



**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

**SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**COURSE CODE: CSS 121**

**COURSE TITLE: INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY**

**COURSE  
GUIDE**

CSS 121

**INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY**

Course Developer/Writer

Dr. Ayanniyi Alhassan  
National Open University of Nigeria  
Lagos

Course Co-ordinator

Dr. (Mrs) Inyang Udofot  
National Open University of Nigeria  
Lagos



**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

National Open University of Nigeria  
Headquarters  
14/16 Ahmadu Bello Way  
Victoria Island  
Lagos

Abuja Office  
National Open University of Nigeria  
5, Dar Es Salaam Street,  
Off Aminu Kano Crescent  
Wuse 11  
Abuja, Nigeria.

e-mail: [centralinfo@nou.edu.ng](mailto:centralinfo@nou.edu.ng)

URL: [www.nou.edu.ng](http://www.nou.edu.ng)

Published by:  
National Open University of Nigeria 2008

First Printed 2006

ISBN: 978-058-026-3

All Rights Reserved

CONTENTS	PAGES
Introduction.....	1
What You will Learn in this Course.....	1
Course Aims.....	2
Course Objectives.....	3
Working through this Course.....	3 - 4
Course Materials.....	4 - 5
Study Units.....	5
Presentation Schedule.....	5
Assignment File.....	5
Tutor-Marked Assignment.....	5 - 6
Final Examinations and Grading.....	6
Course Marking Scheme.....	6
Course Overview.....	6
How to Get the Most from this Course.....	6 - 9
Facilitators/Tutors and Tutorials.....	9
Summary .....	10

## Introduction

Introduction to psychology is a year one, three credit-foundation course. It is relevant to all students as a core module of their B.Sc and Diploma in Criminology and Security Studies. It will also be suitable as a one-off course for anyone who does not intend to complete a National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) qualification but wants to learn Introductory Psychology.

This course will introduce to you ways in which psychological theories and research can be applied to the many and varied roles performed by police officers, members of the correctional services, and personnel from private security companies. Do not worry if you do not have extensive knowledge of psychology. One of the aims of CSS 103 is to give you a general background to psychology and to illustrate key areas in which it can be applied in a practical way to policing and carrying out duties related to law enforcement.

The course consists of 20 units, which involve definitions of psychology, approaches to the study of psychology, the nature of psychology, specialties in psychology, applying psychology to policing, understanding some important factors in person perception and impression formation, understanding and attributing causes : to others' behaviour, accuracy of judgments, the problem of deception, juvenile delinquency, behaviour modification and human aggression. The material has been developed to suit students in Nigeria by virtue of the fact that it has practical examples from the local environment. The intention is to make use of local experiences and situations to support the student's study and to ensure that the content remains current.

This Course guide tells you briefly what the course is about, what course materials you will be using and how you can work your way through the materials. It suggests some general guidelines for the amount of time you should spend on each unit of the course in order to complete it successfully. It also gives you some guidance on your tutor-marked assignments. Detailed information on tutor-marked assignments is similarly made available. There are regular tutorial classes that are linked to the course. You are advised to attend these sessions.

## What You will Learn in this Course

The overall aim of CSS 1 03 -Introduction to psychology -is to introduce specific definitions of psychology and provide approaches to the study of behaviour, the nature of psychology, specialties in psychology and how psychologists develop and test their theories. During this course, you will learn about definitions of intelligence, individual differences in

intelligence, explanation of behaviour in relation to genetic influences and environmental influences, the application of psychology to policing, what perception is, impression formation, important factors in perception, and how we can use psychology to modify behaviour.

Psychology is vital to the understanding and prediction of human behaviour. You will learn what approaches are used to study behaviour and specialties in psychology. You will also learn how psychologists develop and test their theories. In addition, you will understand some important factors in person perception and impression formation. Correct interpretation of signals from others and the understanding and attribution of causes to others' behaviour, accuracy of judgments including deviant behaviour are important in today's world. You will understand how these can be achieved and how delinquent behaviour can be modified. You will be given sufficient grounding to understand human aggression and personality development, which should provide you with the necessary basis for further study.

### Course Aims

This course aims to give you an understanding of the definitions of psychology, what psychology is, approaches to the study of behaviour, the objectives of psychology, specialties in psychology and areas that overlap with other disciplines. You will be taught how psychologists develop and test their theories and how you can apply psychology to policing. The factors Influencing deception attempts and factors influencing the detection of deception would also be understood. These aims will be achieved by:

1. Introducing you to the definitions of psychology.
2. Explaining to you approaches to the study of behaviour and objectives of psychology.
3. Outlining the methods and nature of psychology.
4. Describing how psychologists develop and test their theories.
5. Explaining to you behaviour genetic influences.
6. Giving you situations and environmental influences on behaviour.
7. Describing how psychology can be applied to policing.
8. Explaining what perception is and factors affecting perception.
9. Outlining factors influencing deception attempts and factors influencing the unit c detection of deception.
10. Explaining delinquency and behaviour modification strategies.
11. Giving you explanation on how human aggression can be managed.

## Course Objectives

To achieve the aims set out above, the course sets overall objectives. In addition, each unit also has specific objectives. The unit objectives are always included at the beginning of a unit; you should read them before you start working through the unit.

You may want to refer to them during your study of the unit to check on your progress. You should always look at the unit objectives after completing a unit. In this way you can be sure that you have done what was required of you by the unit.

Set out below are the wider objectives of the course as a whole. By meeting these objectives, you should have achieved the aims of the course.

On successful completion of the course you should be able to:

1. Define the concept of psychology.
2. Describe four approaches to the study of psychology.
3. List some concepts in psychology.
4. Identify the specialties in psychology.
5. Discuss how psychologists develop and test their theories
6. Define the concept of intelligence.
7. Explain the basis of individual differences in intelligence.
8. Discuss the situational and environmental influence on behaviour.
9. Describe how psychology can be applied to policing.
10. Explain what perception is.
11. Describe impression formation.
12. Specify important factors in person perception and impression formation.
13. Explain the concept of personality trait inferences about what the person is like.
14. Discuss the causes of behaviour.
15. Explain the concept of accuracy of judgments.
16. Explain the concept of deception.
17. Define the term socialisation.
18. Explain the concept of juvenile delinquency.
19. Discuss behaviour modification.
20. Explain the concept of human aggression.

## Working through this Course

To complete this course you are required to read the study units, read books and other materials provided by the National Open University of

Nigeria (NOUN). Each unit contains self- assessment exercises, and at points in the course you are required to submit assignments for assessment purposes. At the end of the course is a final examination. The course should take you about 17 weeks in total to complete. Next you will find listed all the components of the course, what you have to do and how you should allocate your time to each unit in order to complete the course successfully on time.

## Course Materials

Major components of the course are:

1. Course Guide
2. Study Units
3. References
4. Presentation schedule

## Study Units

The study units in this course are as follows:

### Module I

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| Unit 1 | Definitions of Psychology                         |
| Unit 2 | Approaches to the Study of Psychology             |
| Unit 3 | Some Basic Concepts in Psychology                 |
| Unit 4 | Specialties in Psychology                         |
| Unit 5 | How Psychologists Develop and Test their Theories |
| Unit 6 | Definitions of Intelligence                       |

### Module 2

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| Unit 1 | Individual Differences in Intelligence   |
| Unit 2 | Explaining Behaviour-Genetic Influences and Environmental Influences               |
| Unit 3 | Applying Psychology to Policing  |
| Unit 4 | Perception: A Basic Process  |
| Unit 5 | Impression Formation   |
| Unit 6 | Understanding some Important Factors in Person Perception and Impression Formation |
| Unit 7 | Personality Trait Inferences about what the Person is like                         |

### Module 3

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| Unit 1 | Understanding and Attributing causes to others' Behaviour |
| Unit 2 | Accuracy of Judgments                                     |



Unit 3	The Problem of Deception
Unit 4	Socialisation
Unit 5	Juvenile Delinquency
Unit 6	Behaviour Modification
Unit 7	Human Aggression

## Presentation schedule

The presentation schedule included in your course materials gives you the important dates for this year for the completion of tutor-marked assignments and for attending tutorials. Remember, you are required to submit all your assignments by the due date. You should guard against falling behind in your work.

## Assignment File

There are three aspects to the assessment of the course. First is a set of self-exercises, second is a set of tutor -marked assignments, and third is a written examination.

In tackling the assignments, you are expected to be sincere in attempting the exercises, you are expected to apply information, knowledge and techniques gathered during the course. The assignments must be submitted to your tutor against formal deadlines stated in the presentation schedule and the assignment file. The work you submit to your tutor for assessment will make up 50% of your total course mark.

At the end of the course you will need to sit for a final written examination of three hours' duration. This examination will make up the remaining 50% of your total course mark.

## Tutor-Marked Assignment

There are twenty tutor-marked assignments in this course. You are encouraged to submit all assignments. Assignment questions for the units in this course are contained in the assignment file. You will be able to complete your assignments from the information and materials contained in your reading, and study units. However, it is desirable in all degree level education to demonstrate that you have read and researched more widely than the required minimum. Using other references will give you a broader viewpoint and may provide a deeper understanding of the subject.

When you have completed each assignment, send it, together with a TMA (tutor-marked assignment) form, to your tutor. Make sure that each assignment reaches your tutor on or before the deadline given in

the presentation schedule and assignment file. If, for any reason, you cannot complete your work on time, contact your tutor before the assignment is due to discuss the possibility of an extension. Extensions will not be granted after the due date unless in exceptional circumstances.

## Final Examinations and Grading

The final examination for CSS 103 will be of three hours' duration and it has a value of 50% of the total course grade. The examination will consist of questions which reflect the type of self-testing, practice exercises and tutor-marked problems you have previously encountered. All areas of the course will be assessed.

Use the time between finishing the last unit and sitting for the examination to revise the entire course. You might find it useful to review your self-tests, tutor-marked assignments and comments on them before the examination. The final examination covers information from all parts of the course.

## Course Marking Scheme

The following table lays out how the actual course marking is done.

Assessments	50% of course marks
Final examination	50% of overall course marks
Total	100% of course marks

Table 1: Course marking scheme

## Course Overview

The next table brings together the units, the number of weeks you should take to complete them, and the assignments that follow them.

## How to Get the Most from this Course

In distance learning, the study units replace the university lecturer. This is one of the great advantages of distance learning; you can read and work through specially designed study materials at your own pace, and at a time and place that suit you best. Think of it as reading the lecturer. In the same way that a lecturer might set you some reading to do, the study units tell you when to read your other materials. Just as a lecturer might give you an in-class exercise, your study units provide exercises for you to do at appropriate points.

Each of the study unit follows a common format. The first item is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit and how a particular unit is integrated with the other units and the course as a whole. Next is a set of learning objectives. These objectives let you know what you should be able to do by the time you have completed the unit. You should use these objectives to guide your study. When you have finished the unit, you must go back and check whether you have achieved the objectives or not. If you make a habit of doing this, you will significantly improve your chances of passing the course.

The main body of the unit guides you through the required reading from other sources. This will usually be either from a reading section or some other sources. You will be directed when there is the need for it.

Self-tests are interspersed throughout the units, and answers are given at the end of units. Working through these tests will help you to achieve the objectives of the unit and prepare you for the assignments and the examination.

Unit	Title of Work	Weekly Activity	Assessment (End of Unit)
	Course Guide	1	
	Module 1		
1	Definitions of Psychology		
2	Approaches to the Study of Behaviour		Assignment 1
3	Some Basic Concepts in Psychology	1	
4	Specialties in Psychology	1	
5	How Psychologists Develop and Test Theories		Assignment 2
6	Definitions of Intelligence	1	
	Module 2		
1	Individual Differences in Intelligence		
2	Explaining Behaviour-Genetic Influences and Environmental Influences	1	Assignment 3
3	Applying Psychology to Policing		
4	Perception: A Basic Process		
5	Impression Formation	1	Assignment 4
6	Understanding some Important Factors in Person Perception and Impression Formation		
7	Personality Trait Inferences about what the Person is like	1	

	Module 3		
1	Understanding and Attributing causes to others' Behaviour	1	Assignment 5
2	Accuracy of Judgments	1	
3	The Problem of Deception		
4	Socialization	1	Assignment 6
5	Juvenile Delinquency		
6	Behaviour Modification	2	
7	Human Aggression	2	Assignment 7
Total		14	

Table 2: Course organizer

You should do every self-test as you come to it in the study unit. There will also be numerous examples given in the study units. Work through these when you come to them too.

The following is a practical strategy for working through the course. If you run into any trouble, telephone your tutor. Remember that your tutor's job is to help you. When you need help, don't hesitate to call and ask your tutor to provide it.

1. Read this course guide thoroughly.
2. Organize a study schedule. Refer to the course overview for more details.

Note the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the assignments relate to the units. Important information, e.g. details of your tutorials, and the date of the first day of the semester is available. You need to gather together all this information in one place, such as in your diary or a wall calendar. Whatever method you choose to use, you should write in your own dates for working on each unit.

3. Once you have created your own study schedule, do everything you can to stick to it. The major reason that students fail is that they get behind with their course work. If you get into difficulties with your schedule, please let your tutor know before it is too late for him to help you.
4. Turn to unit 1 and read the introduction and the objectives for the unit.
5. Assemble the study materials. Information about what you need for a unit is given in the table of content at the beginning of each unit. You will almost always read both the study unit you are

working on and one of the materials for further reading on your desk at the same time.

6. Work through the unit. The content of the unit itself has been arranged to provide a sequence for you to follow. As you work through the unit, you will be instructed to read sections from other sources. Use the unit to guide your reading.
7. Keep in mind that you will learn a lot by doing all your assignments carefully. They have been designed to help you meet the objectives of the course and, therefore, will help you pass the examination. Submit all assignments not later than the due date.
8. Review the objectives for each study unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you feel unsure about any of the objectives, review the study materials or consult your tutor.
9. When you are confident that you have achieved a unit's objectives, you can then start on the next unit. Proceed unit by unit through the course and try to pace your study so that you keep yourself on schedule.
10. When you have submitted an assignment to your tutor for marking, do not wait until you get it back before starting on the next unit. Keep to your schedule. When the assignment is returned, pay particular attention to your tutor's comments, both on the tutor-marked assignment form and also as written on the assignment itself. Consult your tutor as soon as possible if you have any questions or problems.
11. After completing the last unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the final examination. Check that you have achieved the unit objectives (listed at the beginning of each unit) and the course objectives (listed in the Course Guide).

### Facilitators/Tutors and Tutorials

There are 17 hours of tutorials provided in support of this course. You will be notified of the dates, times and location of these tutorials, together with the name and phone number of your tutor, as soon as you are allocated a tutorial group.

Your tutor will mark and comment on your assignments. He will also keep a close watch on your progress or any difficulties you might encounter and provide assistance to you during the course. You must mail your tutor-marked assignments to your tutor well before the due

date (at least two working days are required). They will be marked by your tutor and returned to you as soon as possible.

Do not hesitate to contact your tutor by telephone, e-mail, or discussion board if you need help. The following might be circumstances in which you would find help necessary. Contact your tutor if:

1. You do not understand any part of the study units or the assigned readings.
2. You have difficulty with the self-tests or exercises.
3. You have a question or problem with an assignment, with your tutor's comments on an assignment or with the grading of an assignment.

You should try your best to attend the tutorials. This is your only chance to have a face to face contact with your tutor and to ask questions on problems encountered in the course of your study. To gain the maximum benefit from course tutorials, prepare a question list before attending them. You will learn a lot from participating in discussions actively.

## Summary

CSS 103 intends to introduce psychology to you. Upon completing this course, you will be equipped with basic knowledge of psychology, its approaches and methods.

You will be able to answer questions like these ones.

1. What is psychology?
2. What are the approaches to the study of behaviour?
3. How many specialties can you identify in psychology?
4. How do psychologists develop and test their theories?
5. What is intelligence?
6. Why are there individual differences in intelligence?
7. How can we explain behaviour-genetic influences and environmental influences?
8. How can we apply psychology to policing?
9. What are the important factors in person perception and impression formation?
10. How can we interpret signals from others?
11. How can we understand and attribute causes to others' behaviour?
12. Why is it difficult to determine accurate judgment?
13. What is the problem of deception?
14. Why is the home important as a socialising agent?
15. What is juvenile delinquency?
16. Why is aggression manifested by human beings?

Course Code	CSS 103
Course Title	Introduction to Psychology
Course Developer/Writer	Dr. Ayanniyi Alhassan National Open University of Nigeria Victoria Island, Lagos
Course Coordinator	Dr. (Mrs) Inyang Udofot National Open University of Nigeria Victoria Island, Lagos



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

National Open University of Nigeria  
Headquarters  
14/16 Ahmadu Bello Way  
Victoria Island  
Lagos

Abuja Office  
National Open University of Nigeria  
5, Dar Es Salaam Street,  
Off Aminu Kano Crescent  
Wuse 11  
Abuja, Nigeria.

e-mail: [centralinfo@nou.edu.ng](mailto:centralinfo@nou.edu.ng)  
URL: [www.nou.edu.ng](http://www.nou.edu.ng)

Published by:  
National Open University of Nigeria 2008

First Printed 2006

ISBN: 978-058-026-3

All Rights Reserved



CONTENTS	PAGES
Module 1.....	1
Unit 1      The Concept of Psychology.....	1 - 9
Unit 2      Approaches to Psychology .....	10 - 18
Unit 3      Some Basic Concepts in Psychology.....	19 - 27
Unit 4      Specialties in Psychology.....	28 - 35
Unit 5      How Psychologists Develop and Test their Theories .....	36 - 42
Module 2.....	43
Unit 1      Definitions of Intelligence.....	43 - 50
Unit 2      Individual Differences in Intelligence.....	51 - 55
Unit 3      Explaining Behaviour-Genetic Influences and Environmental Influences.....	56 - 61
Unit 4      Applying Psychology to Policing.....	62 - 66
Unit 5      Perception: A Basic Process.....	67 - 73
Module 3.....	74
Unit 1      Impression Formation.....	74 - 78
Unit 2      Understanding Some Important Factors in Person Perception and Impression Formation.....	79 - 85
Unit 3      Personality Trait Inferences about What the Person is Like.....	86 - 91
Unit 4      Understanding and Attributing Causes to Others' Behaviour.....	92 - 96
Unit 5      Accuracy of Judgment.....	97 -102
Module 4 .....	103
Unit 1      The Problem of Deception.....	103 - 108
Unit 2      Socialization .....	109 - 116
Unit 3      Juvenile Delinquency .....	117 - 123
Unit 4      Behaviour Modification.....	124 - 129
Unit 5      Human Aggression.....	130 - 137



## MODULE 1

Unit 1	The Concept of Psychology
Unit 2	Approaches to Psychology
Unit 3	Some Basic Concepts in Psychology
Unit 4	Specialties in Psychology
Unit 5	How Psychologists Develop and Test their Theories

## UNIT 1 THE CONCEPT OF PSYCHOLOGY

### CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
3.1	Descriptions
3.2	Is Psychology more than just Common Sense?
3.3	Definitions
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

By now, you should have read through the course guide, which was sent to you as part of your institutional package furthering course. If you have not, please ensure that you read the course guide before reading your study materials as it provides a comprehensive outline of the materials you will cover on a unit-to-unit basis, starting with the topic you are about to study: definitions of psychology. The unit guides you through several definitions of psychology across the ages. Let us look at what you should learn in this unit, as specified in the unit objectives below.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

describe the concept of psychology; and  
define the concept of psychology in a specific way.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Descriptions

There are various reasons for popular misconceptions e.g (frequent appearances in the mass media) of statements about what psychologists tell us. These are often one- sided views exaggerating some opinions held by only a few psychologists or even by some who are not properly qualified psychologists. This is because human behaviour can be observed by all and sundry who attempt to explain occurrences from their own intuition, or belief. In other branches of science, for example physics and chemistry, common sense or intuition does not help observers to explain why diatomic hydrogen behaves differently from a monatomic one, when these are bombarded by neutrons.

Another explanation of such differential judgments is traceable to the fact that whereas human behaviour may be a matter of common observation, scientific facts are only understood after sustained learning. Many writers also think that the labels, especially labels of definitions and constructs, in psychology, are derived from the daily usage of many common words while those used in pure science have separate origins and they are of restricted use. For example, *intelligence* is a psychological construct which implies one thing to a psychologist and another to a layman, and a typical word *thermocouple* of pure science means a very special thing to scientists and students of science but, perhaps nothing to a layman.

Furthermore, many people think psychology is the same as psychoanalysis and Freudian or neo- Freudian psychology (We will discuss this in the later units of this course), which psychologists regard as accounting for only a minor part of the entire body of psychological knowledge. It is also not uncommon to find ignorant individuals who conceptualise psychologists as those who can hypnotise others.

Here we will look at some of the descriptions of the concept of psychology. You will probably have come across the word ‘psychology’ before, and you may have your own idea of what psychology is all about. Unfortunately there are a number of misconceptions and misunderstandings as to what psychology is exactly, and for this reason we will consider why this is so and then examine some descriptions of this subject area.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

How would you describe psychology? Make a few brief notes before moving on to the next section.

Now, let us go on with our descriptions of the concept of psychology.

While people have been interested in human behaviour for thousands of years, psychology has only become a discipline in its own right in the last 100 years. For many years, philosophers puzzled over the nature of the human mind and people's motivations. However, philosophers' accounts were essentially speculative and they made no attempt to prove whether their views were correct or incorrect.

Many writers agree that the birth of psychology as we now understand the concept was in 1879 in Leipzig, Germany. At this time, Wilhelm Wundt founded the first laboratory devoted to experimental psychology. Over the next 40 years, many universities throughout Europe and the United States set up their own laboratories. The main belief shared by these early pioneers was that human psychological processes could be studied objectively using the same experimental methods developed over the years by the natural sciences (for example physics and chemistry). The first recognized book on psychology was written by William James and published in 1890.

From these early beginnings, psychology expanded quite rapidly and achieved various important milestones in its history. Many see the writings of Sigmund Freud as very significant in the development of psychology, although as you will see later, his work has been criticized for lacking in sound scientific basis. Psychology today encompasses a wide range of perspectives and has been applied to a large number of different areas of human functioning. You will learn about some of these in what follows. I know you now find our discussion meaningful and interesting. Let us continue.

Any dictionary and almost all introductory psychology textbooks will contain a description of the word *psychology*. Unfortunately, you may find that there are almost as many different descriptions of the subject area as there are textbooks. This may not however be as confusing as it might at first appear as many descriptions will share common elements, or say basically the same thing in slightly different ways. Why do psychologists differ in their descriptions?

There are at least two reasons why psychologists do not always agree on a simple common description of psychology.

1. The first is that psychology is a relatively new discipline. Compared with sciences such as chemistry and physics, psychology is in its infancy and its theories and methods are still being developed.
2. The second reason is that psychology already covers a diverse range of subjects, and psychologists working in different areas see psychology in slightly different ways. Let us cite an example so that you can have a clear understanding. Educational psychologists will be mainly concerned with the way in which children learn, and how to help children who are not doing well at school. By contrast, a clinical psychologist will deal almost exclusively with people who are mentally ill or who are experiencing behavioural problems.

It is time for you to try your hand on a question.

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

State one reason why psychologists disagree on a common description of psychology.

Let us now continue with our discussion

### 3.2 Is Psychology more than just ‘Common Sense’?

One reaction that people have when they hear of the results of a psychological research is that it is all just ‘common sense’. While it is true that psychologists do sometimes confirm what people may already believe, their research also allow them to ascertain the conditions under which certain events do or do not occur. Different people have different views of how the world works and may presume different things about ‘human nature’. Sometimes common sense appears to be contradictory. For example if you were asked to speculate as to why some people enjoy each other’s company and others do not, you may fall back on the proverb ‘Birds of the same feathers flock together’. In other words, people with similar interests, habits, and personalities tend to be attracted to each other. However you might equally have provided an alternative theory which is that ‘opposites attract’. Both of these expressions are well known, yet surely both cannot be true. A psychologist may wish to examine this and determine whether one is more accurate than the other, or identify the circumstances under which one is truer than the other.

There are many other examples of ‘common sense’ which turn out not necessary to be true. As you read more about psychology, you will come across a number of such challenges. For example, some police officers may believe that they can persuade a reluctant suspect to confess or believe that only a guilty person would sign a confession. We will see in another unit of this course that both of these presumptions may not actually be true.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Visit the School of Arts and Social Sciences in the National Open University of Nigeria’s library. Open any recent book on introductory psychology at the contents page and note the different subjects that are covered. If possible, compare it with an introductory psychology book published more than 20 years ago. Note the differences between the contents of the two volumes.

Now, clap for yourself for participating in our discussion. Let us continue.

### 3.3 Definitions

It is not very clear if one would have time to think as Marshall Temple (1984 11) wanted when she opined. Can you imagine what life would be like if we had idea at all what effect our behaviour is going to have on others? What a mad world it would be if a smile were answered by a kick and angry shout by a friendly greeting.

Efforts at thinking about these questions and hazarding answers for them have to do with a branch of knowledge known as psychology. Perhaps the most succinct definition of the concept is that psychology is the scientific study of behaviour. Many people would insert the word ‘human’ in this definitions, as the vast majority of psychologists are interested exclusively in studying human behaviour (Alhassan, 2000).

