

## **CHAPTER 10 - AGGRESSION**

### **Its nature, causes and control**

#### **Study Unit 10.1 – Perspectives on aggression: In search of the Roots of Violence**

Aggression – behaviour directed at harming someone who is trying to avoid such treatment

##### **The role of biological factors: From instincts to the evolutionary perspective**

Biological or genetic factors do play a role in determining aggression, but it is not the entire cause.

1. Human beings aggress against each other in different ways
2. The frequency of aggressive actions varies across societies

##### **Drive theories: the motive to harm others**

Aggression stems mainly from an externally elicited drive to harm others.

Drive theories of aggression – theories suggesting that aggression stems from external conditions that arouse the motive to harm others

Frustration-aggression hypothesis – frustration leads to the arousal of a drive, whose aim is to harm

The belief that frustration is a powerful determinant of aggression

##### **Modern theories of aggression: The Social Learning Perspective and the General Aggression Model**

Social Learning Perspective - individuals learn:

Various ways of harming others

Which people or groups are appropriate targets of aggression

Which actions justify retaliation or vengeance

In which situations is aggression permitted or approved

General Aggression Model (GAM) - Events may lead to overt (obvious) aggression



## **Direct provocation: When aggression (or teasing) breeds aggression**

Physical or verbal provocation is one of the strongest causes of human aggression

Teasing - provoking statements that draw attention to the targets flaw's and imperfections

Cultural differences:

Individualistic cultures - establish uniqueness and a positive self-image, therefore responds more negatively to teasing

Collectivist cultures - less concerned with uniqueness and more with getting along and being a part of the group, therefore responds less negatively

## **Heightened Arousal: Emotion, cognition and aggression**

Heightened arousal can enhance aggression in response to provocation, frustration and other factors

Excitation transfer theory - Arousal produced in one situation can persist and intensify emotional reactions occurring in later situations

## **Exposure to Media Violence: Effects of violence in films, tv and video games**

1. Such materials increase the likelihood of aggressive behaviour by people exposed to them
2. Effects are short and long term
3. The magnitude of these effects are large

### **The effects of media violence: why do they occur?**

Relating to the GAM model:

Repeated exposure to media violence can affect cognitions relating to aggression creating a hostile expectation bias - an expectation that others will behave aggressively. This causes individuals to be more aggressive themselves

### **The effects of media violence: Neuroscience evidence for the impact of desensitization**

Desensitization to violence - frequent exposure to violence in media result in people becoming less sensitive to violence and its consequences

Exposure to violent media increases the tendency to aggress:

1. It reduces individuals emotional reactions, so they perceive them as nothing unusual
2. Strengthens beliefs, expectations and other cognitive processes related to aggression

As a result of repeated exposure to violent media people develop strong knowledge structures (structures reflecting and combining beliefs, expectations, schemas and scripts

When these knowledge structures are activated people respond aggressively because that is what they have “learned” to do.

### **Violent pornography: When sex and aggression mix**

Exposure to violent pornography can increase men’s willingness to aggress against women

Repeated exposure results in the desensitizing effect

Exposure leads men and women to accept dangerous myths about sexual violence

### **Cultural factors in aggression: “cultures of honour” and sexual jealousy**

Cultural factors suggest that aggression is appropriate or required under certain circumstances – ex for honour

Cultures of honour - strong norms indicating that aggression is an appropriate response to insults of honour

### **Sexual Jealousy: One key effect of concern with one’s honour**

Infidelity is highly threatening to male honour

It can result in severe punishment for all those involved

Violence stemming from jealousy that threaten a man’s honour are excused or condoned in cultures of honour

### **Personality and Aggression: Why some people are more aggressive than others**

TASS Model – Traits as situational sensitive model

Many aspects of personality function in a thresh-hold manner: only when situational factors are strong enough to trigger them, do they influence behaviour/aggression

### **The type A behaviour pattern**

Type A behaviour pattern - competitive, impatient, irritable, aggressive and hostile

Type B behaviour pattern - not competitive, patient, relaxed and calm

Hostile aggression - the prime objective is inflicting some kind of harm on the victim

Instrumental aggression - primary goal is not to harm but for attainment of another goal; access to valued resources or praise for being “tough”

### **Narcissism, ego threat and aggression**

Narcissistic people may react strongly to mild provocations because they believe they are better than others

### **Sensation seeking and aggression**

- People high in sensation seeking or impulsiveness experience hostile feelings more often than others
- Tendencies to get bored and seek experiences may lead to hostile thoughts
- They are attracted to situations that elicit aggression
- They are more likely to experience anger and hostility
- They are more likely to focus on the immediate rather than delayed consequences of their behaviour
- They show higher levels of physical and verbal aggression than others

### **Gender differences in aggression**

- Males are more likely to aggress when they have not been provoked; when provocation is intense this disappears
- The size of gender differences in aggression differs with the aggression in question – males are more likely to react with direct aggression and females with indirect
- For men and women aggression can be a social plus to people with high status

Bistrategic controllers - combine high levels of aggression with pro-social, relationship boosting actions

