



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COURSE CODE: PCR 276

COURSE TITLE: PERCEPTION AND CONFLICT

COURSE GUIDE

PCR 276

PERCEPTION AND CONFLICT

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INTRODUCTION**Welcome to PCR 276: Perception and Conflict**

This course is a three-credit unit course for undergraduate students in Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution. The materials have been developed to equip you with the fundamental principles of the subject matter. This course guide gives you an overview of the course. It also provides you with information on the organisation and requirements of the course.

COURSE AIMS

The basic aim of this course is to help you understand the relationship between Perception and Conflict with particular emphasis on the strategies that you may require for the effective management of the conflicts that you encounter in course of relating with people in all facets of life. These broad aims will be achieved by:

- I. Introducing you to the concept of Perception and Conflict,
- II. Explaining to you the various theories of Anti-Social Behaviour,
- III. Acquainting you with the theories of Inter-group Relations, and
- IV. Developing your capacity for the promotion of Social Cohesion.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

To achieve the aims set out above, PCR 276 has overall objectives. In addition, each unit also has specific objectives. The unit objectives are at the beginning of each unit. I advise you read them before you start working through the unit. You may want to refer to them during your study of the unit to check your progress. Here are the wider objectives for the course as a whole. By meeting the objectives, you count yourself as having met the aims of the course. On the successful completion of the course, you should be able to:

- a. Understand Perception and Conflict as well as their main characteristics,
- b. Define Psychological Theory and explain its various types,
- c. Understand the theoretical basis of Inter-group Relations,
- d. Appreciate the Social Psychological determinants of Aggression and Violence (e.g. Genocide, Ethno-national Conflict, Racism and Terrorism), and
- e. Acquire skills in post-conflict Peace-building strategies.

WORKING THROUGH THIS COURSE

To complete this course, you are required to read the study unit and other related materials. You will also need to undertake practical exercises for which you need a pen, a notebook, and other materials that will be listed in the guide. The exercises are to aid you in understanding the concepts being presented. At the end of each unit, you will be required to submit written assignment for assessment purposes. At the end of the course, you will write a final examination.

COURSE MATERIALS

The major materials you will need for this course are:

- (i) Course guide
- (ii) Study Guide
- (iii) Assignments file

Relevant text books are listed under each unit.

STUDY UNIT

There are **21 (units)** in this course. They are listed below:

MODULE 1

TOPIC: FRAMEWORK OF PERCEPTION AND CONFLICT

Unit 1: Perception: Definition and Features (Part I)

Unit 2: Perception: Definition and Features (Part II)

Unit 3: Distinction between Perception and other concepts (Part I)

Unit 4: Distinction between Perception and other concepts (Part II)

Unit 5: Conflict: Meaning and Features

Unit 6: Relationship between Perception and Conflict

Unit 7: Perspectives in Conflict Transformation

MODULE 2

TOPIC: THEORIES OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN SOCIETY

Unit 1: Meaning and Types of Psychological Theories

Unit 2: Psychological theories of Aggression/Violence

Unit 3: Perspectives in Child Aggression

Unit 4: Theories of Attribution

Unit 5: Social-Psychological contexts of Genocide and Ethno-national conflicts

Unit 6: Social-Psychological determinants of racism

Unit 7: Social Psychology of Terrorism

MODULE 3

TOPIC: TOWARDS A PEACEFUL SOCIETY

Unit 1: Theories of Inter-Group Relations (Part I)

Unit 2: Theories of Inter-Group Relations (Part II)

Unit 3: Introduction to Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA)

Unit 4: Dimensions of Nonviolence

Unit 5: Conflict Handling Strategies (Part I)

Unit 6: Conflict Handling Strategies (Part II)

Unit 7: Understanding Tolerance and Intolerance

TEXTBOOKS AND REFERENCES

Certain books have been recommended for the course. You may wish to purchase them for further reading.