However, some psychologists study animals other than humans, partly because such study is interesting in itself and partly because studying animals allows researchers to carry out experiments and then extend the results into the human domain. Perhaps the best known example of this is the work of B.F. Skinner, who carried out many experiments using rats, pigeons and other animals in order to understand how they respond to their environment. Many of Skinner’s findings were expanded to cover human populations and valuable lessons were learnt (Andrew et.at.1993).

In some cases, psychologists have used animals such as rats and mice because such subjects are more easily recruited than humans. It may also be true that some psychologists are less worried about carrying out potentially harmful experiments on animals such as rats and mice than they might be when carrying out the equivalent studies on humans. However, it is important for you to note that today; psychologists in almost all countries are governed by rules, meaning they should not harm any animals (human or otherwise) that are used in experiments.

My dear student, I know you are getting more interested in our discussion. That is nice. You are likely to find the next section even more interesting. Let us go on.

So, psychologists generally study human behaviour and try to understand why people behave the way they do. They may also gather information about a subject and by carefully analyzing their information, reach a conclusion. We will see in unit 2 some of the ways in which psychologists might go about studying human behaviour.

Now assess yourself on the progress you have made in this course by answering this question.

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

State two reasons why some psychologists study animals.

Now take a five minute break. We must continue now.

It is important for you to remember that psychology is the science that studies behaviour and what goes on in the mind that causes behaviour to occur. Psychology has to do with the concepts of learning, memory, perception, motivation and personality traits. All these concepts lead to behaviour. Behaviour in this context may mean anything that we do such as thinking, sneezing, laughing, sleeping and even falling in love. Because we are unable to see the mind, we have to study it through the ways in which it manifests itself. And so the branch of knowledge which deals with the study of this mind is psychology. Dennis Child (1977:1) sees behaviour to include 'all those aspects of human activity which we can observe'. He does not however exclude behaviours that are not observable hence he went further to involve 'personal experience which can only be studied by asking individuals to express their feelings and thoughts' as part of behaviour.



Psychology as an ancient discipline was part of philosophy. Orji(1986:2) submitted that philosophical views would appear relevant because psychology has to do with the behaviour and to some extent, the nature of man and how he relates to his environment. Iwuji(1981:63) stated categorically that ‘psychology cannot explain human behaviour without some philosophical assumptions about human nature’.

Let us cite an example to ensure you understand our discussion. For example, for the psychologists, the varieties of human conduct are morally neither good nor bad. They are simply forms of behaviour to be studied. But for the philosopher, some forms of behaviour are morally good and others are bad. Philosophy seeks to discover and to recommend principles for deciding what actions and qualities are good and why they are so.

Psychology studies such actions or behaviour empirically. This may be why Child (1977) saw psychology as a discipline with a wide area of interest. It covers, according to Child, from the scientific study to all kinds of pursuits including making dogs salivate at the sound of a bell and a study of the growth of intelligence in human beings.

From our discussion, it is clear that there are many definitions of psychology. Here is an interesting question for you: Are there common elements in these definitions? You are eager to know the correct response. Pay attention to the next section.

While many writers of psychology textbooks give differing definitions of the subject area, a common thread still runs through these definitions. Zimbardo (1992) captures the views of many by suggesting that the goals of psychology are:

1. To objectively describe the behaviour of individuals.
2. To develop an understanding of the causes and consequences of that behaviour using explanations which are based upon the best available evidence and creative imagination?
3. To predict accurately if, when, how and in what form from a given situation.
4. To demonstrate that it is possible to control a given behavioural response by making it start, stop, or vary in some predictable way.

Zimbardo also suggests using psychology in ways that can improve the quality of the lives of individuals and of society in general. It is important for you to note that part of the problem with offering a simple but an all embracing definition of psychology is that the concept ‘psychology’

includes a number of different approaches. We will discuss in unit 2 of this course.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt some descriptions of psychology. Psychologists differ in their descriptions of psychology because psychology is a relatively new discipline. In addition, psychology already covers a diverse range of subjects. Given this situation, psychologists working in different areas see psychology in slightly different ways. You have also learnt some definitions of psychology. Psychology is mainly concerned with the systematic (or scientific) study of human behaviour. Such systematic study allows psychologists to offer explanations for different behaviour and in some cases to make predictions about future behaviour.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

1. What you have learnt in this unit concerns descriptions and definitions of psychology from the perspectives of different psychologists.
2. The unit has served to introduce you to other units in the course.
3. The units that follow shall build upon this introduction to ensure clarity of concepts and understanding of contents.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. State two reasons why psychologists do not always agree on a common description of psychology
2. From your understanding of our discussion, how would you define psychology?

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

- Alhassan, A.B. (2000). *Understanding Educational Psychology* Tamaza Publishing Co., Ltd. Zaria, Nigeria.
- Andrew B.C., George R.G. & Paul R.S., (1993). *Psychology* Foresmane & Co. Glenview, USA
- Child D. (1977). *Psychology and the Teacher*. Holt Rmehart and Winston, London.
- Iwuji V.B. (1981). 'What is Learning and what is its Process?' in Alvan School of Education Journal. (ASEJ). Vol. 1 and 2, 62 - 71
- Orji A.S. (1986). *Introduction to Education*, Standard Publishing Co. Ltd. Aba
- Temple M.S. (1984). *Education Psychology for the Teacher in Africa*, Edward Arnold (Publishers Ltd.), London
- Zimbardo P.G. (1992). *Psychology and Life*. Harper Collins, New York.
- Ainsworth P.B. (2001). *Psychology and Policing*. Chichester: Willey

## UNIT 2 APPROACHES TO PSYCHOLOGY

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Objectives of Psychology
  - 3.2 The Methods of Psychology
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In unit 1, we discussed misconception descriptions and definitions of psychology. The unit also served to introduce you to other units in this course. You can now describe and define psychology from your own understanding. You are about to study another interesting unit: the study of behaviour. Because psychology is a relatively new discipline, it is still adopting different approaches to the study of behaviour. This unit guides you through these approaches. Let us look at what other content you should learn in this unit as specified in the unit objectives below.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- explain some of the approaches to the study of behaviour;
- list the objectives of psychology; and
- describe some of the methods used by psychologists in their research.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

From our discussion in unit 1, you will remember that part of the problem with offering a simple but all embracing definition of psychology is that the term 'psychology' includes a number of different approaches. Some of the main approaches that you will study in this unit include:

**The Biological Approach:** Psychologists operating from this perspective tend to search for the causes of behaviour in the functioning of the brain and biochemical processes. It is relevant for you to note that this approach has become more and more important in recent years as we learn more about the brain and brain chemistry. Let us cite an example to drive home this point. A psychologist working from this perspective might for example, search for abnormalities in the brain chemistry of depressed people. The psychologists might try to alleviate the symptoms by suggesting techniques such as administering anti depressant drugs (we will discuss more on this in HEM 606; Alcohol drugs and HIV/AIDS), thus altering the brains chemistry.

**The Psychodynamic Approach:** This approach is linked to the writings of Sigmund Freud. Freud believes that human behaviour stems from inherited instincts, biological drive, and attempts to resolve, the competing demands of personal needs and society's expectations. According to Freud, a great deal of an individual's personality is determined in the first five years of life, when some of these conflicts are being resolved. You must also note that Freud laid great emphasis on the role of the unconscious mind in producing behaviour. In addition a lot of his work involved trying to find ways of tapping into the unconscious. You need to remember that while psychologists do not refer to Freud's writings a great deal today, there are some areas (for example aggression) where his views may be relevant. We will discuss more on aggression later in this course.

Our discussion as getting clearer and more understandable. I commend your active participation. Now, try your hand on this question.

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

- i. We know that psychology is the scientific study of animal and human behaviour. From our discussion, there is a particular approach that attempts to find out the cause of behaviour. State in the space that follows which approach we are referring to.
- ii. List one particular area of psychology where Freud's writing may be of relevance today.

Well done. Let us continue our discussion.

**The Behaviourist Approach:** unlike the previous two approaches, behaviourists are interested not in biological drives or unconscious forces, but rather they are interested in observable behaviour and the environmental force which appear to sustain such behaviour. Behaviourists

such as Ivan Pavlov and B.F. Skinner would thus spend a great deal of time studying the behaviour itself and the environmental conditions that appear to sustain or discourage the behaviour.

You must note that for the behaviourist, any piece of behaviour can be explained simply by reference to the environmental factors that are present and which reinforce the behaviour in question. Let us cite an example to ensure clarity and understanding. A behaviourist called upon to help deal with a disruptive boy in school may start by examining the problem behaviour within the classroom. He/She may observe that whenever the child is disruptive, he receives attention from the teacher, but when he is well behaved, he is ignored. The behaviourist might suggest that the teacher starts to ignore the boy when he is being disruptive, and reinforce his good behaviour instead.

**The Cognitive Approach:** From this perspective, behaviour is understood by reference to the ways in which people think. It is primarily concerned with thinking, the processing of information, perception, memory, problem solving, and consciousness. As such the cognitive approach sees humans not as passive organisms shaped entirely by their genes or by the environment, but rather as thinking, rationalizing individuals who can work through and solve problems and plan their actions. You must note that the cognitive approach has gained influence over the last 30 years. You will see some example of cognitive approach in some units of this course when we consider the area of perception.

You should be aware that there are other approaches. For example, humanism is another approach concerned with the individual and his/her unique qualities, and ecological psychology, which is concerned with the study of behaviour in its natural environment.

Now, find out the progress you have made in understanding our discussion by answering the following questions.

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

- i. State in the space below the main interest of behaviourists

-----  
 -----

- ii. Identify the main concern of behaviour from the standpoint of cognitive approach

Well done. Let us continue our discussion.

### 3.1 Objectives of psychology

The objectives of psychology are many. Of these, the most important are:

1. Understanding human behaviour.
2. Explaining data. This is usually achieved by formulating a theory that can explain the data.
3. Relying on the scientific method to test the accuracy of their theories because so many factors are involved in the manifestation of behaviour. One test of a theory's accuracy and usefulness is its ability to predict behaviour and mental processes.
4. Applying knowledge to promote human welfare. Knowledge gained through psychological research touches almost on every aspect of our lives, ranging from the way we raise and teach children to the tests you took to gain admission to the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN); from the advertising of goods and services that we see on television to the design of 'tie-and-dye' (our local textile print) and from the way nations resolve conflicts.
5. Shaping of human behaviour when necessary. When psychology is referred to as a 'new' science we mean that the methods of studying psychological problems are new. This is bound to be so since psychology became a science in the modern sense of the concept, in the mid nineteenth century. That was when scientific methods were first applied to psychological problems.

I am sure our discussion is clear and understandable to you. Now, try your hand on this question.

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Identify and write in the space below any three goals of psychology.

---

---

---

I am sure you are eager to know how psychologists achieve the objectives discussed above. We must therefore continue our discussion.

### 3.2 The Methods of Psychology

The most important methods psychologists use to accomplish their objectives are:

1. Naturalistic observation: For the most part, psychologists have learned about behaviour in animal and human subjects from laboratory studies. However, at times psychologists want to study how animals and people behave in their normal environments. To do this, the method of naturalistic observation is used. You must remember that this method has two general characteristics.
  - a. Subjects are observed in their natural environments, and
  - b. The observer does not attempt to interfere with natural behaviour of the subjects

It is to be noted that the ethnologists (scientists who study the behaviour of animals in the wild) use the method of naturalistic observation. For example, much of what we know about aggressive behaviour in animals comes from ethological studies. From these studies, psychologists have learned that groups of animals have territories and will band together to fight off any intruders (Krunck, 1966).

The Nobel Prize winning ethnologist Konrad Lorenz (1966), has also proposed that humans, like animals also band together to defend their territory and that this is one of the primary causes of human aggression (we will discuss more on this later). The result of observation can be realized in various situations and is therefore useful for control and prediction.

Amongst the disadvantages of observation are that what is observed may not necessarily reveal the true feelings of an individual subject, and the individual who is observing may have his own biases which may possibly colour his interpretation of the findings.

2. The Case Study: The case study is an essential part of understanding and helping people with psychological disorders. Sigmund Freud, the Austrian, psychologist was probably the first man to introduce case history as a method of scientific investigation.



Case history may be described as mainly a clinical method. Let us give an example to assist you in gaining a clear understanding. In order to treat a patient, the psychologist needs to know what sort of difficulties the patient is experiencing. The psychologist asks the patient about his/her background in relation to the sickness. The psychologist then composes a case study describing how the patient's difficulties arose, how he/she copes with these difficulties and what can be done to help the patient.

The major advantage of the case study is that it provides comprehensive information about the patient that is being studied, and from various other sources.

In addition, it offers opportunity for cooperation between teacher's parents, and other social workers outside the school system.

One of the major problems of the case study is that it often forms the basis for making sweeping generalizations which derive from data coming from individuals whose evidence may not necessarily be reliable.

3. **Surveys:** Surveys are questionnaires, conducted in person or through the mail, that inquire into the ways a group (of people) thinks or acts. It is important for you to remember that in conducting surveys, the population or groups of subjects to be surveyed must be identified. Thereafter, a statistical method must be used to pick a random but representative sample of that population.
4. **Correlational Studies:** To see if two variables are associated or related in some way, psychologists use a statistical technique devised by Francis Galton known as correlation. Although the mathematics involved is a little complex, the idea is very simple. Measure two variables, like height and weight, and see if they are related. They are correlated when changes in the value of one are associated with changes in the value of the other.
5. **Experimentation:** In psychology, experiments are performed on animals and humans. You need to remember that an experiment allows a psychologist to identify causes and effects to the extent that there will be no ambiguity about what caused what. You must also note that this is the most reliable of all methods of collecting information. It is precise and systematic in its approach. However, you need to remember that the findings of an experimental study

usually have limited application because of the small number of people involved.

6. Test: Psychological tests are used to measure all kinds of abilities, interests, and achievements. Such tests are referred to as test-batteries.
7. Questionnaires: The questionnaire is a short method for gaining information on a specific problem in a brief interval of time. Medinnus and Johnson (1976:21) credited Stanley Hall as the first psychologist to use questionnaire in child study. Much information can be gathered by means of a written questionnaire presented to the subjects. Through this method a very large sample of the subjects can be covered. Questionnaires are widely used in educational psychology. In a questionnaire, standard instructions are given to all subjects and the personal appearance, mood or conduct of the investigation will not colour the data collected

At this stage, it is important for you to note that there are two types of questionnaires. They are the structured and the unstructured questionnaires. They are assigned to elicit information from people either about themselves, other people or things. Olomolaiye (1986:64) identified two major parts in any questionnaire:

- a. The first seeks information about the nature and characteristics of the respondents -their age, sex, social class, education and so on. This we shall call the descriptive part of the questionnaire.
- b. The second part is concerned mainly with measurement. It is the section of the questionnaire that provides the relevant information we want about the topic of our research. Such information relates to the attitudes, opinions and beliefs of the respondents. We shall call this the analytic part of the questionnaire.

Time is now ripe for you to clap for yourself for your active participation in our discussion

That is fine. Let us continue. A structured questionnaire contains the questions and alternative answers to them. The answers provided for each should be exhaustive of all possible responses and at the same time mutually exclusive. You should note that the administration and scoring of a structured questionnaire is straight forward and the results lend themselves readily to statistical analysis. You must note also that it has the

disadvantage of forcing subjects into choosing one of a number of preselected alternative answers to questions for which they might feel they did not have a clear answer, or into choosing an alternative that does not readily represent their attitude.

Unstructured questionnaire has the advantage of giving the respondents freedom to reveal their opinions and attitudes. However, they have the disadvantage that the information they generate is difficult to process and analysis. Generally, most investigators avoid this type of questionnaire and prefer to use the structured types. One important point that we must remember is that we should always pre-test our questionnaire in order to remove vagueness and misinterpretations before administering them to the actual sample in question.

You should note also that the sample used for pre-testing should be drawn from a population similar to the sample that will be drawn as research subjects. It is only after the questionnaire items have been tested that the questionnaire can be administered to the subjects.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit you have learnt some approaches to the study of behaviour, objectives of psychology and the methods of psychology. You should also have learned about the different perspectives from which psychologists approach their subject. Among such approaches are the biological approach, the psychodynamic approach, the behaviourist approach and the cognitive approach.

You will have seen that psychologists usually adopt a scientific methodology in trying to understand the complexities of human behaviour and go beyond simply falling back on 'common sense' explanations. The most important methods psychologists use to accomplish these objectives are naturalistic observation, case study, surveys, correlational studies, experimentation and tests, and questionnaires. The objectives of psychology are to describe and explain these behaviours and processes to predict their possible variation, and Sigmund Freud, the Austrian psychologist was probably the first man to introduce case history as a method of scientific investigation. Case history may be described as mainly a clinical method.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

What you have learnt in this unit concerns the approaches to the study of behaviour.

You have also learnt the objectives of psychology and some of the methods used by psychologists in their research

The unit has served to indicate what you will learn in other units later in the course

The units that follow shall build upon these concepts.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain the four objectives of psychology.
2. What are the important methods that psychologists use to achieve these objectives?

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Krunck, T. (1966). *Elements of Psychology*. Knopf, New York..

Lorenz, K. (1966). *On Aggression*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York.

Olomolaiye, F. (1986). *Research Methods and Statistics*. Fab Aneh, Nigeria.

## UNIT 3 SOME BASIC CONCEPTS IN PSYCHOLOGY

### CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
3.1	Concept of Learning
3.2	Maturation and Learning
3.3	Concept of Growth and Learning
3.4	Principles of Growth and Development
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In unit 2, we discussed the study of behaviour. The unit also served to introduce us to other units in this course. You can now explain approaches to the study of behaviour,

List the objectives of psychology, and describe some of the methods used by psychologists in their research. You are about to study another interesting and insightful unit: some basic concepts in psychology. We will now consider what some concepts mean within the context of psychology.

Let us look at other contents that you will learn in this unit as specified in the objectives below.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- explain the concept of learning;
- describe the relationship between maturation and learning;
- define the concept of growth and development; and
- list the principles of growth and development.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Concept of Learning

To the layman 'learning' has always been a rather simple matter, he sees it frequently and assumes that he has a clear understanding of its meaning, that is getting to know something he does not know. As Oxiedine (1968:5) puts it, that 'we learn what we are taught is often the attitude of the non-professional person'. Alhassan (2000) states that although there is little disagreement among psychologists as to the importance of learning and pervasiveness of learning in all forms of human activity, there is a marked difference between the ways they look at learning and the ways the layman does. Let us cite some examples to ensure you have a clear understanding of the concept.

Kohler (1925) in his book, *The Mentality of Apes* explained learning as a perceptual process with the major emphasis being on the study of relationships and how people learn to see relationships among various items of experience. Learning of relationships can be clearly seen in the phenomenon of insight. Sometimes pupils work for a long time on a problem or skill with apparently little progress. All of a sudden there will be a flash of understanding in which the pupil or student sees through the problem or reform his responses into a more complex habit. This phenomenon was first widely publicized by this famous psychologist. Worgang Kohler. He found that apes, when confronted with a different problem, might act as if they were surveying the situation and would then go directly to the goal object (banana) by putting two sticks together, or by piling one box on top of another. It appeared that there had been a sudden perceptual charge in which these animals saw the relationship of the sticks or boxes to themselves and the goal in a new way.

I can perceive you are looking comfortable indicating you are finding out discussion clear and understandable. Fine, we must go on.

Aristotle talked of learning as a association of ideas following the laws of similarity, contrast, and continuity. He believed that people learn and remember those things that are alike, that are striking because of their difference, and that occur together in space and time (Murphy, 1949). Bugelski (1956:120) on his own parts sees learning as the process of the formation of relatively permanent neural circuits through the simultaneous activity of the elements of the circuit to be. Such activity is of the nature of change in cell structure through growth in such a manner as to facilitate the

arousal of the entire circuit when a component element is aroused or activated.

Lindgren (1961) posts that learning is a central process in understanding human behaviour. Most aspects of human behaviour, the writer argues, the learned contrary to the widely held view at the turn of the century that human behaviour is instinctive in nature. Learning may also be thought of as a process of problem solving, a way of thinking, creating, and synthesizing.

Alhassan (1985:1) opines that learning is the totality of the acquisition of factual information, the mastering of skills and means of aiding further study (understanding); acquisition of behaviour patterns, the styles of tackling problems of everyday life and more. Learning is a dynamic process whereby, through interactive experience, insights or cognitive structures of life spaces are changed and so become more useful for future guidance.

Gagne (1970:3) attempts a definition of learning which seems to have a wide appeal when he writes that a learning event take place when the stimulus situation affects the learner in such a way that his or her performance changes from a time- before being in that situation to a time after being in it. The change in performance is what leads to the conclusion that learning has occurred.

In spite of the above discussion, note that leaning may not be easy to define adequately. This may be so because we cannot see it directly, but when we observe a child's behaviour, we can conclude that some kind of leaning has occurred. Let us give an example to drive home this point. When a preschooler is able to recite the alphabet from A – Z or the numerals which he could not do before, we can deduce that some learning has taken place.

Another example: When we look at the stages of a child's development we can see that he first knows how to eat, then to sit, to crawl about, to stand, to walk, to run about, and to speak. The child is now capable of doing some things which he could not do earlier in his life. It may be said that in these respects, the child has learned because 'observed changes in behaviour are evidence of learning' (Balogun,1981:52). Many psychologists agree that learning is a general term for relatively lasting or permanent change in performance or behaviour caused or produced directly by experience. O' Connon (1963) submits that a study of learning is part of the larger study of psychology, which may be defined as the scientific study of human experience and human and animal behaviour.

For Mukherjee (1478) learning may be held to be an inference from some performance of the organism manifesting a change of behaviour. Venile for Olaitan (1992), learning refers to a collection of experiences which a person progressively acquires to be regarded as educated in his/her society. I want you to note what this description of the concept of learning implies: It implies that the value of learning is determined primarily by the society. People learn what the social learning environment permits them to learn by way of subjects offered, quality of teachers, quality of the curriculum, quality of the learning environment, and so on. The writer further states that when the learning the society is capable of offering does not suit its definition of an educated man, a vacuum is created which has to be bridged by making learning more meaningful and relevant to the societal perception of an educated man.

Time is ripe for you to check the progress you have made in understanding our discussion.

**SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

- i. Complete the following psychological statements in the spaces provided.
  - Learning is.....change in.....
  - Learning is a c.....process.
  - Learning is a d.....process.

Well done. You deserve my commendation for your active participation in our discussion. Let us keep the ball rolling.

**3.2 Maturation and Learning**

Maturation as a scientific and psychological concept designates that period of development during which a germ cell becomes mature. It is a process of ripening and of moving towards the fuller unfolding of potentials of the organism. Maturation denotes both a change in the physical equipment of the organism but more importantly it is a change in function and the capacity to perform through the use of this equipment. Let us cite an example: When the muscles of a child’s legs grow they can be noticed, but it is only when maturation takes place that the baby walks with the legs. If in spite of the growth of the legs the baby cannot stand or walk, then maturation of the can germ cells of the muscles has not taken place. It is important for you to remember that psychologists have run experiments and discovered that in spite of the training, sessions babies are subjected to



in order to quicken walking or standing, they do not yield any significant result when compared with sessions. The muscles wait until maturation takes place.

The concept of maturation has some indirect relationship with learning. Learning; by as discussed earlier, means a change in function as a result of experience and practice. In one sense, both learning and maturation depend on change of function. However, while maturation is not noticeable and takes place inside the organism, leaning is entirely based on experience and practice. You should note that the interesting relationship is that maturation must take place before any learning can take effect.

The concept of maturation leads to the concept of phylogenetic function or prehensile skills sometimes referred to as developmental tasks. Such tasks include crawling, creeping, walking and so on. Remember that they are cross cultural and therefore common to all races. More importantly, remember that training is of little importance if maturation is not ready. Such tasks as learning to ride a tricycle or bicycle, learning to swim or make ridges in the farm require maturation and training. So while an American child of four can ride a bicycle, a child of eight in a remote African village may not be able to do so. Whereas maturation provides the raw time table for learning, the culture directs or determines what is learnt. Here's a question for you to answer.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Fill in the blanks in the statements below:

Maturation denotes both a \_\_\_\_\_ in the physical equipment of the \_\_\_\_\_ but more importantly it is the \_\_\_\_\_ in function and the capacity to \_\_\_\_\_ through the use of this equipment. We must continue now.

### 3.3 Concept of Growth and Development

Modern educationists stress the point that a teacher should not only know his subject matter but also the child he teaches. The knowledge of the child would include knowing the child's growth patterns' developments, social and emotional characteristics. It is a thorough understanding of the growth and development of the child that would enable the teacher to make his education more meaningful to the child.

Human body grows in stages and each stage has its dominant characteristics and uniqueness. Each stage has also its significant problems. Each stage is

related to another and not clearly marked out as distinct. No individual passes from one stage to another on a particular birthday. A stage moves imperceptibly to the next stage. Some of the stages are very short but some are long. Psychologists see the study of the child from conception to the beginning of adolescence as child study while the adolescent psychologists see adolescence as concerned with the study of the child from the on-setting of puberty until maturity. Note that an understanding of a stage helps to throw light on what happens in the next stage. According to Alhassan (2000), it is good to look at a child as the child he is and the adolescent he will be. It is also good to look at the adolescent as the adolescent he is and the child he was.

Let us go on with our discussion.

Generally, when we refer to a child or any human organism as growing, we mean that such organism is becoming larger or heavier. Physical growth can be measured in terms of height (meters and centimeters) and in terms of weight (kilogrammes).