## **Situational determinants of aggression: the effects of heat and alcohol**

### **In the heat of anger: temperature and aggression**

When people get hot they become irritable and may be more likely to lash out at others

After prolonged exposure to high temperatures, people become so uncomfortable they focus on reducing discomfort and not attacking others

### **Alcohol and aggression**

Alcohol impairs cognitive functions making it harder to evaluate others intentions as hostile or not

It has been associated with such behaviour in the past

## **Study unit 10.3 – Aggression in ongoing relationships: Bullying and Aggression at work**

### **Bullying: singling out others for repeated abuse**

Bullying - one person is the target of repeated aggression by another; the target has less power than those engaging in aggression

#### **Why do people engage in bullying?**

Two motives: Hold power over others

Be part of the “tough group” therefore high in status

#### **The characteristics of bullies and victims**

Pure bullies - always and only bullies

Pure victims - always and only victims

Bully-victims - switch back and forth between roles

Bullies believe others act the way they do intentionally or because of lasting characteristics

Bullies and bully-victims tend to have lower self esteem

Therefore, they aggress to build their esteem

Bullies and bully-victims believe the best way to respond is with aggression

### **Workplace aggression: Harming others at work**

Workplace aggression - any form of behaviour in which people seek to harm others at work

Effect-danger ratio - producing the most amount of harm to the victim as possible while minimising the chance of retaliation

Three types of hostility:

Obstructionism - behaviour to destruct or impede the targets performance

Incivility - intent to harm the target in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect

Overt aggression - anything concerning work place violence; assault, theft etc

## **Study Unit 10.4 – The prevention and control of aggression**

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Punishment -           | procedures where consequences are delivered to individuals when they engage in specific actions  |
| Forgiveness -          | giving up the desire to punish and instead, acting kind and helpful towards them   |
| Catharsis hypothesis - | if people vent their anger and hostility in non harmful ways, their tendencies to engage in more dangerous types of aggression are reduced |

## **CHAPTER 11 – GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS**

### **THE CONSEQUENCES OF BELONGING**

#### **Study Unit 11.1 - Groups: When we join and when we leave**

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Group -                  | collection of people bonded together as a unit   |
| Common-bond groups -     | involves face to face interaction; members are bonded to each other: affiliation needs, intimacy   |
| Common-identity groups - | face to face interaction is absent; members are linked through their category as a whole rather than each other: identity needs, social identity |

Groups differ in terms of their:

Entitativity - the extent a group is compared as being a coherent entity

Characteristics of groups high in entitativity:

1. Members interact often, not necessarily face to face (ex, internet)
2. The group is of consequence to its members
3. Members share common goals
4. Members are similar in important ways

Highly entitative groups are more likely to be stereotyped than groups low in entitativity

## **Groups: Key Components**

### **Status: Hierarchies in groups**

Group members differ in status

Status - position or rank within a group

Status is linked to a variety of desirable outcomes

Prototypical people - embodying the group's central attributes; generally accorded status and elected leader

### **Roles: Differentiation of functions within groups**

Roles - the set of behaviours that individuals occupying specific positions within a group are expected to perform

Different individuals occupy each role in any group

### **Norms: The rules of the game**

Groups affect the behaviour of their members via norms:

Norms - rules concerning how members should behave

Collectivism - the norm is to maintain harmony among members; disagreement and conflict are avoided (collective groups)

Individualism - the norm is to stand out from the group and be different, disagreeing with groups is seen as courageous (individualistic groups)

### **Cohesiveness: The force that binds**

Cohesiveness - all forces (factors) that cause members to remain in the group

Cohesive groups have a sense of solidarity: see themselves as homogeneous, supportive of in-group members, achieve group goals over individual goals, high morale

## **Study Unit 11.2 – The benefits of joining: What groups do for us**

Gain self-knowledge from belonging to groups

Membership tells us what kind of person we are or would like to be

Groups help us reach goals – attaining prestige and self esteem

The more an individual is seeking **self-enhancement**: boosting ones public image: the more important the groups' status is to that person

The more a person is seeking **self-transcendence**: contribute by helping others: the less important the groups' status is to the person

Politicised collective identity - a result of recognised shared grievances; engage in a power struggle on behalf of the group

### **The costs of getting accepted into a group**

Once we put effort into joining a group we may need to change our attitudes toward the group positively to justify our behaviours

After initiation and learning the group is unattractive, our commitment toward the group will increase

### **The cost of membership why groups sometimes splinter**

Group membership restricts freedom; members are expected to behave in certain ways

Groups make demands on members' time, energy and resources; demands must be met or member must surrender membership

Groups may adopt policies or positions that some members' disapprove of

Individuals may leave/groups may splinter when something in the group has changed significantly and they no longer fall in the boundaries of their extended self-concept

Ideology - philosophical and political values that govern a group

When differences in ideologies become disparate, members cannot see themselves as part of the same group or sharing a social identity with other members'

Schism - splintering of a group into distinct factions following an ideological rift among members

