

Social Perception, p. 444

Impression Formation: Sizing Up the Other Person, p. 444

Attribution: Our Explanation of Behaviour, p. 445

Attraction, p. 447

Factors Influencing Attraction, p. 447

Romantic Attraction, p. 449

Mate Selection: The Mating Game, p. 449

Conformity, Obedience, and Compliance, p. 450

Conformity: Going Along with the Group, p. 450

Obedience: Following Orders, p. 452

Compliance: Giving In to Requests, p. 454

Prejudice and Discrimination, p. 463

The Roots of Prejudice and Discrimination, p. 463

Combating Prejudice and Discrimination, p. 467

Prejudice: Is It Increasing or Decreasing? p. 468

Prosocial Behaviour: Behaviour That Benefits Others, p. 469

The Bystander Effect: The Greater the Number of Bystanders, the Less Likely They Are to Help, p. 469

People Who Help in Emergencies, p. 471

Social Psychology

Group Influence, p. 456

The Effects of the Group on Individual Performance, p. 456

The Effects of the Group on Decision Making, p. 457

Social Roles, p. 458

Attitudes and Attitude Change, p. 459

Attitudes: Cognitive, Emotional, and Behavioural Positions, p. 459

Persuasion: Trying to Change Attitudes, p. 461

Aggression: Intentionally Harming Others, p. 472

Biological Versus Social Factors in Aggression, p. 472

Aggression in Response to Frustration: Sometimes, but Not Always, p. 472

Aggression in Response to Aversive Events: Pain, Heat, Noise, and More, p. 473

The Social Learning Theory of Aggression: Learning to Be Aggressive, p. 474

Key Terms, p. 477**Thinking Critically, p. 477****Summary & Review, p. 477**

Image omitted due to copyright restrictions.

Image omitted due to copyright restrictions.

Do you remember your first day in high school? How worried were you about the way you dressed, how cool you looked, and whether you fitted in? You may have experienced the same concerns when you started college or university or when you dated someone for the first time. The concerns that we all experience when faced with new events are often associated with our fears of violating a norm—doing something that seems inappropriate under the circumstances. Let's think about some other norms that you might have violated either by accident or on purpose. For instance, have you ever showed up in a costume at a Halloween party only to find out that it was not a costumed event? Have you ever dyed your hair blue or orange just to see your parents' reaction? Do you have any tattoos or piercings? Why? Because you like them? Because they make you look (or feel) different and cool? There is no easy explanation for why we choose to abide by norms or decide to violate them. But when we do violate a norm, we can experience a range of emotions, from satisfaction to humiliation. The “receiver,” or person witnessing such a violation, can

Image omitted
due to
copyright
restrictions.

also respond in a number of ways—with approval, anger, ostracism, or indifference.

One person who has experienced all of these responses is Gwen Jacob. In 1991, in Guelph, Ontario, Gwen Jacob was charged with indecency after walking topless in a public area on a hot day. This single event became the focus of attention of an entire province. It led to a court ruling that the requirement that women be covered is a gender-based inequality. As a result, women in Ontario, like their male counterparts, can

choose to be topless or covered in public places. On the basis of a single act or norm violation based on a perception that rules were not fair, the norms of a province were rewritten.

The circumstances surrounding Gwen Jacob's decision to go topless and the subsequent court ruling should not be minimized. Whether or not we agree with Jacob's decision and that of the court, these events reflect some of our society's norms and stereotypes, roles and expectations. All of us are clearly affected by the norms of our community, but do they affect us all to the same extent? Do they influence our perceptions of ourselves and of others? We will explore this and other questions in our study of social psychology.

Social psychology is the area of study that attempts to explain how the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others influences the thoughts, feelings, and behaviour of individuals. No human being lives in a vacuum. How we think about, respond to, and interact with other people provides the scientific territory that social psychology explores. Research in social psychology yields some surprising and provocative explanations about human behaviour, from the atrocious to the altruistic.

In this chapter, we will first explore social perception—how we form impressions of other people, and how we try to understand why they behave as they do. Then we will consider the factors involved in attraction. What draws us to other people, and how do friendships and romantic relationships develop? We will look at factors influencing conformity and obedience, and we will examine groups and their influence on performance and decision making. We will

also discuss attitudes and learn how they can be changed, and we will explore prejudice and discrimination. Finally, we will look at the conditions under which people are likely to help each other (prosocial behaviour) and hurt each other (aggression).

LINK IT!

www.wesleyan.edu/spn
Social Psychology Network

Social Perception

We spend a significant portion of our lives in contact with other people. Not only do we form impressions of others, but we also attempt to understand why they behave as they do.

Impression Formation: Sizing Up the Other Person

Why are first impressions so important and enduring?

When we meet people for the first time, we start forming impressions of them right away. And, of course, they are busy forming impressions of us. Naturally we notice the obvious attributes first—gender, ethnicity, age, dress, and physical attractiveness. The latter, as shallow as it may seem, has a definite impact on our first impres-

sions. Beyond noticing physical appearance, we may wonder: What is her occupation? Is he married? Answers to our questions, combined with a conscious or unconscious assessment of the person's verbal and non-verbal behaviour, all play a part in forming a first impression. Our own moods also play a part—when we are happy, our impressions of others are usually more positive than when we are unhappy (Forgas & Bower, 1987). First impressions are powerful and can colour many of the later impressions we form about people.

A number of studies reveal that our overall impression or judgment of another person is influenced more by the first information we receive than by later information (Asch, 1946; Luchins, 1957; Park, 1986). This phenomenon is called the **primacy effect**. It seems that we attend to initial information more carefully, and once an impression is formed, it provides the framework through which we interpret later information. Any information that is consistent with the first impression is likely to be accepted, thus strengthening the impression. Information that does not fit with the earlier information is more likely to be disregarded. As you will read later in this chapter, people's tendency to minimize cognitive efforts, to use thinking strategies that are easy and fast, plays an important role in the way we evaluate others and in all social interactions (Fiske & Taylor, 1991).

Remember that any time you list your personal traits or qualities, always list your most positive ones first. It pays to put your best foot forward—first.

Image omitted
due to
copyright
restrictions.

What first impression have you formed of the person shown here?

Expectations: Seeing What We Expect to See

Sometimes our expectations become a self-fulfilling prophecy and actually influence the way other people act. Expectations may be based on a person's gender, age, racial or ethnic group, social class, role or occupation, personality traits, past behaviour, relationship with us, and so on. Once formed, our expectations affect how we perceive the behaviour of others—what we pay attention to and what we ignore. Rarely do we consider that our own expectations may colour our attitude and manner toward other people—that we ourselves partly bring about the very behaviour we expect (Jones, 1986; Miller & Turnbull, 1986).

Attribution: Our Explanation of Behaviour

What is the difference between a situational attribution and a dispositional attribution for a specific behaviour?

How often do you ask yourself why people (ourselves included) do the things they do? When trying to explain behaviour, we make **attributions**—that is, we assign or attribute causes to explain the behaviour of others and to explain our own behaviour as well. We are particularly interested in the causes when behaviours are unexpected, when goals are not attained (Weiner, 1985), and when actions are not socially desirable (Jones & Davis, 1965).

Although we can actually observe behaviour, we usually can only infer its cause or causes. Whenever we try to determine why we or someone else behaved in a certain way, we can make two types of attributions. In some instances we make a **situational attribution**—that is, we assign or attribute causes to explain the behaviour of others and to explain our own behaviour as well. We are particularly interested in the causes when behaviours are unexpected, when goals are not attained (Weiner, 1985), and when actions are not socially desirable (Jones & Davis, 1965).

Although we can actually observe behaviour, we usually can only infer its cause or causes. Whenever we try to determine why we or someone else behaved in a certain way, we can make two types of attributions. In some instances we make a **situational attribution**—that is, we assign or attribute causes to explain the behaviour of others and to explain our own behaviour as well. We are particularly interested in the causes when behaviours are unexpected, when goals are not attained (Weiner, 1985), and when actions are not socially desirable (Jones & Davis, 1965).

social psychology: The study of the way in which the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others influences the thoughts, feelings, and behaviour of individuals.

primacy effect: The likelihood that an overall impression or judgment of another will be influenced more by the first information

received about that person than by information that comes later.

attribution: An inference about the cause of our own or another's behaviour.

situational attribution: Attribution of a behaviour to some external cause or factor operating in the situation; an external attribution.

bution (an external attribution) and attribute the behaviour to some external cause or factor operating within the situation. After failing an exam, we might say, “The test was unfair” or “The professor didn’t teach the material well.” Or we might make a **dispositional attribution** (an internal attribution) and attribute the behaviour to some internal cause such as a personal trait, motive, or attitude. Thus, we might attribute a poor grade to our own lack of ability or to a poor memory.

Attributional Biases: Different Attributions for Ourselves and Others

How do the kinds of attributions we tend to make about ourselves differ from those we make about other people?

A basic difference exists in how we make attributions for our own behaviour and that of others—a phenomenon called the **actor–observer**

bias (Jones, 1976, 1990; Jones & Nisbett, 1971). We tend to use situational attributions to explain our own behaviour, because we are aware of factors in the situation that influenced us to act the way we did. In addition, being aware of our past behaviour, we know whether our present actions are typical or atypical.

In explaining the behaviour of others, we focus more on the personal factors than on the factors within the situation (Gilbert & Malone, 1995; Leyens et al., 1996). Not knowing how a person has behaved in different situations in the past, we assume a consistency in his or her behaviour. Thus, we are likely to attribute the behaviour of the individual to some personal quality. The tendency to overemphasize internal factors and underemphasize situational factors when we explain other people’s behaviour is so fundamental, so commonplace, that it has been named the **fundamental attribution error** (Ross, 1977).

There is one striking inconsistency in the way we view our own behaviour—the self-serving bias. We use the **self-serving bias** when we attribute our successes to internal or dispositional causes and blame our failures on external or situational causes (Baumgardner et al., 1986; Brown & Rogers, 1991; Miller & Ross, 1975). If we interview for a job and get it, it is probably because we have the right qualifications. If someone else gets the job, it is probably because he or she knew the right people. The self-serving bias allows us to take credit for our successes and to shift the blame for our failures to the situation. In some ways the self-serving bias can be adap-



Social Perception

- Which of the following statements about first impressions is false?
 - We usually pay closer attention to early information than to later information we receive about a person.
 - Early information forms a framework through which other information is interpreted.
 - First impressions often serve as self-fulfilling prophecies.
 - The importance of first impressions is greatly overrated.
- We tend to make _____ attributions to explain our own behaviour and _____ attributions to explain the behaviour of others.
 - situational; situational
 - situational; dispositional
 - dispositional; situational
 - dispositional; dispositional
- The tendency of people to overemphasize dispositional causes and underemphasize situational causes when they explain the behaviour of others is called the
 - fundamental attribution error.
 - false consensus error.
 - self-serving bias.
 - actor-observer bias.
- The tendency of people to emphasize situational explanations for their own behaviours but dispositional attributions for the behaviours of others is called the
 - fundamental attribution error.
 - false consensus error.
 - self-serving bias.
 - actor-observer bias.
- Attributing Mike’s poor grade to his lack of ability is a dispositional attribution. (true/false)

tive: it helps protect our self-esteem and positive self-identity (Schlenker et al., 1990; Tesser, 1988) both of which are associated with well-being (Taylor & Brown, 1988).

Attraction

Think for a moment about the people you consider to be your closest friends. What causes you to like or even love one person yet ignore or react negatively to someone else? What factors influence interpersonal attraction—the degree to which we are drawn to or like one another?

Factors Influencing Attraction

Proximity: Close to You

Why is proximity an important factor in attraction?

One major factor influencing our choice of friends is physical **proximity**, or geographic closeness. If you live in an apartment complex, you are probably more friendly with people who live next door or only a few doors away (Festinger et al., 1950). The same is true in a dormitory (Priest & Sawyer, 1967). What about the people you like best in your classes? Do they sit next to you or not more than a seat or two away?

It is much easier to make friends or even fall in love with people who are close at hand. One possible explanation for this is that mere exposure to people, objects, and circumstances probably increases our liking for them (Zajonc, 1968). The **mere-exposure effect** refers to our tendency to feel more positive toward stimuli with repeated exposure. People, food, songs, and styles become more acceptable the more we are exposed to them. Advertisers rely on the positive effects of repeated exposure to increase our liking for products, trends, and even political candidates.

There are exceptions to the mere-exposure effect, however. If our initial reaction to a person is highly negative, frequent exposure can make us feel even more negative toward the person (Swap, 1977).

Reciprocal Liking: Liking Those Who Like Us

We tend to like people who like us—or who we believe like us. Curtis and Miller (1968) falsely led research

participants to believe that another person either liked or disliked them after an initial encounter. This false information became a self-fulfilling prophecy. When the participants met the person again, those who believed they were liked “self-disclosed more, disagreed less, expressed dissimilarity less, and had a more positive tone of voice and general attitude than subjects who believed they were disliked” (p. 284). These positive behaviours, in turn, actually caused the other person to view them positively.

Attractiveness: Good Looks Attract

How important is physical attractiveness in attraction?

Although people are quick to deny that mere physical appearance is the main factor that attracts them to someone initially, a substantial body of evidence indicates that it is. People of all ages have a strong tendency to prefer physically attractive people (Dion, 1973, 1979; Feingold, 1992).

What constitutes physical beauty? Researchers Langlois and Roggman (1990) found that physical beauty consists not of rare physical qualities but of facial features that are more or less the average of the features in a given general population. Studies show, for instance, that symmetrical faces and bodies are seen as more attractive and sexually appealing (Singh, 1995; Thornhill & Gangestad, 1994). Judgments of physical attractiveness seem to have some definite consistency across cultures, especially for men. A study by Cunningham and others (1995) found that

dispositional attribution: Attribution of one’s own or another’s behaviour to some internal cause such as a personal trait, motive, or attitude; an internal attribution.

actor–observer bias: The tendency of observers to make dispositional attributions for the behaviours of others but situational attributions for their own behaviours.

fundamental attribution error: The tendency to overemphasize internal factors and underemphasize

situational ones when explaining other people’s behaviour.

self-serving bias: Our tendency to attribute our successes to dispositional causes, and our failures to situational causes.

proximity: Geographic closeness; a major factor in attraction.

mere-exposure effect: The tendency of people to develop a more positive evaluation of some person, object, or other stimulus with repeated exposure to it.