ASSESSMENT FILE

An assessment file and a marking scheme will be made available to you. In the assessment file, you will find details of the works you must submit to your tutor for marking. There are two aspects of the assessment of this course; the tutor marked and the written examination. The marks you obtain in these two areas will make up your final marks. The assignment must be submitted to your tutor for formal assessment in accordance with the deadline stated in the presentation schedule and the Assignment file. The work you submit to your tutor for assessment will count for 30% of your total score.

TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMAs)

You will have to submit a specified number of the (TMAs). Every unit in this course has a Tutor Marked Assignment. You are required to attempt all the questions and you will be assessed on all of them but the best four performances from the (TMAs) will be used for your 30% grading. When you have completed each assignment, send it together with a Tutor Marked Assignment form, to your tutor. Make sure each assignment reaches your tutor on or before the deadline for submissions. If for any reason, you cannot complete your work on time, contact your tutor for a discussion on the possibility of an extension. Extensions will not be granted after the due date unless under exceptional circumstances.

FINAL EXAMINATION AND GRADING

The final examination will be a test of three hours. All areas of the course will be examined. Find time to read the unit all over before your examination. The final

examination will attract 70% of the total course grade. The examination will consist of questions, which reflect the kinds of self assessment exercise and tutor marked assignment you have previously encountered. And all aspects of the course will be assessed. You should take the time between completing the last unit and taking the examination to revise the entire course.

COURSE MARKING SCHEME

The following table lays out how the actual course mark allocation is broken down.

Assessment	Marks
Assignments 1-3(the best three of all the assignments submitted)	Four assignments, marked out of 10% totaling 30%
Final Examination	70% of overall course score
Total	100% of course score

PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

The dates for submission of all assignments will be communicated to you. You will also be told the date of completing the study units and dates for examinations.

COURSE GUIDE: OVERVIEW AND PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

UNIT	TOPIC(S)	WEEKLY ACTIVITY	ASSESSMENT (END OF UNIT)
MODULE 1	FRAMEWORK OF PERCEPTION & CONFLICT		
Unit 1	Perception: Definition, and Features (Part I)	Week 1	Assignment 1
Unit 2	Perception: Definition, and Features (Part II).	Week 2	Assignment 2

Unit 3	Distinction between Perception and other concepts (Part I)	Week 3	Assignment 3
Unit 4	Distinction between Perception and other concepts (Part II)	Week 4	Assignment 4
Unit 5	Conflict: Meaning and Features	Week 5	Assignment 5
Unit 6	Relationship Between Perception and Conflict	Week 6	Assignment 6
Unit 7	Perspectives in Conflict Transformation	Week 7	Assignment 7
MODULE 2	THEORIES OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN SOCIETY		
Unit 1	Meaning and Type of Psychological Theories	Week 1	Assignment 1
Unit 2	Psychological Theories of Aggression	Week 2	Assignment 2
Unit 3	Perspectives in Child Aggression	Week 3	Assignment 3
Unit 4	Theories of Attribution	Week 4	Assignment 4
Unit 5	Social-Psychological Contexts of Genocide & Ethno-national Conflicts	Week 5	Assignment 5
Unit 6	Social-Psychological Determinants of Racism	Week 6	Assignment 6

Unit 7	Social Psychology of Terrorism	Week 7	Assignment 7
MODULE 3	TOWARDS A PEACEFUL SOCIETY		
Unit 1	Theories of Inter-Group Relations (Part I)	Week 1	Assignment 1
Unit 2	Theories of Inter-Group Relations (Part II)	Week 2	Assignment 2
Unit 3	Introduction to Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment	Week 3	Assignment 3
Unit 4	Dimensions of Nonviolence	Week 4	Assignment 4
Unit 5	Conflict Handling Strategies (Part I)	Week 5	Assignment 5
Unit 6	Conflict Handling Strategies (Part II)	Week 6	Assignment 6
Unit 7	Understanding Tolerance and Intolerance	Week 7	Assignment 7

HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM THIS COURSE

You will be required to study the units on your own. However, you may arrange to meet with your tutor for tutorials on an optional basis at the study centre. Also, you can organize interactive sessions with your course mates.