In effect, growth can be either horizontal or vertical. Physical growth involves stages or epochs. These stages or epochs can be gradual, continuous but not uniform. They include the pre-natal stage, the infancy stage, the childhood stage, the adolescence, the adult and the senescence.

The concept of development refers to changes in structure and function. This means that development includes growth and the ability to see the organism in the performance of certain functions. Development is the progress an organism makes towards maturity. It then means that from the very beginning of life up to old age and death, human beings are subjected to many internal and external influences. You need to remember that psychologists usually see development as the process that leads to greater strength and stability.

It is time to stretch your legs and hands. So, take 5 minutes to do that. Let us now carry-on with our discussion.

### 3.4 Principles of Growth and Development

The principles of growth and development are:

1. Development in an organism is for the most part orderly and proceeds on the same order for all children. For example, all fetuses turn their heads before they turn their hands. Every child sits before

standing, babbles before talking, is dependent before being independent.

2. Growth and development are continuous. Growth may be continuous but not always smooth and gradual. There are *spurts* in physical growth and psychological functions. Let us cite some examples: abrupt or sudden increases in height or development of genital organ during pre-adolescence, sharp rises in vocabulary during childhood, sudden improvement in problem solving ability during middle and later adolescence.
3. There are critical periods for certain organs. If anything interferes with the development of an organ at that particular time, it results in permanent deficiency or malfunctioning. For example, certain organs such as the heart, the kidneys, the eyes, and the fingers have critical periods. If during their development, any thing happens to them, it affects these organs permanently. Eric Erikson, a psychologist (we will discuss more on him) postulates that if a child of 1 fails to learn to trust people, he may never trust people throughout his life.
4. The basic personality of any individual is set during the first years of his life. Well adjusted babies develop this trait often during the first years of their lives and grow to be well adjusted adults.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit you have learnt the concept of learning and the relationship between maturation and learning. You also have learned the concept of growth and development as well as the principles of growth and development. You have learnt that the concept of maturation has some indirect relationship with learning. Both learning and maturation depend on change of function.

You will have seen that psychologists usually see development as the process of greater strength and stability. All aspects of growth are inter-related. The different aspects of growth such as physical, mental, social and emotional are inter-related because all these are taking place in one individual.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

1. What you have learnt in this unit concerns the concept of learning, and the relationship between maturation and learning.
2. You also learnt the concept of growth and development and the principles of growth and development.
3. The unit has served to indicate what you will learn in other units later in the course.
4. The units that follow shall build upon this reflective understanding into the study of basic concepts in psychology to ensure an overall understanding of contents.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Define the concept of learning
2. Describe maturation
3. Distinguish between growth and development

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

- Alhassan, A.B. (1985). *The Role of Motivation in School Learning*. Seminar Paper, Department of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- Alhassan, A.B. (2000). *Understanding Educational Psychology*. Tamaza Publishing Co. Ltd, Zaria, Nigeria.
- Balogun, T.R. (1981). 'A Systems Approach to Education in Nigeria' in: *West African Journal of Education*, XII 21-29.
- Bugelski, B.R (1956). *The Psychology of Learning* Holt. New York..
- Gagne, R. (1970). *The Conditions of Learning*. Rinchart & Winston, Holt, New York..
- Kohler, W. (192). *Gestalt Psychology Live Right*.
- Lindgren, H.C. (1961). *Educational Psychology in the Classroom*, John Wiley and Sons Inc. London.
- Murphy, G. (1949). *Personality: A Biosocial Approach to Origins and Structure*. Rinehart and Winston, Holt, New York.
- Mukherejee, M. (1978). *Educational Psychology* K.P. Basu Publishing Co. Calcutta, India.
- Olaitan, S.D. (1992). 'Learning about Learning: A Builder's Bridge between Learning, People and Society'. In Ipaye, B. (ed). *Education in Nigeria, Past, Present and Future*. Macmillan Nigeria Publishers Ltd, Lagos.
- Oxiedine, P. (1968) *Learning Difficulties in children* New York.

## UNIT 4 SPECIALTIES IN PSYCHOLOGY

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Development Psychology
  - 3.2 Educational Psychology
  - 3.3 Social Psychology
  - 3.4 Physiological Psychology
  - 3.5 Clinical Psychology
  - 3.6 Occupational Health Psychology
  - 3.7 Cardiac Psychology
  - 3.8 Psychology of Law
    - 3.8.1 Community Psychology
  - 3.9 Community Psychology
    - 3.9.1 The Psychology of Eating
    - 3.9.2 Forensic Psychology
    - 3.9.3 Psychology of Politics
    - 3.9.4 Feminist Psychology
    - 3.9.5 Disability and Health Psychology
    - 3.9.6 Philosophical Counseling
    - 3.9.7 Police Psychology
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In unit 3, we discussed some basic concepts in psychology. The unit also served to introduce us to other units in this course. You can now explain tire concepts of learning, maturation, growth and development. You are about to study another interesting and practical unit: specialties in psychology. We will now consider the areas in which psychology can be applied. Let us look at what other contents you should learn in this unit as specified in the objective below:

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

describe some of the main psychological influences on human behaviour.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Development Psychology

Developmental psychology is a broad field of interest in which the physical, emotional and intellectual characteristics and development of youngsters from pre-natal stage onwards are studied. In addition to this are changes in many other forms of activity, for example, the acquisition of language or the growth of a sense of morality.

### 3.2 Educational Psychology

An educational psychologist will use the subject matter of psychology mainly to help children going through the education system. You should note also that educational psychology seeks to discover by studying the mental, physical, social and emotional behaviour of children and adults, the factors which influence the quality and quantity of learning.

Thus, if a particular child is experiencing difficulty with his/her school work, or is being disruptive in the classroom, the psychologist may examine the child to try to establish what might be causing the problem. Let us cite an example: the teacher may conduct an I.Q. test on the child, or interview the individual and the parents. Following such an assessment the psychologist may be able to recommend the best way in which the school might deal with the individual or meet his/her needs.

The application of psychology in education therefore gives us a means of appraising children's similarities and differences when attempting to create more efficient learning environments for them.

The application of psychology in education also provides us with a means of making evaluations of our own strengths and weaknesses as learners and teachers (Alhassan, 2000). In the light of our discussion above, educational psychology could be seen as a fundamental discipline in education,

performing functions similar to what the pure sciences (physics, chemistry, mathematics, biology) do to applied sciences (engineering, architecture, town planning, estate management and food technology). In fact, Gage and Berliner (1979) argued that teachers combine insight from educational psychology with philosophical reasoning.

### 3.3 Social Psychology

Social psychology is the study of social institutions and their impact on the behaviour of individuals. It concentrates on the external agencies which influence man. Social psychologists would be interested in the study of family, village, and role of the head teacher or effect of family background on achievement at school.

It is now time for you to check your level of understanding of our discussion.

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

- i. Would you say developmental psychology is a broad area of interest?
- ii. List any 4 areas that may generate research interest in social psychology

Well done, let us continue our discussion.

### 3.4 Physiological Psychology

The domain of the physiological psychology is the examination of the biological bases of behaviour with particular reference to the biochemical reactions underlying memory and learning, and the role of various portions of the brain in the regulation of such motives as hunger and thirst, and such basic processes as sleep.

### 3.5 Clinical Psychology

A clinical psychologist is someone who specialises in the treatment of those with behavioural problems and mental illness. Such a person will have received specialized training, usually involving a further three year course of study. You should note that clinical psychologists often work within hospitals or specialist psychiatric facilities and many sometimes are part of a team comprising psychiatrists, nurses, and so on. Clinical psychiatrists



often work to help those with relatively minor behavioural disorders, such as phobias.

### 3.6 Occupational Health Psychology

Occupational health psychology focuses on work environment, the individual, and the work-family interface. It concerns the application of psychology to improve the quality of work life and to protect and promote the safety, health and well being of workers.

### 3.7 Cardiac Psychology

This studies the workings of the heart -a cardiac structure of the transport system in higher animals and the centre of emotions, especially love and the mind, what a person thinks or feels, conscious thoughts of patients (The monitor APA, 1998).

### 3.8 Psychology of Law

Both psychology and law deal generally on human behaviour with reference to testimony, evidence, influences, crime, truancy, delinquency, and emotion. Psychology has a great deal to offer any law enforcement agency -large or small. Law enforcement officers and their management structure face a considerable variety of problems, many of which can be addressed by knowledgeable and skillful professional psychologists. It is important for you to note that whether psychological services can be effective depends on the degree to which police managers accept that understanding human behaviour can further the goals and purposes of law enforcement

#### 3.8.1 Community Psychology

The main thrust of community psychology is in the direction of family-care programmes and programmes in child guidance and rehabilitation centres.

### 3.9 Forensic Psychology

This is the branch of psychology that will be of most interest to those studying this course. It involves mainly the application of psychology to the area of crime and the legal system. Note that forensic psychology is applicable in many other areas.

Forensic psychology studies psychological damages, forensic examination, expert testimony in employment -related disputes, doomsday cults, secret societies and militias: brain washing, madness, criminality, sexual predator laws, patient estimate of pain, child-custody decision-making, child-sexual behaviour in relation to abuse variable, treating psychological disturbances caused by motor accidents, and forensic evaluation of sexual harassment (The monitor APA, 1998).

Now, take a short break of 2 minutes. Let us continue by checking your progress in understanding our discussion.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

- i. Given our discussion so far, which of the areas of psychology will you want to specialize in?
- ii. Why do you prefer that specialty?

You deserve commendation for active participation in our discussion. Let us continue.

#### 3.9.1 Psychology of Politics

It is that body of knowledge which lies somewhere between individual psychology and political science, just as social psychology and sociology. It deals with the problems of control of behaviour among groups, with the study of organizations of people in conflict. It refers also to the ways and means, the methods and techniques by which politicians particularly partisan politicians, promise the masses various things, such as paradise, having all their villages air-conditioned, and so on; when in reality, the masses, particularly in developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America are always forgotten once such politicians are on the seat of power.

Such politicians manipulate and exploit the needs and aspirations of the gullible masses to their advantage. It is important for you to note that the psychology of politics is practiced in the developed and developing countries. However in the former, the level of literacy is comparatively high and the electorate is far more sophisticated.

These factors make the practice of both politics and the psychology of politics much more demanding. Conversely, in the developing countries the level of literacy is comparatively low and the citizens are both less

sophisticated and more gullible. This makes it easier for politicians in the developing countries to practice the .psychology of politics on the people.

### 3.9.2 Feminist Psychology

This branch of psychology is on how widely-held feminist tenets -such as empowering individuals, valuing diversity, and creating dialogue -can be integrated across the field of psychology.

### 3.9.3 Disability and Health Psychology

This studies the interplay between psychological health and medical conditions, it introduces information on the nature of different types of disabilities and the ways in which disability -specific factors such as age of onset, duration of the disability and how the disability was acquired -all towards psychological adjustment.

### 3.9.4 Philosophical Counseling

Unlike the approach of counseling psychology, the approach of philosophical counseling is more open-ended and reflective- there are no fixed ideas or goals. The possibilities of cross-fertilization between philosophy and psychology are wonderful.

It is important for you to know that there are many ways in which meaningful life changes can occur through education, one form of which is the discussion of philosophical issues. Gerard Achenbach is believed to be the first to revive the profession of philosophical counseling when in 1981 he founded a suicide-prevention organization called the Samaritan (Phillips, 1997:12). In his work, Achenbach believed that the counter between the philosopher and the client was of the paramount importance, and that the aim was not healing but arriving at a satisfactory self- explanation and clarification. You must remember that philosophical practice has been a world-wide movement that is starting to flourish in Germany, the Netherlands, the USA, Canada, Britain, France, Israel and South Africa. It is to be noted that each of these countries now has its own certification organization.

### 3.9.5 Police Psychology

We must of course add police psychology, as this is the subject matter of another unit in this course. In the unit, you will see the extent to which

psychology might be useful in the training of police recruits and in everyday policing.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt branches of psychology. You have therefore learnt the areas in which psychology can be applied. We can now say that there is no discipline that has no psychological perspective. For example, as we discussed earlier, we have developmental psychology, social psychology, clinical psychology, and psychology of politics among others.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

1. What you have learnt in this unit concerns the specialties in psychology.
2. You also learnt occupational health psychology, psychology of law, forensic psychology, feminist psychology, and police psychology.
3. The unit has served to indicate what you will learn in other units later in your course.
4. The units that follow shall build upon this interesting and revealing unit. In this way, you will gain a better understanding of the contents.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. a. Two things that the educational psychologist will do are:
  - i. ....
  - ii. ....
- b. The social psychologist will be interested in the study of two areas. These are:
  - i. ....
  - ii. ....
- c. Occupational health psychology concerns the application of psychology to:
  - i. ....
  - ii. ....
- d. Describe clinical psychology.
- e. What is forensic psychology?

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Alhassan, A.B. (2000) *Understanding Educational Psychology*, Tamaza Publishing Co. Ltd. Zaria, Nigeria.

Gage, N. L. & Berliner D.C. (1979). *Educational Psychology*. Rand McNally College Publishing Co. Ltd. Chicago.

Phillips, C. (1997). *An Ancient Practice is being Rejuvenated* American Psychological Association, AP A, 28.11,12.

*The Monitor*: America Psychological Association, APA (1998), 29, 2, 36, 41.

## UNIT 5 HOW PSYCHOLOGISTS DEVELOP AND TEST THEIR THEORIES

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Awareness of the Problem
  - 3.2 Location of Definition of the Problem
  - 3.3 Collection of Data
  - 3.4 Formation of Hypotheses
  - 3.5 Testing Hypotheses
  - 3.6 Verification of the Hypotheses
  - 3.7 Testing Ideas
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In unit 4, we discussed specialties in psychology. The unit also served to introduce us other units in this course. You can now explain what we call mental psychology, social psychology, occupational health psychology, forensic psychology, feminist psychology, and police psychology, amongst others. You are about to study another it that you will find quite interesting and very useful: How psychologists develop test their theories. We will consider the scientific method. Let us look at what other content you should learn in this unit as specified in the objectives below

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- identify the steps involved in the scientific method,
- explain how ideas in psychology are tested; and
- steps in the scientific method.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Awareness in the Scientific Method

The first stage is that a problem is felt when a man encounters a problem which puzzles him and he apparently has no answer for.

#### 3.2 Location and Definition of the Problem

The problem, as encountered by man, may be so diffused or overwhelming that he cannot specify it. He then tries to find specifically what his problem is. Let us cite an example to enhance your level of understanding: If the problem is fear, is it .rear arising from pain in a particular part of the body or a strange noise or object?

#### 3.3 Collections of Data

When man has defined the problem before him precisely, he begins to collect relevant or possible data. He starts to take closer observation of the part of the now localized problem. He collects as much information as possible. Let us give an example. If the original fear is now localized to a strange object, man starts to find if the object is big or small, the colour of the object, whether it is mobile, whether it makes any sound and if any, the timing, and so on.

#### 3.4 Formulation of Hypotheses

On the basis of the accumulated data, man starts to formulate possible hypotheses. These hypotheses can be seen as educated guesses or answers to the problem. His preliminary study of the facts has led him to these now intelligent guesses about the possible solution to his problem. At this stage these possible solutions are tentative, hence they are many and all cannot be the solution. Where the hypothesis is one, it is still tentative unit it is proved to be the correct solution. In fact some scientists at this stage label them as hunches.

#### 3.5 Testing the Hypotheses

The guesses are tested as to their solubility of the problem. If A and B are true, then C must be true. If for example the strange object which caused fear is four footed, mobile and makes some noise, then it is a wild animal. If we had seen that, though the fear object is four footed but immobile then

we might conclude that it can be any other thing but an animal. This will mean testing another hypothesis.

### 3.6 Verification of the Hypotheses

This may mean testing the workability or solubility of the accepted hypotheses. It is therefore left for man to select a suitable and safe method which will help him to confirm whether or not the hypotheses will work. To find, for example, if the cause of the fear is a wild animal, man may decide to attack it by hauling a stone at it or using a club to hit it. On the basis of his findings, he can now draw conclusions.

The above scientific method gives one an idea about the procedures involved in psychological investigations. However, it is important for you to note that in psychology the steps listed do not provide the right pattern that a psychologist or even a scientist must follow. One may find out that while applying the scientific method, a psychologist does not necessarily tackle one step at a time, complete that process and then move on to the next step. For example, the scientist may formulate his hypotheses and move to the next step of testing. He discovers that none of the hypotheses works, then he shuttles back to formulate new hypotheses or even to take a second look at his definition of the problem. But in the final analysis, his results, when presented, will show a logically arranged sequence which parallels the scientific method.

You have been very active in our discussion, well done. Now try your hand on this question.

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

- i. State what you must do before testing an hypothesis.
- ii. State what you must do after defining a problem.

### 3.7 Testing Ideas

Psychologists often gather information by carrying out experiments to test certain ideas. From our previous discussion, we refer to this as testing a hypothesis. Let us cite an example to illustrate this process. Suppose a psychologist thinks that male police officers may have better memories than female officers. The psychologist might wish to check whether this is the case and set up an experiment to test the hypothesis: The psychologist may invite a number of male and female officers to view a videotape of a crime taking place and then ask each person a series of questions about the event.



He/she could then compare the results from the male and female officers to see whether there is any difference in how much information they could recall, and also whether one group was more accurate than the other in the details they provide (The Open University of Hong Kong, 2001).

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Think about the example cited above and decide whether it would be a good way of obtaining information about sex difference and memory.

Let us continue our discussion.

A couple of questions might be asked about the example cited above. Firstly why did the psychologist choose to test a number of male and female officers; rather than just one of each? Secondly, if differences were found between the two groups, how would the psychologist know whether such differences were 'real' or whether they were due to chance?

The answer to the first question is that it would have been inappropriate for the psychologist to test just one male and one female because if differences were found, the psychologist would not know whether such differences were because he/she had chosen a male with a good memory. For this reason, psychologists always try to test a reasonable size sample of individuals in their studies. However, you must note that we are not necessarily talking about a large number of people. The psychologist would also need to be sure that members of the same group were 'typical' or representative of their groups.

For example, a particularly sexist male psychologist might attempt to prove his theory about women performing less well than men by selecting women he already knew were not very bright, and men he knew were highly intelligent. The sexist psychologist may claim that he did find differences proving his theory, but his colleagues may not accept his views because of how the study was carried out. It may be that if any differences were found, they could be accounted for entirely by the fact that one group was, on average, more intelligent than the other and this fact rather than gender differences accounts for the results.

In comparing two groups of people and trying to find differences, the psychologist would need to be sure that members in his/her sample were representative of the groups from which they were drawn. If the average female police officer's I.Q. score was 110, it would be unfair if the

psychologist deliberately included only people with a score well below this average in his sample. Similarly, the psychologist would need to be sure that his comparison group of male officers contained those who were normal or representative of the whole population of male police officers.

Good research thus always tries to compare a reasonable size sample of individuals, and also tries to be sure that members of the sample are largely representative of the groups from which they were drawn. In order to avoid the accusation that he/she was still biased in the way in which the samples were selected, the psychologist might try to obtain 'random sample' rather than one based on certain selection criterion. The psychologist might obtain a list of all local male and female officers and include every tenth name on the list until samples of a roughly equal size were obtained. This random sampling would negate any accusation that certain individuals were more likely to 'prove' that the researcher's theory was correct.

At this stage, you deserve to clap for your active participation. Now, we must continue our discussion.

The psychologist would therefore want to compare a random, comparable and representative sample of male and female officers. However: he/she would still need to be able to prove that if any differences were found, they were real as opposed to chance differences. If the psychologist found that an average male officer correctly recalled 15 details and female 14, he/she should be able to say that this difference was so large that it could not be explained by chance. In order to do-this, the psychologist would analyse the results using an appropriate statistical measure that could then prove the differences were 'real' differences and could not be explained by luck or chance.

You need to remember that psychologists routinely subject their results to statistical analysis in order to prove to themselves and to others that any differences are real differences. Proof that a difference is 'statistically significant' allows the researcher to state 'with a high degree of certainty' that the results are not due to chance. In this way a psychologist is in a better position to make objective (as opposed to subjective) claims about the data.

As you read about various psychology experiments, you will often see sentences such as 'the results were found to be significant at the 0.05 level'.

You are eager to know what that means. You will not wait for too long.

What this means is that the psychologist has carried out an appropriate statistical test proving that the chances that, any differences between two groups might be due to chance are less than one in 20.

Similarly, if a researcher states that ‘The difference was found to be significant at the 0.01 level’ this would mean that the probability that any differences found were due to chance were one in 100.

It should be noted that just because a finding is proved to be statistically significant does not necessarily mean that the researcher has proved absolutely that his/her theory is true. For example, Alhassan (2000) states that some early research on intelligence appeared to show a statistically significant difference between the I.Q. score of African-Americans and Americans. However, the actual test used was biased in favour of Americans (one group) and against the African-Americans (the other).

It should be noted that one basic rule is that the larger the size of any sample, the more likely it is that small differences will prove to be statistically significant. We should however bear in mind a point made earlier -any statistically significant differences found will only be accepted if the researcher can demonstrate that the samples were comparable.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt how psychologists develop and test their theories. You have therefore learnt the scientific method. For example, as we discussed earlier, we must have awareness of the problem, location and definition of the problem, collection of data, formulation of hypotheses, testing the hypotheses and verification of the hypotheses as steps in the scientific method.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

1. What you have learnt in this unit concerns how psychologists develop and test their theories.
2. You have also learnt that psychologists usually use a scientific method in carrying out their research. This has advantages over other types of research as it:
  - a.. allows researchers to test a hypothesis in a systematic way,
  - b. allows researchers to be confident about the fact that their results are not likely to be due to chance.

- c. allows other researchers to see how studies were carried out and to replicate them.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- 1 a. state 4 reasons why psychologists usually use a scientific method in carrying out their research
- b. if a psychologist states that the results of his research were found to be significant at the 0.05 level, what does he or she mean?
- c. the same psychologist reports the results of another investigation to be significant at the 0.01 level. What does he/she mean?

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Alhassan, A.B. (2000). *Understanding Educational Psychology*. Tamaza Publishing Co. Ltd. Zaria, Nigeria.

The Open University of Hong Kong (2001) p. 203.

## MODULE 2

Unit 1	Definitions of Intelligence
Unit 2	Individual Differences in Intelligence
Unit 3	Explaining Behaviour-Genetic Influences and Environmental Influences
Unit 4	Applying Psychology to Policing
Unit 5	Perception: A Basic Process

### UNIT 1 DEFINITIONS OF INTELLIGENCE

#### CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
3.1	Intelligence in the Early Days
3.2	Definitions
3.3	The Concept of Intelligence Quotient
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Readings

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In Unit 5, we discussed how psychologists develop and test their theories. The unit also served to introduce us to other units in this course. You can now identify and explain steps in the scientific method. In addition, you can explain how a psychologist can test an hypothesis at 0.01 and 0.05 levels of significance. You are about to study another unit that you are likely to find relevant and interesting: Definitions of Intelligence. We will now consider conceptual clarification. Let us look at what other content you should learn in this unit as specified in the objectives below.

#### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- describe what intelligence is from the perspective of the layman;
- define the concept of intelligence; and
- explain the concept of intelligence quotient.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Conceptual Clarification

Undoubtedly, 'intelligence' is a concept of theory and educational practice. Intelligence remains a major concern of psychology. Intelligence is an abstract noun.

The early days of this century witnessed little usage of the term intelligence in psychology or in the classroom. According to Spencer and Galton, there is an important general ability which is super-ordinate to and distinct from special abilities. Burt equally accepted the theory of a general cognitive capacity that is probably dependent upon the number, complexity or connection of the organization of the nerve cells in the cerebral context.

There was the technique of factor analysis which was introduced by Pearson at a time when Alfred Binet in France was working with French children of different pre-school and school ages to arrive at some answers explaining the underlying factors of the different performances of children at home and in school.

The importance of the general ability was strongly recognized in Britain and Europe while in the USA, it was questioned. The emphasis here was laid on the breakdown of the specific abilities explaining different types of activities and the performance of these activities.

#### 3.2 Definitions

Of all the words used by professionals, no other word seems so clear when we hear it, and yet is so difficult to define, as intelligence. There is a massive research on the development of a child. Such research generates explanations on the definition of intelligence which for Piaget (1950:3) is 'the concept of growth'.

The concept of growth has been taken up by the environmentalists who claim that intelligence is not determined by heredity but by the type of environmental interaction in the history of early childhood. It is important for you to note that the type of environment and interaction will shape and determine a child's adult intelligence. But you must remember that all children, given the same history of environmental interaction, will attain the same level of intelligence in adult life (we will discuss more on this in units 7 & 8 of this course). The definition of intelligence based on the growth theory does not explain completely why there are some amounts of

individual differences in cognitive behaviour. By implication, intelligence is also determined by heredity.

Of recent; prominent radical sociologists argued that the definition of intelligence is a social-class based one. They argued further that the differences in the social class origins of individuals compelled them to undergo differential environmental changes and hence differential levels of intelligent behaviour in later life. Had there been no differences in the class structures of societies, they argued then, the emphasis given on intelligence will most probably disappear as everybody will manifest the same level of intelligent behaviour eventually.