Native Asians, Hispanics, and black and white North American men reported a high level of agreement in rating the attractiveness of women's faces of different cultures. Whether this level of agreement is associated with similar views of beauty across cultures or the influence of the media on our perceptions of beauty is still debated.

Why is physical attractiveness so important? When people have one trait or quality that we either admire or dislike very much, we often assume that they also have other admirable or negative traits—a phenomenon known as the **halo effect** (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977; Thorndike, 1920). Dion and colleagues (1972) at the University of Toronto found that people generally attribute other favourable qualities to those who are attractive. Attractive people are seen as more exciting, personable, interesting, and socially desirable than unattractive people.

Feingold (1992) conducted several large studies that shed more light on the relationship between physical attractiveness and certain personality characteristics and social behaviours. One such study confirmed that positive characteristics are indeed attributed to physically attractive people.

Feingold also discovered a positive correlation between a person's *self-rated* physical attractiveness and many other attributes—self-esteem, popularity with the opposite sex, social comfort, extraversion, mental health, and sexual experience. In other words,

if we believe we are physically attractive, others will be more likely to perceive us as attractive.

Other than believing we are physically attractive, what else can we do to increase our attractiveness to others? Try smiling more. A study by Reis and colleagues (1990) revealed that smiling increases our perceived attractiveness among others and makes us appear more sincere, sociable, and competent.

Eagly and colleagues (1991) analyzed 76 studies of the physical attractiveness stereotype. They found that physical attractiveness has its greatest impact on judgments of popularity and sociability and less impact on judgments of adjustment and intellectual competence. They did find one negative, however: attractive people are perceived as more vain and less modest.

Other research suggests that job interviewers are more likely to recommend highly attractive people (Dipboye et al., 1975), and that attractive people have their written work evaluated more favourably (Landy & Sigall, 1974). Even the evaluation of the attractiveness of a person's voice is affected by the person's physical appearance (Zuckerman et al., 1991).

Being attractive is an advantage to children and adults, and to males and females. According to some studies, women's looks contribute more to how they are judged on other personal qualities than is the case with men (Bar-Tal & Saxe, 1976; Feingold, 1990). Not surprisingly, physical attractiveness seems to have its greatest impact in the context of romantic attraction, particularly in initial encounters (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986; Feingold, 1988).

Does this mean that unattractive people don't have a chance? Fortunately not. Eagly and her colleagues (1991) suggest that the impact of physical attractiveness is strongest in the perception of strangers. But once we get to know people, other qualities assume more importance. In fact, as we come to like people, they begin to look more attractive to us, while people with undesirable personal qualities begin to look less attractive.

Similarity: A Strong Basis of Attraction

Are people, as a rule, more attracted to those who are opposite or to those who are similar to them?

To sum up research on attraction, the saying that “birds of a feather flock together” is more accurate than “opposites attract.” Beginning in elementary

Image omitted due to copyright restrictions.

The halo effect—the attribution of other favourable qualities to those who are attractive—helps explain why physical attractiveness is so important.

school, people are more likely to pick friends of the same age, gender, ethnic background, and socioeconomic class. These sociological variables continue to influence the choice of friends through college or university and later in life. Of course, choosing friends who are similar to us could be related to proximity—that is, to the fact that we tend to come into contact with people who are more similar to us in a variety of ways.

For both sexes, liking people who have similar attitudes begins early in childhood and continues throughout life (Griffitt et al., 1972). We are likely to choose friends and lovers who have similar views on most things that are important to us. Similar interests and attitudes toward leisure activities make it more likely that time spent together is rewarding. Not only is similarity in attitudes an important ingredient in attraction (Newcomb, 1956), but people often have negative feelings toward others whose attitudes differ from their own (Byrne et al., 1986; Rosenbaum, 1986; Smeaton et al., 1989). People who share our attitudes validate our judgments; those who disagree with us suggest that we may be wrong and arouse negative feelings in us. It is similarities, then, not differences, that usually stimulate liking and loving (Alicke & Largo, 1995). But recent studies suggest that attitude similarity plays a more important role in attraction than attitude dissimilarity does in preventing it (Drigotas, 1993; Tan & Singh, 1995).

Romantic Attraction

The Matching Hypothesis

Moderately attractive, unskilled, unemployed, 50-year-old divorced man with 7 children seeks beautiful, wealthy, exciting woman between ages 20 and 30 for companionship, romance, and possible marriage. No smokers or drinkers.

Can you imagine reading this ad in the personals column of your newspaper? Somehow, we all recognize that this “match” is not reasonable. Even though most of us may be attracted to beautiful people, the **matching hypothesis** suggests that we are more likely to end up with someone similar to ourselves in attractiveness and other assets (Berscheid et al., 1971; Feingold, 1988; Walster & Walster, 1969). Furthermore, couples mismatched in attrac-

tiveness are more likely to end the relationship (Cash & Janda, 1984).

It has been suggested that most people estimate their social assets and realistically expect to attract someone with more or less equal assets. In terms of physical attractiveness, some people might consider a current movie idol or supermodel to be the ideal man or woman, but they do not seriously consider the ideal to be a realistic, attainable possibility. Fear of rejection keeps many people from pursuing those who are much more attractive than they are.

Does the same process apply to same-sex friendships? In general, yes (Cash & Derlega, 1978), although this is more true of males (Feingold, 1988). A person’s perceived attractiveness seems to be affected by the attractiveness of his or her friends (Geiselman et al., 1984).

Mate Selection: The Mating Game

In 1958 Robert Winch proposed that men and women tend to choose mates whose needs and personalities complement their own. Winch saw complementary needs not necessarily as opposite, but as needs that supply what the partner lacks. A talkative person might seek a quiet mate who prefers to listen. Although there is some research to support this view (Dryer & Horowitz, 1997), the weight of research suggests that *similarity* in needs leads to attraction (Buss, 1984; Phillips et al., 1988). Similarities in personality, as well as in “physical characteristics, cognitive abilities, age, education, religion, ethnic background, attitudes and opinions, and socioeconomic status,” play a role in marital choice (O’Leary & Smith 1991, p. 196) and seem to be related to marital success. Similarities wear well.

If you were to select a marital partner, what qualities would attract you? Do the next *Try It!* to evaluate your own preferences.

halo effect: The tendency to infer generally positive or negative traits in a person as a result of observing one major positive or negative trait.

matching hypothesis: The notion that people tend to have spouses, lovers, or friends who are about equal in social assets such as physical attractiveness.

Try It!



What Qualities Are You Looking for in a Mate?

In your choice of a mate, which qualities are most and least important to you? Rank these 18 qualities of a potential mate from most important (1) to least important (18) to you.

- ___ Ambition and industriousness
- ___ Chastity (no previous sexual intercourse)
- ___ Desire for home and children
- ___ Education and intelligence
- ___ Emotional stability and maturity
- ___ Favourable social status or rating
- ___ Good cooking and housekeeping skills
- ___ Similar political background
- ___ Similar religious background
- ___ Good health
- ___ Good looks
- ___ Similar education
- ___ Pleasing disposition
- ___ Refinement/neatness
- ___ Sociability
- ___ Good financial prospects
- ___ Dependable character
- ___ Mutual attraction/love

Image omitted due to copyright restrictions.

How do your selections compare with those of men and women from 33 countries and five major islands around the world? Generally, men and women across cultures agree on the first four values in mate selection: (1) mutual attraction/love, (2) dependable character, (3) emotional stability and maturity, and (4) pleasing disposition (Buss et al., 1990). Beyond these first four, however, they differ somewhat in the attributes they prefer. According to Buss (1994), “Men prefer to mate with beautiful young women, whereas women prefer to mate with men who have resources and social sta-

tus” (p. 239). These preferences, he believes, have been adaptive in human evolutionary history (Buss & Kenrick, 1998). Others, however, see this as a simple reflection of men’s greater economic power in our society (Carporeal, 1989; Howard et al., 1987).

Conformity, Obedience, and Compliance

Conformity: Going Along with the Group

Whether we like it or not, we all conform to some norms. The real question is: To what do we conform? **Conformity** involves changing or adopting a behaviour or an attitude in order to be consistent with the norms of a group or the expectations of other people. **Norms** are the standards of behaviour and the attitudes that are expected of members of the group. Some conformity is necessary if we are to have a society at all. We cannot drive on either side of the street as we please, or park anywhere we want, or drive as fast as we choose. Norms are in place to create a predictable and stable environment.

We need other people, so we must conform to their expectations to some extent. It is easy to see why people conform to norms and standards of groups that are important to them, such as the family, the peer group, the social group, and the sports team. But to an amazing degree, people also conform to the majority opinion, even when they are among strangers.

Asch’s Experiment: The Classic on Conformity

What did Asch find in his famous experiment on conformity?

The best-known experiment on conformity was conducted by Solomon Asch (1951, 1955), who

designed the simple test shown in Figure 14.1. Look at the standard line at the top. Then pick the line—1, 2, or 3—that is the same length. Did you pick line 2? Can you imagine any circumstances in which you might tell the experimenter that either line 1 or line 3 matched the standard line? You could be surprised by your own behaviour if people around you insisted that the wrong line—say, line 3—was of the same length as the standard line. And many participants were, in Asch’s classic experiment, even when the tests were so simple that they otherwise picked the correct line more than 99 percent of the time.

Attraction

1. Physical attractiveness is a very important factor in initial attraction. (true/false)
2. People are usually drawn to those who are more opposite than similar to themselves. (true/false)
3. Match the term at the right with the description at the left.

- ___ 1) Brian sees Susan at the library often and begins to like her.
- ___ 2) Liane assumes that because Boyd is handsome, he must be popular and sociable.
- ___ 3) Alan and Carol are going together and are both very attractive.

- a. matching hypothesis
b. halo effect
c. mere-exposure effect

Answers: 1. true 2. false 3. 1) c 2) b 3) a

Eight males were seated around a large table and were asked, one by one, to tell the experimenter which of the three lines matched the standard line as in Figure 14.1. Only one of the eight was an actual participant; the others were confederates assisting the experimenter. There were 18 trials—18 different lines to be matched. During 12 of these trials, the confederates all gave the same wrong answer, which of course puzzled the naive participant. Would the participant continue to believe his eyes and select the correct line, or would he feel pressure to conform to the group's selection and give the wrong answer himself?

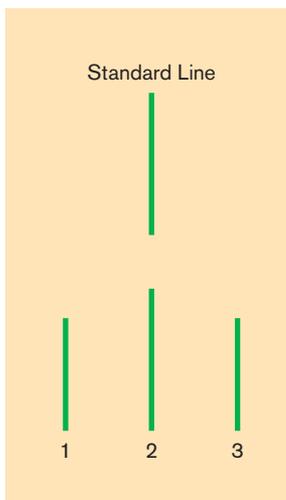


FIGURE 14.1

Asch's Classic Study of Conformity

If you were one of eight participants in the Asch experiment who were asked to pick the line (1, 2, or 3) that matched the standard line, which line would you choose? If the other participants all chose line 3, would you conform and answer line 3? (Based on Asch, 1955.)

Asch found that 5 percent of the participants conformed to the incorrect, unanimous majority *all* of the time; 70 percent conformed *some* of the time; and 25 percent remained completely independent and were *never* swayed by the group.

Image omitted due to copyright restrictions.

In this scene from Asch's experiment on conformity, all but one of the "participants" were really confederates of the experimenter. They deliberately chose the wrong line to try to influence the naive subject (second from right) to go along with the majority.

conformity: Changing or adopting an attitude or behaviour to be consistent with the norms of a group or the expectations of others.

norms: The attitudes and standards of behaviour expected of members of a particular group.

Asch wondered how group size would influence conformity. Varying the experiment with groups of two, three, four, eight, and ten to fifteen, he found that the tendency to “go along” with the majority opinion was in full force even when the unanimous majority consisted of only three confederates. Surprisingly, unanimous majorities of 15 produced no higher conformity rates than did those of three. Asch also found that if just one other person voiced a dissenting opinion, the tendency to conform was not as strong. When just one confederate in the group disagreed with the incorrect majority, the naive participants’ errors dropped drastically, from 32 percent to 10.4 percent.

Other research on conformity reveals that people of low status are more likely to conform than those of high status (Eagly, 1987); but, contrary to the conventional wisdom, women are no more likely to conform than men (Eagly & Carli, 1981). And conformity is even greater if the sources of influence are perceived as belonging to one’s own group (Abrams et al., 1990).

According to Wood and others (1994), those who hold minority opinions on an issue have more influence in changing a majority view if they present a well-organized, clearly stated argument. And minorities who are especially consistent in advocating their views are more influential.

Obedience: Following Orders

Some obedience is necessary if society is to function; however, unquestioned obedience can bring people to commit unbelievably horrible acts. In one of the darkest chapters in human history, officials in Nazi Germany obeyed Hitler’s orders to exterminate six million Jews and other “undesirables.” The civilized world was stunned and sickened by their actions, and nearly everyone wondered how human beings could be capable of committing such atrocities. Stanley Milgram, a young researcher at Yale University in the 1960s, designed a study to investigate how far ordinary citizens would go to obey orders.

The Milgram Study: The Classic on Obedience

What did Milgram find in his classic study of obedience?

In the 1960s this advertisement appeared in newspapers in New Haven, Connecticut, and in other communities near Yale:

Wanted: Volunteers to serve as subjects in a study of memory and learning at Yale University.

Many people responded to the ad, and 40 males between the ages of 20 and 50 were selected, among them “postal clerks, high school teachers, salesmen, engineers, and laborers” (Milgram, 1963, p. 372). But no experiment on memory and learning was to take place. Instead, Milgram planned a staged drama. Imagine that you are one of the naive participants selected for the experiment.

The researcher actually wants to know how far you will go in obeying orders to administer what you believe are increasingly painful electric shocks to a “learner” who misses questions on a test. The cast of characters is as follows:

The experimenter: A 31-year-old high school biology teacher dressed in a grey laboratory coat who assumes a stern and serious manner.

The learner: A pleasant, heavyset accountant about 50 years of age (an accomplice of the experimenter).

The teacher: You—the only naive member of the cast.