TUTORS AND TUTORIALS

Information relating to the tutorials will be provided at the appropriate time. Your tutor will mark and comment on your assignments, keep a close watch on your progress and on any difficulties you might encounter and provide assistance to you during the course. You must take your tutor-marked assignments to the study centre 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 if you do not understand any part of the study units or the assigned readings; you have difficulty with the exercises: you have a question or problem with the assignments, 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 the only chance to have face-to-face contact with your tutor and ask questions which are answered instantly. You can raise any problem encountered in the course of your study. To gain maximum benefit from course tutorials, prepare a question list before attending them. You will learn a lot from participating in discussion actively.

SUMMARY

The course guide gives you an overview of what to expect in the course of this study. The course teaches you the basics about citizen and state relations in the Nigerian state. We wish you success with the course and hope that you will find it both interesting and useful.

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MODULE 1

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MODULE 2

TOPIC: THEORIES OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN SOCIETY

Unit 1: Meaning and Types of Psychological Theories

Unit 2: Psychological theories of Aggression/Violence

Unit 3: Perspectives in Child Aggression

Unit 4: Theories of Attribution

Unit 5: Social-Psychological contexts of Genocide and Ethno-national conflicts

Unit 6: Social-Psychological determinants of racism

Unit 7: Social Psychology of Terrorism

MODULE 3

TOPIC: TOWARDS A PEACEFUL SOCIETY

Unit 1: Theories of Inter-Group Relations (Part I)

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MODULE 1 FRAMEWORK OF PERCEPTION AND CONFLICT

Unit 1: Perception: Definition and Features (Part I)

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UNIT 1: PERCEPTION: DEFINITION AND FEATURES (PART I)

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Content

3.1 What is Perception

3.2 Characteristics of Perception

3.3 The Perceptual Process

3.4. Self-Assessment Exercise

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments

7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit 'Perception: Definition and Features' introduces you to the meaning of perception together with its basic characteristics.

2.0 UNIT OBJECTIVES

It is expected that after studying this unit, you should be able to:

- (a) Define perception,
- (b) Mention and explain the characteristics of perception,

3.0 MAIN CONTENT: PERCEPTION: DEFINITION AND FEATURES (PART I)

3.1 DEFINITION OF PERCEPTION: Like most concepts within the social science disciplines, perception (or what other scholars refer to as social perception) has been defined in a variety of ways since its first usage. From the lay man's perspective, perception is defined as an act of being aware of "one's environment through physical sensation, which denotes an individual's ability to understand" (Chambers Dictionary). However, many social psychologists have tended to develop the concept around one of its most essential characteristics that the world around us is not psychologically uniform to all individuals. This is the fact, in all probability, that accounts for the difference in the opinions and actions of individuals/groups that are exposed to the same social phenomenon. At this point, it is important for you to take a look at some of these definitions in order to better appreciate the point being made here:

According to Nelson and Quick (1997: 83-84) "social perception is the process of interpreting information about another person." What this definition has clearly highlighted for your attention is that the opinions you form about another person depends on the amount of information available to you and the extent to which you are able to correctly interpret the information you have acquired. In other words, you may be in possession of the same set of information that other people have on a particular situation, person or group but still arrive at different conclusions due to individual differences in the capacity to interpret the information that you all have.

Rao and Narayan (1998: 329-330) obviously share the main characteristics of the above definition. However, they emphasise that perception ranks among the "important cognitive factors of human behaviour" or psychological mechanism that enable people to

understand their environment. In their own words, “perception is the process whereby people select, organise, and interpret sensory stimulations into meaningful information about their work environment.” They argue that perception is the single most important determinant of human behaviour, stating further that “there can be no behaviour without perception.” Though focussing on managers in work settings, Rao and Narayan draw attention to the fact that since there are no specific strategies for understanding the perception of others, everyone appears to be “left with his own inventiveness, innovative ability, sensitiveness and introspective skills to deal with perception.”

