding attitude postulates that people generally have various beliefs or values. Whenever these beliefs are inconsistent with one another every individual strives for coherence. Thus, restoring cognitive consistency is the primary motive underlying this perspective. Such theories include: the balance theory, which considers the consistency among the affects held by a person within a simple cognitive system; the cognitive dissonance theory which also deals especially with inconsistencies between one's attitudes and one's behaviour; and self-perception theory that suggests that our expressions of attitudes are rather casual verbal statements. Note that cognitive dissonance theory and self-perception theory make the same prediction, but for entirely different reasons. While dissonance theory views attitude as strong and enduring predisposition, self-perception theory believes that attitudes are causal verbal statements.

Expectancy-Value Theory

This theory assumes that individuals adopt a particular attitude position based on the merits and demerit evaluations of its possible value effects. Thus, the theory posits that in adopting attitudes, people try to maximise the subjective utility of the various expected outcomes which is the product of (1) the value of a particular outcome and (2) the expectancy that this position will produce that outcome.

Cognitive Response Theory

The theory sees attitude as thoughts that people

generate in response to persuasive communications. It assumes that an individual reacts to different aspects of a particular persuasive communication with positive or negative thought that in turn determine whether or not the individual will support the position. The theory goes further to state that attitude will change if the counter arguing it triggers is much. When we cannot think of any counter arguments or can be distracted from thinking about them while listening to a message, the communication is more likely to be accepted. At times, however, we are motivated to learn arguments. The elaboration likelihood model argues that people can respond to a communication in either a thoughtful, deliberate way or in a more automatic, emotional way. In a similar vein, the systematic processing model posits that people are guided by the idea that longer arguments are stronger or that consensus implies that a position is correct.

These theories bring into focus the concepts of persuasion which first involve a communicator that will be positively evaluated on credibility, expertise, trustworthiness, etc. Secondly, the communication message should be made to clearly influence the audience by proffering strong arguments, repetition and distorting the message to reduce discrepancies between it and our own position. Thirdly, an arousal of the motives of the target individuals that affects how willing they will be to change in response to the persuasive message is also very important. Finally, the situational context in which other things are happening will make the persuasion attempt successful.

From earlier studies of attitudes, it has been established that attitudes are learned in the course of socialisation and that acquired attitudes helped the holders to organise, simplify and understand the world around them; protect their self-esteem by avoiding unpleasant truths about themselves; express their fundamental values; conform to the group and maximise rewards from the group. Also, attitudes have been found to change in directions that maintain the consistency of thought, feelings and decisions of the individual and that they are also measurable.

In spite of the need for consistency between attitudes and behaviour, evidence from the literature by Wicker (1969) indicated that attitude-behaviour inconsistency is a more common phenomenon than attitude-behaviour consistency. Wicker's review covered the following general areas:

— Attitudes and behaviour towards jobs and industrial organisations.
— Attitudes and behaviour in relation to issues such as: attending labour union meeting; cheating in examination; voting in students election and participating in psychological research, etc.
— Attitudes and behaviour towards members of minority groups.

A classic study illustrating attitude-behaviour inconsistency is that of La Piere (1934); he tested the attitude of American hoteliers towards accommodating and serving Chinese/Oriental guests by first visiting the hotels in the company of a Chinese couple. Most of the hoteliers served the Chinese, very few refused. La Piere next went back and sent postal questionnaires to 125 of the hoteliers asking if they will serve Chinese. Most of them said they would not and there lay the inconsistency or lack of relationship between expressed attitude and actual behaviour.

La Piere's study and those of others indicate that the relationship between expressed attitude and actual behaviour may be affected by some intervening variables. One such intervening variable is the physical presence of the object (Chinese/La Piere) or negative attitude. Such a presence may cause the inability to convert a negative attitude into action. Another variable that may be situational is the rationalisation of action. In the case of the Chinese guests, a hotelier may have said to himself, let me tolerate the Chinese for this brief period. A third intervening variable may be pressure from existing law, e.g. anti-discrimination laws or other forms of pressure.

The effect of pressure is emphasised by Campbell (1965) who believed that the way the attitude is manifested depends upon certain situational pressures. Kahle and Berman (1979) add that it is highly probable that the person who responded to the later (questionnaire) was different from the person who provided the service when the research team arrived. It is unlikely that the hotel receptionists in La Piere's (1934) study, for instance, that a desk

clerk confronted with a pleasant looking Oriental couple and the already welcome travelling companion may find serving them more adaptive than expelling them, whereas a manager answering an enquiry about organisational policy towards accepting Oriental guests may find non-response, even a negative response, to be more adaptive. He upholds further that attitude-behaviour inconsistency depends also on what he called person-influences and on-situation influences. Crespi (1971) had earlier proposed that many of the studies cited as evidence of poor predictive utility of attitude reflect poorly conceived and poorly executed research. Research on attitudes that are expected to give information about behaviours must utilise careful measurements. There is a possibility that attitude measures can predict future conduct at least moderately well, especially when the attitudes and behaviour are important.

Although empirical evidences seem inconclusive with regard to attitude behaviour inconsistency, it seems that effort having changing attitude in desirable directions and bringing about correlative forms of behaviour can be aided by the use of certain factors of communication.

In this regard communication is considered in terms of:

- The communicator (who said?), the credibility of the source (how credible as a source of communication?). The more credible the source the more you regard his communication as important.

- The communication (what is said?) the content of the message may carry what is known in social psychology as any of the following or all as the case may be; conclusion drawing (explicitness); and preparation for future experience.

- The audience (the receiver of the communication): Attention should be focused on nature and type of group; individual difference in personality and persuability for example. The low self-esteem is susceptible to information consumption while psycho-neurotic I resistance to information.

- The response: Active participation increase effect; and duration of effect (note, that early resistance tends to give way to evaluation of the intrinsic value of the argument involved).

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