The experimenter leads you and the learner into one room. The learner is then strapped into an electric-chair apparatus. You, the teacher, are given a sample shock of 45 volts, which stings you and is supposedly for the purpose of testing the equipment and showing you what the learner will feel. The learner complains of a heart condition and says that he hopes the electric shocks will not be too painful. The experimenter admits that the stronger shocks will hurt but hastens to add, “Although the shocks can be extremely painful, they cause no permanent tissue damage” (p. 373).

Then the experimenter takes you to an adjoining room, out of sight of the learner. The experimenter seats you in front of an instrument panel (shown in the photograph on the left), on which 30 lever switches are set horizontally. The first switch on the left, you are told, delivers only 15 volts, but each successive switch is 15 volts stronger than the last—30 volts, 45 volts, and so on up to the last switch, which carries 450 volts. The instrument panel has verbal designations ranging from “Slight Shock” to “Danger: Severe Shock.”

Image omitted
due to
copyright
restrictions.

Image omitted
due to
copyright
restrictions.

On the left is the shock generator used by Milgram in his famous experiment. On the right is the learner (actually an accomplice) being strapped into his chair by the experimenter and the unsuspecting participant.

The experimenter explains that you are to read a list of word pairs to the learner and then test his memory. When the learner makes the right choice, you go on to the next pair. If he misses a question, you are to flip a switch and shock him, moving one switch to the right—delivering 15 additional volts—for each miss. The learner does well at first but then begins missing about three out of every four questions. You begin pulling the switches, which you believe are delivering stronger and stronger shocks for each incorrect answer. When you hesitate, the experimenter urges you, “Please continue” or “Please go on.” If you still hesitate, the experimenter orders you, “The experiment requires that you continue,” or more strongly, “You have no other choice, you *must* go on” (p. 374).

At the 20th switch, 300 volts, the learner begins to pound on the wall and screams, “Let me out of here, let me out, my heart’s bothering me, let me out!” (Meyer, 1972, p. 461). From this point on, the learner answers no more questions. Alarmed, you protest to the experimenter that the learner, who is pounding the wall frantically, does not want to continue. The experimenter answers, “Whether the learner likes it or not, you must go on” (Milgram, 1963, p. 374). When the learner fails to respond, you are told to count that as an incorrect response and shock him again.

Do you continue? If you do, you flip the next switch—315 volts—and only groans are heard from the learner. You look at the experimenter, obviously distressed, your palms sweating, your heart pounding. The experimenter states firmly: “You have no

other choice, you *must* go on.” If you refuse at this point, the experiment is ended. Would you refuse, or would you continue to shock a silent learner nine more times until you delivered the maximum of 450 volts?

How many of the 40 participants do you think obeyed the experimenter to the end—to 450 volts? The answer is quite disturbing: almost everyone in the study (87.5 percent) continued to administer the shock to the 20th switch, supposedly 300 volts, when the learner began pounding the wall. Amazingly, 26 people—65 percent of the sample—obeyed the experimenter to the bitter end, as shown in Figure 14.2. But this experiment took a terrible toll on the participants. “Subjects were observed to sweat, tremble, stutter, bite their lips, groan, and dig their fingernails into their flesh. These were characteristic rather than exceptional responses to the experiment” (p. 375).

Variations of the Milgram Study

Would the same results have occurred if the experiment had not been conducted at a famous university like Yale? The same experiment was carried out in a three-room office suite in a run-down building identified by a sign, “Research Associates of Bridgeport.” Even there, 48 percent of participants administered the maximum shock, compared with the 65 percent in the Yale setting (Meyer, 1972).

Milgram (1965) conducted a variation of the original experiment in which each trial included three teachers; two were confederates and the third a naive participant. One confederate was instructed to refuse to continue after 150 volts, the other after

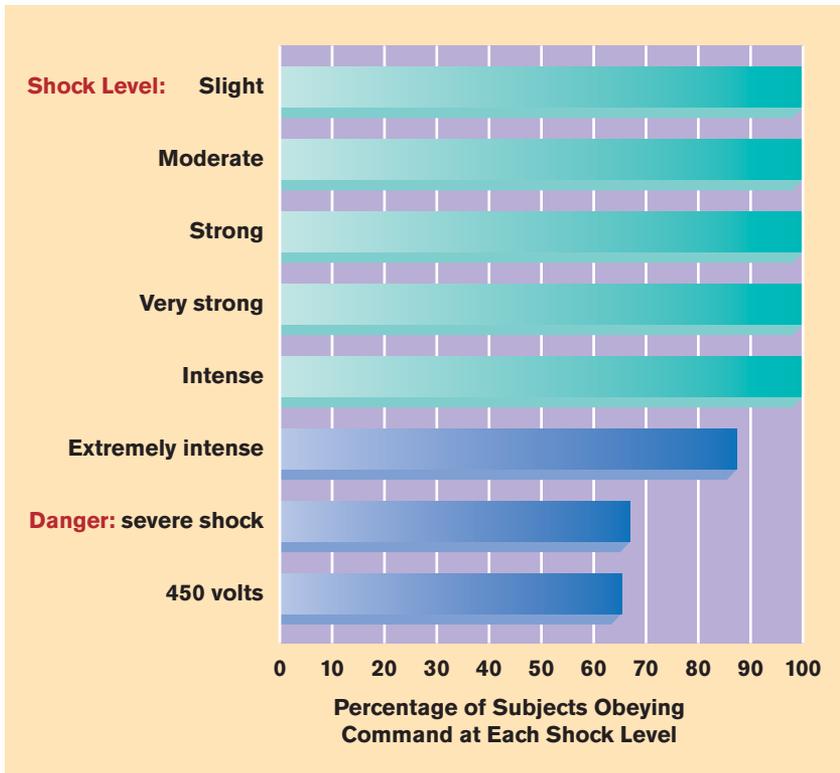


FIGURE 14.2

The Results of Milgram's Classic Experiment on Obedience In his classic study, Stanley Milgram showed that a large majority of his participants would obey authority even if obedience caused great pain or was life-threatening to another person. Milgram reported that 87.5 percent of the participants continued to administer what they thought were painful electric shocks of 300 volts to a victim who complained of a heart condition. Amazingly, 65 percent of the participants obeyed authority to the bitter end and continued to deliver what they thought were dangerous, severe shocks to the maximum of 450 volts. (Data from Milgram, 1963.)

210 volts. In this situation 36 out of 40 naive participants (90 percent) defied the experimenter before the maximum shock could be given, compared to only 14 in the original experiment (Milgram, 1965). In Milgram's experiment, as in Asch's conformity study, the presence of another person who *refused to go along* gave many of the participants the courage to defy authority.

Compliance: Giving In to Requests

What are three techniques used to gain compliance?

Often, people act not out of conformity or obedience but in accordance with the wishes, suggestions, or direct requests of another person. This type of action is called **compliance**. Almost daily we are confronted by people who make requests of one sort or another. Do we comply with these requests? Quite often we do. People use several techniques to gain the compliance of others.

The Foot-in-the-Door Technique: Upping the Ante

One strategy, the **foot-in-the-door technique**, is designed to secure a favourable response to a small

request first. The intent is to make a person more likely to agree later to a larger request (the request that was desired from the beginning). In one study a researcher pretending to represent a consumers' group called a number of homes and asked whether the people answering the phone would mind answering a few questions about the soap products they used. Then a few days later, the same person called those who had agreed to the first request and asked if he could send five or six of his assistants to conduct an inventory of the products in their home. The researcher told the respondents that the inventory would take about two hours, and that the inventory team would have to search all drawers, cabinets, and closets in the house. Would you agree to such an imposition?

In fact, nearly 53 percent of the foot-in-the-door group agreed to this large request, compared with 22 percent of a control group who were contacted only once, with the large request (Freedman & Fraser, 1966). A review of many studies on the foot-in-the-door approach suggests that it is highly effective (Beaman et al., 1983; DeJong, 1979). But strangely enough, exactly the opposite approach will work just as well.



Conformity, Obedience, and Compliance

- What percentage of the participants in the original Asch study never conformed to the majority's unanimous incorrect response?
 - 70 percent
 - 33 percent
 - 25 percent
 - 5 percent
- What percentage of the participants in Milgram's original obedience experiment administered what they thought was the maximum 450 volt shock?
 - 85 percent
 - 65 percent
 - 45 percent
 - 25 percent
- Match the compliance technique with the appropriate example.

_____ 1) Julie agrees to sign a letter supporting an increase in taxes for road construction. Later she agrees to make 100 phone calls urging people to vote for the measure.	a. door-in-the-face technique
_____ 2) Rick refuses a phone request for a \$24 donation to send four needy children to the circus but does agree to give \$6.	b. low-ball technique
_____ 3) Linda agrees to babysit for her next-door neighbours and then is informed that their three nephews will be there, too.	c. foot-in-the-door technique

Answers: 1. c 2. b 3. 1) c 2) a 3) c

The Door-in-the-Face Technique: An Unreasonable Request First

With the **door-in-the-face technique**, a large, unreasonable request is made first. The expectation is that the person will refuse but will then be more likely to respond favourably to a smaller request later (the request that was desired from the beginning). In one of the best-known studies of the door-in-the-face technique, university students were approached on campus. They were asked to agree to serve without pay as counsellors to young offenders for two hours each week for a minimum of two years. As you would imagine, not a single person agreed (Cialdini et al., 1975). Then the experimenters countered with a much smaller request, asking the students if they would agree to take a group of young offenders on a two-hour trip to the zoo. Half the students agreed—a fairly high compliance rate. The researchers used another group of university students as controls, asking them to respond only to the smaller request, the zoo trip. Only 17 percent agreed when the smaller request was presented alone. We should note that, of the foot-in-the-door and the door-in-the-face techniques, the former is more effective (Fern et al., 1986).

The Low-Ball Technique: Not Telling the Whole Truth Up Front

Another method used to gain compliance is the **low-ball technique**. A very attractive initial offer is made

to get people to commit themselves to an action, and then the terms are made less favourable. In one study, university students were asked to enrol in an experimental course for which they would receive credit. But they were low-balled: only after the students had agreed to participate were they informed that the class would meet at 7:00 a.m. But 55 percent of the low-balled group agreed to participate anyway. When another group of students were told up-front that the class would meet at 7:00 a.m., only about 25 percent agreed to take the class (Cialdini et al., 1978).

compliance: Acting in accordance with the wishes, the suggestions, or the direct requests of another person.

foot-in-the-door technique: A strategy designed to secure a favourable response to a small request at first, with the aim of making the subject more likely to agree later to a larger request.

door-in-the-face technique: A strategy in

which someone makes a large, unreasonable request with the expectation that the person will refuse but will then be more likely to respond favourably to a smaller request at a later time.

low-ball technique: A strategy to gain compliance by making a very attractive initial offer to get a person to agree to an action and then making the terms less favourable.

Group Influence

The Effects of the Group on Individual Performance

Our performance of tasks can be enhanced or impaired by the mere presence of others, and the decisions we reach as part of a group can be quite different from those we would make when acting alone.

Social Facilitation: Performing in the Presence of Others

Under what conditions does social facilitation have either a positive or a negative effect on performance?

The term **social facilitation** refers to any effect on performance, positive or negative, that can be attributed to the presence of others.

Research on this phenomenon has focused on two types of effects: (1) **audience effects**—the impact of passive spectators on performance; and (2) **coaction effects**—the impact on performance of the presence of other people engaged in the same task.

One of the first studies in social psychology was conducted by Norman Triplett (1898), who looked at coaction effects. Triplett had observed in official bicycle records that bicycle racers pedalled faster when they were pedalling against other racers than when they were racing against the clock. Was this pattern of performance peculiar to competitive bicycling? Or was it part of a more general phenomenon in which individuals worked faster and harder in the presence of others than when performing alone? Triplett set up a study in which he told 40 children to wind fishing reels as quickly as possible under two conditions: (1) alone, and (2) in the presence of other children performing the same task. He found that the children worked faster when other reel turners were present.

Later studies on social facilitation found just the opposite effect—the presence of others, whether coacting or just watching, could impede individual performance. Robert Zajonc (1965; Zajonc & Sales, 1966) reasoned that we become aroused by the presence of others and that arousal facilitates the dominant response—that is, the one most natural to us. On simple tasks and on tasks at which we are skilled, the dominant response is the correct one (performing effectively). However, on tasks that are difficult or tasks we are first learning, the incorrect response

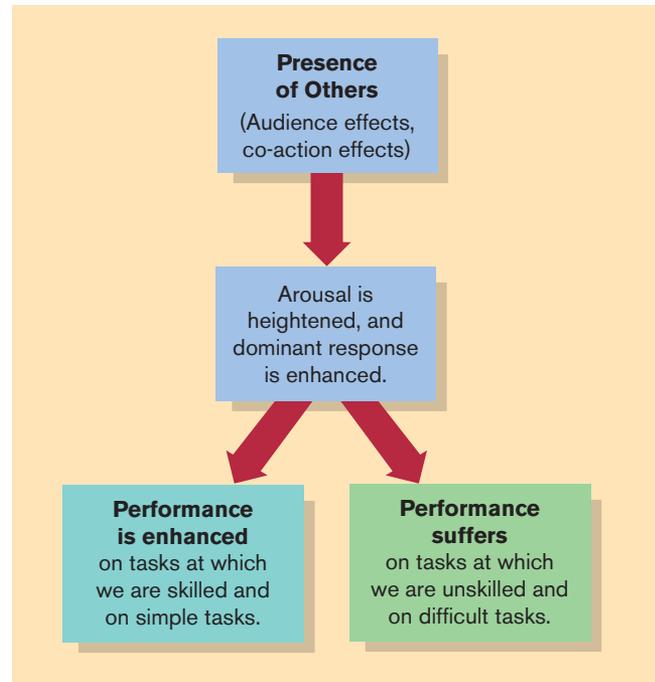


FIGURE 14.3

Social Facilitation: Performing in the Presence of Others The presence of others (either as an audience or as coactors engaged in the same task) may have opposite effects, either helping or hindering our performance. Why? Robert Zajonc explained that (1) the presence of others heightens our arousal, and (2) heightened arousal leads to better performance on tasks we are good at and worse performance on tasks that are difficult for us. (Based on Zajonc & Sales, 1966.)

(making a mistake) is dominant. This would account for the repeated findings that in the presence of others, performance improves on tasks that people do easily, but suffers on difficult tasks (Michaels et al., 1982) See Figure 14.3.