Also recently, there has been emphasis in the understanding of the definition of intelligence from psychological experiment and research evidence where the importance of parental attitudes toward education and of the home-background factors has been established. For example, Mukherjee (1972) showed that while attitudes towards mathematics and previous experience in mathematics explained most of the transferred task variance, intelligence was the least important factor in terms of the task explained.

I can see that you are more eager to learn about more definitions of intelligence. That is nice. Let us go on.

It is generally agreed that many degrees of intelligence exist, that even an imbecile exhibits some manifestations of intelligent behaviour. But when we refer to an intelligent person we mean only someone who is at the upper end of the distribution of I.Q. scores. Such an individual is one who exceeds a hypothetical cut-off point separating intelligent individuals from the general run of humans. Thus, although the creativity undoubtedly varies along a continuum, only the rare individual who makes a singularly original (unusual) and significant contribution to art, science, literature, philosophy, government, and so forth, can be called a creative person. Note that a creative person is by definition a much rarer individual than the intelligent person. Thousands of intelligent individuals exist for every one who is truly creative.

If we observe events and behaviour which are concrete things as they can be recorded and measured. Let us cite an example so that you can have a clear understanding. We observe the difference between individuals of the same background, same chronological age and same previous history of learning in problem-solving. If one individual solves the problem more quickly than the other, we say the former individual is more intelligent,

thereby implying that the former individual has something to a greater degree than the latter. It is the 'something' that is called intelligence. Intelligence is therefore a kind of mental or cognitive ability which comes to play in problem solving.

Intelligence is also referred to as the reasoning ability of individuals. These reasoning abilities are of many types, for example understanding relations, comprehension of series, drawing analogies, completing patterns on the basis of symmetry and meaningful asymmetry, permutations and combinations, drawing inferences, understanding logic, deductive and inductive, verbal ability, and so on. We can therefore say that intelligence is a cluster of psychological traits. If valid instruments exist to measure these traits, then intelligence can as well be measured. Any trait or characteristic which is a continuum (continuous in nature) is amenable to statistical techniques leading to factor analysis. Thus when an experienced motor- car driver wants to negotiate a corner, he skips gear easily and the [mal function is still the same. The same technique is used by stenographers, textile workers, who usually produce more than their fellows.

According to Ryle (1952), there is no kind of performance or behaviour which can be described without qualification as 'intelligence'. Confronted with such diversity in the nature of intelligence behaviour, it is not surprising that psychologists have often failed to agree on a comprehensive definition. Years ago, the editors of *Journal of Educational Psychology*, London, invited seventeen leading scholars to express their opinions on the nature of intelligence. While they achieved some agreement, nearly seventeen different definitions of intelligence emerged from this symposium (Thorndike, 1951). Some of these definitions are:

The ability to carry on abstract thinking (Terman, 1910).

The capacity to acquire capacity (Woodrow)

The power of good responses from the point of truth or fact (Thorndike, 1927). Vernon (1950) classified the description of intelligence as biological, psychological or operational.

Freeman (1936) classified descriptions of intelligence into those emphasizing:

1. Power of adaptation to the environment;
2. Capacity for learning;
3. Ability for abstract thinking.

Let us carry on our discussion.



Although modern psychologists know much more about mental abilities, the difficulty is far from resolved. One possible solution is to create a broad definition that addresses the complexity of the word 'intelligence'.

Wechsler (1975) is one psychologist who has attempted such a definition. He believes that intelligence is the capacity to understand the world and the resourcefulness to cope with its challenges. Much earlier, Wechsler (1958) suggested that intelligence is 'the capacity to act purposefully, to think rationally, and to deal effectively with the environment'. By these broad standards, people act intelligently when they learn from past experiences, seek effective solutions to every day problems, and adapt to the world around them.

Wechsler's definitions provide a useful overview of the meaning of intelligence, but difficulties still persist. For instance, the issue of value judgment remains. Although Wechsler used broad terms-coping, resourcefulness, and rationality - they, all the same, imply particular values. You must remember that in any given culture different circumstances demand different types of coping and resourcefulness. Clearly, what is required of the ambitious distance learner undergraduate student is different from what is demanded of the child whose unemployed parents have been living in impoverished conditions for over a decade. We have many of such children in Nigeria particularly, and developing countries in general.

Find out your level of understanding by trying your hands on this question.

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

- i. Will you describe yourself as intelligent?
- ii. Explain why you so describe yourself?

We must continue our discussion.

### 3.3 The Concept of Intelligence Quotient (IQ)

I.Q. is the result obtained when an individual's mental age (MA) is divided by his/ her chronological age (that is biological age) and multiplied by 100. Mental age refers to an individual's level of intellectual development. Alfred Binet (1905) was credited with the first successful attempt to measure intelligence. He was asked by the French government to investigate the causes of retardation in the schools of Paris. Through a sampling process he identified the questions that would be solved easily by the children. From there, he developed the concept of units on MA. Average MA scores correspond to chronological age (CA). A bright child's

MA is above his CA; while a dull child has an MA below his CA. Thus, the index of brightness is the IQ which indicates how an individual scores relative to others of comparable age. Note that Alfred Binet was called the father of intelligence testing. The Binet scale was later revised and named the Stanford-Binet scale. Table 1 shows the distribution of IQ scores.

Table 1: Intelligence Quotient on the Standford-Binet: Distribution of IQ scores

IQ Range of Score	Verbal Description	Approximate % of People in each Group
Above 130	Very superior	1
120 – 129	Superior	11
111 – 119	High average	18
90 – 109	Average	46
80 – 89	Low average	15
70 – 79	Borderline	6
Below 70	Mentally retarded	3

Source: Hilgard et. Al. (1975: 405)

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt how the layman describes intelligence, how psychologists define intelligence and what we mean by intelligence quotient. For example, the layman sees intelligence as the ability to do things correctly, while to the psychologists, intelligence is a psychological construct which implies the ability to carry on abstract thinking, the power of adaptation to the environment, and capacity for learning amongst others.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

1. What you have learnt in this unit concerns descriptions and definitions of intelligence
2. You also learnt that psychologists define intelligence differently.
3. This enables us to have various definitions of the concept of intelligence some of which are stated below:

- a. What the intelligence tests measure (Berelson and Steriner, 1964),
  - b. It consists of 120 different abilities, (Guliford, 1980),
  - c. It is the totality of an individual's ability in solving problems of every day life, how best an individual succeeds is open to question (Alhassan, 1.981).
4. Intelligence quotient reflects the extent to which a child is mentally advanced or backward for his/her age.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- 1 a. Two things that determine intelligence are:
  - i. ....
  - ii. ....
- b. Define intelligence from the perspective of a sociologist.
- c. Define intelligence from the standpoint of a psychologist.
- d. Four reasoning abilities are:

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

- Alhassan, A.B. (1981). *'Intellectual Development in Children'* Seminar Paper, Department of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- Berelson, B. & Steiner, G. (1964). *Human Behaviour: An Inventory of Scientific Findings. 1964*, Har court, New York..
- Freeman, F. (1936). *Intellectual Growth of Children as Indicated by Repeated Tests*.
- Guilford, J.P. (1959.) *'Three Faces of Intellect'* in *American Psychologist*. 14.469-79.
- Hilgard S. (1975). *Human Development and Education*. Longmans. New York..
- Mukherjee, M. (1972). *'Investigation of Personality Factors on Transfer of Learning'*, Unpublished Ph.D Thesis University of London, Institute of Education.
- Ryle, D. (1952). *Intelligence and Human Performance* McGraw-Hill, New York..
- Thorndike, E. (1951). *Measurement of Intelligence*. Columbia, New York..
- Vernon, P.E. (1950). *The Structure of Human Abilities*.
- Wechester, D. (1958). *The Measurement and Appraisal of Adult Intelligence*.
- Williams & -Wilkins. Baltimore, MD.
- Woodrow, S. (1975). *Human Abilities*. Pergamon, London.

## UNIT 2 INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN INTELLIGENCE

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Intellectual Performance
  - 3.2 Mental Ability
  - 3.3 Normal Curve
  - 3.4 Defects in I.Q.
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Individuals differ in different ways. There are many theories about individual differences. In this unit, the various reasons that may account for differences in intelligence are examined. The unit also examines the concept of intelligent quotient (I.Q.) and its dynamics.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- explain what is meant by normal distribution;
- identify different forms in which intelligence comes into play; and
- state the defect in IQ.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Intellectual Performance

Globally, people differ greatly in intelligence, aptitudes, physical strength, manual dexterity, knowledge, skill, interests, personality traits, motivation, threshold of tolerance, and many other attributes which potentially influence behaviour and productivity.

Of a group of exceptionally intelligent persons, one may be an artist, another writer, a third a mathematician, a fourth a historian, and so on.

Their high intelligence comprises a high general factor plus one or more specific factors. This theory helps to explain why some bright pupils may be outstanding in certain subjects and only mediocre in others. We all know a pupil who is clever at mathematics and dull in languages or vice-versa. Gardner suggests that intelligence comes in at least the following forms:

- (a) Musical Intelligence or Sensitivity to pitch, melody, rhythm, and tone.
- (b) Linguistic intelligence, or sensitivity to the meaning and order of words and varied uses of languages.
- (c) Logical-mathematical intelligence or the ability to handle long chains of reasoning and to recognize patterns and order in the world.
- (d) Spatial intelligence or the ability to perceive the visual world accurately and to recreate, transform, or modify aspects of that world based on one's perceptions.
- (e) Interpersonal intelligence or access to one's own 'feeling of life'.

We will now consider two styles of reasoning. 'Convergent and divergent'. We will describe the boys as convergers and divergers.

The converger is the boy who is substantially better at the intelligence tests than he is at the open-ended tests; the diverger is the reverse. By open-ended tests, we mean objective/multiple-choice test. In addition to this categorisation, there are the all-rounders, the boys who are more or less equally good (or bad) on both types of text. It may well be that 30% are divergers, and the remaining 40% could be in the middle as all-rounders. In a typical classroom, we may find extreme divergers (10%); moderate divergers (20%); all-rounders (40%); moderate convergers (20%); extreme convergers (10%).

Let us go on with our discussion.

### 3.2 Mental Ability

As it has been argued elsewhere (Alhassan, 1989), the most important element in all of education is the element of individual differences. If there is anyone characteristic of people which is universally valid and important, it is that they differ. To say that all persons are created equal is a statement of human rights under the law. It communicates nothing at all about human nature.

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Five attributes which influence behaviour are:

### 3.3 Normal Probability Curve

Let us continue our discussion by looking at figure 1 which is generated by graphically plotting the distribution of IQ scores we discussed in unit 6.

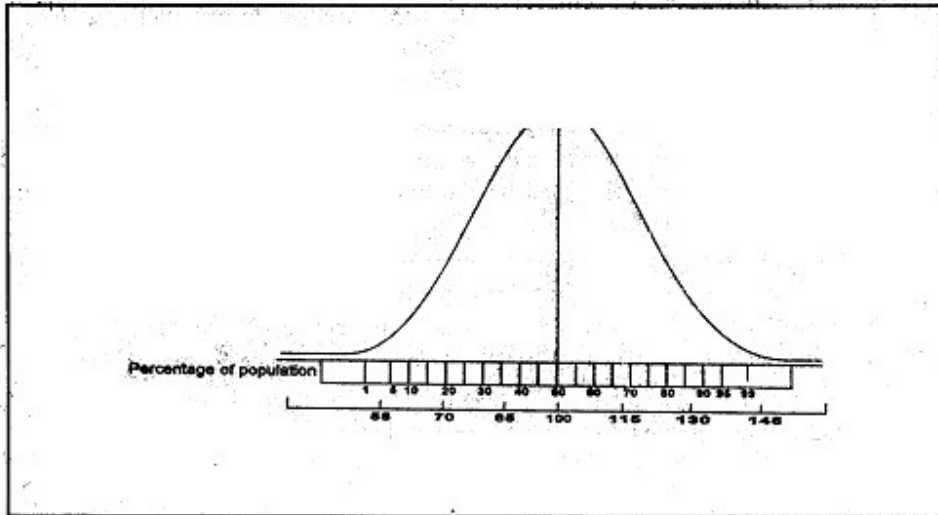


Fig. 1: A Normal Distribution Curve of Intelligent Quotient (IQ)

Figure 1 suggests that mental ability essentially follows a normal probability or bell shaped curve. The figure looks simple, but it is significant that most people are just average and, therefore, cannot be expected to perform well on many jobs that demand the complex mental process required, for example in most scientific and professional positions.

It is important for you to note that an individual's IQ, would be equal to 100 if his mental age exactly matched his chronological age. Thus, IQ's greater than 100 reflect advanced or accelerated intellectual development, while those below 100 reflect some degree of intellectual slowness or backwardness. It is to be noted that any plan for Universal Basic Education in Nigeria must provide for the intellectual diversity of children. It is clearly undesirable to educate children to take an examination which they are unlikely to pass. A secondary school which concentrates on getting as many senior secondary school students as possible to the university would provide a poor education for children of low IQ.

### 3.4 Defects in I.Q.

Although the intelligence quotient reflects the extent to which a child is mentally advanced or backward for his/her age, this particular index of intelligence has a weakness: while mental age must necessarily stop increasing at some point during an individual's life, chronological age, alas, does not. Referring to this major weakness in the IQ, Baron et. al. (19-70) argues that scores determined in this simple manner begin to decrease as maturity is attained. As students of Developmental Psychology, we know that mental development seems to reach a maximum in the late teens or early twenties.

I am sure you feel something should be done to remove the weakness in IQ.

Let us go on with our discussion.

It is not surprising, therefore, that in the face of this serious weakness; IQ scores based on the concept of mental age were replaced some years ago by another measure called deviation IQ.

Remember that scores derived by this new measure represent an individual's performance on the test relative to those of other persons of his/her age. Thus, the average performance of all such persons is arbitrarily set equal to 100, and the individual's IQ then expresses the extent to which his/her own performance departs (that is deviates) from this level. You must note that a major advantage of such scores is that they are statistically adjusted in such a manner that it is possible to tell, from appropriate mathematical tables, precisely what proportion of others taking the test score higher or lower than a given individual.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Complete the following sentence:.....essentially follows a .....probability curve.

### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt that the most important element in all of education is the element of individual differences. You have therefore learnt that universally, people 100 if differ greatly in intelligence, aptitudes, manual dexterity, and personality traits, amongst others.

### 5.0 SUMMARY



1. What you have learnt in this unit concerns differences in intelligence.
2. You also learnt that mental ability essentially follows a normal probability curve
3. You equally learnt that IQ is defective and the concept of deviation IQ was explained and understood.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. a. State the most important element in all of education.
- b. State attributes which may influence behaviour and productivity
- c. Describe the importance of the normal probability curve
- d. Who is a converger?

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Alhassan, A.B. (1980). *Creativity and the Teacher*: Department of Education, ABU, Zaria.

Baron, R., Byrne, D. & Kantowits, B. (1978). *Psychology: Understanding Behaviour*: Saunder Co. Ltd. Toronto.

## UNIT 3 EXPLAINING BEHAVIOUR-GENETIC INFLUENCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Behaviour-Genetic Influences
  - 3.2 Behaviour-Environmental Influences
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assessment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

We have discussed individual differences in intelligence. The unit also served to introduce us to other units in this course. You can now explain normal probability curve, identify different forms in which intelligence comes into play. In addition, you can describe the concept of IQ and explain its defect. Right now, you will study another unit that is very topical and interesting; explaining behaviour-genetic influences and environmental influences. We will now consider influences on behaviour. Let us look at what other content you should learn in this unit as specified in the objective below.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

describe some of the main psychological influences on human behaviour.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Behaviour – Genetic Influences

One of the longest running debates in psychology is the ‘nature versus nurture’ debate. This relates to the question of whether behaviour is best explained by reference to genetic or to environmental factors. Note that at

times the issue divides the academic community, with proponents of both schools of thought providing evidence supporting their own viewpoint and challenging that of their opponents.

The question is important for a number of reasons. If it is possible to prove that a person's genes predominantly determine certain aspects of behaviour, then there is little point in trying to change people by using external influences. Let us cite an example to ensure clear understanding. If intelligence was found to be almost entirely determined by genetic factors, then there would be little point in spending billions of naira on providing a good education for those who are low in intelligence. To do so would be a 'wasted effort, as any such attempts would be unproductive.

Similarly, if genetics were found to largely determine criminality, there would be profound implications regarding how society deals with those who exhibit criminal tendencies from an early age. If one were to believe in' such a viewpoint, then one would want to advocate that such individuals be incarcerated at an early age and not be released. Punishment and rehabilitation would presumably be a waste of time because such individuals would be unable to overturn the powerful effects of their genetic make-up.

While it is true that a person's genetic make-up does affect their behaviour, it is rarely in such an absolute way as implied by the examples above. It is important for you to note that these days, psychologists rarely talk about behaviour being determined by either heredity or the environment. Most psychologists would accept that any behaviour results from the interaction between genetic factors and the environment.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

1. a. Explain what you understand by nature.
- b. What is nurture?

Let us continue our discussion. Now, we need to consider how genetic influences might affect behaviour.

Every human being comes into this world with a genetic make-up. Note that this is the blueprint for the individual's passage through life and as originating from his or her parents. When a baby is first born, relatives often look to see whether the child looks more like the mother or father. Each new child results from the combination of elements from both the mother and father. The human reproduction system ensures that, with the

exception of identical twins, there are no two genetically identical people in the world. You must note that, although there can be nothing in the child that has not come from the mother or father, each child will be genetically different.

If you think about a large family with a number of brothers and sisters, each family member may share common characteristics but there will also be identifiable differences between each individual. I know you are eager to know why this is so: This may be partly due to the different genetic make-up of each individual, but also partly because each child will have slightly different experiences as he/she grows up.

Let us consider the example of criminality. You may have your own view as to whether or not crime runs in families. The evidence suggests that children born to criminal parents run an increased risk of becoming criminals themselves. It is to be noted that while crime may run in families, this does not necessarily prove that genetics is the correct or the only explanation. It may be that criminal parents instill values in their children that make them more likely to adopt a criminal lifestyle as they grow up. While most parents would punish their child if they committed a criminal act, criminal parents may encourage or reward their own child for following in their footsteps.

Those who wish to argue for the importance of genetic factors often look to the study of twins for evidence to support their viewpoint. There are two distinct types of twins, that is identical and non-identical. As the name implies, identical twins are genetically identical and result from a splitting of the zygote around the time of conception. Such twins are referred to as monozygotic or MZ. Non-identical twins are the result of two different eggs being fertilized by two different sperms around the same point in time. Non-identical twins are also known as dizygotic or DZ. Note that although they are conceived at the same time, they are genetically no more similar than brothers or sisters conceived and born at different times. Because they are genetically identical, MZ twins will always be the same sex, whereas DZ twins are sometimes of the same, but sometimes of different sexes.

You deserve commendation for active participation in our discussion. Let us continue by attempting this question.

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Have you ever come across any set of twins? What were your impressions?

We must now go on.

If genetics is important, then we would expect identical twins to be more similar than non-identical twins. For research purposes, the ideal study would be to examine pairs of twins who were separated from each other early in life, to see whether they still ended up with similar behavioural characteristics. If this was the case, it might be suggested that genetic influences are perhaps more important than those of the environment. Where such research has been carried out it shows consistently that identical twin pairs do often end up more similar than non-identical twin pairs, even when they have been raised in different environments. Where such research has been carried out it shows consistently that identical twin pairs do often end up more similar than non-identical twin pairs, even when they have been raised in different environments. Research of this kind would lead us to believe that genes have some influence over behaviour, but this influence is not all embracing. You must note that our genes set some limits on what can be achieved, but the exact result will be determined by our life experiences. This can be illustrated by research on identical twins. We saw earlier that identical twins are of great interest to psychologists because they can help us unravel the relative contribution of genetics and the environments.

Let us now consider crime and genetics. Dilalla and Gottesman (1990) reviewed some 40 years of twin studies and claimed to have found some evidence to support the view that criminal behaviour might have a genetic component. You must note that criminal behaviour covers such a vast array of actions that there can be few people who have never committed a criminal act during their lifetime.

### 3.2 Determinants of Editorial Subject

We saw in the previous section that genetics can play an important role in understanding human behaviour. We also noted that genetics alone can never fully explain why people behave as they do. It is important for you to note that while all individuals enter the world with a genetic make-up, they are not raised in a social or environmental vacuum. If we are to fully understand why people behave as they do, we need to consider both their genetic make-up and the environment in which they are raised.

From the moment of conception, the developing child is subject to all sorts of environmental influences. Even in the womb, the child may develop differently if the mother smokes, takes drugs or is ill while pregnant (Alhassan, 2000). Once born, the baby will be subject to a vast array of environment influences that will help to shape him/her. As this writer explained elsewhere (Alhassan, 1983:450), environment is the aggregate of

all external and internal conditions affecting the existence, growth, and welfare of organisms in general and the child in particular. A child's environment commences from within her mother's womb. Thereafter, a child experiences a social environment, a physical environment, an economic environment, and in fact, a political environment. Of course the cultural environment is all-embracing. Both heredity and environment contribute to an individual's intelligence.

It is obvious that the environment can exert a powerful influence on behaviour but when it comes to explaining our own behaviour, humans are not always willing to accept this fact. If you were asked whether you are an independent sort of person, or whether you simply go along with the crowd, you would probably say that while you are influenced by others to some extent, you are still capable of independent thought and decision making. Yet social psychology (which we discussed in unit 4) provides ample evidence of the powerful effects that social situations can have.

Let us cite an example. Police Officers will tend to presume that the vast majority of people who are arrested and questioned might initially deny the offence but may eventually confess to the crime. It may never occur to the officer concerned that if a person does confess, this results from the powerful situational environmental forces to which the suspect is subjected.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt influences on behaviour. You have therefore learnt the important role of genetics in all human behaviour but genetics rarely has a direct or total influence. We also learnt that the environment in which people are raised must be considered.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

1. What you have learnt in this unit concerns the role of genetics and environment on behaviour.
2. You also learnt that genetics may set the limits within which certain types of behaviour will fall, but the environment may determine which aspects of our genetic inheritance are revealed.
3. You equally learnt that situations exert a powerful influence over people's behaviour and make them do things that we might not predict.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. a. State what you understand by ‘nature’
- b. Explain ‘nurture’
- c. State two reasons why the nature vs nurture debate is important.
- d. Complete this sentence:  
Human behaviour is the result of a complex interaction between a large number of variables, perhaps the most important of which are.....and.....

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Duyile, D (2005). *Writing For the Media – A Manual for African Journalists*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Lagos: Gong Communication.

Ate, A.A. (2006). “*Editorial Writing*.” Unpublished Work.

## UNIT 4 APPLYING PSYCHOLOGY TO POLICING

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 What Policing Involves
  - 3.2 The Psychological Consultant
  - 3.3 The In-House (Staff) Psychologist
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

We have discussed behaviour-genetic influences and environmental influences. The unit on it also served to introduce us to other units in this course. You can now explain what we mean by ‘nature’ and ‘nurture’. In addition, you can explain the relative influences of nature and nurture on human behaviour. It is now time for you to study another interesting and practical unit: Applying psychology to policing. We will now consider what policing involves. Let us take a look at what other contents you should learn in this unit as specified in the objective below.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

provide examples of how psychology can be applied to policing the environment.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 What Policing Involves

In the previous units, we have seen some of the ways in which psychologists conduct their research and gather information. We have noted that only by carefully considering internal and external factors can we hope to understand or offer explanations for human behaviour. We have also seen that theories and research findings can be applied to many everyday



situations. Throughout this course you will encounter a great deal of information that you can reflect upon in explaining your own and others' behaviour.

One of the areas to which psychology can be applied is policing. A great deal of policing involves interacting with others, be they citizens in distress, witnesses, colleagues, suspects or whatever. Psychology can be of great benefit in helping police officers understand human behaviour and so deal with others in a more effective way.

Policing involves the use of a wide range of skills, and over the years police organizations in Nigeria have built up array of techniques that help their officers do their job. There is the need for police officers to accept that psychology can be of benefit to individual police officers and to the organization. Police psychologists may, for example, offer advice on the selection of the most able candidates for promotion, or help counsel those who have been traumatized by particular incidents, and so on. They will also be able to help with a number of practical policing tasks including hostage negotiation, interviewing of witnesses and suspects, and even offender profiling. It is important for you to note that even where police forces do not employ psychologists directly, there are many areas of applied psychology that will be of great benefit to officers within the service.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Describe how you will persuade police officers in your state of origin that psychologists can offer valuable help and understanding.

Let us go on with our discussion.

Having read this unit, it should be apparent that psychology can be extremely useful when applied to the area of policing. Remember that psychology can never be a substitute for knowledge about the law, powers of arrest, and so on, but it can add to other knowledge and hopefully improve individual officers' effective and efficient functioning within the society.

### 3.2 The Psychological Consultant

Most psychologists who work with law enforcement agencies act as consultants. The degree to which a consultant can be effective in police work depends a great deal on who the consultant serves and to whom the

consultant reports. If the consultant has been retained and have initial contact with upper management; there will probably be a good deal of involvement in organizational diagnosis and development issue. The higher the level of interaction, the more likely the psychologists will be evaluating the department's states and making recommendations for problems solving. This might include such issues as poor upward communication among negative discipline.

