

NCERT SOLUTIONS

CLASS - 12th



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Class : 12th
Subject : Psychology
Chapter : 6
Chapter Name : Attitude and Social Cognition

Q1 Define attitude. Discuss the components of an attitude.

Answer. Attitude can be defined as - " a state of mind, a set of views or thoughts regarding some topic, which have an evaluative feature (positive, negative or neutral quality)." The topic about which belief is made is termed as the attitude subject. It has an emotional component and a tendency to behave or act in a particular manner regarding the attitude object. The following are the main components of attitude -

- i) Affective component - The emotional component of attitude is termed as the affective component.
- ii) Behavioural component - The tendency of a person to act in a particular way regarding the attitude object is known as the behavioral component.
- iii) Cognitive component - The thought component or the state of mind of the person is known as the cognitive component.

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Q2 Are attitudes learnt? Explain how?

Answer. Yes, attitudes are learnt by a person. They can be learnt by various experiences, knowledge or in other ways. The following are the ways in which an attitude can be learnt -

1. Learning attitudes by association - We meet many people in our life on a daily basis. We see many good and bad features in them and we may learn many new attitudes by associating with them.
2. Learning attitudes by being rewarded or punished - Sometimes we may get rewarded for our work and other times, we may get punished due to some wrong deed. This helps us in understanding the right and wrong deeds and we learn many attitudes from it.
3. Learning attitudes through modelling - It is the method of learning attitudes by observing what others are doing around us. For example, a child learns many attitudes by observing his parents, his neighbours and other people surrounding him.
4. Learning attitudes through group or cultural norms - Norms are the behaviour which we are supposed to follow while living in a society. Thus we learn new attitudes by following the norms of the society. They may change when we move from one culture to another.

5. Learning through exposure to information - An attitude can not only be learnt through contacting with someone, rather a person may also learn attitude by reading someone's biography or by various social media platforms.

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Q3 What are the factors that influence the formation of an attitude?

Answer. The factors influencing the formation of attitude are as follows -

1. Family and School Environment : A person learns many attitudes and values from his family and friends. If his family and friends share positive attitude with him then it will positively develop his state of mind and he will develop positive attitude within himself.
2. Reference Groups : These groups include cultural, social, political or religious groups to which a person is associated. These groups help him in learning new attitudes and behaviour towards the society and other groups. They teach him the norms or ways of thinking.
3. Personal Experiences : Many attitudes are developed by the personal experiences of the individual which he develops when he is exposed to the society. An individual has different experiences when he is admitted to school, when he starts doing a job or business and in other phases of his life.
4. Media-related Influences : Currently the technological advancements have made it possible to get linked to the world at a click of the mouse. Thus people are largely affected by the social media and the media platforms.

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Q4 Is behaviour always a reflection of one's attitude? Explain with a relevant example.

Answer. No it isn't always necessary that one's behaviour is a reflection of his attitude towards a particular object. Sometimes it may happen that the attitude of a person towards a certain object is completely different from how he behaves towards it. Attitude and behaviour are consistent with each other only in certain circumstances which are explained below -

- i) When the person isn't being observed.
- ii) When his attitude towards a particular object is very strong.
- iii) The person is aware of his attitude.
- iv) When his behaviour would show a positive consequence as per his belief.

For example - it may happen that a person is afraid of dark places. However he may predict in front of others that he isn't afraid and may seem to be happy roaming around in a dark place. His behaviour in this case contradicts his attitude.

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Q5 Highlight the importance of schemas in social cognition.

Answer. A schema is defined as a mental structure that provides a framework, set of rules or guidelines for processing information about any object. It is very important in social cognition which is highlighted below -

In the case of social cognition, the basic units are social schemas. Some attitudes may also function like social schemas. These are the mental structure which function as a framework to process social information. These schemas help in developing many prototypes. Prototypes are those concepts which have defining features of a concept, class or family to a large extent. Schemas may work in categories or classes. If they do so, then such schemas are called prototypes. These category based schemas which are related to a group of people are termed as stereotypes in social cognition.

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Q6 Differentiate between prejudice and stereotype.