Other researchers have suggested that it is concern over the observers' evaluations of us that affects performance, particularly if we expect a negative evaluation (Sanna & Shotland, 1990; Seta et al., 1989).

Social Loafing: Not Pulling Our Weight in a Group Effort

What is social loafing, and what factors can lessen or eliminate it?

What happens in cooperative tasks in which two or more individuals are working together? Do they

Image omitted due to copyright restrictions.

Social loafing is people's tendency to exert less effort when working with others on a common task, such as pedalling a multiperson cycle.

increase their effort or slack off? Researcher Bibb Latané used the term **social loafing** for the tendency of people to exert less effort when they are working with others on a common task than when they are working alone on the same task. Social loafing takes place in situations in which no one person's contribution to the group can be identified, and in which individuals are neither praised for a good performance nor blamed for a poor one (Williams et al., 1981).

Several studies have found that social loafing disappears when participants in a group are led to believe that each person's output can be monitored and his or her performance evaluated (Harkins & Jackson, 1985; Weldon & Gargano, 1988). Even the *possibility* that the group's performance may be evaluated against some standard can be sufficient to eliminate the loafing effect (Harkins & Szymanski, 1989). When group size is relatively small and group evaluation is important, some members will even expend extra effort if they know that some of their co-workers are unwilling, unreliable, or incompetent (Karau & Williams, 1995; Williams & Karau, 1991). Social loafing is not likely to take place when participants can evaluate their own individual contributions (Szymanski & Harkins, 1987), when they are personally involved in the outcome or feel that the task is challenging (Brickner et al., 1986), and when they are working with close friends or teammates (Karau & Williams, 1993).

Social loafing is apparently not peculiar to any single culture but is typical of the human species. Some 50 studies conducted in places as diverse as Taiwan, Japan, Thailand, and India confirm that

social loafing shows up when people are involved in performing cooperative tasks (Gabrenya et al., 1983).

The Effects of the Group on Decision Making

The group can have profound and predictable effects on decision making, depending on the group's attitudes before discussion begins.

Group Polarization: When Group Decisions Become More Extreme

How are the initial attitudes of group members likely to affect group decision making?

It is commonly believed that groups tend to make more moderate, conservative decisions than individuals make, but some

research in social psychology tells us otherwise.

Group discussion often causes members of the group to shift to a more extreme position in whatever direction they were leaning initially—a phenomenon known as **group polarization** (Isenberg, 1986; Lamm, 1988). The group members, it seems, will decide to take a greater risk if they were leaning in a risky direction to begin with, but they will shift toward a more cautious position if they were somewhat cautious at the beginning of the discussion (Moscovici & Zavalloni, 1969; Myers & Lamm, 1975).

Why, then, aren't all group decisions either very risky or very cautious? The reason is that the members of a group do not always all lean in the same direction at the beginning of a discussion. When subgroups within a larger group hold opposing views, compromise rather than polarization is the likely outcome (Vinokur & Burnstein, 1978).

social facilitation: Any positive or negative effect on performance due to the presence of others, either as an audience or as coactors.

audience effects: The impact of passive spectators on performance.

coaction effects: The impact on performance caused by the presence of others engaged in the same task.

social loafing: The tendency to put forth less effort when working with others on a common task than when working alone.

group polarization: The tendency of members of a group, after group discussion, to shift toward a more extreme position in whatever direction they were leaning initially.

Groupthink: When Group Cohesiveness Leads to Bad Decisions

Group cohesiveness refers to the degree to which group members are attracted to the group and experience a feeling of oneness. **Groupthink** is the term that social psychologist Irving Janis (1982) applies to the decisions that are often reached by overly cohesive groups. When a tightly knit group is more concerned with preserving group solidarity and uniformity than with objectively evaluating all possible alternatives in decision making, individual members may hesitate to voice any dissent. The group may also discredit opposing views from outsiders and begin to believe it is invulnerable and incapable of making mistakes. Even plans bordering on madness can be hatched and adopted when groupthink prevails.

To guard against groupthink, Janis suggests that the group encourage an open discussion of alternative views and encourage the expression of any objections and doubts. He further recommends that outside experts sit in and challenge the views of the group. Finally, at least one group member should take the role of devil's advocate whenever a policy alternative is evaluated.

Groups exert an even more powerful influence on individuals by prescribing social roles.

Social Roles

The group is indispensable to human life. We are born into a family group, a culture, a racial and ethnic group, and usually a religious group. And as we grow and mature, we may choose to join many other groups, such as social groups and professional groups.

The groups to which we belong define certain roles. **Roles** are the behaviours considered to be appropriate for individuals occupying certain positions within a group.

Roles are useful because they tell us beforehand how people—even people we have never met before—are likely to act toward us in many situations. If you have ever been stopped for speeding by a police officer, you were at that moment unwillingly cast in the role of speeder, and you had few doubts about the role the officer would play. But both you and the police officer assume many different roles in life—family roles, social roles, work roles, and so on—and your behaviour can differ dramatically as you shift from role to role.

Roles can shape human behaviour to an alarming degree. This is best illustrated in a classic study by Philip Zimbardo.

Zimbardo's Prison Study: Our Roles Dictate Our Actions

Picture the following scene: On a quiet Sunday morning in a peaceful university town, the scream of sirens split the air as the local police conducted a surprise mass arrest, rounding up nine male university students. The students were searched, handcuffed, read their rights, and hauled off to jail. Here they were booked and fingerprinted, then transported to "Stanford County Prison." At the prison, each student was stripped naked, searched, deloused, given a uniform and a number, and placed in a cell with two other prisoners. All of this was more than sufficiently traumatic, but then there were the guards in their khaki uniforms, wearing reflector sunglasses that made eye-to-eye contact impossible and carrying clubs that resembled small baseball bats.

The prisoners had to get permission from the guards for the most simple, routine matters, such as writing a letter, smoking a cigarette, or even using the toilet. And the guards were severe in the punishments they imposed. Prisoners were made to do pushups while the guards sometimes stepped on them or forced another prisoner to sit on them. Some prisoners were placed in solitary confinement. (This anecdote is adapted from Zimbardo, 1972.)

But wait a minute! People are not arrested, charged, and thrown into prison without a trial. What happened? In truth the guards were not guards and the prisoners were not prisoners. All were university students who had been selected to participate in a two-week experiment on prison life (Zimbardo et al., 1973). Guards and prisoners were selected randomly from a pool of volunteers who had been judged to be mature, healthy, psychologically stable, law-abiding citizens. Those who were to be prisoners were not aware of their selection until they were "arrested" on that quiet Sunday morning.

This was only an experiment, but it became all too real—for the guards and especially for the prisoners. How could some of the guards, though mild-mannered pacifists, so quickly become sadistic, heartless tormentors in their new role? One guard remembered making prisoners clean the toilets with their bare hands—he virtually viewed them as cattle. The prisoners fell into their roles quickly as well.



Group Influence

- Which of the following statements regarding the effects of social facilitation is true?
 - Performance improves on all tasks.
 - Performance worsens on all tasks.
 - Performance improves on easy tasks and worsens on difficult tasks.
 - Performance improves on difficult tasks and worsens on easy tasks.
- Social loafing is most likely to occur when
 - individual output is monitored.
 - individual output is evaluated.
 - a task is challenging.
 - individual output cannot be identified.
- When group polarization occurs following group discussion, the group will decide to take a greater risk
 - if members were leaning in a cautious direction to begin with.
 - if members were leaning in a risky direction to begin with.
 - if members were leaning in different directions to begin with.
 - regardless of the initial position of the members.
- What occurs when members of a very cohesive group are more concerned with preserving group solidarity than with evaluating all possible alternatives in making a decision?
 - groupthink
 - group polarization
 - social facilitation
 - social loafing

Answers: 1. c 2. d 3. b 4. a

How could autonomous, self-respecting students allow themselves to become debased and subservient in their captivity, to suffer physical and mental abuse, and to behave as if they were real prisoners? The experiment was to be run for two weeks but had to be called off after only six days.

Now, years later, social psychologists are still trying to answer the questions posed by the behaviour of the “prisoners” and the “guards.”

Attitudes and Attitude Change

Attitudes: Cognitive, Emotional, and Behavioural Positions

What are the three components of an attitude?

What is your attitude toward abortion? or gun control? or premarital sex? An **attitude** is a relatively stable evaluation of a person, object, situation, or issue that varies along a continuum from negative to positive (Petty et al., 1997). Most of our attitudes have three components: (1) a cognitive component—our thoughts and beliefs about the attitudinal object; (2) an emotional component—our feelings toward the attitudinal object; and (3) a behavioural component—how we are predisposed to act

toward the object (Breckler, 1984; Chaiken & Stanger, 1987; Petty & Wegener, 1998; Zanna & Rempel, 1988). Figure 14.4 on the next page shows the three components of an attitude.

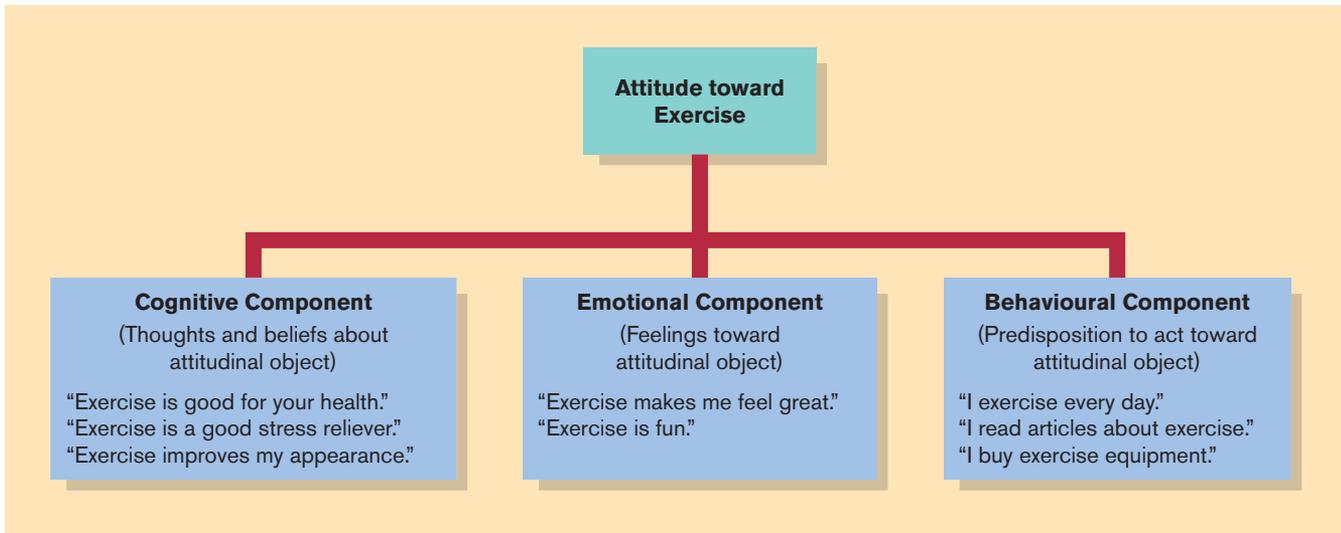
Attitudes enable us to appraise people, objects, and situations; in this way they provide structure and consistency to our social environment (Fazio, 1989). Attitudes help us process social information (Pratkanis, 1989); they also guide our behaviour (Sanbonmatsu & Fazio, 1990) and influence our social judgments and decisions (Devine, 1989a; Jamieson & Zanna, 1989).

How do we form our attitudes? Some of our attitudes are acquired through firsthand experience with people, objects, situations, and issues. Others are acquired vicariously. When we hear parents, family, friends, and teachers express positive or negative attitudes toward certain issues or people, we may take

groupthink: The tendency for members of a very cohesive group to feel such pressure to maintain group solidarity and to reach agreement on an issue that they fail to adequately weigh available evidence or to consider objections and alternatives.

roles: The behaviours considered to be appropriate for individuals occupying certain positions within the group.

attitude: A relatively stable evaluation of a person, object, situation, or issue.

**FIGURE 14.4**

The Three Components of an Attitude An attitude is a relatively stable evaluation of a person, object, situation, or issue. Most of our attitudes have (1) a cognitive component, (2) an emotional component, and (3) a behavioural component.

the same attitudes as our own. The media, including advertisers, greatly influence our attitudes and reap billions of dollars annually for their efforts. As you might expect, however, the attitudes we form through direct experience are stronger than those we acquire vicariously and are more resistant to change (Wu & Shaffer, 1987).

Some research indicates that attitudes may have a partly genetic basis (Lykken et al., 1993). Tesser (1993) found that the greater the degree to which particular attitudes could be attributed to genetic influences, the more resistant those attitudes were to conformity pressures. But the controversial claim for a genetic influence on attitudes contradicts more conventional findings that emphasize the roles of learning and experience in attitude formation (Petty et al., 1997).

The Relationship between Attitudes and Behaviour

The general consensus among social scientists initially was that attitudes govern behaviour (Allport, 1935). But toward the end of the 1960s, one study after another failed to reveal a strong relationship between what people reported they believed on atti-

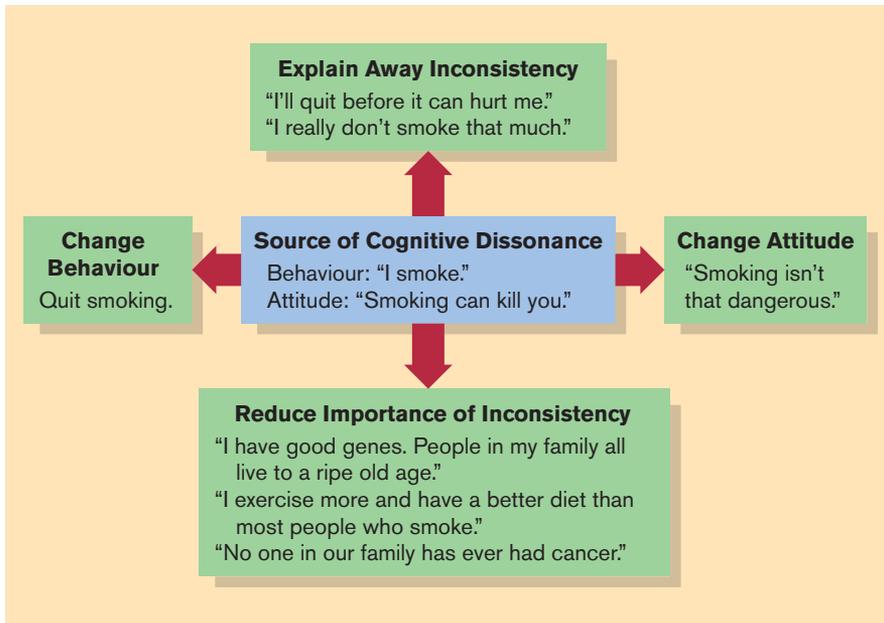
tude measurement scales and their actual behaviour. Attitudes seemed to predict observed behaviour only about 10 percent of the time (Wicker, 1969).