It is important for you to note that every consultant can expect a good deal of initial caution and hostility on the part of the people he or she works with. Suspicion and distrust may accompany the stereotypes on both sides of the interface. Remember that openness and sensitivity are required, and the psychologist must readily present these qualities. An attitude of humility and willingness to listen is helpful. The psychologist working as a consultant must be willing to accept and tolerate the slowness of change commonly found in bureaucratic institutions. One of the most important attributes for the consultant is patience (Reisen & Klyver, 1987).

If possible, the consultant should report directly to the chief. By having a close association with the highest possible level in the organization, the consultant can obtain the support necessary to effect recommendations involving change and innovation. The advantages and disadvantages of a psychologist serving as a consultant might be summarized as follows:

#### Advantages

1. Autonomy and distance can be maintained
2. There is somewhat less bureaucratic interference with the psychologist's job
3. There is a minimizing of dual relationship problems
4. It is easier to maintain confidentiality
5. There are fewer pressures for the psychologist to be all things to all people.
6. The psychologist has the opportunity to serve other agencies
7. It allows for the introduction of broader applications and newer psychological techniques.

#### Disadvantages

1. A 'distance' or a barrier between the psychologist and the staff tends to exist because the law enforcement officers form a 'closed society'.

2. The range of services is generally capped at the narrowest level, for fiscal and administrative reasons.
3. Psychologists rarely get complete feedback on the services they provide
4. There is less opportunity for research
5. The psychologist is viewed as an outsider and in some instances does not get the full story as to how and why services are being requested. (The Open University of Hong Kong, 2001)

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

To whom should the psychological consultant report? State reasons for your response.

Well done, let us continue.

### 3.3 The In-House (Staff) Psychologist

The psychologist who is a staff member in a law enforcement agency has certain advantages as a member of the establishment. There is a ready access to confidential personnel information. The psychologist acquires credibility and confidence as member of the department.

#### Advantages

Salary is predictable.

There are health and retirement benefits.

There is a sense of identification and involvement with the organization. The Psychologist knows the clear-cut lines of authority and his or her responsibilities.

The psychologist learns the unspoken and unwritten rules that are practicalised.

It is easier to initiate new kinds of services, by first exploring them informally.

The psychologist is able to develop a network that helps in dealing with conflicts and opportunities.

#### Disadvantages

The psychologist is a staff member subject to the bureaucratic stresses and the antagonisms of entrenched staff members who may feel threatened by 'psychology'

The staff member may be overwhelmed with requests and demands for service far beyond his/her realistic capabilities.

Along with other law enforcement staff members, the psychologist is subject to a host of minor criticisms and resentment.

Continual stresses and pressure occur as the psychologist deals with expectations and demands of staff members that may involve serious ethical dilemmas.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt what policing involves. You have therefore learnt that the psychologist may be a consultant in police organizations. We also learnt the advantages and disadvantages of the psychologist who is a staff member in a law enforcement agency.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

1. What you have learnt in this unit concerns what policing involves.
2. In some cases this will involve a psychologist working within the organization, but in others it may involve psychological theories and principles being incorporated into the training of police officers at various stages.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. a. List any 4 groups of citizens with whom the police interacts
- b. State one specific instance in which psychology may be of use to the police
- c. Mention 2 advantages and 2 disadvantages of a psychologist as a consultant

#### 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Reiser T. & Klyver M. (1987). Training Police Officers to detect Deceptive Eye-Witness Statements, *Social Behaviour*, 2, 1-17.

The Open University of Hong Kong (2001).

## UNIT 5 PERCEPTION: A BASIC PROCESS

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Concept of Perception
  - 3.2 Factors Affecting Perception
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, we discussed application of psychology to policing. The unit also served to introduce us to other units in this course. You can now identify groups of citizens with whom the police interact. In addition, you can explain the advantages and disadvantages of a psychologist serving as consultant. Time is now ripe for you to study another interesting and relevant unit: perception: a basic process. We will now consider what is meant by perception. Let us take a close look at what other content you should learn in this unit as specified in the objectives below:

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- define the concept of perception; and
- identify the factors affecting perception

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Concept of Perception

Perception is a psychological operation that is basic to the determination of terminal human behaviour. It is important for you to note that without any satisfactory perception of this precise nature of the stimulus objects or things, there cannot be accurate cognition. Without Cognition, there can be no learning. It is therefore likely that wrong percepts may lead to wrong or mistaken concepts, and hence the psychology of perception becomes so

basic a topic in any introductory text of educational psychology. In addition, the psychology of perception and attention are closely interlinked and the understanding of their functioning becomes very relevant considered from the teacher's point of view.

Perception implies the psychological process occurring in the brains of the organisms. This leads to the organization and interpretation-of sensory information received from the stimulus or stimuli. Perception mechanisms include analysis, synthesis, and integration of sensory information. When several individuals confront an object or thing in their environment, the input of information that impinges their respective sense organs, for example, eyes, ears, and so on, is the same for every individual, though they perceive differently (Mukherjee, 1978).

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

In your own words, explain what you understand by perception.

Let us go on with our discussion. Various explanations can be offered as to why individuals perceive differently even when they are all confronted with the same stimulus. Hebb suggested a model to understand this feature of individual differences in the perceiving process which with some modifications is represented in figure 1.

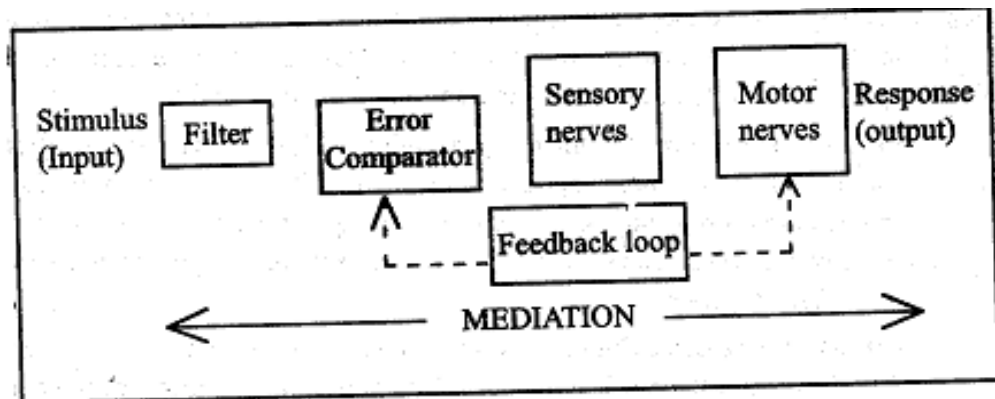


Fig. 1: Model of Perception Mechanism

It is seen from the above model that the input of information from the stimulus is apt to be same for every individual. But something must be happening within the organism that tends to alter the organization and interpretation of the information till it is responded by the organism as perception of the stimulus. The entire process of filtering the whole range of information, sensations, and motor activities of the nerves including the

features of comparison of errors in interpretation before the response (perception) is formed, may be termed as 'mediation'.

Since the individuals are likely to differ among themselves in their mediation mechanisms, they perceive differently the same stimulus object. Further, you must understand that the action of the 'filter' in the above model is to allow only the relevant aspects of the information bits to the organism. In any perceiving situation, the individuals are confronted with a host of stimuli some of which are irrelevant and some relevant. Let us cite an example when a teacher is making some statements in the classroom, some children may be talking with one another, and the children who are attentive to what their teacher is saying will certainly filter the conversation of their classmates, and thus the irrelevant aspects of the stimulus situation will be discounted.

Moreover, the teacher's statements may have several points -a, b, and c, for example, and a thorough understanding demands that all these points must be perceived satisfactorily. It is usually noticed how some of the children miss some of these points thereby achieving a somewhat stunted perception of the whole situation. It is now necessary for us to consider the factors that influence individual perception.

### 3.2 Factors Affecting Perception

#### Stimulus Configuration Factors

Gestalt school of psychology, a school of the psychology of perception, originating from Germany, has made a significant contribution in showing how different configurations of the stimuli in the environment lead to easier perception. The following are some of the important factors influencing perception:

- i. **Grouping of the Stimuli:** When many stimuli of different types are presented to the individuals, it is found that grouping of the stimuli aids perception. For example in classroom teaching, the children will perceive better if the materials to be learned are presented in some well organized groups of similar types, shape or cases, and categories.
- ii. **Similarity of the Stimuli:** Similar stimuli elements will be more easily perceived than dissimilar ones. In the teaching of mathematics, it will help if the mathematics teacher can classify the problems of a mathematics exercise into sets of similar problems.

- iii. **Proximity of the Stimuli:** If the stimuli elements are in close proximity to one another, the perception becomes an easier process than when they are remotely associated. In blackboard presentation of any teaching materials, it is a bad habit, if one aspect of the information is written in one corner of the board, and another aspect in another corner of the board.

### Attention and Perception

Human perception is a selective process. We cannot attend to more than one thing at a time and perceive all at the same time. For example when you are listening to a person talking to you, you do not attend to any other person talking at the same time.

You tend to select that stimulus information in which you are interested or directed to attend. The unattended messages tend to be filtered out, and the model of perception represented in Figure I explains this point. If teaching can be made interesting then there is no reason why the children in the classroom should fail to attend. It is true that none of us can keep attention fixed at a thing or object for longer than a few. A simple experiment will show the validity of the above statement.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

When you are reading this unit, take a pencil in your hand and hold it a foot away from you, trying to keep your attention on it for as long a time as you possibly can. During this period of your voluntary attention, you will soon find so many different things or thoughts crossing your mind. Since without attention, meaningful perception may not be achieved, it is now necessary to consider the ways and means which would facilitate attention of the children. Of the various factors facilitating attention of individuals, the following may be cited.

- a. **Novelty of the Stimulus:** A novel situation or stimulus will at once draw the attention of the person confronted with such a situation.
- b. **Repetition of the Stimulus:** A stimulus word or sentence or figure will be attended to if the same is repeated frequently.
- c. **Intensity of the Stimulus:** A high pitched sound or a visual stimulus with a high intensity of illumination will be more attractive for attention than either a low pitched sound or a less illuminated visual stimulus.
- d. **Size of the Stimulus:** If the visual stimulus is large and clear, then it will facilitate attention of the onlookers.



- e. **Contrasting Stimulus:** If the stimuli appear in contrast with some other stimuli at the same time, then the contrasting features of the stimuli would very likely attract the attention of the subjects.

The importance of the above factors in securing attention of human beings has long been recognized in the fields of commercial advertisement in the press or on television. Each advertiser makes use of one or more features of the stimuli to secure attention of his potential buyers. It is also true that many aspects of our day to day perception take place without our being aware of the presence of the stimuli in our environment. This is so evident when we recall that signboard or that particular advertisement on the screen or magazine which says: 'Don't buy our product', etc. Here we notice how a subtle and contrasting message was deliberately put in so that our attention is automatically directed to the message. This is so because our normal expectation about all commercial advertisements lies in the presence of a message exactly opposite in character where we expect to see or hear: 'Buy our product because it is so and so, etc'.

If commercial advertisers can make use of these important psychological findings to draw the attention of their customers, then there is no reason why the teachers should fail to secure the attention of even the most inattentive pupils of their classes. Blackboard diagrams, writings, teacher's utterances and so on, during the imparting of lessons, can at random make use of any or all of the above features to keep their pupils interested and attentive during the lesson hours.

### Personality Factors

Besides the above factors affecting perception, there are other factors which differ from individual to individual, and these influence individual perception to a considerable extent. For example, individual's interests, values, and cultural backgrounds. Their experiences in life also differ, and these experiences generate expectations among them. It is for these reasons that we should consider each of these factors separately, viz:

- i. **Learning Style and Perception:** Some individuals are reflective in their learning style, and they take a much longer time to perceive a stimulus or a stimulus pattern. They are usually more accurate in their recall of the perceived stimuli, but if the stimuli are presented only for a short while then these individuals are likely to miss out a lot of the details of the stimulus though recalling with accuracy the part of the stimulus situation reflected over.

Contrasted with these individuals are those who are called 'impulsive' in their learning style. These individuals are quicker in their perception though they are generally inaccurate in their later reproductions of the stimulus situations. Reflective pupils learn well if the teacher is patient with them.

They are usually good in mathematics and problem solving types of subjects, while the impulsive ones are those who need special care especially if the topic of learning is complex, that is, problem solving.

- ii. Motivation and Perception: Individuals perceive things according to their motivation and needs. Children who are motivated to learn will perceive more easily the lesson materials than those who are not so motivated to learn.
- iii. Interests, Values and Perception: Individuals tend to perceive according to their interests and values. We frequently come across children who do not seem to bother with what goes on during teaching. It may be that such children do not seem to possess ~e relevant interests or values with the topic of the lessons in the classrooms. There is therefore the need to modify the interests of such children.
- iv. Culture and Perception: Individuals are influenced by their respective culture in their perception. In teaching a group of students coming from various cultures, great care ought to be taken by the teachers in their teaching and dealing with the various expectations of these children till they settle down accepting the norms of the country.
- v. Experience and Perception: There is evidence that, we tend to perceive according to our experience, as we tend to select from a host of competing stimuli only those which satisfy our experience.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit you have learnt what perception is; you have therefore learnt factors affecting perception. You have also learnt stimulus configuration factors, attention factors, and personality factors.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

1. What you have learnt in this unit concerns the process of perception.
2. It can be said that perception is due to the organization of the sensory information of the data from the stimulus objects.

3. The model explaining perception mechanism shows why individuals differ in perception even when confronted with the same stimulus at the same time
4. Besides, there are various factors that tend to influence perception, for example, Gestalt factors of stimulus configurations, factors of attention, and personality factors.

## 6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. a. Define perception.
- b. List the stimulus configuration factors.
- c. List any 4 attention factors affecting perception.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Hebb, D.O. (1949). *The Organization of Behaviour*. John Wiley. New York..

Mukherjee, A. (1978). *Educational Psychology*. K.P. Basu Publishing Co. Calcutta, India.

## MODULE 3

Unit 1	Impression Formation
Unit 2	Understanding some Important Factors in Person Perception and Impression Formation
Unit 3	Personality Trait Inferences about what the Person is like
Unit 4	Understanding and Attributing Causes to Others' Behaviour
Unit 5	Accuracy of Judgment

### UNIT 1 IMPRESSION FORMATION

#### CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
	3.1 General Principles
	3.2 The Information we use to form Impression
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Readings

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In unit 5, we discussed perception a basic process. The unit also served to introduce us to other units in this course. You can now define the concept of perception. You can also identify and explain the factors affecting perception. We are now ready to discuss another unit you will find very interesting and applicable: impression formation. Let us take a look at what other content you should learn in this unit as specified in the objectives below.

#### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

state the general principles of impression formation; and  
describe the type of information that you may use.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 General Principles

Two freshmen who are destined to be roommates arrive at college and meet for the first time. Each one's personality -how easy each one is to get along with, how considerate each is -will have an important effect on the other's life. In the first few minutes of their meeting, each tries to form an impression of the other because they know they will be spending a great deal of time together during the year. How late does each one stay studying at night? What kind of music does the other like? How does each feel about parties in the room? They try to find out as much about each other as they can. People use whatever information that is available to form impressions of others -to make judgments about their personalities or hypotheses about the kind of persons they are. In thinking about how people form impressions of others, it is useful to keep in mind six quite simple and general principles:

1. People form impressions of others quickly, on the basis of minimal information and go on to impute general traits to them.
2. Perceivers pay special attention to the most salient features of a person, rather than paying attention to everything. We notice the qualities that make a person distinctive or unusual.
3. Processing information about people involves perceiving some coherent meaning in their behaviour. To some degree, we use the context of a person's behaviour to infer its meaning, rather than interpreting the behaviour in isolation.
4. We organize the perceptual field by categorizing or grouping stimuli. Rather than seeing each person as a separate individual, we tend to see people as members of groups -a person wearing white lab coat is a doctor, even though she may have features that make her quite different from other doctors,
5. We use our enduring cognitive structures to make sense of people's behaviour. Upon identifying a woman as a doctor, we use our information about doctors more generally to infer the meaning of her behaviour.
6. A perceiver's own needs and personal goals influence how he or she perceives others. For example, the impression you form of someone you meet only once is different from the impression you form about your new roommate (Shoda & Mischel, 1993).

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Think of your arrival at the study centre for your Distance Learning Programme. You meet a fellow student who also intends to use the library where you also intend to work. You find out he registers for the same course as you. In the first minutes of your meeting, state the impressions you may have of the fellow student.

Well done. Let us continue our discussion

### 3.2 The Information we use to Form Impression

Our knowledge and expectations about others are determined by the impressions we form of them. A glance at someone's picture or at an individual passing on the street gives us ideas about the kind of person he/she is. Even learning a name tends to conjure up-images of what its owner is like. When two people meet, if only for an instant, they form impression of each other. With more contact, they form fuller and richer impressions .that determine how they behave towards each other, how much they like each other, whether they will associate often, and so on. The following is worthy of note.

#### Physical Cues

As this discussion implies, generally we draw on other people's appearance and behaviour to infer qualities about them. Such factors can lead us to form remarkably detailed impressions. The observation that a person is wearing conservative clothes, for example, may lead to the imputation of a variety of other characteristics, such as being conservative politically. We also use behaviour to draw inferences about people. We observe a fellow distance learner helping a primary school pupil across the street and infer that he is kind.

#### Salience

People direct their attention to those aspects of the perceptual field that stand out the figure rather than to the background or setting the ground. This is termed the 'figure-ground principle'. In the case of impression formation, the main implication is that most salient cues will be used most heavily. If a distance learner appears at the study centre in a wheelchair the first day of the first semester, everyone else in the library, everyone else in the room is likely to form an impression that is most heavily influenced by

the fact of the person's physical disability. Clothing, hair style, and perhaps even age and sex will be secondary.

Let us ask ourselves a relevant question: What determines the salience of a cue as opposed to another? Brightness, noisiness, motion, or novelties are the most powerful conditions, according to the Gestalt principles of object perception (discussed before). A man in a bright red sweater stands out in a crowded classroom, and the sweater is his most salient feature. The student who stands up shouting in the middle of a lecture and leaves the room draws our attention because she is noisy and moving and almost everything else in the classroom is quiet and stationary. We can therefore say that anything that makes a cue objectively unusual in its context makes it subjectively more salient and more likely to be noticed.

It is to be noted that salience has a number of consequences for person perception. First, salient behaviours draw more attention than do subtler, less obvious ones, (Taylor & Fiske, 1978). Second, salience influences perceptions of causality in that more salient people are seen as having influence over their social context (Taylor & Fiske, 1975). Let us cite other example. The student who sits in the front row of the classroom and asks an occasional question is more likely to be perceived as dominating the discussion than we the student who sits 'in the back and contributes just as much.

Salience increases the coherence of impression. If the salient person is a member of a stereotyped group, such as 'drug addict', he/she will be seen as possessing other stereotyped attributes of that group, such as criminal tendencies, weak moral character, and a lack of honesty.

It is important for you to note that salient stimuli draw the most attention. They are seen as the most causally powerful, they produce the most extreme evaluative judgments. The effects of salience are sufficiently interesting and exciting to attract the perceiver's attention.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

With the use of principles 1, think of situations where you can form impression of others?

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt what the general principles of forming impressions of others are. You have therefore learnt the information we use

to form impressions. The most important of these are physical cues and salience cues.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

1. What you have learnt in this unit concerns general principles of impression formation
2. You also learnt the information we use to form impressions.
3. Amongst the most important of such information are physical cues and salience

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain any three general principles of impression formation.
2. Briefly describe physical cues and salience as some of the information we use to form impression.

## 7.0 REFERENCE/FURTHER READINGS

Shoda, R. & Mischel T. (1993). *Advances in Social Psychology*, Academic Press, San Diego.

Taylor, L. & Fiske, S. (1975). *Social Psychology*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, U.S.A.

Taylor, L. & Fiske, S. (1975). *Human Perception*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, U.S.A.



## UNIT 2 UNDERSTANDING SOME IMPORTANT FACTORS IN PERSON PERCEPTION AND IMPRESSION FORMATION

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Person Perception
  - 3.2 Important Factors in Person Perception
  - 3.3 The Most Important Aspects of Impressions
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, we discussed impression formation. The unit also served to introduce us to other units in this course. You can now state the general principles of impression formation. You can also describe the type of information that you may use. We are now ready to discuss another interesting unit: understanding some important factors in person perception and impression formation. We will now consider person perception: impression formation. Let us take a look at what other content you should learn in this unit as specified in the objectives below.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- describe person perception;
- identify important factors in person perception; and
- explain the most important aspects of impression.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Person Perception

While perception implies the use of direct sensory information, person perception is concerned with the process by which impressions, opinions,

and feelings about other persons are formed. Often an opinion about another person is not based on direct information but on statements by others or knowledge of the person, received from other sources. It is important for you to note that opinions, feelings, and impressions are rather on subjective processes, and inferences drawn on the basis of such subjective judgments go to constitute what person perception is all about.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

State the opinions you have of the Librarian at your study center.

Let us go on with our discussion.

There are three sources in forming impressions of personality which are stimulus information, perceiver variables, and impressions of stimulus person. Stimulus information comprises of the physical appearance of the person, and his overt verbal and nonverbal behaviour. Perceiver variables consist of the perceiver's feelings and cognitions towards stimulus, his self-concept, and his implicit personality theory and stereotype. The last source consists of perception of causality, intent, justifiability, attribution of personality traits and other cognitions towards the stimulus person.

As you can see from the list of the factors above, most of these sources apart from the source of stimulus information belong to subjective judgment of the perceiver.

There are however the following modes of perceiving others, viz:

- a. From the point of view of the outward appearance and other superficial characteristics of the person.
- b. From the point of view of central traits of the person, for example, aggressive, shy, and so on.
- c. From the point of view of a cluster of congruous traits of the person, for example strong and bold, polite and kind, and so on.
- d. From the point of view of a variety of traits not necessarily congruous of the person, for example, polite but cruel, kind but aggressive, and so on.

The above modes of person perception will be clear if we consider the following factors influencing person perception in the next section of our discussion.

### 3.2 Important Factors in Person Perception

- a. **Verbal Cues:** In a study conducted by Asch (1986), subjects who were all college students, were asked to write a brief characterisation of the person for whom the following traits were given, for example, energetic, assured, talkative, cold, ironical, impulsive, and persuasive. In spite of the paucity of information, all subjects readily accepted the task of completing the sketch of the person. Their responses showed significant differences in making use of the traits, though they were all given the same list of traits. Some perceivers saw the hypothetical person as cold, inquisitive and ironical, others perceived him as energetic and assured, and some perceived him as talkative, and persuasive. In all cases, there was one predominant trait that characterized the hypothetical person. There was also evidence that new traits were invented, and ascribed to the person.
- b. **Non-Verbal Cues:** As a source of impression formation, physiognomy has been studied more systematically than other forms of non-verbal stimulus information. In one study, facial photographs of women having narrowed eyes, a relaxed and full mouth, and a smooth skin, were perceived as more feminine and sexually attractive than others of women lacking these features (Secord, 1955). The classic example that we tend to form opinions about others from their appearances, is to be found from the frequently quoted passage from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* Act 1, scene 2:

Let me have men about me that are fops sleek-headed men and such as sleep O' nights: You Cassius has a lean and hungry look; he thinks too much: such men are dangerous.

Let us cite another example: Sheldon's (1982) theory of personality on the body types, like, ectomorphic, mesomorphic, and endomorphic is a relevant example.

- c. **The Social Stereotype:** We often find ourselves having only categorical information concerning a person. We often categorise a person as a policeman, a teacher, or an old man. In all such categorizing processes, society selects the dominant traits identifying various categories of persons, for example, age sex, membership of group, or some behaviour patterns. It is important for you to note that stereotyping has also two other characteristics:

- i. perceivers agree on the attributes that the persons in the category possess, and
  - ii. a discrepancy exists between the attributed traits and actual traits.
- d. **Perceiver Variables:** Bruner and Tagiuri (1964) referred to the idea that perceivers generally have a set of biases in judging others in their 'implicit personality theories'. That is, without realizing it, the perceiver has a theory about what other people are like, and this theory influences his perception. For example, an individual may believe that a person who is friendly is also honest, though other persons may associate friendliness with other traits, each of them being influenced from his own experience or learning.

In another experiment, a group of children were taught the same lesson by a 'popular teacher' who was instructed to make as many 'mistakes' in teaching as possible, and by another 'unpopular teacher' who was instructed to give a 'copy-book lesson'. A post-text was given to the children asking them to rate the teaching of the two teachers, and it was found that the children rated the 'popular' teacher who made mistakes during teaching as a 'better' teacher than the other who made no mistakes at all during teaching. It is obvious from such findings that individual biases towards the other person had influenced their perception of the teaching methods of the two different teachers. Many studies have shown that perceivers like persons they assume to be more similar to themselves than persons towards whom they feel neutral or whom they dislike. Remember that no hard and fast generalisation can be made from either of these opposite types of evidence.

Sometimes, preferences are shown on the basis of similarity, for example, successful teachers tend to perceive the teaching profession as the only honest profession worth doing; they even marry within their profession. There are cases when an individual who is withdrawn and shy, and knows that he is not rewarded by others for being so, tends to admire one who is opposite, that is talkative, self-confident, and-persuasive. It is to be noted that in the latter case, the preferences are based on compatibility and admiration, and admiration, we all know, arises from one's accepted knowledge or belief of one's inferiority in some respect. You must also remember that one's self-concept influences one's person perception.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Distinguished between stimulus information and perceiver's variables.

You should commend yourself for actively participating in our discussion. Let us go on.