Answer. The difference between prejudice and stereotype is as follows -

| Basis | Prejudice | Stereotypes |
|------------|--|---|
| Definition | These are the examples of attitudes towards a particular group. They are generally negative. | It refers to a cluster of ideas regarding the characteristics of a particular group. |
| Based on | They are based on ethnicity, race, gender, caste and they mostly show negative attitudes towards other groups. | It includes classifying people on the basis of their membership in a particular group, and it can be negative, positive or neutral. |
| Consist of | It may lead to hatred or dislike towards a particular group which may also lead to discrimination. | It consists of undesirable characteristics about the target group. |
| Truth | It isn't based on a truth and usually originates from the lack of knowledge about a particular group. | It is generally based on a truth and a factual concept. However it can also be based upon prejudice. |

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Q7 Prejudice can exist without discrimination and vice versa. Comment.

Answer. Prejudice can exist without the presence of discrimination. Similarly discrimination can also exist without prejudice. However they generally go hand in hand. It means that wherever prejudice or discrimination exist, the two groups may have conflicts while living in the same society.

The discrimination may be there on the basis of gender, religion, community, caste, physical handicap, and illnesses. In these cases, prejudice may or may not exist. However in most of these cases, it can be suppressed by law.

However the cognitive and emotional components of prejudice are more difficult to change.

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Q8 Describe the important factors that influence impression formation.

Answer. The factors which influence the formation of impression of a person are as follows -

- (i) The nature of information available to the perceiver.
- (ii) Social schemas in the perceiver (including stereotypes).
- (iii) personality characteristics of the perceiver.
- (iv) situational factors.

The following are the three sub-processes in the formation of impressions of an individual towards a particular object or another individual -

1. Selection - Under this, selected information is taken from the targeted person.
2. Organisation - The selected information is classified and organised in systematic manner.
3. Inference - After analysing the information, a conclusion is drawn about the person who is targeted.

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Q9 Explain how the attribution made by an 'actor' would be different from that of an 'observer'.

Answer. There is a difference between the attribution made by an actor and an observer and this is known as the actor - observer effect.

The attribution made by a person towards his own positive or negative attitudes or experiences is known as the actor role. However other persons may also develop attribution towards his positive or negative attitudes or experiences, which is known as the observer role. The basic reason for the difference between the actor and observer roles is that people want to have a nice image of themselves, as compared to others.

For example - if you get good marks then you will give the credit to your hardwork. However if your friend gets good marks then you will give credit to easy test or his good luck. This makes the difference.

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Q10 How does social facilitation take place?

Answer. Our performance on specific tasks is largely influenced by the mere presence of others. This is called social facilitation. It may happen that we perform completely different when we are alone as compared to the time when we are surrounded by other people.

- If we perform better in the presence of others, then it is because we feel arousal in the presence of others. We feel that we will be praised for our better performance. Thus he performs in an intense manner.
- When we feel that we will be praised for better performance and will be punished for bad performance, then we try hard to perform better for getting appreciation since we don't want to get punishment.
- The nature of the task to be performed also affects the performance in the presence of others.
- If two or more persons perform the same task at the same time in front of others, then it gives rise to competition. When the task is simple then the performance is better in social competition.

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Q11 Explain the concept of pro-social behaviour.

Answer. All religions teach us that we should help those who are in need. This behaviour is called helping or pro-social behaviour. We are taught that we should be helping others in case they need our help. It is similar to 'altruism' which means helping others without thinking of self interest or self benefit.

Some of its examples are cooperating with others, helping during natural calamities or an emergency situation, showing sympathy towards the weaker section of the society etc.

This type of behaviour of people has great value and importance for promoting peace and harmony in the society, however people don't show this behaviour very often. Nowadays people are becoming more selfish and self-catering. Thus they don't like to help others.

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Q12 Your friend eats too much junk food, how would you be able to bring about a change in her/his attitude towards food?

Answer. I would like to use the concept of cognitive dissonance to bring about a change in her attitude towards food. This concept was given by Leon Festinger. According to this concept, cognitive components of an attitude must be consonant which means they should be logically in line with each other.

Here, the cognitions are as follows -

(i) Junk food is bad for health.

(ii) He/she eats too much junk food.

Hence the two cognitions aren't in line with each other i.e. They are dissonant. Thus he would tend to change one of them in order to bring consonant. Thus he would stop eating much junk food to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

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