Why aren't attitude measurements better predictors of behaviour? Attitude measurements may often be too general for this. People may express strong attitudes toward protecting the environment and conserving resources, but this doesn't mean they use their recycling boxes or join carools. When attitudes correspond very closely to the behaviour of interest, they actually become good predictors of behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). Attitudes are also better predictors of behaviour if the attitudes are strongly held, are readily accessible in memory (Bassili, 1995; Fazio & Williams, 1986; Fazio et al., 1986; Kraus, 1995), and vitally affect our interests (Sivacek & Crano, 1982).

Cognitive Dissonance: The Mental Pain of Inconsistency

What is cognitive dissonance, and how can it be resolved?

If we discover that some of our attitudes are in conflict with others or are not consistent with our behaviour, we are likely to experience an unpleasant state. Leon Festinger (1957) called this **cognitive dissonance**. We usually try to reduce the dissonance by changing our behaviour or our attitude, or by somehow explaining away the inconsistency or reducing its importance (Aronson, 1973, 1976; Cooper & Fazio, 1984; Festinger 1957). A change in attitudes does seem to reduce the discomfort caused by dissonance (Elliot & Devine, 1994).

**FIGURE 14.5**

Methods of Reducing Cognitive Dissonance Cognitive dissonance can occur when people become aware of inconsistencies in their attitudes or between their attitudes and their behaviour. People try to reduce dissonance by (1) changing their behaviour, (2) changing their attitude, (3) explaining away the inconsistency, or (4) reducing its importance. Here are examples of how a smoker might use these methods to reduce the cognitive dissonance created by his or her habit.

Smoking provides a perfect example of cognitive dissonance. What are smokers to do? The healthiest, but perhaps not the easiest, way for them to reduce cognitive dissonance is to change their behaviour—quit smoking. Another way is to change their attitude—to convince themselves that smoking is not as dangerous as research suggests. Smokers can also tell themselves that they will stop smoking long before any permanent damage is done, or that medical science is advancing so rapidly that a cure for cancer is just around the corner. Figure 14.5 illustrates the methods that smokers can use to reduce cognitive dissonance.

If people voluntarily make a statement or take a position that is counter to what they believe, they will experience cognitive dissonance because of the inconsistency. To resolve this dissonance, they are likely to change their beliefs to make them more consistent with their behaviour (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959). Cognitive dissonance can also be reduced by trivializing or minimizing the dissonant cognitions instead of changing one's attitudes (Simon et al., 1995).

Persuasion: Trying to Change Attitudes

What are the four elements in persuasion?

Persuasion is a deliberate attempt to influence the attitudes and/or the behaviour of another person.

Persuasion is a pervasive part of our work experience, social experience, and family life.

Researchers have identified four elements in persuasion: (1) the source of the communication (who is doing the persuading), (2) the audience (who is being persuaded), (3) the message (what is being said), and (4) the medium (the means by which the message is transmitted).

The Source: Look Who's Talking

What qualities make a source most persuasive?

Some factors that make the source (communicator) more persuasive are credibility, attractiveness, and likability. Credibility refers to how believable a source is. A credible communicator is one who has expertise (knowledge of the topic at hand) and trustworthiness (truthfulness and integrity). The influence of a credible source is even greater if the audience knows the communicator's credentials beforehand. Moreover, we attach greater credibility to sources who have nothing to gain from persuading us or, better yet,

cognitive dissonance: The unpleasant state that can occur when people become aware of inconsistencies between their attitudes or

between their attitudes and their behaviour.

persuasion: A deliberate attempt to influence the attitudes and/or behaviour of another.

who seem to be arguing against their own best interests. For example, arguments against pornography are more persuasive if they are made by a source known to be generally opposed to censorship.

In matters that involve our own personal tastes and preferences rather than issues, attractive people and celebrities can be very persuasive (Chaiken, 1979). Movie and TV stars, athletes, and even unknown but attractive fashion models have long been used by advertisers to persuade us to buy certain products. Likable, down-to-earth, ordinary people who are perceived to be similar to the audience are sometimes even more effective persuaders. Political candidates try to appear more likable, and more like voters, by donning hard hats and visiting construction sites and coal mines, by kissing babies, and by posing with farmers.

The Audience and the Message

Persuaders must consider the nature of their audience. In general, people with low intelligence are easier to persuade (Rhodes & Wood, 1992). Research suggests that a one-sided message (in which only one side of an issue is given) is usually most persuasive if the audience is not well-informed on the issue, is not overly intelligent, or is already in agreement with the point of view. A two-sided approach (in which both sides of an issue are mentioned) works best when the audience is well-informed, fairly intelligent, or



Persuasion is a deliberate attempt to influence the attitudes and/or behaviour of another person. What tactics do you use when trying to persuade others?

initially opposed to the point of view. The two-sided approach usually sways more people than a one-sided appeal (Hovland et al., 1949; McGuire, 1969, 1985).

People tend to scrutinize arguments that are contrary to their existing beliefs more carefully and exert more effort refuting them; they are also more likely to judge such arguments as weaker than those that support their beliefs (Edwards & Smith, 1996).

A message can be well-reasoned, logical, and unemotional (“just the facts”); or it can be strictly

Attitudes and Attitude Change

- Which of the following is *not* one of the three components of an attitude?
 - cognitive component
 - emotional component
 - physiological component
 - behavioural component
- All of the following are ways to reduce cognitive dissonance *except*
 - changing an attitude.
 - changing a behaviour.
 - explaining away the inconsistency.
 - strengthening the attitude and behaviour.
- People who have made a great sacrifice to join a group usually decrease their liking for the group. (true/false)
- Credibility relates most directly to the communicator's
 - attractiveness.
 - expertise and trustworthiness.
 - likability.
 - personality.
- With a well-informed audience, two-sided messages are more persuasive than one-sided messages. (true/false)
- High-fear appeals are more effective than low-fear appeals if they provide definite actions that people can take to avoid dreaded outcomes. (true/false)

Answers: 1. c 2. d 3. false 4. b 5. true 6. true

emotional (“scare the hell out of them”); or it can be a combination of the two. Which type of message works best? Arousing fear seems to be effective for persuading people to adopt healthier attitudes and behaviours (Robberson & Rogers, 1988). Appeals based on fear are most effective when the presentation outlines definite actions the audience can take to avoid the feared outcome (Leventhal et al., 1965).

IT HAPPENED IN CANADA

Image omitted due to copyright restrictions.

Burnt Church

Despite the changing nature of Canada's cultural environment and the growing acceptance of our country as one that includes many traditions, norms, and beliefs, Canadians continue to be challenged and somewhat divided over how to deal with the way these different views affect perceptions and expectations. In the past few years, Canadians have witnessed an increasing tension over issues associated with the inherent rights of Native people.

In the summer of 2000, conflict between Natives and government officials took a serious turn when the Supreme Court ruled that Native Canadians had the treaty right to fish and hunt for a moderate livelihood, while also upholding Ottawa's right to regulate the fishery. Burnt Church, New Brunswick, a community of 1300 people, mainly Mi'kmaq, became the focal point of the conflict. There, Native and non-Native fishers fought over their apparent rights to fish for lobster. The clash of views and the differing interpretations of the Supreme Court ruling resulted in acts of vandalism and threats from members of both Native and non-Native groups, along with strong intervention from both RCMP and Fisheries officials. The daily occurrences of Burnt Church wrought constant headlines in our newscasts during the summer of 2000, and attempts to reconcile the two groups were not successful.

Conflicts such as these are infused with social psychological processes. They are based on each group's prejudicial attitudes regarding the other group. Those views involved a focus on differences between members of “our” versus the “other” group. Such perspectives serve to polarize each person's attitudes toward any member of the other group by casting everyone in the other group as being indistinguishable in attitudes and beliefs from any other member of that group. Such views lead to discrimination and make it virtually impossible for negotiators to find a solution. Can social psychologists help find a solution to such conflicts? (Based on Morris, 2000a, 2000b.)

Another important factor in persuasion is repetition. The more often a product or a point of view is presented, the more people will be persuaded to buy it or embrace it. Advertisers apparently believe in the mere-exposure effect, as they repeat their message over and over (Bornstein, 1989).

Prejudice and Discrimination

As we have seen, increasing cultural diversity is a fact of life in the modern world. And Canada is among the most culturally diverse nations in the world. Can we all learn to live and work peacefully no matter what racial, ethnic, cultural, or other differences exist among us? The answer is a conditional yes—we can do it *if* we can learn how to combat prejudice and discrimination.

The Roots of Prejudice and Discrimination

What is the difference between prejudice and discrimination?

Prejudice consists of attitudes (usually negative) toward others based on their gender, religion, race, or membership in a particular group. Prejudice involves beliefs and emotions (not actions) that can escalate into hatred. **Discrimination** consists of behaviour—that is, actions (usually negative) toward members of a group. Many people have experienced prejudice and discrimination—minority racial groups (racism), women (sexism), the elderly (ageism), disabled people, gays and lesbians, religious groups, and others. What, then, are the roots of prejudice and discrimination?

The Realistic Conflict Theory: When Competition Leads to Prejudice

One of the oldest explanations offered for prejudice is competition among various social groups for scarce economic resources—good jobs, land, political power,

prejudice: Negative attitudes toward others based on their gender, religion, race, or membership in a particular group.

discrimination: Behaviour, usually negative, directed toward others based on their gender, religion, race, or membership in a particular group.

and so on. Commonly called the **realistic conflict theory**, this view suggests that as competition increases, so does prejudice, discrimination, and hatred among the competing groups. Some historical evidence supports this theory. Prejudice and hatred were high between the Europeans and the Native Canadians who struggled over land during Canada's westward expansion. Many of the millions of immigrants to Canada have felt the sting of prejudice and hatred from native-born Canadians. This has been especially true in times of economic scarcity. As nations around the world experience hard economic times in the late new century, will we see an increase in prejudice and discrimination? The realistic conflict theory predicts that we will. But prejudice and discrimination are too complex to be explained simply by economic conflict. What are some other causes?

Us Versus Them: Dividing the World into In-Groups and Out-Groups

What is meant by the terms *in-group* and *out-group*?

Prejudice can also spring from the distinct social categories into which we divide our world—*us versus them* (Turner et al., 1987). An **in-group** is a social group with a strong feeling of togetherness and from which others are excluded. Fraternities and sororities often exhibit strong in-group feelings. An **out-group** consists of individuals or groups specifically identified by the in-group as not belonging. Us-versus-them thinking can lead to excessive competition, hostility, prejudice, discrimination, and even war.

Prejudiced individuals who most strongly identify with their racial in-group are most reluctant to admit others to the group if there is the slightest doubt about their racial purity (Blascovich et al., 1997). Note, however, that groups need not be composed of different races, religions, nations, or any other particular category for in-group/out-group hostility to develop (Tajfel, 1982). Sometimes, even the slightest form of affiliation can lead to in-group/out-group differences.

THE ROBBERS' CAVE EXPERIMENT A famous study by Sherif and Sherif (1967) shows how in-group/out-group conflict can escalate into prejudice and hostility rather quickly, even between groups that are very much alike. The researchers set up their experiment at the Robbers' Cave summer camp. Their subjects were 22 bright, well-adjusted, 11- and 12-year-old

white, middle-class boys from Oklahoma City. Divided into two groups and housed in separate cabins, the boys were kept apart for all their daily activities and games. During the first week, in-group solidarity, friendship, and cooperation developed within each of the groups. One group called itself the Rattlers; the other group took the name Eagles.

During the second week of the study, competitive events were purposely scheduled so that the goals of one group could be achieved “only at the expense of the other group” (Sherif, 1958, p. 353). The groups were happy to battle each other, and intergroup conflict quickly emerged. Name-calling began, fights broke out, and accusations were hurled back and forth. During the third week of the experiment, the researchers tried to put an end to the hostility and to turn rivalry into cooperation. They simply brought the groups together for pleasant activities such as eating meals and watching movies. “But far from reducing conflict, these situations only served as opportunities for the rival groups to berate and attack each other.... They threw paper, food, and vile names at each other at the tables” (Sherif, 1956, pp. 57–58).

Finally, the last stage of the experiment was set in motion. The experimenters manufactured a series of crises that could be solved only if all the boys combined their efforts and resources, and cooperated. The water supply, sabotaged by the experimenters, could be restored only if all the boys worked together. After a week of several activities requiring cooperation, cutthroat competition gave way to cooperative exchanges. Friendships developed between groups, and before the end of the experiment, peace was declared. Working together toward shared goals had turned hostility into friendship.

The Social Learning Theory: Acquiring Prejudice through Modelling and Reinforcement

How does prejudice develop, according to the social learning theory?

According to the social learning theory, people learn attitudes of prejudice and hatred the same way they learn other attitudes. If children hear their parents, teachers, peers, and others openly express prejudices toward different racial, ethnic, or cultural groups, they may be quick to learn such attitudes. And if parents, peers, and others reward children with smiles and approval for mimicking their own prejudices (operant condi-



tioning), children may learn these prejudices even more quickly.

Philips and Ziller (1997) suggest that people can also learn to be nonprejudiced. These researchers conceptualize *nonprejudice* as a set of attitudes about interpersonal relations that lead people to selectively pay attention to and emphasize the similarities between themselves and others, rather than the differences.

Social Cognition: Natural Thinking Processes Can Lead to Prejudice

What are stereotypes? Social cognition also plays a role in giving birth to prejudice. **Social cognition** refers to the ways in which we typically process social information, or to the natural thinking processes whereby we notice, interpret, and remember information about our social world. The processes we use to simplify, categorize, and order our world are the very same processes we use to distort it. Thus, prejudice may arise not only from heated negative emotions and hatred toward other social groups, but also from cooler cognitive processes that govern how we think and process social information (Kunda & Oleson, 1995; Linville et al., 1989; Quattrone, 1986).