### 3.3 The Most Important Aspect of Impression Evaluation

The most important and powerful aspect of first impression is ‘evaluation.’ Do we like or dislike a person? Put more formally, the evaluative dimension is the most important of a small number of basic dimensions that organize our unified impressions of other people.

This point was shown in a study by Osgood (1957) using a measurement procedure called the semantic differential. In this study, participants were given a list of trait pairs and asked to indicate which trait more closely described particular persons and objects. The list consists of such trait pairs as happy- sad, good- bad, strong- weak, and warm-cold. It is important for you to note that these underlying dimensions accounted for most of the ratings: potency (strong-weak), and activity (active-passive). Once we know that someone rate ‘mother’ as very good, moderately, strong, and somewhat passive, we learn little more about these perceptions of ‘mother’ by asking for additional ratings. It is to be noted that evaluation is the main dimension that underlines perceptions; potency and activity play lesser roles.

#### Positively Bias

A general evaluative bias in person perception is to evaluate people positively; a phenomenon termed the positively bias. (Sear, 1983a). Let us cite an example to enhance your level of understanding. In one study, students rated 97% of their professors in college favorably (that is above ‘average’ on a rating scale), despite all the mixed experiences students have in their college classes (Sear, 1983a).

There is a hypothesis about why people are evaluated so favorably. It has been suggested that people feel better when they are surrounded by good things, pleasant experiences, nice people, good weather, and so on.

There is a special positively bias in people’s evaluation of others, which Sears describes as the person-positively bias. People feel more similar to other people than they do to impersonal objects and therefore extend to them a more generous evaluation.

### Negativity Effect

During impression formation, we tend to pay special attention to negative information. And when we come to form an overall impression of the person, that negative information is weighed more heavily. That is, a negative trait affects an impression more than a positive trait, everything else being equal. This has been called the negativity effect. The main explanation for this effect is based on the figure-ground principle. As just noted, positive evaluations of other people are much more common than negative evaluations. Negative traits, which are more unusual, are therefore more distinctive. People may simply pay more attention to those negative qualities and give them more weight.

It is important for you to note that the impact of negative information depends in part on what kind of judgment is being made about a person. The negativity bias is very strong for moral traits. Thus, if a person engages in dishonest behaviour that is assumed to be very informative about the person's underlying morality. Positive behaviours, in contrast, are perceived to be performed by both moral and immoral persons.

### Emotional Information

As it is true for negative information, perceivers notice emotionally charged information and make great use of it in their judgments about others. That is we infer what people are like from the emotions they express. In fact, emotional information is one of the most difficult sources of information to ignore when perceiving others.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt person perception. You have therefore learnt important factors in person perception. In addition you have learnt the most important aspects of impressions: evaluation, positively bias, negativity effect and emotional information.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

1. What you have learnt in this unit concerns person perception: impression formation.
2. You also learnt important factors in person perception.
3. The most important aspects of impressions were learnt.
4. You have therefore learnt the process of putting together information about people.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Describe three sources in forming impressions of personality
2. State 4 modes of perceiving others.

## 7.0 REFERENCE/FURTHER READINGS

Asch, S.E. (1986). 'Forming Impressions of Personality' *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 47,258-290.

Bruner, J.S. & Tagiuri R. (1964). 'The Perception of People' in: Lindzey, R. (ed). *Handbook of Social Psychology*. Addison-Wesley. Mass.

Osgood, R. (1957). *Social Psychology*. Prentice Hall Inc. Chicago. Sears, T.

(1983a). *Advances in Social Psychology*. Longman, London. Secord, P.F.

(1955). 'Personalities in Faces' *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*. 50,238-242.

Sheldon, W.H. (1982). *The Values of Temperament: A Psychology of Constitutional Differences*. Harper Row. New York.

## UNIT 3 PERSONALITY TRAIT INFERENCES ABOUT WHAT THE PERSON IS LIKE

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 From Behaviours to Traits
  - 3.2 Categorisation
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In unit 2, we discussed understanding some important factors in person perception and impression formation. Also, the unit served to introduce us to other units in this course. You can now describe person perception. You can also identify important factors in person perception and explain the most important aspects of impressions. We are now ready to discuss another interesting unit: personality traits inferences about what the person is like. We will now consider traits. Let us take a look at what other content you should learn in this unit as specified in the objectives below.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- identify behaviour traits; and
- explain categorization

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 From Behaviour to Traits

We will move from observable information, such as appearance, behaviour, even gestures, to personality trait inferences about what the person is like. Note that referring to traits is a more economical and general way of describing a person than is referring to behaviour. If someone asked you what your roommate (in the secondary school) was like and you had to



recount each behaviour you could remember, it would take you a long time and the person to whom you were describing your roommate to might not become much better informed in the process. Instead, you would use traits to summarize aspect of your roommate.

He was a good-natured, sloppy night person with a penchant for loud rock music’.

This process appears to occur spontaneously, even automatically, as behaviour is perceived. These traits, in turn, can act as indicators for predicting future behaviour (Newman 1996).

The fact that we move from behaviours to traits so quickly is compounded by the fact that traits imply each other. On observing a person patting a dog in a friendly manner, we may infer that she is kind, and from our inference of kindness, we may infer that she is friendly, warm, and helpful to her friends. From a very simple incident of behaviour, then we can infer almost a whole personality. The implications that traits have for other traits is called ‘implicit personality theory’.

People use traits to describe others from the moment they first observe them, although the more they know someone, the more likely they are to use traits to describe the person (park, 1986 cited in Taylor 2000). Nonetheless, there are individual differences in the degree to which people make trait inferences. People who demonstrate a high need for structure, that is a need to have organized and distinct patterns of information, are more likely to make continuous inferences than individuals who do not demonstrate this quality.

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

- a. Which traits will you use to describe the principal of your secondary school?
- b. Which traits will you use to describe the English language teacher in your SSS III class?

Well done. Let us go on with our discussion.

#### Competence and Sociability

The traits inferences that we make about other people fall out along two important dimensions:

1. We tend to evaluate others in terms of their task-related qualities or intellectual competence.
2. We tend to evaluate others in terms of their interpersonal or social qualities.

It is important for you to note that within these general dimensions, we also make more detailed impressions or judgments about a person, such as how he treats his parents versus his friends or how good he is at physics versus music.

### Central Traits

According to Asch (1986), debate has raged over whether some traits are more central than others. Let us cite examples to make our discussion clearer and more understandable. The pair of traits, warm-cold, appears to be associated with a great number of other characteristics, whereas the pair, polite-blunt is associated with fewer. Traits that are highly associated with many other characteristics have been called central traits.

In a unique demonstration of their importance of traits, Kelley (1950) gave students in psychology course personality trait descriptions of a guest lecturer before he spoke. Half the students received a description containing the word 'warm', and the other half were told the speaker was 'cold'; in all other respects, the lists were identical. The lecturer then came into the class and led a discussion for about 20 minutes, after which the students were asked to give their impressions of him. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Effect of 'Warm' and 'Cold' Description on Ratings of other Qualities

Quality	Warm	Cold
Self-centred	6.3	9.6
Unsociable	5.6	10.4
Unpopular	4.0	7.4
Formal	6.3	9.6
Irritable	9.4	12.0
Humorless	8.3	11.7
Ruthless	8.6	11.0

Source: Kelley (1950:434)

Note: The higher the rating, the more the person was perceived as having the quality.

It is to be noted that there were great differences between the impressions formed by students who were told the lecturer was warm and those who were told he was cold. In addition, those students who expected the speaker to be warm tended to interact with him more freely and to initiate more conversations with him. Remember that different descriptions affected not only the students' impressions of the lecturer, but also their behaviour towards him.

### The Perseverance of Traits

Once we have made personality trait inferences about the meaning of another person's behaviour, those inferences take on a life of their own. Let us cite an example. You may recall your impression of your friend as kind and helpful long after you have forgotten the specific instance when she helped the elderly person across the street. Asked if your friend is kind and helpful, you are more likely to refer to your more prior trait judgment than to a specific event. Trait inferences, then, are made quickly, great virtually spontaneously, on the basis of minimal information about a person and then persists long after the information on which they were originally based has been forgotten.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

- i. Will you describe your best friend as 'cold'?
- ii. Will you describe your best friend as 'warm'?
- iii. Will you describe your best friend as 'cold' and 'warm'?

Fine, we must continue our discussion now.

### 3.2 Categorisation

Social' categories, such as gender, tribe, religion, and social class influence our perceptions as well. Perceivers do not respond to salient stimuli in isolation; they immediately and spontaneously perceive stimuli as part of some group or category.

Let us give an example. We do not see that unshaven, dirty, disorganized man in the park with worn-out shoes and a couple of old shopping bags as just another human being; we immediately categorize him as a derelict. When we go to a basketball game, we usually categorize people immediately as members of one or another of five social groups: members of one team or the other, referees, cheerleaders, team supporters and spectators.

The categorization or grouping process is immediate and spontaneous and does not take any time or thought. At the crudest level we categorize on the basis of natural similarities appearance. We tend to assign people to the category of 'men' or 'women' on the basis of their physical characteristics, usually culturally defined differences in appearance (hair length, make-up, type of clothing.)

At this stage, we need to ask a relevant question. What are the consequences of categorization? Determining that an individual is a member of a particular category may lead to social judgments about that person that are consistent with the category-based stereotype. The observation that someone is a Yoruba may call up a stereotype about Yorubas in general. In addition, categorizing a person also speeds information processing time: For example, Brewer et. al. (1981 cited in Taylor, 2000) presented participants with photos of people in three categories - 'grandmother', 'young woman', and 'senior citizen'-along with verbal labels clearly identifying their category. Then they presented the participants with additional information about each target person and measured how long the participants took to incorporate the information into their impressions.

It is to be noted that if we place a person into category, often our impression of the person is based on that category, and the person's individual characteristics are assimilated to the overall impressions we have of that category.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you learnt behaviours, you have therefore moved from behaviours to traits. In addition, you have learnt categorization and how social categories influence our perception.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

1. What you have learnt in this unit concerns how we move from behaviour to traits.
2. You also learnt that social categories, such as gender, tribe, religion and social class, influence our perceptions.
3. You have therefore learnt that perceivers immediately and spontaneously perceive stimuli as part of some group or category.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. a. On what basis are traits inferences made?
- b. If you go to a football game, state six (6) categories of people you will see and
- c. State how people use traits

## 7.0 REFERENCE/FURTHER READINGS

Asch, S.E. (1986). 'Forming Impression of Personality' *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 47,258-90.

Kelley, H. H. (1950). *Journey of Personality* 18,434.

Newman, R.D. (1996). *The Acquaintance Process*. Holt, Rinehart & Winston. New York.

Taylor, S.E., Peplau, L.A. & Sears, D.O. (2000). *Social Psychology*. Prentice Hall Inc. New Jersey, USA.

## UNIT 4 UNDERSTANDING AND ATTRIBUTING CAUSES TO OTHERS' BEHAVIOUR

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Goals
  - 3.2 Affective Cues
  - 3.3 Attributing the causes of Behaviour
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit we discussed personality traits inferences about what the person is like. Also, the unit served to introduce us to other units in the course. You can now describe competence and sociability. You can now move from observable information to personality traits. We are now ready to discuss another interesting and practical unit: understanding and attributing causes to others' behaviour. We will now consider behaviour. Let us take a look at what other content you will learn in this unit as specified in the objectives below.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- identify the goals we have for interacting with people;
- explain affective cues; and
- describe the causes of behaviour.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Goals

So far, we have discussed person perception as if it were a relatively rational process of taking in information about others and organizing it according to particular principles. Our goals and feelings about other people

also influence the information that we gather about them. One such factor that influences how we gather information about others is the goals we have for interacting with them. In one study, (Klein & Kunda, 1992 cited in Taylor et. al. 2000) participants were told that another student would be either their partner or opponent in a forthcoming game. Those who expected the student to be their partner were motivated to see him as very high in ability, whereas those who expected him to be an opponent were motivated to see him as low in ability. After interacting with the student in a simulated quiz show during which the student answered some questions correctly and others incorrectly, the participant's impression corresponded to their motivations. Those who expected the student to be their partner thought he was smarter than those who expected him to be their opponent. This occurred even though the student exhibited exactly the same pattern of answers in both conditions.

Goals have also been manipulated experimentally by telling participants either to form a coherent impression of a person (impression formation goal) or to try to remember the separate bits of information they might be exposed to (remembering goal). Generally speaking, under impression goal conditions, people form more organized impressions of others than when their goal is simply to remember the information (Matheson, et. al. 1991 cited in Taylor et. al. 2000).

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

List the goals you intend to achieve by applying and getting admitted into the National Open University of Nigeria to read the Diploma in HIV Education management programme.

Clap for yourself for your active participation in our discussion. Now, let us continue.

Anticipating future interactions with somebody creates very different social goals than simply trying to learn about that person, and research shows that people remember more and organize the information differently when they expect to interact with someone in the future.

Another important point you must remember is that the need to be accurate usually produces more extensive and less biased information gathering about a person. Chen et. al. (1996 cited in Taylor et. al. 2000) also reported that the need to be accurate generally leads to more thorough and systematic processing of information about people than is true under conditions when accuracy is not a goal.

The type of impression one forms of another person also depends on the kind of interaction one anticipates having with that individual. Outcome dependency that is, the situation in which achievement of an individual's own goals depends heavily on the behaviour of another person typically leads the individual to form a careful impression of the other. Participants whose goals are not dependent upon the behaviour of another person are more likely to form their impressions quickly and casually.

Another powerful goal is communication. The process of gathering information for another person greatly influences not only what information people communicate to that other person, but also the impression they finally form themselves.

Sedikides (1990) asked participants to form their own impressions of a target to a third individual. Communication goals completely determined the information that was provided to the third individual such that they overrode the participant's own impressions. In fact, participants actually reformulated their own impressions in the direction of the positive, negative, or neutral impression they had been instructed to convey.

When people communicate information about a target individual to a listener, they not only modify their own perceptions about the target, they systematically affect the impressions formed by the listener.

The influence of social goals on the kinds of impressions that people form of others is substantial. People who have a particular social goal when they interact with another person appear to make inferences that are consistent with their goals about the other person, even when they do not intend to do so or are completely unaware that they are doing so.

Try your hand on this question.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

How will you describe the process of gathering information on your study centre to another distance learner whom you come across in the bookshop?

Let us go on.

### 3.2 Affective Cues

Sometimes we use our internal state as a basis for judging other people, and this can lead to systematic errors. When people are emotional, they are more likely to attend to emotional information and use that in their



impression. Let us cite an example to drive the point home. When we are aroused, we tend to perceive other people in a more extreme manner than when we are not aroused (Stangor, 1990 cited in Taylor et. al. 2000). If you have just finished playing a table tennis game and you meet someone who strikes you as sleazy, your impression of the person as sleazy is likely to be more extreme than if you met the person having just come from reading a book.

Mood is another factor that can influence how another person is perceived. When we are in a good mood, we tend to see another person more positively, and when we are in a bad mood, we tend to view that person more negatively. The effects of mood appear to be stronger for judgments about unusual people than for more ordinary individuals. The reason is that unusual people elicit extensive processing; therefore more information is available, and there is a longer time for mood to have an influence (Forgas, 1992).

Mood may influence not only the content of impressions we form of others, but also the process we use in forming them. A negative mood makes people more likely to use piecemeal processing in impression formation than categorical processing, even when categorical information is available to them.

### 3.3 Attributing Causes to Behaviour

One of the most important influences we make about other people is why they behave as they do. What causes one individual to be shy at a party and another to be outgoing? What prompts a romantic breakup between two people who had seemed so close? Attribution theory is the area of psychology concerned with when and how people ask 'why' questions.

Theorizing about causal attributions that is, how and why people infer what causes what began with Heider (1958 cited in Taylor et. al. 2000). He argued that all human beings have two strong motives: the need to form a coherent understanding of the world and the need to control the environment. In order to achieve understanding and control, we need to be able to predict how people are going to behave. Otherwise, the world is random, surprising, and incoherent.

We are especially likely to make causal attribution when something unexpected or negative events create a need for greater predictability (Kanazawa, 1992, cited in Taylor et. al. 2000). To illustrate this point, researchers talked with distressed married couples who had come to a clinic

for marital therapy. Each person was asked to list positive and negative events that had happened in their marriage and to indicate how frequently those events occurred. They were then asked their thoughts about the events, which were coded for the presence of causal attributions. The researchers found that the most attributional thoughts were made about the most distressing event: their partner's frequent negative behaviours or infrequent positive behaviours (Holtzworth et. al. 1985).

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit you have learnt about goals, you have therefore learnt about affective cues. In addition you have learnt about attributing causes to behaviour.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

1. What you learnt in this unit concerns goals and feelings about other people.
2. You also learnt affective cues.
3. Often we are in the position of wanting to know why a person committed a particular action. .
4. You have therefore learnt attributing causes to behaviour.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1.
  - a. State the reason the effects of mood appear to be stronger for judgments, about unusual people than for more ordinary individuals.
  - b. State the two strong motives that all human beings have and
  - c. What do you understand by outcome dependency in relation to impression one forms of another person?

#### 7.0 REFERENCE/FURTHER READINGS

Forgas, S.A. (1992). *Physique and Character*, Harcourt Brace, New York  
Holtz G.C.

Katona, G. & Hudson, L. (1985). *Social Behaviour: Its Elementary Forms*  
Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York,

Taylor, S. E., Peplau, L. A., & Sears D.O. (2000). *Social Psychology*.  
Prentice Hall Inc. New Jersey, USA.

## UNIT 5 ACCURACY OF JUDGMENTS

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Accurate Person Perception
  - 3.2 Cues used to make Judgments
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, we discussed understanding and attributing causes to others' behaviour. In addition the unit served to introduce us to other units in this course. You can now explain goals and affective cues. Time is now ripe for us to discuss a most interesting unit: accuracy of judgment. We will now consider the need for society to function smoothly. Let us take a closer look at what other content you should learn in this unit as specified in the objectives below.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

describe accurate person perception; and  
explain cues used to make judgment.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Accurate Person Perception

How accurately do people perceive others? As we will see, this is a thorny question. On the one hand, people must be reasonably accurate in their judgment of others for society to function as smoothly as it does. On the other hand, having considered various evaluative and cognitive subjects, the research suggests that under many circumstances, person perception may be quite inaccurate. The answer is that we are both accurate and inaccurate.

It is important for you to note that people perceive external visible attributes fairly accurately. A man in the blue uniform with a gun strapped to his side is a police officer, and we must treat him accordingly. Note that person perception becomes difficult when we try to infer internal states, such as traits, feelings, emotions, or personalities.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Complete the following statements.

- i. A man in a white top coat with a stethoscope on his neck is a person who works in an.....
- ii. A woman in a .....skirt suit wearing a white belt, putting on a pair of white shoes is a .....who works in the city.....

That is good of you. Let us go on with our discussion.

We will now identify and explain the cues used to make judgments

### 3.2 Cues used to make Judgments

#### The Eye of the Beholder

One of the most surprising aspects of person perception is the fact that different people observing the same individual can come to quite different conclusions about that person's personality. Thus observing a talkative, cheerful and outgoing young woman, one person may conclude that she is warm and appealing, while another may infer that she is shallow and rather silly. Not only do people emphasize different aspects of other people and their impressions, they often put information together in playful ways (Pack et. al., 1994 cited in Taylor et. al., 2000). This finding implies that the more complex and integrated our impression of someone becomes, the more likely it is to diverge from that of others.

An interesting study with children illustrates this point (Richardson et. al., 1965 cited in Taylor et. al., 2000). Each child was asked to describe all the other children in the camp. The experimenters then looked at the characteristics each child used in making descriptions of other children and the characteristics used for describing each child. They could then examine whether the same child was described the same way by most people or whether the same perceiver used the same characteristics to describe all the other children.

It is important for you to note that overall, the researchers found little agreement about which dimensions described any given child. Rather, each rater tended to use the same characteristics no matter which child he or she was describing. Older children and adults share more consistent perceptions of attributes and behaviour than is true for young children. Sometimes what we notice in another person is influenced more by our ways of looking at people than by that person's actual characteristics.

### Judging Personality

There is some research on how accurate people are in judging others' personality traits, such as dominance or sociability. Accuracy is found to be compromised by several factors.

First, people's perceptions of others are sometimes determined by their playful preferences for particular personality dimensions than by objective attributes of the person being evaluated.

Second, it is difficult to measure personality traits, and so it is difficult to establish the proper criteria for accuracy.

The third factor has to do with how consistent people's personality traits are, especially in predicting their behaviour. Note that often, personality traits predict behaviour in only a limited set of circumstances. Let us cite an example: If a man cheats at pool but is very honest in dealing with his co-workers and subordinates, is he an honest or dishonest person?

Some traits have behavioural manifestations that are especially observable. Observable traits show high levels of agreement. For example, people show a lot of agreement in their ratings of whether someone is extroverted or not. Accuracy has also been measured by whether a rater's judgments of another person match that person's own self-perception. For example, if you were asked to rate your senior secondary school roommate, Samuel's friendliness, your rating would be compared with Samuel's self-rating to see how much you agree. Generally speaking, agreement between peer ratings depends upon how well the two people are acquainted (Malloy & Albright, 1990 cited in Taylor et. al., 2000). When you know a person less well, agreement may be high on publicly visible qualities, but not on qualities less open to observation.

It is important for you to note that accurate perception of another person's attributes can be improved when we have information about situation in which the traits occur. For example, if people learn that an individual has a

particular goal in a situation, they are more likely to make a trait inference from observation of behaviour.

Surprisingly, even strangers are able to rate others in a manner consistent with those others' self-perceptions after relatively brief exposures to their behaviours. Sharing the same cultural background usually leads to more accurate inferences than if the perceiver and the perceived come from different cultures.

Remember that when we attempt to predict future behaviour, we fare rather badly. That is for the most part we are overconfident about predicting the behaviour of both other people and of ourselves (Ross, 1990 cited in Taylor, 2000). This inaccuracy seems to be due to two factors. First, when people express high confidence that certain things will happen to themselves or others in the future, it is rarely warranted.

As confidence increases, the gap between accuracy and confidence widens.

### Recognition of Emotions

Much of the work on the accuracy of person perception has focused on the recognition- of emotions on whether a person is happy or afraid, horrified or disgusted. In a typical study, a person is presented with a set of photographs of people portraying different emotions and asked to judge what those emotions are. More recent research has made use of video taped clips of emotional reactions. Research has now shown the virtual universal recognition of several facial expressions of emotion in both literate (Izard, 1971) and pre literate Friesen, (1969) cultures.

It is now time to ask a relevant question. Why are we fairly accurate in our perception of emotional state? (I know you are eager to read the answer to this question) In 1871, on the basis of his evolutionary theory, Charles Darwin proposed that facial expressions convey the same emotional states in all cultures. His argument was that universal expressions have evolved because they have great survival value: they allow animals to communicate emotions and thereby control the behaviour of others.

One reason why people are quite accurate in judging the emotional states of others may then be because all people use the same facial expression to show a given underlying emotion. People smile when they feel happy, grimace when they feel pain, frown when they are worried, and so on.

A number of empirical investigations have supported this point Craig and Patrick (1985) induced pain by immersing participants' hands and wrists into icy water just at freezing temperature. They found consistent responses across cultures in response to this task, including raising the cheeks and tightening the eyelids, raising upper eyelids, parting the lips, and closing the eyes or blinking.

It is to be noted that while not all individual emotions can be discriminated well, people can typically distinguish the major groups of emotions using facial cues. In an earlier study, Woodworth (1938 cited in Taylor et. al. 2000) suggested that emotions can be arranged on a continuum. The continuum of emotion is:

1. Happiness, joy
2. Surprise, amazement.
3. Fear
4. Sadness
5. Anger
6. Disgust, contempt
7. Interest, attractiveness

Two basic dimensions of emotional expression are pleasantness and arousal and people are reasonable judges of emotional states within the categories that these dimensions form. For example, positive emotions such as excitement and happiness are easily distinguished from negative ones such as fear, anger, and disgust. Among the positive emotions such as fear and anger can be distinguished from non arousing ones such as sadness.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt the need for society to function smoothly. You have therefore learnt accurate person perception. In addition, you have learnt cues used to make judgments.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

1. What you have learnt in this unit concerns the need for society to function smoothly.
2. You also learnt accurate person perception and cues used to make judgments: the eye of the beholder, judging personality and recognition of emotions.
3. People universally draw on the same highly specific cues for judging emotions.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. a. Why do we fare rather badly when we attempt to predict future behaviour?
- b. State the basis of this inaccuracy.
- c. Explain why we are fairly accurate in our perception of emotional states?
- d. Describe the continuum of emotions.

## 7.0 REFERENCE/FURTHER READINGS

Craig, S.A. & Patrick, T.D. (1985). *Principles of Behaviour*: Appleton-Century Crofts, New York.

Friesen, P. (1969). *The Basis of Social Behaviour*: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, London.

Izard, F. (1971). *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations*, Wiley, New York. Taylor, S.E.

Peplau, L.A. & Sears, D.O (2000). *Social Psychology*, Prentice Hall. Inc. New Jersey, USA.