## **Study Unit 11.3 – Effects of the presence of others: From task performance to behaviour in crowds**

### **Social facilitation: Performing in the presence of others**

The presence of others can affect our performance

## **Can having an audience distract us?**

The presence of others can produce cognitive overload

Performers must divide attention between the task and the audience; this can restrict attention causing one to only focus on one cue or stimuli

Distraction-conflict theory - the presence of others induces tendencies to focus on the task and the audience, resulting in increased arousal and narrow attentional focus

Drive-theory - the presence of others is arousing and can increase or reduce performance depending on whether the responses in a given situation are correct or incorrect

Evaluation-apprehension view - as audience disrupts a performance because of anxiety about being evaluated

## **Study Unit 11.4 – Social Loafing: Letting others do the work**

Additive tasks - contributions of each member are combined into a single group output

Social loafing - reductions in motivation and effort when individuals work in a group compared to working alone

If people feel dispensable to group, they are likely to loaf

The more fairness in a group, the less loafing will occur

### **Reducing social loafing: useful techniques**

Make outputs individually identifiable

Increase commitment to the task and task performance

Increase the importance or value of tasks

Assure all members that their contributions to the task are unique

### **Effects of being in a crowd**

Hooliganism - negative stereotype about crowd behaviour at sporting events

Deindividuation - when in a crowd people lose their individuality and act as others do

Being in a crowd makes people anonymous and less responsible for their actions, resulting in unrestrained, antisocial actions.

Being in a crowd or deindividuation does not always lead to negative behaviour:

It increases the likelihood that crowd members will follow group norms – showing respect, singing etc

## **Study Unit 11.5 – Coordination in groups: Cooperation or Conflict?**

Cooperation - working together to attain shared goals

Conflict - when individuals or groups believe others will take actions incompatible with their own interests

### **Cooperation: Working with others to achieve shared goals**

Some goals people seek can't be shared – same job or romantic partner

#### **Social dilemmas: Where cooperation could occur but often doesn't**

Social dilemmas - when each person can increase individual gains by acting selfishly, but if most people do the same thing, the outcomes experienced by all is reduced

Decreasing the attractiveness of competition increases cooperation

### **Conflict: Its nature, causes and effects**

Incompatible interests and recognition of the parties involved

Social factors play a role in initiating conflicts

Faulty attribution error - the causes of others behaviour

Erroneous attributions - the causes of negative outcomes are important in conflicts and cause them to occur when they could be avoided

Faulty communication - communicating in a way that annoys or angers others

Status quo bias - powerful groups defend the current status quo to be less accurate at intergroup perception than the groups that are challenging them

Conflict may stem from poor performance and negative feedback by the group

## **Resolving conflicts: Useful techniques**

### **Bargaining: The universal process**

Most common strategy

Bargaining (negotiation) - opposing sides exchange offers directly or through representatives

### **Superordinate goals: Were all in this together**

Superordinate goals - goals that both sides seek and that tie their interests together rather than set them apart

## **Study Unit 11.6 – Perceived fairness in groups: Its nature and effects**

### **Rules for judging fairness: distributive, procedural and transactional justice**

Distributive justice (fairness) - rewards should be divided among members according to their contributions

Procedural justice - the fairness of the procedures through which rewards have been distributed

1. The extent to which procedures are applied the same to all people
2. Opportunities for correcting errors in distributions
3. Decision makers aren't influenced by their own self-interest
4. Decisions are ethical and values are held by all those involved

Transactional justice - the way information about outcomes and procedures are explained

We judge fairness:

In terms of the rewards we receive – distributive justice

The procedures used to reach these rewards – procedural justice

The way we are informed about these rewards – transactional justice

## **Reactions to perceived unfairness – Dealing with injustice**

If unfairness centres on rewards (distributive justice) people change their balance between contributions and outcomes

When unfairness centres on procedures (procedural justice) or a lack of courteous treatment by the people determining rewards (transactional justice), people adopt different tactics

## **Study Unit 11.7 – Decision making by groups: How it occurs and the pitfalls it faces**

### **The decision making process: How groups attain consensus**

#### **The decision quality of groups: less or more extreme**

Groups are more likely to adopt extreme positions than if members made decisions alone

Group polarisation - shift towards views that are more extreme than the ones they initially began with

Social comparison: wanting to be better than average holds views of being better than others

During group discussions most arguments favour the initial preference

### **The downside of group decision making**

#### **Groupthink: when cohesiveness is dangerous**

Groupthink - highly cohesive groups think they can do no wrong and that information contrary to the group's view should be rejected

Emergent group norms - norms suggesting the group is infallible (incapable of making mistakes), morally superior

#### **The failure to share information unique to each member**

Groups do not always pool resources and share information resulting in decisions which tend to reflect shared information

This is fine if the information points to the best decision unless the best decision is not shared among members which prevents them from reaching the best decision

## **Brainstorming: Idea generation in groups**

Brainstorming - meeting as a group to generate ideas together

If members believe their ideas will be viewed negatively, they are unable to come up with new ideas while also trying to expand on others ideas