

Social Cognition & Social Perception

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- Note: Main reference and resource of this topic is taken from Baron, R.A. 2011. Social Psychology. 13th edition. Pearson Inc.



Social Perception

- A process through which we seek to know and understand other persons
- More often than not, we use non-verbal communication to read others expression
- Non-verbal communication includes body language and facial expression
- Eye contact is a powerful tool for us to know about people's friendliness, shyness, etc



Attribution Theories

- Attribution- seek to determine causes behind others' behavior



Correspondence Inference

- We try to reason other people's behaviour from our observation
- We presume the behaviour of the person as :
 - Is freely chosen
 - Person rallying for women's rights is feminist
 - Is socially undesirable (or unusual)
 - Professor who wears colourful shirts is free spirit
 - Yields noncommon effects
 - Woman who marries a rich, stupid, and unattractive man is probably marrying for money



- You arranged to meet someone for lunch, but he/she didn't show up.
- You sent several sms to a friend, but she didn't reply.
- You expect a promotion in your job, but didn't receive it.

Causal Attribution Theory

- We regard the cause of others' behavior to:
 - Internal factor which is caused by the person's own trait
 - External factor which is caused by the situation



Explaining other's behaviour

- Consensus— the extent others behave in same way
- Consistency— the extent person always behaves this way
- Distinctiveness— the extent person acts differently in other situations



Suppose one day your boss stops by your desk and praises your work, telling you that you are doing a wonderful job and that she is glad to have you working with her.

She does this in front of several other employees, who all congratulate you after she leaves.

For the rest of the morning you feel great.

But then, after lunch, she calls you into her office and asks if you would be willing to take on an extra difficult work assignment.



Handling Multiple Causes

- Discounting Principle—tendency to downplay importance of one cause if others exist
- Augmenting Principle—tendency to increase importance of one factor when behavior occurs in the presence of an inhibitory factor

A man arrives at a meeting an hour late. On entering, he drops his notes on the floor. While trying to pick them up, his glasses fall off and break. Later, he spills coffee all over his tie.

How would you explain these events?



Fundamental Attribution Error

- The tendency to overestimate internal causes of other's behavior while ignoring external causes
- Also known as Correspondence Bias



Actor Observer Effect

- The tendency to attribute own behavior to external causes, but others to internal

Self Serving Bias

- The tendency to take credit for success and blame failures on the situation
- Depressed persons often show a self-defeating pattern of attributions opposite of the self-serving bias
 - Attribute positive events to temporary, external causes and negative events to internal causes



Impression Management

- Self-enhancement—boost one's appeal
- Other-enhancement—inducing positive moods in others