## MODULE 4

Unit 1	The Problem of Deception
Unit 2	Socialization
Unit 3	Juvenile Delinquency
Unit 4	Behaviour Modification
Unit 5	Human Aggression

### UNIT 1 THE PROBLEM OF DECEPTION

#### CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
	3.1 Channels of Non-Verbal Communication
	3.2 Explanations for Deceptive Non-Verbal Cues
	3.3 Factors Influencing Deception Attempts
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Readings

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, we discussed accuracy of judgments. In addition, the unit served to introduce us to other units in this course. You can now describe person perception and explain cues used to make judgments. It is now time for us to discuss another interesting unit: the problem of deception. We will now consider non-verbal behaviour. Let us look at what other content you should learn in this unit as specified in the objectives below.

#### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- identify channels of communication;
- explain deceptive non-verbal cues; and
- list factors influencing deception attempts.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Channels of Non-Verbal Communication

It is frequently assumed that certain aspects of non-verbal behaviour are not under voluntary control. Thus a look, or glance, or tone of voice may be involuntary or unintentional. However, a number of provisos need to be kept in mind. First not all channels of non-verbal communication are alike, some seem to be more under voluntary control than others. Leakage cues are defined as those non-verbal acts which give away information the sender wishes to conceal, while deception cues are those non-verbal acts which indicate that deception is occurring without revealing the concealed content of the message.

Second, a number of factors influence success in deceiving others. Let us cite an example. Highly motivated deceivers seem more likely to fail to deceive observers, while experienced and confident liars and those with the opportunity to plan their deceit seem to be more adept at deceiving.

Thirdly, situational factors such as the degree of stressfulness of the situation influence detection of deceit.

Finally, a range of factors associated with the observer or message recipient influences the extent of detecting deception. For example, degree of suspicion, extent of probing questions asked and experience.

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

How will you define leakage cues?

Let us continue our discussion.

#### 3.2 Explanation for Deceptive Non-Verbal Cues

A number of psychological processes underpin deceptive communication (Zuckerman and Driver, 1985). These are listed as control, arousal, felt emotion and cognitive processing. Lie tellers are insecure, more concerned with the impression they are making, more guilty or anxious or more aroused than truth tellers.

Because most people tell lies rather less frequently than they tell the truth there may be a general tendency to feel less confident and insecure when trying to deceive. As a result, deceptive behaviour may appear to be

planned, rehearsed or lacking in spontaneity. This is more apparent for those non verbal behaviours over which some degree of voluntary control can be exerted; for example taking a longer time to respond before speaking, or speaking more slowly.

Those who are socially anxious also exhibit a longer response time and slower speech. That is, they are by nature concerned about making a particular impression but are insecure about doing so. Hence their non-verbal style is a characteristic sign of deceit.

I know you are enjoying our discussion given your active participation. That is nice. We must go on now.

It is important for you to note that deception seems to increase body arousal. Behaviours associated with arousal includes increased pupil dilation, eye blinks, voice pitch, speech errors and hesitations. Given the stressful nature of most interrogative interview, such signs would be the norm rather than the exception. For example, it would be quite usual when someone is telling the truth but is highly motivated to be believed.

It must also be noted that telling lies is likely to require thought and may well be a more cognitively complex task than telling the truth. A number of non-verbal behaviours are associated with cognitive demand including pupil dilation, pausing and decreased number of illustrative hand movements. An opportunity to plan and rehearse may thus be advantageous to some deceivers. It is worth bearing in mind also that thought and planning may be required when truthful message senders are highly motivated to convince others they are telling the truth. Note that this is not unusual in many interrogative interviews.

Thus, although it may well be the case that lie tellers, in comparison to truth tellers, are more concerned with the impression they are making, they may appear more guilty or more anxious or more aroused but there are certain instances when these same motives and feeling may be affected in truth tellers; for example, during interrogative interviews when it is important that a truthful message is believed.

### 3.3 Factors Influencing Deception Attempts

#### Motivation

The research literature suggests that the behaviour of highly motivated deceivers differs from the behaviour of less motivated ones. To get away

with lying, their lies become more obvious to observers. De Paulo et. al. (1983 cited in Taylor et. al. 2000) found that judges who could see the speakers' facial expressions and body movements, or hear the tone of voice cues, were more successful at detecting the lies of motivated than unmotivated speakers. In contrast, those judges who only had access to the typed transcript of what had been said were relatively less successful at detecting lies told by motivated speakers.

A similar effect was suggested by De Paulo (1985) in another study where undergraduates were urged to make a good impression while telling lies and truths to attractive or unattractive members of the same sex or opposite sex. The author argued that subjects would be more highly motivated to lie to members of the opposite sex and indeed lies were more readily detected in this instance.

Reviews of a range of studies suggest that, in comparison to less highly motivated senders, those who are more highly motivated to deceive give slower, shorter, more negative and more highly pitched responses which are accompanied by less eye contact, less blinking, fewer head movements, and fewer postural shifts and fewer adaptive gestures, (De Paulo et. al. 1983 cited in Taylor et. al. 2000). Motivated deceivers try hard to either suppress or control their behaviour and, as a result, end up over controlling it. Observers notice this and infer that the person might be lying.

Highly motivated liars may also be those who are likely to plan their response, be more practiced and more confident in their ability to deceive.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Will you be motivated to be a member of a discussion group with female student) be reading or studying the same course with you and with whom you regularly meet at the study centre?

Let us continue

### Experienced Deceivers

The ability to use non-verbal behaviour is gained by practice and experience. For example, there is some evidence that experienced sales people are effective liars (De Paulo and De Paulo, 1989). In this study, sales people were videotaped while making pitches for products they liked and products they disliked but still had to try to sell. With these more experienced liars, observers were unable to detect lies from the truth even

when they were directed towards cues which typically help people to detect them. This failure to detect deception showed that the relevant cues were simply not present.

De Paulo and De Paulo suggest four possible explanations for their results:

1. Sales people may be more practiced or experienced at telling similar lies.
2. They may have confidence in their ability to deceive.
3. They may have a natural ability to deceive or may lack guilt about lying in relation to selling.

You must also remember that individual differences (which we have discussed) in communication skills are closely linked to deception ability and that confidence in one's ability to deceive plays an important role.

### Self-Confidence

Individuals who are skilled communicators of posed emotions tend to be more successful deceivers, whereas socially anxious subjects are less successful. Lies, in comparison to truths are particularly detectable when it is important for the deception to be successful but the deceiver has a low expectation of their likely success.

### Message Planning

The opportunity to plan and rehearse deceptive messages makes them more difficult to detect. Spontaneous deception contains more speech errors and pauses than spontaneous truthful messages. In contrast, there may be no difference between truth-tellers and liars that are given the opportunity to plan their messages. It is to be noted that truth-tellers may be even more highly motivated than deceivers in interrogative situations and yet they are frequently assumed to be lying.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you learnt non-verbal behaviour. You have therefore learnt channels of non-verbal communication. In addition, you have learnt explanations for deceptive non-verbal cues and factors influencing deception attempts.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

1. What you have learnt in this unit concerns non-verbal behaviour.
2. You also learnt channels of non-verbal communication, explanations for deceptive non-verbal cues, and factors influencing deception attempts.
3. It is more likely that a highly experienced, self-confident and socially skilled liar who has taken the opportunity to plan their lies but is not highly motivated to deceive will be erroneously assumed to be telling the truth.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. a) Distinguish between leakage cues and deception cues
- b. Three factors that influence success in deceiving other are:
- c. Four psychological processes that underpin deceptive communication are:

## 7.0 REFERENCE/FURTHER READINGS

De Paulo, S.R. (1985). *Analyzing Social Behaviour* Addison-Wesley, New York.

De Paulo, S.R. & De Paulo, H.M. (1989). *Social Behaviour: Its Elementary Forms*, Harcourt Braces World Inc, New York..

Taylor, S.E., Peplau L.A. & Sears, D.O. (2000). *Social Psychology*. Prentice Hall Inc. New Jersey, USA.

## UNIT 2    SOCIALISATION

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Concept of Socialization
  - 3.2 Socializing Agents
  - 3.3 Sociometry
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, we discussed the problem of deception. Also, the unit served to introduce us to other units in this course. You can now identify channels of communication, explain deceptive non-verbal cues, and list factors influencing deception attempts. Time is now ripe for us to discuss another interesting and relevant unit: socialization. We will now consider a significant process. Let us take a look at other content you should learn in this unit as specified in the objectives below.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- define socializing;
- identify socializing agents; and
- specify the values of interpersonal relationships.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Concept of Socialization

At birth, the human baby is entirely dependent on others. It is subject to certain biological pressures such as hunger, thirst, and the need to eliminate waste. This is referred to as physiological needs in psychology. The human baby has no means of avoiding these tensions and may even be unaware of the precise cause of the discomfort. The mother waits upon its needs,

communicates in an elementary way, and allays fear. Early in this process, an incipient social relationship is established between the baby and its mother, when the former cries and the latter responds.

The human being, though born with the potential for social life, must nevertheless undergo a long and often arduous process of socialization. He must learn first to live with others and then to participate in his society in satisfying and rewarding ways. This by no means requires the slavish acquisition of conventional values, it does require, however, that some ethics of self-discipline and self-respect be transmitted, not merely for the sake of the social order but for the sake of individual happiness(Alhassan, 2000:180).

For any society to survive, it is necessary, to transmit to all new members the system of shared meanings, language, customs, values, ideas and material goods that are called culture. Socialization refers to the process of growing up into a human being, a process which necessitates contact with other people. It is through this process that the growing child acquires the language and standards of the social group into which it has been born.

Research studies indicate that deprivation of human contact in early life inhibits the development of normal social responses. Note that all human beings, except those born with severe physical handicaps, have the inborn capacity to become fully mature members of society but, in order for this capacity to be realized, the child has to have adequate social relationships with others. It is to be noted that social behaviour in humans is not inborn. In a very important sense, we have to “learn” to be human beings. Ogburn and Nimkoff (1964) describe socialization as a process whereby the individual becomes a person.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Will you say that social behaviour in human beings is inherited? Think very well about this. Respond now.

Let us continue our discussion.

According to some psychologists, socialization includes the following aspects:

1. Imitation, identification, and role learning.
2. Acquiring internal controls or conscience, the self-concept; and social roles.



3. Development of various behaviour systems of dependency, aggression, and social affiliations.
4. The relation of the social structure to the processes of socialization, and to their effects (Mukherjee, 1978).

It is important for you to note that the term socialization is broad enough to cover all types of learning. In brief, these include the following:

1. Fundamental psychomotor skills, for example, walking.
2. The communication skills, for example, the ability to use a language.
3. Acquiring to use a language.
4. Other patterns of behaviour expected of an adult, for example, independence from the mother and development of an awareness of and control over self.
5. Social skills, for example, the art of conducting oneself among a group of strangers.
6. Ideas, attitudes and values either of the dominant group in society.
7. Occupational skills, for example, the ability to teach in a secondary school.
8. Ideas regarding specific status, for example, the rights and obligations of a husband (Datta, 1986:55).

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Will you say socialization and learning are one and the same process? Think before you respond.

Let us go on with our discussion.

### 3.2 Socializing Agents

The first point you must note in this section is that socialization is not accomplished, willy-nilly, in accordance with personal tastes. Every society has developed specific ways and means of accomplishing it. It may well be that probably all institutions are pertinent to the socialization processes because in all, new members are to be taught the do's and don'ts of the established order. Obviously, some of them are more important than others to the individual's induction into the value of his society. The major socializing agents are:

- a. The Family: Everywhere, the family plays a central role in socializing the child. Typically, parenting includes a major responsibility for socialization. It is in the family that the child is

born, it is there he spends his early years and learns his first language. The family is the single most important agency for the inculcation of these basic social values and character traits, which make .for the child's eventual responsible participation in the life of society. It is important for you to note that the recent history of the family represents a gradual but inexorable loss of function and importance in the larger community, but the job of child rearing still belongs to it. The family is of course responsible for the physical and material care of the young ones, but to it is also entrusted their moral education. When things go wrong, as in juvenile delinquency, common sense tends to place the onus squarely upon the family and to look for shortcomings in the home.

The ultimate origin of personality and character is traced to the dynamics of the parent-child relation, and early childhood experiences within the home is seen as the most important single factor in formation of basic adult attitudes and behaviour. Because family life revolves around basic needs and satisfactions, both physical and emotional, parents are in a position to inflict painful deprivations and thereby exercise considerable influence in moulding their children.

- b. The School: Beginning with nursery school, the family now relinquishes the child to other people and other more impersonal institutions for a good part of the day and for almost the entire period of youthful dependence. The relinquishing of the family's educative role to the school is most important during adolescence and early adulthood, when the problem of relating to society and to people outside the family becomes acute. There are teachers at all levels of the educational systems, and there are all those who are involved in the production of books, magazines, newspapers and television programmes all contributing individually and severally to the socialization process.
- c. The Peer Group: Although relationship with parents and the school is important to the child, it is not the only influence in the socialization process. In recent years, psychologists have become interested in peer relationships. Peers are children of roughly the same age who share similar interests. Children all over the world form peer groups. The young spend most of their time with one another, and this strengthens their tendency to the approval of their peers at least as much as that of their family. When family ideas are in sharp conflict with peer group ideas, this creates tension between

parents and children and tends to reduce the effectiveness of parental control.

The interrelatedness of age-mates in peer groups has come to have a new significance in modern society. Where the family is the important unit of social participation, relation cuts across the generations. A peer group shelters and protects its members. It gives them psychological sustenance by meeting emotional needs of affection, understanding and acceptance. It invests individuals with specific status. Since it comprises a small number of persons of equal rank, a peer group can operate as a medium of communication. In all these, it is not surprising that a peer group provides effective learning situations. It transmits the culture of society in a diluted form, it teaches certain roles and social expectations, and conditions the attitudes and sentiments of its members. Datta (1986) observes that in Africa, much of the peer group socialization was achieved traditionally through the age set system where it was prevalent, though in most other societies, peers had considerable influence on shaping the behaviour of young adolescents.

- d. The Mass Media: The mass media print and electronic are playing an increasingly important role in the socialization process. One index of this is the increasing numbers of newspapers, magazines, periodicals, and comic booklets that seem to be enjoying increasing patronage. The influence of radio is most pervasive, especially after the introduction of the battery-operated set. The radio has now penetrated remote corners of every country in Africa. It is cheap to operate, and programmes in many indigenous languages are available. Hachten (1971) reported that the number of transmitters in the whole of Africa jumped to 370 in 1964 from 151 in 1955. During the same period, the number of radio receivers increased from 350,000 to about 12 million. We can rightly say that the expansion of broadcasting is a measure of its popularity as a source of information. Remember that religious authorities have responsibilities for certain aspects of socialization. So do many others.

You deserve commendation for active participation in our discussion. Now, we must go on.

### 3.3 Sociometry

Successful school work depends, among other things, on such characteristics as the pupil's personal adjustment, attitudes, and social or group skills. It is therefore important that teachers know how to measure and interpret these personal and social factors and to use the test results in planning classroom activities. Sociometry is the study of patterns of interrelationship existing in a group of people. Essentially, from the measure of interrelationships it is possible to draw up a chart that will give a pictorial representation of some aspects of interpersonal relations. The teacher could generate sociometric data by asking the pupils different questions: for example, the teacher can ask the children to 'list the person you would like to invite to your birthday party; list the person you would like to sit next to you in class; whom do you prefer as the class game's master'. The children may be requested to make a single choice or two or three choices. The teacher obtains different kinds of information about the pupil's preferences from these differently focused questions. For purpose of illustration, suppose we ask twelve children, 'Whom would you like to sit next to in class?'

Each child is allowed two choices. The teacher charts the answers she receives on a specially constructed table. The teacher then transfers the information from her table to a sociogram (see Figure 1).

If you look at the figure, you will see that a sociogram allows you to see how the cliques in the class are distributed. In our example, you will note that we have represented each child by a circle, and indicated choices by means of arrows pointing from the child who made choice to the child he preferred. In our sociogram, Audu, Bala, and Charles are the most popular in the class. These children are designated the stars. Arrows pointing both to and from them show that their attraction to each other as friends is reciprocated. They also form a clique. The single arrows from Eze, Gab, Kim and Usman to Audu indicate that these children desire friendship and more interactions with Audu but their preferences are not reciprocated. Chide and Usman aspire friendship with other members of the class but no child in the class

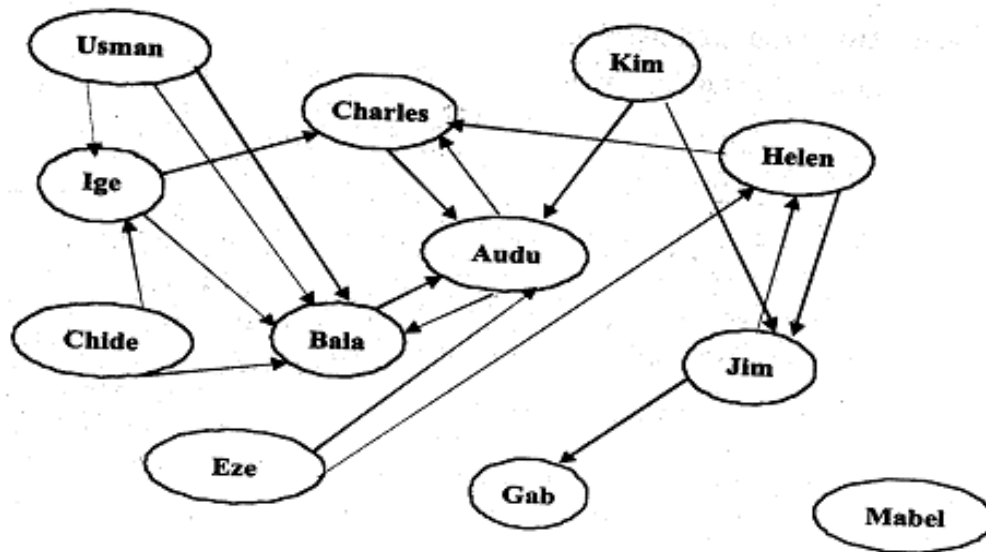


Fig. 1: Sociogram showing Sitting Preferences in the Classroom

would like to sit with them since none of the other children chose them. We would regard them as isolates on the basis of the question we asked. Sometimes a true isolate is neither chosen by anyone nor does he choose anybody. In our sociogram Mabel is a 'true isolate'. Feeling rejected or isolated can lead to loss of self-esteem and, indeed, sometimes to depression. Experienced teachers are often able to identify rejected or isolated children or young people by watching classroom or playground interactions. Frandsen (1967) suggests that the teacher should compare the pupils' preferences with other information available to her. Such information includes the teacher's classroom observations interviews and other procedures. If these sources support the children's responses, then the teacher will know that her sociogram is valid, and if a particular child is the isolate, the teacher will be alerted to the need to provide special help to remove the causes of rejection.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt significant processes. You have therefore learnt the concept of socialization. In addition, you have learnt agents of socialization and sociometry.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

What you have learnt in this unit concerns a significant process. You also learnt concept of socialization. In addition, you learnt major socialization

agent: the family, for school, the peer group and the mass media. Sociometry is the study of patterns of interrelationship existing in a group of people.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. a. How will you define socialization?
- b. List 4 socializing agents?
- c. State 3 types of learning covered by socialization?

## 7.0 REFERENCE/FURTHER READINGS

Alhassan, A.B. (2000). *Understanding Educational Psychology*. Tamaza Publishing Coy Ltd Zaria, Nigeria.

Datta, A. (1986). *Education and Society: A Sociology of African Education*. Macmillan Publishers, Nairobi.

Frandsen, T. (1967). *Educational Psychology*, McGraw-Hill, New York.

Hachten, W. (1971) *Muffled drums: The New Media in Africa*. Iowa State University Press, Ames.

Mukherje, A. (1978) *Educational Psychology*. K.P. Basu Publishing Coy. Calcutta, India.

Ogburn, W. & Nimkoff, F. (1964) *A Handbook of Sociology*. Routledge & Keegan Paul, London.

## UNIT 3 JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Concept of Delinquency
  - 3.2 Places where Delinquent Personality Operates
  - 3.3 Remediation
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, we discussed socialization. In addition, the unit served to introduce us to other units in this course. You can now define socialization, identify and discuss the agents of socialization, and specify the values of interpersonal relationships. It is now time for us to discuss a very relevant and useful unit: juvenile delinquency. Let us take a look at what other content you should learn in this unit as specified in the objectives below.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- define the concept of juvenile delinquency;
- identify the places where delinquent personality operates; and
- describe how the situation of juvenile delinquency may be remedied.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Concept of Delinquency

By legal definition, the juvenile delinquent is neither a neglected youngster nor a young criminal but one who occupies instead some twilight zone between the two. According to the law, if a young lawbreaker is legally defined as a juvenile delinquent, he cannot be charged with crime or treated as a criminal. Like the neglected and dependent child, he becomes a ward of the state. Sometimes, as in the case of murder, the young lawbreaker is

charged with a crime, tried and punished in the regular courts. For most other offences, however, the law requires that an offender under a certain age be adjudged delinquent and not criminal. On the face of it, the concept of juvenile delinquency may be said to be one of pro-criminality, the youthful violator in adult law is regarded as pre-criminal and as someone not only in need of rehabilitation but likely to be amenable to it. The incorrigible child, even though he violates an adult law, is also regarded as probably pre-criminal. The breakdown of parental authority is by itself considered ominous. The concept of juvenile delinquency automatically places the 17-year-old habitual committer of crime in the same legal category of responsibility with the 10-year-old child who steals a tyre as an escapade. Care must be taken to ensure that the concept of juvenile delinquency does not blur our perception of the distinction between delinquent youths and those who are, to all intents and purposes youthful criminals.

The special importance which delinquency has acquired in relevant years in the public mind may be traceable to a growing conviction that delinquent behaviour patterns are spreading among young people formerly relatively immune to them. Children who pickpocket with a view to buying sweets, or anything else are delinquents. Unlicensed schoolboys and undergraduate students riding automobile machines and or driving cars are delinquents. Vibrant Lagos youths who found the wild afternoon bar beach sun in 1985 a perfect rendezvous for their adventure when they were supposed to be in school or at work are delinquents. As Omotunde (1985:6) reveals, alcohol was unabashedly consumed and assorted weeds freely puffed by the youths.

Such was the situation in July, 1985 when a news crew of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) recorded the level of juvenile moral degeneration as was often exhibited at the Lagos bar beach. It was intended for a documentary, but a one-minute clip during the evening network news was enough to cause a stir in the then Lagos State Government of Governor Mudashiru who swiftly set up a 4-member tribunal to probe what later became commonly known as the 'bar beach show of shame' and other issues relating to juvenile delinquency tribunal. It is important for you to note that its findings revealed that many of the principal actors were mainly school drop-outs.

### 3.2 Places where Delinquent Personality Operates

There are certain conditions in some places that make it more likely that the delinquent learning and the development of the delinquent personality will operate. Amongst such places and conditions are:



**The Family:** Dacey (1989 cited in Alhassan, 2000) writes that the family is, and for millennia has been the social group that has the most influence on individual behaviour. Negative feelings within the family or the sudden alteration of family life can create disturbances that lead to juvenile delinquency. Burt (1925) in his book, *The young delinquent*, opined that the most favorable condition associated with delinquent acts is 'a defected home discipline'.

I want you to note that discipline in such a home may be too strict, too lenient or worst of all, alternating between strictness and leniency. Merrill (1947) reports 'good' discipline in 15% of the delinquent homes and 63% of the non-delinquent homes. The Gluecks (1950) report 'lax' discipline in 57% of the delinquent cases and 12% of the non-delinquent ones. In deeper analysis, the Gluecks found that the fathers typically used physical punishment as a method of control in 68% of the delinquent cases, they used reasoning as a method of control in 11 % of the former as and in 24% of the latter.

So many things may happen within the family: It is through the family that the child most directly comes into contact with the value conflicts that exist in society. Not uncommon are the parents whose own overwhelming drive for success is all too obvious. Children who experience unhappy home lives, rejection by parents and inferiority complex are usually delinquent. Let us note that conflicts within the family, parental rejection, delinquent parents who take to alcoholism and lack of parental supervision of their children could easily bring about delinquency in children.

In addition, the size of the family, which is usually large in African societies, the emotional climate of the home caused by parental coldness and lack of any appreciable degree of freedom could bring about delinquency in children. Delinquency rates has been found to be high in homes broken by death, divorce, desertion or prison terms, and in homes where there is lack of emotional security.

**The Peer Group:** Juvenile gangs recruit, stimulate, and teach delinquents. Shaw and Mckay (1961) and the Gluecks (1950) and others have concluded that delinquency is largely a gang operation. Of 5,480 offenders, Shaw found that only 18% had committed their delinquency alone, 30% had a single companion, 27% had three or more. 89% of those charged with theft had at least one accomplice. Note that the gang contributes to delinquency rates in several connected ways.

The adolescent tends to want to conform to the ways of his peers. Because delinquent gangs are organized groups, they are in a particularly good position to exercise pressure for conformity.

Delinquent gangs provide ready antisocial channels for the energies and the normal and special personality needs of the adolescent.

It is to be noted that a gang can provide security, recognition, affection, and new experience when these are not provided by the family or elsewhere in society.

**The Mass Media:** The mass media are a key factor in the generation of delinquency. Radio, television, films, comic books, and newspapers contribute to delinquency by glorifying, overemphasizing and giving instruction in crime. It is important for you *to* note that this is one of the theories of delinquency causation that has attracted the most popular support from the public.