One way people simplify, categorize, and order their world is through stereotypes. **Stereotypes** are widely shared beliefs about the characteristics of members of various social groups (racial, ethnic, religious); among these beliefs is the assumption that *they* are usually all alike. Macrae and colleagues (1994) suggest that we resort to stereotypes because doing so requires less mental energy than trying to understand people as individuals. Research by Anderson and colleagues (1990) showed that people can process information more efficiently and answer questions more quickly when they are using stereotypes. But even though they help us process information more quickly, stereotypes may also carry *symbolic beliefs* about a specific group—that is, stereotypes may imply that a specific group threatens our values and norms (Esses et al., 1993).

Do you use stereotypes in your thinking? To find out, complete the *Try It!*

Are women nurturant and non-competitive, and men strong, dominant, and the best leaders? Are beautiful people more vain? All these beliefs are stereotypes. Once developed, stereotypes strongly influence

Try It!

Do You Use Stereotypes?

Can you list characteristics for each of the following groups?

- Jamaican Canadians
- White, male top-level executives
- Native Canadians
- Gays
- Feminists
- Members of fundamentalist religious groups
- Jews
- Arabs
- Italians
- Germans

our evaluations of incoming information about specific groups. The stereotypes we hold can powerfully affect our reactions to and judgments of people in various groups.

When you did the *Try It!* how many group characteristics could you list? We know that not *all* members of a group possess the same traits or characteristics, but we tend to use stereotypic thinking nonetheless.

realistic conflict theory:

The notion that prejudices arise when social groups must compete for scarce opportunities and resources.

in-group: A social group with a strong sense of togetherness and from which others are excluded.

out-group: A social group specifically identified by the in-group as not belonging.

social cognition: Mental processes that people use

to notice, interpret, understand, remember, and apply information about the social world and that enable them to simplify, categorize, and order their world.

stereotypes: Widely shared beliefs about the characteristic traits, attitudes, and behaviours of members of various social groups (racial, ethnic, religious); these include the assumption that they are usually all alike.

Social stereotypes can involve more than over-generalization about the traits or characteristics of members of certain groups (Judd et al., 1991; Park & Judd, 1990). People tend to perceive more variability within the groups to which they belong (in-groups) and less variability among members of other groups (out-groups) (Ostrom et al., 1993). Thus, whites see more diversity among themselves but more sameness within groups of Blacks and Asians. This tendency in thinking can extend from race to gender to age to any other category of people (Linville et al., 1989). Age stereotypes can often be more pronounced and negative than gender stereotypes (Kite et al., 1991).

Stereotypes can be positive or negative, but all are distortions of reality. One of the most insidious things about stereotypes is that we often are not even aware that we are using them. The *World of Psychology* box illustrates the way gender stereotyping affects women's income.

LINK IT!

www.psych.purdue.edu/~esmith/arcor.html
Social Cognition Archive: General Orientation

WORLD OF PSYCHOLOGY

Gender Stereotyping: Who Wins? Who Loses?

Most of the people on our planet are women, yet around the world women are vastly underrepresented in positions of power. Gender stereotypes define men as decisive, aggressive, unemotional, logical, and ambitious. These qualities are perceived by many men and women alike as precisely the “right stuff” for leaders, decision makers, and powerful people at all levels of society. But women, too, can be strong, bold, and decisive leaders—like former prime ministers Margaret Thatcher of Britain, Golda Meir of Israel, and Indira Gandhi of India.

Today, 99 percent of men and 98 percent of women say that women should receive equal pay for equal work (Newport, 1993). Yet the average female worker in Canada is paid about 72 cents for every dollar paid to a male worker (Statistics Canada, 1995). And women are more likely to hold low-paying, low-status jobs. Table 14.1 shows the male–female earnings gap in 10 different countries.

As you can see, wage discrimination against women is not confined to

Canada. Of the 10 industrialized nations shown in Table 14.1, Australia has the smallest wage gap between men and women (88 cents to female workers for every dollar paid to male

workers). Switzerland has the widest wage gap, with women paid, on the average, only about half as much as men (International Labour Organization, 1990).

TABLE 14.1

Average Earnings of Full-time Female Workers as a Percentage of Men's in 10 Industrialized Countries (Non-agricultural Activities), 1980 and 1988.

Country	Earnings Ratio	
	(1980)	(1988)
Australia	85.9	87.9
Denmark	84.5	82.1
France	79.2	81.8*
Netherlands	78.2	76.8
Belgium	69.4	75.0
West Germany	72.4	73.5
United Kingdom	69.7	69.5
United States	66.7‡	70.2
Switzerland	53.8	50.7

*1987 data †1984 data ‡1983 data
Source: Renzetti & Curran, 1992, p. 192.

Reverse Discrimination: Bending Over Backward to Be Fair

What is reverse discrimination?

Another subtle form of discrimination is **reverse discrimination**. It occurs when people bend over backward to give favourable treatment to members of groups that have been discriminated against in the past. Those who practise reverse discrimination may be trying to show that they are not prejudiced. But reverse discrimination is not genuine, and it insults the dignity of the group to which it is directed. It assumes that the other group is indeed inferior and capable only of achieving a lower standard.

A study by Fajardo (1985) clearly illustrates reverse discrimination. A group of teachers (all of whom were white) were asked to grade essays that were identified as having been written by either black or white students. The researchers had purposely written the essays to be poor, low average, high average, or excellent in quality. If white teachers were practising reverse discrimination, they would rate the essays they believed were written by black students higher than those supposedly written by white students. This is exactly what happened, especially when the quality of the essays was in the average range.

A series of studies by Don Dutton and his colleagues (1971, 1973) at the University of British Columbia also demonstrated the presence of reverse discrimination. For instance, in one study, couples asked to be seated in a restaurant. The couples were either black or white, and in each case the man's attire violated the restaurant's dress code. About 30 percent of the white couples were seated, whereas 75 percent of the black couples were seated. Dutton (1971) argued that employees went out of their way to appear non-discriminatory.

Reverse discrimination may benefit people in the short run, but it deceives them and creates false hopes, setting them up for greater disappointment and failure in the long run. Students and workers alike need and deserve objective evaluations of their work and their progress.

Combating Prejudice and Discrimination

What are several strategies for reducing prejudice and discrimination?

Prejudice and discrimination have been pervasive in human societies throughout recorded his-

tory. We have seen that both may take many forms, ranging from bigotry and hatred to the kindness and compassion (though misplaced) of reverse discrimination. Given that prejudice and discrimination may grow from many roots, are there effective ways to reduce them? Many experts believe so. One way is through education: To the extent that prejudice is learned, it can also be unlearned. Sustained educational programs designed to increase teachers' and parents' awareness of the damage caused by prejudice and discrimination can be very effective (Aronson, 1990).

LINK IT!

www.uwindsor.ca:7000/classical/king/me10.htm

Multiculturalism in Canada

www.auaa.org

Americans United for Affirmative Action (AUAA)

Direct Contact: Bringing Diverse Groups Together

Prejudice separates us, keeping us apart from other racial, ethnic, religious, and social groups. Can we reduce our prejudices and stereotypic thinking by increasing our contact and interaction with people in other social groups? Yes, according to the **contact hypothesis**.

Increased contacts with members of groups about which we hold stereotypes can teach us that *they* are not all alike. But the contact hypothesis works to reduce prejudice only under certain conditions. In fact, if people from diverse groups are simply thrown together, prejudice and even hostility are likely to increase rather than decrease, as we learned from Sherif and Sherif's Robbers' Cave experiment. We also learned from that experiment the conditions under which intergroup contact reduces prejudice. These findings have been confirmed and extended by others (Aronson, 1990; Finchilescu, 1988).

reverse discrimination:

Giving special treatment or higher evaluations to individuals from groups that have been the target of discrimination.

contact hypothesis:

The notion that prejudice can be reduced through increased contact among members of different social groups.

The contact hypothesis will work to reduce prejudice most effectively under the following conditions:

- Interacting groups should be about equal in social and economic status and in their ability to perform the tasks.
- The intergroup contact must be cooperative (not competitive) in nature, and work should be confined to shared goals.
- The contact should be informal, so that friendly interactions can develop more easily and group members can get to know each other individually.
- The conditions of the contact situation should favour group equality.
- The individuals involved should perceive each other as typical members of the groups to which they belong.

Us Versus Them: Extending the Boundaries of Narrowly Defined Social Groups

Our tendency to separate ourselves into social categories (in-groups and out-groups) creates an us-versus-them mentality. This mentality heightens prejudice, stereotypic thinking, and discrimination—for example, “Our group (or school, or country, or race, or religion) is better than theirs.” But the boundary lines between us and them are not eternally fixed. If such

boundaries can be extended, prejudice and in-group/out-group conflict can be reduced. We saw in the Sherif study that the Rattlers and the Eagles became a larger us group when they were brought together to work cooperatively on shared goals.

If your college or university wins the regional championship in a competitive event, then local rival colleges and universities will often join your group because you represent the region in national competition. Many researchers have shown that this recategorization reduces us-versus-them bias and prejudice (Gaertner et al., 1990; Wright et al., 1990).

Prejudice: Is It Increasing or Decreasing?

Few people would readily admit to being prejudiced. Gordon Allport (1954), a pioneer in research on prejudice, noted that while “defeated intellectually, prejudice lingers emotionally” (p. 328). Even those who are sincerely intellectually opposed to prejudice may still harbour some prejudicial feelings (Devine, 1989b).

Is there any evidence that prejudice is decreasing in our society? According to some researchers, we are not making much progress toward reducing either prejudice *or* discrimination (Crosby et al., 1980; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). But Devine and her colleagues (1991) are more optimistic. Their research

Prejudice and Discrimination

1. Match the example with the appropriate term.

- ___ 1) Joseph was promoted because the firm needed one French-Canadian manager.
- ___ 2) Darlene thinks all whites are racists.
- ___ 3) Betty’s salary is \$5000 less than that of her male counterpart.
- ___ 4) Bill can’t stand Jews.
- ___ 5) To make his Native employees feel good, Mr. Jones, who is white, gave them higher bonuses than he gave his white employees.

2. From the in-group perspective, out-group members are often liked as individuals. (true/false)

3. Researchers have found that bringing diverse social groups together almost always decreases hostility and prejudice. (true/false)

- a. stereotypic thinking
- b. discrimination
- c. reverse discrimination
- d. prejudice
- e. tokenism

Answers: 1. 1) e 2) a 3) b 4) d 5) c 2. false 3. false

suggests that “many people appear to be in the process of prejudice reduction” (p. 829).

Gallup polls reveal that whites are becoming more racially tolerant than they were in decades past (Gallup & Hugick, 1990). When whites were asked in 1990 whether they would move if blacks were to move in next door to them, 93 percent said no, compared with 65 percent 25 years earlier.

We can make things better for all by examining our own attitudes and actions, and then by using what we have learned here and elsewhere to combat prejudice and discrimination in ourselves. Prejudice has no virtues. It immediately harms those who feel its sting and ultimately harms those who practise it.

Prosocial Behaviour: Behaviour That Benefits Others

Kitty Genovese was returning home alone late one night. But this was no ordinary night. Nearly 40 of her neighbours who lived in the apartment complex nearby watched as she was attacked and stabbed, but they did nothing. The attacker left. Kitty was still screaming, begging for help, and then ... he returned. He dragged her around, stabbing her again while her neighbours watched. Some of them turned off their bedroom lights to see more clearly, pulled up chairs to the window, and watched. Someone yelled, “Leave the girl alone,” and the attacker fled again. But even then, no one came to her aid. A third time the attacker returned. Again there was more stabbing and screaming, and still they only watched. Finally, Kitty Genovese stopped screaming. When he had killed her, the attacker fled for the last time. (Adapted from Rosenthal, 1964.)

This actual event might not seem so unusual today, but it was a rare occurrence in the early 1960s—so rare, in fact, that people wondered how Genovese’s neighbours could have been so callous and cold-hearted to do nothing but watch as she begged for help that never came. Social psychologists Bibb Latané and John Darley looked deeper for an explanation. Perhaps there were factors in the situation itself that would help explain why so many people only watched and listened.

The Bystander Effect: The Greater the Number of Bystanders, the Less Likely They Are to Help

What is the bystander effect, and what factors have been suggested to explain why it occurs?

If you were injured or ill and needed help, would you feel safer if one or two other people were near, or if a large crowd of

onlookers were present? You may be surprised to learn of the **bystander effect**: as the number of bystanders at an emergency increases, the probability that the victim will be helped by them decreases, and the help, if given, is likely to be delayed.

Why should this be? Darley and Latané (1968a) set up a number of experiments to study helping behaviour. In one study, participants were placed one at a time in a small room and told they would be participating in a discussion group by means of an intercom system. It was explained that because personal problems were being discussed, a face-to-face group discussion might be inhibiting. Some participants were told they would be communicating with only one other person, some believed that two other participants would be involved, and some were told that five other people would be participating. In fact, there were no other participants in the study—only the prerecorded voices of confederates assisting the experimenter.

Shortly after the discussion began, the voice of one confederate was heard over the intercom calling for help, indicating that he was having an epileptic seizure. Of the participants who believed that they alone were hearing the victim, 85 percent went for help before the end of the seizure. When they believed that one other person was hearing the seizure, 62 percent sought help. When they believed there were four other people, only 31 percent sought help. Figure 14.6 shows how the number of bystanders affects both the number of people who try to help and the speed of response.

bystander effect: As the number of bystanders at an emergency increases, the probability that the victim will receive help decreases, and help, if given, is likely to be delayed.

