



EDO UNIVERSITY IYAMHO



Department of Sociology

SOC 112: Introduction to Psychology

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Lectures: Monday, 3pm – 5pm, LC3, phone: (+234) 8039179218.

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General overview of lecture: As an introduction to general psychology, the science of human mind and behaviour, this course will examine the relationship between the functioning of social systems and the behaviour and attitude of individuals. The reasons why individuals behave in particular way will be exhaustively examined along with such things as definition of psychology, genetic & environmental influences as well as causes of behaviour, perception, impression formation, personality traits, accuracy of judgement, deception and human aggression.

Learning outcomes: At the completion of this course, students are expected to:

1. Define Psychology and discuss the history of Psychology
2. Describe four approaches to the study of psychology.
3. Understand basic concepts in psychology and identify the specialties in psychology.
4. Discuss the situational and environmental influence on behaviour
5. Describe impression formation and discuss the causes of behaviour.
6. Explain the concept of intelligence, perception, and personality trait inferences, accuracy of judgments, deception and human aggression.

Assignments: We expect to have 1 individual homework assignment, 1 group assignment throughout the course in addition to a Mid-Term Test and a Final Examination. Home works in the form of individual assignments, and group assignments are organized and structured as preparation for the Mid-Term Test and Final Examination. The goal is to have the students prepare adequately for the final examination.

Grading: We will assign 10% of this class grade to individual homework assignment, 10% for group assignment, 10% for the mid-term test and 70% for the final examination. The Final examination is comprehensive.

Textbook: The recommended textbook for this course are as stated:

Title: *Introduction to Psychology*

Author(s): OpenStax College

Publisher: OpenStax College

Year: 2014

Title: *Psychology and Life*

Author(s): *Zimbardo P.G.*

Publisher: Harper Collins, New York.

Year: 1992

Title: *Understanding Educational Psychology*

Author(s): Alhassan, A.B.

Publisher: Tamaza Publishing Co., Ltd. Zaria, Nigeria.

Year: 2000

Main Lecture: Below is a description of the contents:

❖ **Introduction:**

It is not surprising that the concept of psychology has been misconstrued in various degrees. These are often exaggeration of opinions held by only a few psychologists or even by some who are not properly qualified psychologists. This misconception is not unconnected with the fact that because human behaviour can be observed by anyone, who attempt to explain occurrences from their own intuition, or belief, which is not the same in other sciences like chemistry and physics where common sense or intuition cannot be used to explain the behavior of hydrogen. A number of reasons have been advanced for the misconceptions and misunderstandings as to what psychology is exactly. One of the reasons is that people have been interested in human behaviour for thousands of years but psychology only becomes a discipline in its own right in the last 100 years. Hence psychology is the scientific study of human mind and behavior.

❖ **Some Basic Concepts in Psychology**

The concept of learning and the relationship between maturation and learning is a major focus of psychology. Hence, learning is the totality of the acquisition of factual information, the mastering of skills and means of aiding further study. The concept of maturation has some indirect relationship with learning. Both learning and maturation depend on change of function. Psychologists see development as the process of greater strength and stability. All aspects of growth are interrelated. The different aspects of growth such as physical, mental, social and emotional are inter-related because all these are taking place in one individual.

❖ **Explaining Behaviour: Genetic & Environmental Influences**

In explaining behaviour, psychologists focus on two factors; the genetic influences and the environmental influences on behaviour. The genetics are the personality traits of the individual while environmental influences include the presence of other people as well as cultural factors. Genetics rarely have a direct or total influence on behaviour the environment in which people are raised to a large extent determines behaviour more than genetics. Though genetics may set the

limits within which certain types of behaviour will fall, but the environment determines which aspects of our genetic inheritance are revealed. Situations exert a powerful influence over people's behaviour and make them do things that are unimaginable.

❖ **Perception: A Basic Process**

Perception is the psychological processes occurring in the brains of the organisms which leads to the organization and interpretation of information received from the stimulus or stimuli. Perception mechanisms include analysis, synthesis and integration of sensory information. When different individuals have contact with an object or thing in their environment, the input of information that impinges their respective sense organs like eyes, ears, etc is the same for every individual but they may perceive that object or thing differently. The factors that tend to influence perception are; Gestalt factors of stimulus configurations, factors of attention, and personality factors.

❖ **Impression Formation**

People use whatever information that is available to form impressions about others as well as make judgments about their personalities or draw conclusions about the kind of persons they are. People form impressions of others using some simple and general principles such as using minimal information and go on to impute general traits to them or pay special attention to the most salient features of a person, rather than paying attention to everything. To a large extent, we use the context of a person's behaviour to interpret its meaning, rather than interpreting the behaviour in isolation. However, we use information to form impression about others, but amongst the most important of such information are physical cues and salience cues.

❖ **Personality Trait Inferences**

In an attempt to describe the other person, we often move from observable information, such as appearance, behaviour, even gestures, to personality trait inferences about what the person is like. Referring to traits is a more economical and general way of describing a person than referring to behaviour. When describing someone, you usually recount each behaviour you could remember and use traits to summarize aspect of that person's behaviour. E.g, a good-natured, sloppy night person with a penchant for loud rock music'. This process occurs spontaneously or automatically, as behaviour is perceived. These traits can act as indicators for predicting future behaviour. Social categories, such as gender, tribe, religion and social class, influence our

perceptions as we immediately and spontaneously perceive someone as part of some group or category.

❖ **Understanding and Attributing causes to Behaviour**

Our goals and feelings about other people to a large extent 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. Therefore, under impression goal conditions, people form more organized impressions of others than when their goal is simply to remember the information. Other factors that aid attributing causes to behaviour are affective cues and our current mood.

❖ **Accuracy of Judgments**

Our ability to perceive others accurately is absolutely key for the human society to function smoothly. On the one hand, it is important for people to reasonably accurate in their judgment of others as evidence suggests that under many circumstances, person perception may be quite inaccurate. That is, we are both accurate and inaccurate in perceiving others. People perceive external visible attributes fairly accurately but rather become difficult when we try to infer internal states, such as traits, feelings, emotions, or personalities. Therefore, certain cues are often used to make judgment which includes: the eye of the beholder, judging personality, recognition of emotions, among others.

❖ **The Problem of Deception**

The assumption that certain aspects of non-verbal behaviour are not under voluntary control is common. It is important to note that all channels of non-verbal communication are not the same and some seem to be more under voluntary control than others. Leakage cues are that non-verbal act that gives away information the sender/deceiver 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. Factors influencing deception attempts are motivation, experienced deceivers, self confidence, message planning etc.

❖ **Human Aggression**

Aggression is a sequence of behaviour with the intent of inflicting harm, pain or injury to the person toward whom it is directed. Intention to inflict pain or injury is essentially what makes an action aggressive. There are different types of aggression which includes: Instrumental

Aggression: is aimed at securing extraneous (external) rewards other than the victim's suffering, Hostile Aggression: is aimed at inflicting injury on others, and Displaced Aggression: which means aggressive behaviour directed towards a person or an object other than the one actually causing the feelings. Factors that can influence aggression are uncomfortable heat, heightened physiological arousal, exposure to unpleasant noise, crowding, and even darkness. Although there different ways to manage or reduce aggressive behaviour but intensity of such behaviour can often be sharply reduced by even such wild forms of punishment as social disapproval.