I am sure you are eager to know what the public reaction is against the mass media. Among the charges against the mass media are that they stimulate the juvenile appetite for adventure; glorify the criminal; impart knowledge of criminal techniques; and overemphasize the extent of criminal life in our society.

Children tend to remember good or bad acts learnt in movies more easily. We know that motion pictures can affect attitude towards social groups. Children who watch a sex act in a film tend to imitate such action. And this is seen as an aspect of delinquency. In a highly delinquent area, newspapers, which are sensational and which glorify various crimes and offences are usually in great demand. It is not therefore surprising that *Lagos Weekend*, Africa's largest-circulation week-end daily, is printed and published in Lagos and not in Lokoja.

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Take a close look at your immediate community. Are there delinquent gangs there? How do they operate?

Let us continue our discussion by looking at what we may do to sufficiently reduce the incidence of delinquency.

### 3.3 Remediation

Note that preventive measures are more reassuring. To prevent delinquency, it becomes necessary to deal with both personality factors and environmental influences, especially those coming from home, intimate associates and the community. Creating a wholesome environment and eliminating undesirable influences are two important phases of a constructive preventive programme. For instance, the Lagos state Government in 1985 accepted the recommendation of the Lagos Bar Beach Juvenile Delinquency Tribunal and banned the sale of cigarettes and alcohol to persons under 18 years while the doors of hotels and pub houses were shut against them. Police patrol at the bar beach was made more effective at all times so as to rid the resort of malingering and criminals while the government stopped further approval of beer parlours and liquor sales points within school vicinities. The principal actors among the youths were sent to approved schools and foster homes as applicable where they can be conditioned to grow to become useful citizens.

We must embark on a genuine and sustained reconstruction of the Nigerian society. There are several ways that schools and teachers can facilitate the instruction of Nigerian youths and aid them in the solution of their personal problems.

1. Be alert to the symptoms of the delinquent-prone such as extreme restlessness, hostility, truancy, and any apparent lack of moral standards. Other aspects of indiscipline such as lateness, absence from school without permission from home and school, truancy and improper dressing should attract proportional and relevant sanction.
2. Separate the fact from the fiction about delinquency. There are no physical differences between the delinquent and non-delinquent (Glueck and Glueck, 1952); they differ emotionally, since delinquents are more sadistic, impulsive, defiant, and destructive.
3. Be certain that school conditions are not causing or intensifying delinquent behaviour. Schools may cause delinquency, prevent delinquency, and help to treat the delinquent.
4. Provide curriculum materials, and methods that are designed to enable the child to utilize them effectively.
5. Maintain good community relations to receive necessary support for varied programmes, both curricular and extra-curricular.

Effort to lead juvenile gangs and clubs into socially acceptable avenue of behaviour must be embarked upon on a sustained basis. The government should make provision for social services agency that would give adequate and continuous attention to family.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit you have learnt maladjustment. You have therefore learnt the concept of delinquency. In addition, you have learnt where delinquent personality operates and remediation strategies that may be employed.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

1. What you have learnt in this unit concerns maladjustment.
2. You also learnt concept of delinquency.
3. The family, the peer group, and the mass media are among the factors that generate delinquency.
4. Towards solving this problem, the school and teachers have been caned upon to be alert to the symptoms of the delinquent-prone such as extreme restlessness, hostility, truancy, and any apparent lack of moral standards, amongst others.
5. The government should make provision for social service agency that would give adequate and continuous attention to family situations and parent education.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. a. Complete this statement:  
'For preadolescents and adolescents, the law requires that an offender under a certain age be adjudged.....and not.....'
- b. Among the places and conditions where the delinquent personality operates are:
- c. State any three (3) ways in which the gang contributes to delinquency rates in Nigeria.

## 7.0 REFERENCE/FURTHER READINGS

- Alhassan, A.B.(2000). *Understanding Educational Psychology*. Tamaza Publishing .Co. Ltd. Zaria, Nigeria.
- Burt, C. (19.25). *The Young Delinquent*. Routledge and Kegan Paul. London.
- Glueck, S. & Glueck, E. (1950). *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquent*. Commonwealth Fund, New York.
- Merrill, (1947). *Problems of Child Delinquency*. Boston: Houghton
- Omotunde, S. (1947). 25 Minutes of Delinquency in *Newswatch Magazine* (September 23) 6.
- Shaw, C. & Mckay, H. (1961). *Juvenile Delinquency in Urban Area*. University of Chicago, Chicago.

## UNIT 4 BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Types and Frequency of Deviant Behaviour
  - 3.2 Methods for Controlling Behaviour
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, we discussed juvenile delinquency. The unit also served to introduce us to the other units in this course. You can now define the concept of juvenile delinquency and identify the places and conditions where delinquent personality operates. You can also explain how the situation of juvenile delinquency may be remedied. Time is now ripe for us to discuss a most relevant and applicable unit: behaviour modification. We will now consider managing human behaviour. Let us take a look at what other content.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- explain what is meant by behaviour modification; and
- list the methods for controlling behaviour.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Types and Frequency of Deviant Behaviour

It is possible for students of educational psychology with some training to 'shape' the desired behaviour, and to minimize the deviant behaviour of children in classrooms. Some parents with the awareness of the psychology of operant conditioning can shape the desired behaviour of children. What is behaviour modification? By behaviour modification we mean a formal technique for promoting the frequency of desirable behaviour and

decreasing the incidence of unwanted ones. Note that behaviour modification has been used in a variety of situations ranging from teaching severely retarded people the rudiments of language to helping people stick to diets (Whaley & Malott, 1993).

Before any behaviour modification is attempted, it is however necessary for the manipulator of the experiment to have a detailed knowledge of the type and frequency of the deviant behaviour needed to be eliminated from the child or the person concerned. For example, if a child is observed to rise from his seat and run to some other child frequently during the lesson hour, then the 'baseline' or operant level of this deviant behaviour of the child has to be determined first. That means the number of times per lesson hour during the morning, for example, the child rises from his seat, and manifests this disturbing behaviour. This has to be assessed to determine the frequency and nature of this distracting behaviour. Then the next step is to determine the 'terminal behaviour' wanted to be seen in the behaviour manifestations of the child or the person concerned.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Think of a deviant behaviour that a child has been manifesting and which you will prefer modified. Is the deviant behaviour disturbing to the child alone?

Clap for yourself for having participated so actively in our discussion. Now, let us go.

### 3.2 Methods for Controlling Behaviour

Various methods can be employed for controlling behaviour, and some of them are as follows:

- (a) Operant conditioning
- (b) Shaping
- (c) Scheduling various types of reinforcements
- (d) Modeling or imitations
- (e) Extinction
- (f) Satiation
- (g) Aversion therapy
- (h) Conditioning incompatible behaviour
- (i) Self-control

If a child manifests some form of deviant behaviour then it is also very likely that the same child manifests some forms of other socially approved behaviour as well. During the initial period of observation of the child's behaviour to determine the baseline of the deviant behaviour, these elements of socially approved behaviour can also be spotted. It is now necessary to quote some examples of modifications of different types of deviant behaviour that has been reported in the relevant literature.

A technique, often employed in behaviour modification is the use of the 'free method'. This implies that the individual manifests his behaviour 'freely' preferably when he is left alone, and the emphasis is on the performances of the individual. Hart and her collaborators (1964) employed the technique of the free operant method to eliminate the crying behaviour of a four-year old child. Firstly, the baseline of the child's crying responses was determined from observing the child's crying behaviour for a ten-day period' morning sessions. It was found that eye-contact with the person present reinforced the crying response of the child.

Then a period of experimentation followed which lasted three more periods, each of ten days. During the first of these experimental periods, the teacher avoided making eye-contacts with the child which produced extinction of the crying behaviour, but other behaviour of the child was reinforced positively. One thing that is to be noted in the experiment is that eliminated behaviour is likely to reappear if the child or the person gets reinforcement of these deviant responses from different environments. This implies that the behaviour that is modified in the school or the clinic should in no circumstances be reinforced elsewhere, and in this regard, parents' cooperation is of great importance to the teacher. The methods we have discussed is the 'free operant method' where extinction, reinforcement of the desired behaviour element, and a correct scheduling of the reinforcements of the operant were used in modifying the crying operant behaviour of let us go the child.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Mention any two deviant behaviours that you will like to remedy by using the method just discussed?

We must continue our discussion now.

Another method that is frequently used is the method of 'shaping'. It implies reinforcement of closer and closer approximations of the desired behaviour. Isaacs et. al. (1960) used the method of shaping to reinstate



verbal behaviour in an hospitalized patient who had been mute for several years. It was found that the patient would sit at a place without any signs of any movement of eyes or lips. Various methods to draw the attention of the patient, for example, waving cigarettes or other things before his eyes had already failed.

The experimenters then found that while taking a packet of cigarettes, a packet of gum accidentally dropped to the floor and this made the patient move his eyes to the floor.

Two things became clear from the shaping experiment: extreme patience on the part of the experimenters and successive reinforcements of closer and closer approximations of the desired behaviour: If the behaviour of the hospitalized patient having being mute for nineteen years could be shaped in course of 18 sessions only, then there is no reason why the behaviour of children in the classroom cannot be shaped by teachers with experience and patience.

The withdrawal of reinforcement is aversive in nature, and it is found that subjects will learn a response that prevents the withdrawal of reinforcement, since withdrawal of reinforcement contingent upon a response decreases the strength of that response. Let us cite an example. If a (hungry) child is sent to his bedroom every time he puts his elbows on a dinner table, then the rate at which he puts his elbows on the table decreases. If the rate of his putting his elbows on the table increases following his experiences of being sent away from the table, then by definition, 'sending away' from the table is positively reinforcing the child. Let us consider another example. We notice that when mothers often say to their children: 'If you do this I will not speak to you, but if you stop doing this or that, I will love you all the more' children respond to this treatment from their mothers and learn to behave accordingly. Mothers, though inexperienced and untrained in the psychology of avoidance responses and withdrawal of reinforcements, are continually engaged in the process of shaping their children's behaviour.

Another experimental technique that decreases the strength of a deviant behaviour is called satiation. Under this concept, it is implied that the strength of a response will decrease under the influence: of continued reinforcement. For example, if a teacher continually says to a child for every manifestation of a particular behaviour of his that he is a good child, and then it is likely that the child will get bored with hearing that he is good all the time and out of satiating experience he will refrain from emitting that behaviour.

With aggressive children who must show various forms of aggression, as in the case of children processed by the law, this method has been used where the children are allowed to display their aggression in any manner they like with only safeguard being taken that the lives of the persons dealing with the children, and of the children themselves are not endangered.

It is important for you to note that deviant behaviour observed commonly in the classroom can be successfully tackled by experienced and trained teachers though difficult cases should be referred to the specialists in this field. The importance of the psychology of behaviour modification is relevant to teachers as it unfolds to him avenues which produce a congenial atmosphere in the classroom for further progress of lessons. The importance of parental cooperation in achieving the objective to modify deviant behaviour of children cannot be overstated.

It is to be noted that any attempt to modify deviant behaviours presupposes the following:

- (a) Determining the baseline of the deviant behaviour.
- (b) Determining the terminal behaviour, and close approximations of it.
- (c) Deciding on the nature of positive reinforcement that will be attractive to the child.
- (d) Locating the nearest possible avoidance responses available in the behaviour repertoire of the child.
- (e) Reinforcing the child during adaptation while extinction continued.
- (f) Taking recourse to predetermined schedule of reinforcement while shaping of the child's behaviour is continued.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt how human behaviour may be managed. You also have learnt about types and frequency of deviant behaviour as well as the methods for controlling behaviour: operant method, shaping, scheduling various types of reinforcements, modelling or imitation, satiation, and aversion therapy, amongst others.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

1. What you have learnt in this unit concerns the management of deviant behaviour.
2. You also learnt types and frequency of deviant behaviour.
3. In addition you have learnt methods for controlling behaviour.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. a. Explain what you understand by behaviour modification?
- b. What form of knowledge must an experimenter interested in modifying behaviour have?
- c. List six (6) methods for controlling behaviour
- d. State four (4) suppositions that an experimenter must take into consideration in an attempt to modify behaviour.

## 7.0 REFERENCE/FURTHER READINGS

Hart, B.M., Allen, K.E. & Wolf, M.M: (1964). 'Effect of Social Reinforcement on Operant Crying' *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 1, 145-153.

Isaacs, W. Thomas J. & Goldiamond, (1960). 'Application of operant and conditioning to Reinstate Verbal Behaviour in Psychotics' *Journal of Speech for Hearing Disorders*, 25,8-12.

Whaley, S. T. & Mallot, R.W. (1993). *Personality and Adjustment*. Longmans, London.

## UNIT 5 HUMAN AGGRESSION

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The Word Aggression
  - 3.2 Theories of Aggression
  - 3.3 Additional Determination of Aggression
  - 3.4 Management of Aggression
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In unit 4, we discussed behaviour modification. The unit also served to introduce us to other units in this course. You can now explain what is meant by behaviour modification and list and explain its major methods. We are now going to discuss another very interesting and very applicable unit: human aggression. We will now consider the important part of the human condition. Let us take a look at what other content you should learn in this unit as specified in the objectives below.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- define the concept of aggression;
- explain theories of aggression;
- describe additional determinants of aggression; and
- discuss how aggression may be managed.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 The Word Aggression

Semantically speaking, the word 'aggression' or the phrase 'aggressive behaviour' may arouse different, wide or varied connotative meanings to different individuals, though the denotative meaning of the word, according

to the Pocket Oxford English Dictionary, is simply ‘unprovoked attack’. To students of the science of behaviour, that denotative meaning of the word is not satisfactory since under aggressive behaviour, psychologists list a great variety of behaviour. Such behaviour may be both verbal and non-verbal where the apparent cause creating aggressive behaviour may or may not be present.

Freud and others argued that aggression is a primary instinct in the living species who have survived through the ages during evolution. There is some evidence as to show how pacifism, a supposed contrasting type of behaviour, has led to complete extermination of species including members of the human race. The primitives of Tasmania were renowned for their isolation and pacifist life style. Today they have been exterminated from the face of this earth. Another human race, the Veddas of Sri Lanka is nearing extinction and complete extermination due to their complete isolation and pacifist life style. Traditionally, an example can be quoted from the story depicted in the puppet theatre of the NTA Jos, Nigeria where the members of a town are all the time conspiring to get ‘the innocent man’ exterminated for his isolation and love for peace. We can cite many of such instances to show that pacifism leads to extermination of the species while aggression contributes towards survival.

Martin Luther King, Anwar Sadat, Mahatma Ghandi, Murtala Mohammed, Dele Giwa, Kudirat Abiola, Alfred Rewane, and Bola Ige all died by the assassins’ bullets and all were known for their love for peace and goodwill. It is on record that King trained his followers (most of them workers and students) in the tactics of non-violence. He made them sign non-violence pledges and made them watch plays where the white man’s police brutalized the African-Americans without the latter raising a finger. We know also how Sadat tried to settle the Middle East crises peacefully through diplomatic maneuvers.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

From your personal experience, identify any three individuals known for their love of peace and avoidance of violence.

Well done. Let us continue our discussion by looking at aggression from a psychological standpoint.

Psychologically speaking, aggression has been defined as a sequence of behaviour ‘the goal response to which is the injury of the person toward whom it is directed’ (Dollard, et. al. 1939:7). Most subsequent theorizing

and research into aggressive behaviour have adopted injurious intent as an essential aspect of aggression. But we know that aggression serves more than the infliction of injury. Aggression is a normal component of sexuality, as indeed it is of any activity in which human beings express themselves. The failure of a love-relation is inevitably accompanied by hostility, as the pathetic records of divorce courts bear witness.

In point of fact, there are different types of aggression some of which are examine below:

**Instrumental Aggression:** This is aimed at securing extraneous (external) rewards other than the victim's suffering. The Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) is a classic example of instrumental aggression -it was 'used' as an instrument for maintaining national unity and national cohesion by the Federal Military Government of General Yakubu Gowon. Any act of war is instrumental aggression.

**Hostile Aggression:** The sole aim of this is to inflict injury on others. Physical assertiveness is more likely to be defined as aggression if preformed by a female than by a male because such behaviour departs more widely from common expectations of appropriate female conduct. On the other hand similar assertiveness by boys in a delinquent gang would be underrated with respect to aggressiveness.

**Displaced Aggression:** This means aggressive behaviour directed against some object than the one actually causing the feelings. It is a defence mechanism and it is common in everyday affairs.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Which type(s) of aggressive is (are) widely manifested in Nigeria?

Now, let us go on with our discussion.

### 3.2 Theories of Aggression

Some psychologists still hold that aggression stems from biological or genetic causes, and should be viewed as a natural aspect of human behaviour (Johnson, 1972). Reports from the mass medial print and electronic of murder, and brutal assaults tend to suggest that violence is purely a random event one which strikes innocent victims from out of the blue without warning or even apparent cause. It is relevant for you to note that in some instances, this is certainly true. When armed robbers go on a

shooting spree during which they gun down total strangers, or when street-corner gangs attack and brutally beat innocent pedestrians on the streets of large cities, violence does indeed seem to be both pointless and random. It is to be noted that aggression does not occur in a social vacuum: rather, it springs from specific conditions which pave the way for its occurrence. In the occurrence of aggression; three factors which have often been implicated are frustration, physical or verbal attack, and exposure to the actions of highly aggressive models.

### Frustration-Aggression Theory

The most striking point that you must take note of with respect to the frustration aggression theory is that it sees the source of violence in a person's relationship to his social environment. It states that aggressive behaviour of which violent conduct is a major form, results when purposeful activities are interrupted. The classical proponents of this theory often cite an example of a boy being prevented by his mother from getting an ice cream cone after the ice cream vendor's bell has been heard and the boy is on his way to buy it.

You must note that the frustration aggression theory is frequently criticized for not explaining the circumstances under which frustration leads to aggression and under which it does not. Some children regress rather than aggress; for example, when toys are taken from them, they wet their pants rather than attack other children. In fact, the theory does not differentiate between aggression that is violent and aggression that is not (which may take the form of personal insult rather than physical assault): We also know that aggression may be evoked by other factors other than by frustration, for example, by boredom or by disrupting physiological and non-purposeful activities, such as sleep.

The frustration aggression theory is often cited to suggest that if people's aspirations are kept from outpacing the opportunities available to them, violence will be less common than in our own frustrating world, where everyone is encouraged to strive for economic and social success but the avenues are not equally available to all. Taking the case of Hitler and Germany and the accusation of causing World War II, the British called it 'unprovoked attack'. Germany was frustrated by the treaty of 1919 which stripped her of all powers. She became frustrated and took to aggression.

Yates (1967) puts it that 'an individual strongly motivated to reach a goal will be instigated to aggression and aggressive forms of behaviour if the goal is unattainable and the barrier to the goal is held constant in each case'.

In the trial of Adolf Hitler, Hitler's defence counsel argued that Hitler should not be sentenced for causing World War II. He went further to say that war was a biological necessity and an indispensable regulator of mankind. He said, 'If you want peace, prepare for war'.

I can see that you are enjoying our discussion. Remember I told you that this unit was very interesting and applicable, let us continue.

We know that not all forms of aggression result from frustration. For example, soldiers often inflict greater harm and suffering on others in time of war when ordered to do so by their superiors, even in the total absence of frustration. Hired assassins (as has been witnessed in Nigeria from 1988) cold-bloodedly murder persons they have never met even on days when they are in particularly fine spirits, simply because they are paid to do so. Such cases indicate that aggression may stem from many factors besides frustration, and occur in total absence of frustration.

Then after watching non aggressive shows (Liebert & Schewartzberg, 1977). We can conclude that the high level of violence prevailing in many popular television shows has adverse effects upon the persons who view them, though not all experimental findings support this conclusion (Manning & Taylor, 1975). But the weight of existing evidence does seem to suggest that exposure to televised violence may weaken children's restraints against attacking or harming others.

Let us now consider other sources of aggression.

### 3.3 Additional Determination of Aggression

Many individuals can readily be induced to inflict pain and discomfort on others by the command of an authority figure. Among the many other factors that can influence aggression are uncomfortable heat, heightened physiological arousal, exposure to unpleasant noise, crowding, and even darkness. Obviously, it is reasonable for us to conclude that aggression springs from many different sources, and is influenced by many different conditions. The occasional emotive outbursts in the national dailies by some Nigerians are certainly aggressive in connotations but they are also beneficial to the mental health of those individuals who by catharsis tend to release their emotion of anger and frustration. This point is worth taking notice of as it shows how different the Nigerian culture is from the Western culture where the training is to suppress or even repress emotions.



Alhassan (1981) writes that overcrowding is an environmental condition often involved as an aversive instigator of aggression. There are certain features of density groupings that could facilitate aggressive prowess. At the familiar level, children who live in cramped quarters are likely to spend more time on neighbourhood streets, than those residing in spacious households. To the extent that neighbourhood influences foster antisocial styles of life, the probability of developing aggressive conduct is thereby increased. Besides, note that parents who have to cope with many children in congested quarters are often forced to punitive measures to halt squabbles between family members who repeatedly get in one another's way.

At the broader social level, the immense logistic problems of servicing hordes of people inevitably create annoyances. Crowding heightens competitiveness for services and desired resources as is commonly seen on Lagos, Ibadan, Onitsha, Port Harcourt, Enugu, Abuja and Kano streets where people really struggle every moment they are to catch a bus of the Lagos State Transport Service and those of other cities and towns: it is always exasperating. Densely crowded conditions not only increase the likelihood of interpersonal friction, but also pollute and otherwise intensify the aversive qualities of the physical environment. In addition to the irritants of crowded living, they foster a sense of anonymity and impersonality conducive to inconsiderate behaviour. Remember that the psychological consequences of overcrowding are difficult to isolate because it is usually associated with, among other factors, poverty, ethnicity, unemployment, and inadequate law enforcement, which compound the causes. At this stage, we need to ask a relevant question. What can we do to control aggression? Think about this. Let us go on.

### 3.4 Management of Aggression

It has often been suggested that neither punishing aggressors for their violent acts or merely threatening to do so may be a highly effective means of preventing these persons from engaging in such activities: For example, Walters (1966:69), a noted child psychologist, states that 'it is only the continual expectation of retaliation by the recipient or other members of society that prevents many individuals from more freely expressing aggression'. It is apparent that punishment is sometimes quite effective in deterring aggression.

In addition, several experiments conducted with children indicate that the frequency or intensity of such behaviour can often be sharply reduced by even such wild forms of punishment as social disapproval (Brown & Elliot,

1965). Notwithstanding such findings, there are strong grounds for doubting that punishment will always serve as an effective deterrent to human violence as treatment often produces only a temporary suppression of punished acts. Individuals on the receiving end of punishment may interpret such disciplinary actions as attacks against them. It is to be remembered that aggression often breeds aggression and this may lead to an increase rather than a reduction in the overall level of violence. Direct punishment may often fail to reduce the likelihood of overt aggression: indeed, in some cases, it may actually tend to enhance such behaviour (Baron, 1973a).

As a practical system for controlling and making use of the competitive aggression which is so evident in political controversy, democracy still seems to be the best system yet devised in spite of its apparent drawbacks. Although slow and uncertain in operation, democracy has the decided advantage over other political systems of providing an opposition which not only acts as a check on government, but also asserts that political opponent, in countries where free speech is allowed, may be apparently friendly though bitterly antagonistic in reality.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt an important part of the human condition. You also have learnt about the word aggression, the concept of aggression, and theories of aggression. You also learnt how the situation of aggression could be managed.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

What you have learnt in this unit concerns human aggression.

You also learnt theories of aggression.

In addition, you learnt additional determinants of aggression.

Finally, you learnt Strategies for managing aggression.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Define the concept of aggression
2. List three types of aggression
3. State one weakness of the frustration aggression theory
4. Four other factors that can influence aggression are:

## 7.0 REFERENCE/FURTHER READINGS

- Alhassan, A. B. (1981). *The Psychology of Aggression Re-examined within the Nigerian Context*. Unpublished M. ED. Study of Educational Psychology Department, Ahmadu\_Bello University, Zaria.
- Baron, R. A. (1973). 'Threatened Retaliation from the Victim as an Inhibitor of Physical Aggression' in: *Journal of Experimental Research in Personality*. 7, 103-15.
- Baron, R.A. (1974a). 'Aggression as a Function of the Victim's Pain Cues, Level of Prior Anger are usual and Exposure to an Aggressive Model'. In: *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 29, 117-124.
- Berkowitz, L. (1962). *Aggression: A Social Psychological analysis*. McGraw-Hill, New York..
- Brown, P. & Elliot, R. (1965). 'Control of Aggression in a Nursery School Class' in: *Journal of Exceptional Child Psychology*. 2, 103-9.
- Dollard J., Doob L., Miller N. & Sears R. (1939). *Frustration and Aggression*. University Press. New Haven, Yale.
- Green, R. & Stonner, D. (1973). 'Context Effects in Observed Violence' in: *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 25, 145-50.
- Johnson, R.N. (1972). *Aggression in Man and Animals*. W.B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia.
- Liebert, R. & Chwartzberg, N. (1977). 'Effects of Mass Media in: M. Rosenzweig & Porter (eds) *Annual Review of Psychology*: Longmans, California.
- Manning, S. & Taylor, D. (1975). 'Effects of Viewed Violence and Aggression: Stimulation and Catharsis. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*. 31, 180-8.
- Yaters, A..J. (1961). 'Hypnotic Age Regression'. *Psychological Bulletin*. 58, 249.