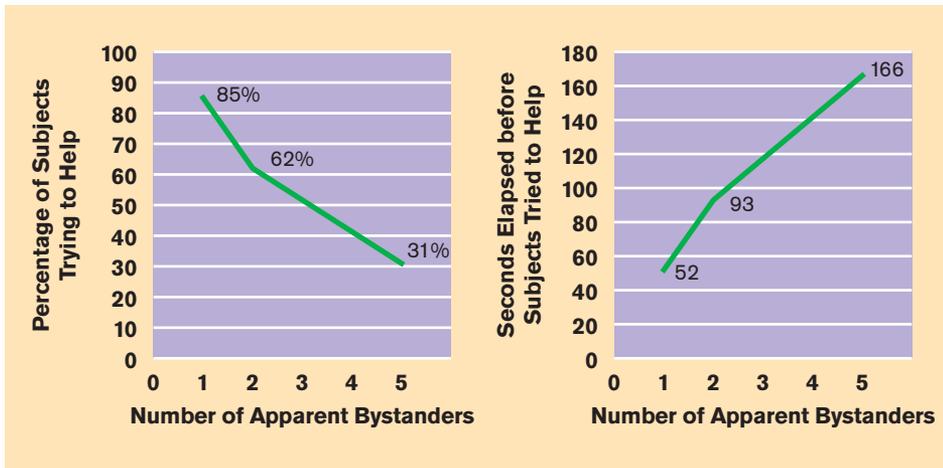


FIGURE 14.6

The Bystander Effect In their intercom experiment, Darley and Latané showed that the more people a participant believed were present during an emergency, the longer it took that participant to respond and help a person in distress. (Data from Darley & Latané, 1968a.)

Latané and Darley suggest two possible explanations for the bystander effect: diffusion of responsibility and the influence of apparently calm bystanders.

Diffusion of Responsibility: An Explanation for the Bystander Effect

When bystanders are present in an emergency, they generally feel that the responsibility for helping is shared by the group, a phenomenon known as **diffusion of responsibility**. Consequently, each person feels less compelled to act than if she or he were alone and thus totally responsible. Kitty Genovese's neighbours were aware that other people were watching because they saw lights go off in the other apartments. They did not feel that the total responsibility for action rested only on their shoulders. Or they may have thought, "Somebody else must be doing something" (Darley & Latané, 1968a, p. 378).

The Influence of Apparently Calm Bystanders: When Faces Deceive

Sometimes it may not be clear that an actual emergency exists. Bystanders often hesitate to act until they are sure that intervention is appropriate (Clark & Word, 1972). They may stand there watching other apparently calm bystanders and conclude that nothing is really wrong and that no intervention is necessary (Darley & Latané, 1968b).

More than a few people have died while many potential helpers stood and watched passively because of the bystander effect. Picture an orthopedic surgeon's large waiting room in which eight patients are waiting to see the doctor. In one chair a middle-aged man sits slumped over, yet he does not appear to be sleeping. His position resembles that of a person who is unconscious. If you were a patient in such a setting, would you check on the man's condition or just continue sitting?

This was the actual scene one of the authors entered a few years ago as a patient. She sat down and immediately noticed the man slumped in his chair. She scanned the faces of the other waiting patients but saw no sign of alarm or even concern. Was there really no emergency, or was this a case of the bystander effect? Knowing that the reaction of onlookers is a poor indicator of the seriousness of a situation, she quickly summoned the doctor, who found that the man had suffered a heart attack. Fortunately, the doctor's office was attached to a large hospital complex, and almost immediately a hospital team appeared and rushed the victim to the emergency room.

Image omitted due to copyright restrictions.

Why do people often ignore someone who is unconscious on the sidewalk? Diffusion of responsibility is one possible explanation.

IT HAPPENED IN CANADA

Image omitted
due to
copyright
restrictions.

Canadian Heroes

Did you know that the Governor General of Canada presents Medals of Bravery to Canadians who are rewarded for their acts of heroism? Here are the stories of some of one year's recipients.

- The year's youngest recipient was seven-year-old Marie-Hélène Etienne Rousseau, who saved her three-year-old brother from drowning in the St-Germain river in Québec. Despite the heavy current due to the spring thaw, Marie-Hélène jumped in the river and managed to hold on to the bank with one hand while holding her brother until her mother rescued them both.
- Teresina Aniceto Batikayo of London, Ontario, received her award for helping a bus driver who was being stabbed near his vehicle. She grabbed the assailant from behind and pinned his arms to his sides, holding him down until others took over before the police arrived.
- Ian Goudy of Ilderton, Ontario, pulled a man from a burning car that had spun out of control. Mr. Goudy reached inside the burning vehicle.
- Barry Tait of B.C. made his way into his neighbour's smoke-filled house to rescue her 11-year-old son moments before the structure burned to the ground.

Are these people different from you and me? Would we rush to save someone from a burning fire or the frigid water of a river? Clearly, these people are among those who have performed extraordinary acts of heroism and altruism. Were they thinking of the possible rewards that might result from their act of heroism? Not likely. So how do social psychologists explain such incredible acts of prosocial behaviour? (Adapted from Canadian Press Newswire, April 5, 2000.)

People Who Help in Emergencies

There are many kinds of **prosocial behaviour**—behaviour that benefits others, such as helping, cooperation, and sympathy. Prosocial impulses arise early in life. Researchers agree that children respond sympathetically to companions in distress at least by their second birthday (Hay, 1994; Kochanska, 1993). The term **altruism** is usually reserved for behaviour aimed at helping others that requires some self-sacrifice, is not performed for personal gain, and carries no expect-

tation of external reward (Bar-Tal, 1976). What motivates us to help or not to help in an emergency? Batson and colleagues (1988, 1989, 1998) believe that we help out of empathy—the ability to feel what another feels.

Cultures vary in their norms for social responsibility (i.e., for helping others). According to Miller and colleagues (1990), North Americans tend to feel an obligation to help family, friends, and even strangers in life-threatening circumstances, but only family in moderately serious situations. In contrast, in India social responsibility extends to strangers whose needs are only moderately serious or even minor.

We have heard accounts of people who have risked their lives to help others. During World War II in Nazi-occupied Europe, thousands of Christians risked their lives to protect Jews from extermination. What might explain such uncommon risks in the service of others? A study of 406 of these rescuers revealed that they did not consider themselves heroes and that different motives led to their altruistic behaviour. Some rescuers were motivated by strong convictions about how human beings should be treated, others by empathy for the individuals they were rescuing (Fogelman & Wiener, 1985; Oliner & Oliner, 1988). Still others were following the norms of their family or social group that emphasized helping others.

People are more likely to receive help if they are physically attractive (Benson et al., 1976), if they are perceived by potential helpers as similar to them (Dovidio, 1984), and if they are not considered responsible for their plight (Reisenzein, 1986; Schmidt & Weiner, 1988). Potential helpers are more likely to help if they have specialized training in first aid or police work, if they are not in a hurry, if they have been exposed to a helpful model (Bryan & Test, 1967), if they are in a positive mood (Carlson et al., 1988), and if the weather is good (Cunningham, 1979).

diffusion of responsibility:

The feeling among bystanders at an emergency that the responsibility for helping is shared by the group, so that each individual feels less compelled to act than if he or she alone bore the total responsibility.

prosocial behaviour:

Behaviour that benefits others, such as helping, cooperation, and sympathy.

altruism: Behaviour aimed at helping another, requiring some self-sacrifice, and not designed for personal gain.

Prosocial Behaviour

- The bystander effect is influenced by all of the following *except*
 - the number of bystanders.
 - the personalities of bystanders.
 - whether the bystanders appear calm.
 - whether the situation is ambiguous.
- As the number of bystanders to an emergency increases, the probability that the victim will receive help decreases. (true/false)
- In an ambiguous situation, a good way to determine whether an emergency exists is to look at the reactions of other bystanders. (true/false)
- Altruism is one form of prosocial behaviour. (true/false)

Answers: 1. b 2. true 3. false 4. true

Aggression: Intentionally Harming Others

We humans have a long history of **aggression**—intentionally inflicting physical or psychological harm on others. Consider the tens of millions of people killed by other humans in wars and even in times of peace. The rate of violent crime in Canada increased 65 percent between 1981 and 1991. In the latter year, 87 percent of violent crimes were assaults, and many of these were sexual assaults (Statistics Canada, 1992). Violence affects all of us.

What causes aggression? One of the earliest explanations of aggression was the instinct theory—the idea that human beings, along with other animal species, are genetically programmed for aggressive behaviour. Sigmund Freud believed that humans have an aggressive instinct that can be turned inward (as self-destruction) or outward (as aggression or violence toward others). Konrad Lorenz (1966), who won a Nobel Prize for his research in animal behaviour, maintained that aggression springs from an inborn fighting instinct common in many animal species. Most social psychologists, however, consider human behaviour too complex to attribute to instincts.

Biological Versus Social Factors in Aggression

What biological factors are thought to be related to aggression?

While rejecting the instinct theory of aggression, many psychologists believe that biological factors are involved. Twin and adoption studies suggest a genetic link for both aggression (Miles & Carey, 1997) and criminal behaviour (DiLalla & Gottesman, 1991).

Much research suggests there is a substantial sex difference in aggressiveness, especially physical aggressiveness (Eagly & Steffen, 1986). Some researchers believe that the male hormone testosterone is involved (Archer, 1991; Dabbs & Morris, 1990; Olweus, 1987). However, much of this gender difference in aggressiveness is likely due to socialization. In our culture, the “male role” encourages men to act in aggressive ways (Eagly & Steffen, 1986). The repercussions are often shocking. For instance, Statistics Canada (1989) reports that 90 percent of murders are committed by men. And over one million Canadian women are physically abused by their partners each year (MacLeod, 1989).

Alcohol and aggression are also frequently linked. Ito and others (1996) found that alcohol intoxication is particularly likely to lead to aggression in response to frustration. People who are intoxicated commit the majority of murders, spouse beatings, stabbings, and instances of physical child abuse.

Aggression in Response to Frustration: Sometimes, but Not Always

What is the frustration-aggression hypothesis?

Does **frustration**—the blocking of an impulse, or interference with the attainment of a goal—lead to aggression? The **frustration-aggression hypothesis** suggests that frustration produces aggression (Dollard et al., 1939; Miller, 1941). If a traffic jam kept you from arriving at your destination on time and you were frustrated, what would you do—lean on your horn, shout obscenities out of your window, or just sit patiently and wait? Berkowitz (1988) points out that even when a feeling of frustration is justified, it can cause aggression if it arouses negative emotions.

Aggression in response to frustration is not always aimed at the people causing it. If the preferred target is too threatening or not available, the aggression may

on the cutting edge in canada

Alcohol Consumption and Risky Behaviour

Alcohol consumption is a double-edged sword. On one hand, it is associated with parties and good times, perhaps because it is a social facilitator that causes people to be more relaxed and outgoing. But all of us certainly recognize the many negative personal consequences associated with too much alcohol consumption—poor decision-making process, risky behaviour, and the potential for increase in aggression. There is a common assumption among lay people and researchers alike that alcohol simply reduces inhibitions and that this process results in risky behaviours and thoughtless decision making. But recent research conducted by Tara MacDonald and her

colleagues (1992, 2000a, 2000b) at Queen's University and the University of Waterloo suggests that the risky behaviours associated with alcohol consumption may not necessarily be the result of alcohol's capacity to make people less concerned about the consequences of their actions or be less inhibited. Instead, MacDonald suggests that when people are intoxicated, they may be more or less likely to act in risky ways depending on the cues provided by the situation. This "alcohol myopia" (Steele & Josephs, 1990) results in a restriction in cognitive capacity, so that people attend to the most salient cues in a situation.

In a series of complex and clever studies, MacDonald and her colleagues asked college-aged men who were in a dance club to indicate their attitudes and behavioural intentions toward engaging in unprotected sexual intercourse that evening. This information was collected under different conditions—when the men were sober or had

not consumed alcohol, and when they were intoxicated. When the participants were sober, sexual arousal did not influence the participants' intentions. However, when participants were intoxicated, those who felt sexually aroused reported more favourable attitudes, thoughts, and intentions toward having unprotected sex. By contrast, participants who were intoxicated but who did not feel aroused indicated similar intentions to those who were sober.

MacDonald argues that the restriction in cognitive capacity associated with alcohol intoxication leads people to attend to the most salient cues in the situation. Variables such as sexual arousal, strong group pressure, and other factors commonly associated with situations where alcohol is consumed may provide such powerful cues that those who are intoxicated simply focus on these factors and not others. Perhaps these studies are worth considering next time you decide to have a drink.

be displaced. For example, children who are angry with their parents may take out their frustrations on a younger sibling. Sometimes minorities and others who have not been responsible for a frustrating situation become targets of displaced aggression—a practice known as **scapegoating** (Koltz, 1983).

Aggression in Response to Aversive Events: Pain, Heat, Noise, and More

What kinds of aversive events and unpleasant emotions have been related to aggression?

only one special case of a broader phenomenon—

According to a leading researcher on aggression, Leonard Berkowitz (1988, 1989), aggression

in response to frustration is

aggression resulting from unpleasant or aversive events in general. People often become aggressive when they are in pain (Berkowitz, 1983), when they are exposed to loud noise or foul odours (Rotton et al., 1979), and even when they are exposed to irritating

aggression: The intentional infliction of physical or psychological harm on another.

frustration: Interference with the attainment of a goal or the blocking of an impulse.

frustration-aggression hypothesis: The hypothesis

that frustration produces aggression.

scapegoating: Displacing aggression onto minority groups or other innocent targets who were not responsible for the frustration causing the aggression.

cigarette smoke. Extreme heat has been linked to aggression (Anderson, 1989; Anderson & Anderson, 1996; Anderson & DeNeve, 1992).

The Social Learning Theory of Aggression: Learning to Be Aggressive

According to social learning theory, what causes aggressive behaviour?

The social learning theory of aggression holds that people learn to behave aggressively by observing aggressive models

and by having their aggressive responses reinforced (Bandura, 1973). It is well known that aggression is higher in groups and subcultures that condone violent behaviour and accord high status to aggressive members. A leading advocate of the social learning theory of aggression, Albert Bandura (1976) believes that aggressive models in the subculture, the family, and the media all play a part in the increasing levels of aggression in North American society.

Abused children certainly experience aggression and see it modelled day after day. “One of the most commonly held beliefs in both the scholarly and popular literature is that adults who were abused as children are more likely to abuse their own children” (Widom, 1989b, p. 6). There is some truth to this belief. On the basis of original research and an analysis of 60 other studies, Oliver (1993) concludes that one-third of people who are abused go on to become abusers, and one-third do not; the final one-third may become abusers if the social stress in their lives is sufficiently high.

Most abusive parents, however, were not abused as children (Widom, 1989b). Although abused and neglected children run a higher risk of becoming delinquent, criminal, or violent, the majority do not take that road (Widom & Maxfield, 1996).

The Media and Aggression: Is There a Connection?

By the time the average North American child completes elementary school, he or she will have watched over 8000 murders and more than 100 000 violent acts (Huston et al., 1992). But is there a causal link between viewing aggressive acts and committing them? Some studies say no (Freedman, 1984; Milavsky et al., 1982) and suggest that laboratory studies cannot truly replicate real-life aggression. However, the evidence overwhelmingly reveals a relationship between TV violence and viewer aggression. Some research indicates that both adults and children as young as nursery school age show higher levels of aggression after they view media violence (Geen, 1978; Liebert et al., 1989). And the negative effects of TV violence are even worse for individuals who are highly aggressive by nature (Bushman, 1995).

Participants in a longitudinal study of 600 boys aged seven to nine, which was launched in 1960, were reinterviewed at age 19 and again at age 30 (Eron, 1987). Those participants who were most aggressive at 8 were still aggressive at 19 and at 30. Many of them showed antisocial behaviour ranging from traffic violations to criminal convictions and aggressiveness toward spouse and children (Huesmann et al., 1984). Did media influence play a part? “One of the best predictors of how aggressive a young man would be at age 19 was the violence of the TV programs he preferred when he was 8 years old” (Eron, 1987, p. 438). And the more frequently the participants had

Image omitted
due to
copyright
restrictions.

Children learn to behave aggressively by observing aggressive models, often their parents.

watched TV violence at that age, “the more serious were the crimes for which they were convicted by age 30” (p. 440). A similar study conducted in Finland found that the viewing of TV violence was related to criminality in young adulthood (Viemerö, 1996).

A review of 28 studies of the effects of media violence on children and adolescents revealed that “media violence enhances children’s and adolescents’ aggression in interactions with strangers, classmates, and friends” (Wood et al., 1991, p. 380). Media violence

may stimulate physiological arousal, lower inhibitions, cause unpleasant feelings, and decrease sensitivity to violence and make it more acceptable to people (Wood et al., 1991).

Are violent episodes of TV shows in which the “good guys” finally get the “bad guys” less harmful? Not according to Berkowitz (1964), who believes that justified aggression is the type most likely to encourage the viewer to express aggression.

Remember It!



Aggression

- Social psychologists generally believe that aggression stems from an aggressive instinct. (true/false)
- Pain, extreme heat, loud noise, and foul odours have all been associated with an increase in aggressive responses. (true/false)
- The social learning theory of aggression emphasizes all of the following *except*
 - aggressive responses are learned from the family, the subculture, and the media.
 - aggressive responses are learned through modelling.
 - most aggression results from frustration.
 - when aggressive responses are reinforced, they are more likely to continue.
- According to the frustration–aggression hypothesis, frustration _____ leads to aggression.
 - always
 - frequently
 - rarely
 - never
- The weight of research suggests that media violence is probably related to increased aggression. (true/false)
- Research tends to support the notion that a person can drain off aggressive energy by watching others behave aggressively in sports or on television. (true/false)

Answers: 1. false 2. true 3. c
4. b 5. true 6. false

Sexual Harassment

Apply It!

What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment on the job is very difficult to define. First, let’s clarify what sexual harassment is *not*. It is not flirting with someone, asking for a date, flattery, and other similar behaviour. Sexual harassment lacks the elements of

mutual choice found in normal relationships (Charney & Russell, 1994). It often involves unwelcome sexual remarks, lewd sexual comments or jokes, and sexual touching or deliberate brushing or rubbing against an intended victim.

The following standards on workplace sexual harassment have become widely accepted. Unwelcome sexual

advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when (1) submission to the conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment; (2) submission to or rejection of the conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting the

Image omitted
due to
copyright
restrictions.

individual; or (3) the conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment in the workplace can take many forms, from mild to moderate to severe. In the most extreme form, a supervisor makes a raise, a promotion, conditions of employment, or other opportunities contingent upon an employee's compliance with sexual demands. Though we are more sensitive to it today, there is nothing new about sexual harassment.

How Prevalent Is Sexual Harassment?

In a random-sample survey of 24 000 U.S. federal employees conducted in 1981 and updated in 1988, 42 percent of the women and 15 percent of the men surveyed said that they had been sexually harassed during the two-year period prior to the survey.

In a more recent survey conducted by the *Harvard Business Review*, two-thirds of the men interviewed believed that reports of sexual harassment were exaggerated (Castro, 1992). But a survey by *Working Woman* magazine revealed that over 90 percent of the Fortune 500 companies had recorded employee complaints of sexual harassment, and over one-third of the companies had had sexual harassment lawsuits filed against them (Sandross, 1988).

Sexual harassment is also a problem on school campuses. According to the best data available, between 20 and 30 percent of female undergraduates have been sexually harassed

while attending college or university (Charney & Russell, 1994). Similar rates have been reported in a study done in Canadian universities (DeKesseredy & Kelly, 1993). Note that the rates are said to be even higher for graduate students.

Not everyone who has been sexually harassed reports it. Experts today believe that as many as 50 percent of women in Canada and the United States experience some form of sexual harassment on campus, in the workplace, or elsewhere (Fitzgerald, 1993). And it does not appear that the incidence of sexual harassment has decreased (Ingrassia, 1993).

In the vast majority of cases, women are the victims of sexual harassment and men are the harassers. A survey of medical residents who had been sexually harassed found that for female victims, 96 percent of the harassers were male, and for male victims, 55 percent of the harassers were male (Komaromy et al., 1993).

What to Do about Sexual Harassment

If you were being sexually harassed by an employer, fellow worker, professor, or student, how would you handle it? Here are some practical suggestions, adapted from *Sex on Your Terms* by Elizabeth Powell (1996):

- *Maintain a strictly professional, businesslike manner.* Do not respond personally to acts of sexual harassment. Often a harasser seeks to get a personal, emotional response from his victims, and sometimes to shock, embarrass, or humiliate them. Let the harasser know that your relationship with him is strictly business.

- *Don't be alone with the harasser.* If the harasser on the job or on the campus asks or tries to coerce you to join him for lunch, for drinks, or in some other personal setting, refuse firmly and professionally.
- *Have a talk with the harasser.* If you can't avoid the harasser and he keeps coming on to you, it may help to talk directly with him about the situation. Point out his acts of sexual harassment and tell him directly that it must stop immediately.
- *Find support from friends, co-workers, or others you can trust for emotional support and advice.* Surveys indicate that more than 90 percent of sexual harassment victims suffer emotional distress (Charney & Russell, 1994). Victims are less likely to suffer emotional distress when there is a support group to help, but even then, some people may need professional counselling.
- *File a formal complaint if the harasser refuses to stop.* The law now requires companies (even relatively small ones) to respond to sexual harassment complaints. Large organizations and most colleges and universities have a designated professional to handle such complaints.
- *Seek legal advice if all else fails.* Sexual harassment is against the law, and you can take legal action against the harasser, or even against the company or institution that allowed the harassment to continue.



KEY TERMS

- actor–observer bias, p. 446
 aggression, p. 472
 altruism, p. 471
 attitude, p. 459
 attribution, p. 445
 audience effects, p. 456
 bystander effect, p. 469
 coaction effects, p. 456
 cognitive dissonance, p. 460
 compliance, p. 454
 conformity, p. 450
 contact hypothesis, p. 467
 diffusion of responsibility, p. 470
 discrimination, p. 463
 dispositional attribution, p. 446
 door-in-the-face technique, p. 455
 foot-in-the-door technique, p. 454
 frustration, p. 472
 frustration–aggression hypothesis, p. 472
 fundamental attribution error, p. 446
 group polarization, p. 457
 groupthink, p. 458
 halo effect, p. 448
 in-group, p. 464
 low-ball technique, p. 455
 matching hypothesis, p. 449
 mere-exposure effect, p. 447
 norms, p. 450
 out-group, p. 464
 persuasion, p. 461
 prejudice, p. 463
 primacy effect, p. 445
 prosocial behaviour, p. 471
 proximity, p. 447
 realistic conflict theory, p. 464
 reverse discrimination, p. 467
 roles, p. 458
 scapegoating, p. 473
 self-serving bias, p. 446
 situational attribution, p. 445
 social cognition, p. 465
 social facilitation, p. 456
 social loafing, p. 456
 social psychology, p. 444
 stereotypes, p. 465

THINKING CRITICALLY

Evaluation

Many Canadians and Americans were surprised when the majority of the people in the Soviet Union rejoiced at the downfall of the communist system. Using what you have learned about attribution bias and conformity, try to explain why many Canadians mistakenly believed that the Soviet masses preferred the communist system.

Point/Counterpoint

Prepare a convincing argument supporting each of the following positions:

- Aggression results largely from biological factors (nature).
- Aggression is primarily learned (nurture).

Psychology in Your Life

Review the factors influencing impression formation and attraction as discussed in this chapter. Prepare a dual list of behaviours indicating what you should and should not do if you wish to make a better impression on other people and increase their liking for you.

SUMMARY & REVIEW

Social Perception

Why are first impressions so important and enduring?

First impressions are important because we attend more carefully to the first information we receive about a person, and because, once formed, an impression acts as a framework through which later information is interpreted.

What is the difference between a situational attribution and a dispositional attribution for a specific behaviour?

An attribution is our inference about the cause of our own or another's behaviour. When we use situational attributions, we attribute the cause of behaviour to some factor in the environment. With dispositional attributions, the inferred cause is internal—some personal trait, motive, or attitude.

How do the kinds of attributions we tend to make about ourselves differ from those we make about other people?

We tend to overemphasize dispositional factors when making attributions about the behaviour of other people, and to overemphasize situational factors in explaining our own behaviour.

Attraction

Why is proximity an important factor in attraction?

Proximity influences attraction because it is easier to develop relationships with people close at hand. Proximity also increases the likelihood of repeated contacts, and mere exposure tends to increase attraction (the mere-exposure effect).

How important is physical attractiveness in attraction?

Physical attractiveness is a major factor in attraction for people of all ages. People attribute other positive qualities to those who are physically attractive—a phenomenon called the halo effect.

Are people, as a rule, more attracted to those who are opposite or to those who are similar to them?

People are generally attracted to those who have similar attitudes and interests, and who are similar in economic status, ethnicity, and age.

Conformity, Obedience, and Compliance

What did Asch find in his famous experiment on conformity?

In Asch's classic study on conformity, 5 percent of the subjects went along with the incorrect, unanimous majority all the time; 70 percent went along some of the time; and 25 percent remained completely independent.

What did Milgram find in his classic study of obedience?

In Milgram's classic study of obedience, 65 percent of the subjects obeyed the experimenter's orders to the end of the experiment and administered what they believed were increasingly painful shocks to the learner up to the maximum of 450 volts.

What are three techniques used to gain compliance?

Three techniques used to gain compliance are the foot-in-the-door technique, the door-in-the-face technique, and the low-ball technique.

Group Influence

Under what conditions does social facilitation have either a positive or a negative effect on performance?

When others are present, either as an audience or as coactors, one's performance on easy tasks is usually improved, but performance on difficult tasks is usually impaired.

What is social loafing, and what factors can lessen or eliminate it?

Social loafing is the tendency of people to put forth less effort when they are working with others on a common task than when they were working alone. This is less likely to take place when individual output can be monitored or when people are highly involved with the outcome.

How are the initial attitudes of group members likely to affect group decision making?

Following group discussions, group decisions usually shift to a more extreme position in whatever direction the members were leaning toward initially—a phenomenon known as group polarization.

Attitudes and Attitude Change

What are the three components of an attitude?

Attitudes usually have a cognitive, an emotional, and a behavioural component.

What is cognitive dissonance, and how can it be resolved?

Cognitive dissonance is an unpleasant state that can occur when we become aware of inconsistencies between our attitudes or between our attitudes and our behaviour. We can resolve cognitive dissonance by changing the attitude or the behaviour, or by rationalizing away the inconsistency.

What are the four elements in persuasion?

The four elements in persuasion are the source, the audience, the message, and the medium.

What qualities make a source most persuasive?

Persuasive attempts are most successful when the source is credible (expert and trustworthy), attractive, and likable.

Prejudice and Discrimination

What is the difference between prejudice and discrimination?

Prejudice consists of attitudes (usually negative) toward others based on their gender, religion, race, or membership in a particular group. Discrimination consists of actions against others based on the same factors.

What is meant by the terms *in-group* and *out-group*?

An in-group is a social group with a strong sense of togetherness and from which others are excluded; an out-group consists of individuals or groups specifically identified by the in-group as not belonging.

How does prejudice develop, according to the social learning theory?

According to this theory, prejudice is learned in the same way as other attitudes—through modelling and reinforcement.

What are stereotypes?

Stereotypes are widely shared beliefs about the characteristics of members of various social groups (racial, ethnic, religious); they include the assumption that *they* are usually all alike.

What is reverse discrimination?

Reverse discrimination involves giving special treatment or higher evaluations to members of a group who have been the target of prejudice and discrimination.

What are several strategies for reducing prejudice and discrimination?

Several strategies for reducing prejudice include (1) arranging appropriate educational experiences for children, (2) providing situations where diverse social groups can interact under certain favourable conditions, and (3) extending the boundaries of narrowly defined social groups.

Prosocial Behaviour: Behaviour That Benefits Others

What is the bystander effect, and what factors have been suggested to explain why it occurs?

The bystander effect means that as the number of bystanders at an emergency increases, the probability that the victim will receive help decreases, and help, if given, is likely to be delayed. The bystander effect may be due in part to diffusion of responsibility or, in ambiguous situations, to the assumption that no emergency exists.

Aggression: Intentionally Harming Others

What biological factors are thought to be related to aggression?

Biological factors thought to be related to aggression are a genetic link (in criminal behaviour), high testosterone levels, low levels of serotonin, and brain damage.

What is the frustration–aggression hypothesis?

The frustration–aggression hypothesis holds that frustration produces aggression and that this aggression may be directed at the frustrator or displaced onto another target, as in scapegoating.

What kinds of aversive events and unpleasant emotions have been related to aggression?

Aggression has been associated with aversive conditions such as pain, heat, loud noise, and foul odours, and with unpleasant emotional states such as sadness, grief, and depression.

According to social learning theory, what causes aggressive behaviour?

According to the social learning theory, people acquire aggressive responses by observing aggressive models in the family, the subculture, and the media, and by having aggressive responses reinforced.