From a third perspective “social perception refers to constructing an understanding of the social world from the data we get through our senses” (Michener, DeLamater and Myers, 2004: 106). Thus, perception “refers to the process by which we form impressions of other people’s traits and personalities.” You may have noticed that by referring to “our senses” as the means of data collection the authors may have placed too much emphasis on its perception component, which the first two definitions clearly avoided. In order to shed more light on this concept it is important for you to pay attention to the following elements of the above definitions of perception listed by Rao and Narayan (1998: 329-330):

1. Our attention, feelings and the way we act are influenced by our environment,
2. Perception helps you to gather data from your surrounding, process the data and make sense out of it,
3. In perception it is sometimes difficult to separate the information from the action,
4. It is basically a process of gaining mental understanding, and
5. Perception guides the perceiver in harnessing, processing and channelling relevant information towards fulfilling the perceiver’s requirements.

3.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF PERCEPTION: This section is drawn from Nelson and Quick's (*op cit*: 84-87) concise description of the three major characteristics that influence our perception of other people:

3.2.1 Perceivers-Specific Characteristics: One of the perceivers-specific factors that influence perception is familiarity with the object of perception. Familiarity implies that, compared to others, we are better positioned to make observations leading to better relative ability to arrive at superior decisions about a particular situation. However, you must note that for you to perceive someone accurately you must have generated accurate data on that person during the stage of observation. This is because the relationship between familiarity and accuracy is not always direct. "Sometimes when we know a person well, we tend to screen out information that is inconsistent with what we believe the person is like" (Nelson and Quick, *op cit*: 85), which constitutes a major danger in performance appraisals.

Another factor that influences social perception is the perceiver's attitude. For instance, since no woman has ruled Nigeria since its independence in 1960, you are likely to develop the attitude that women are incapable of handling the challenges of leading this country, which has no empirical foundation.

Our mood is another important factor that affects the way we perceive others. Generally, the difference in our reaction to situations is a function of the state of happiness or sadness in which we find ourselves, (i.e. our moods). Thus, we tend to more easily remember information that identify with our moods than those that do not. Accordingly, whenever we are in negative moods we generally tend to form negative impressions of others.

The self-concept of the perceiver is also a critical determinant of perception. Basically, people that possess positive self-concepts tend to perceive positive attributes in other people, while, those with negative self-concepts tend to perceive negative attributes in others. Therefore, greater understanding of self allows us to have more accurate perception of others.

The cognitive structure, that is, a person's thought pattern of thinking equally determines his/her perception in significant ways. While some individuals are inclined to perceiving physical characteristics such as height, weight, and appearance others pay more attention to central traits or personality dispositions. However, there are people that are capable of perceiving all these traits at the same time instead of focussing on only one aspect.

3.2.2 Target-Specific Characteristics: Social perception is also influenced by certain characteristics that are specific to the person being perceived (i.e. the target).

One of the most important target-specific characteristics is the physical appearance of the perceived. Some of these characteristics include height, weight, estimated age, race and gender. In addition, the way you dress speaks volume about the way you are perceived. More importantly, perceivers find it easier to pick out those appearance traits that are unusual or new. Common examples of unusual personality traits include a very tall person, an energetic child as well as newcomers within a community. Verbal communications out of which perceivers assess a target's voice tone, accent and related factors also affect his/her perception.

Furthermore, the nonverbal Communication contains a lot of information through which an individual is perceived. Eye contact, facial expressions, body movements and posture are features that guide the perceiver's impression of the target. But, while facial impressions tend to convey general meanings, nonverbal communication poses a challenge of having different meanings in different cultures.

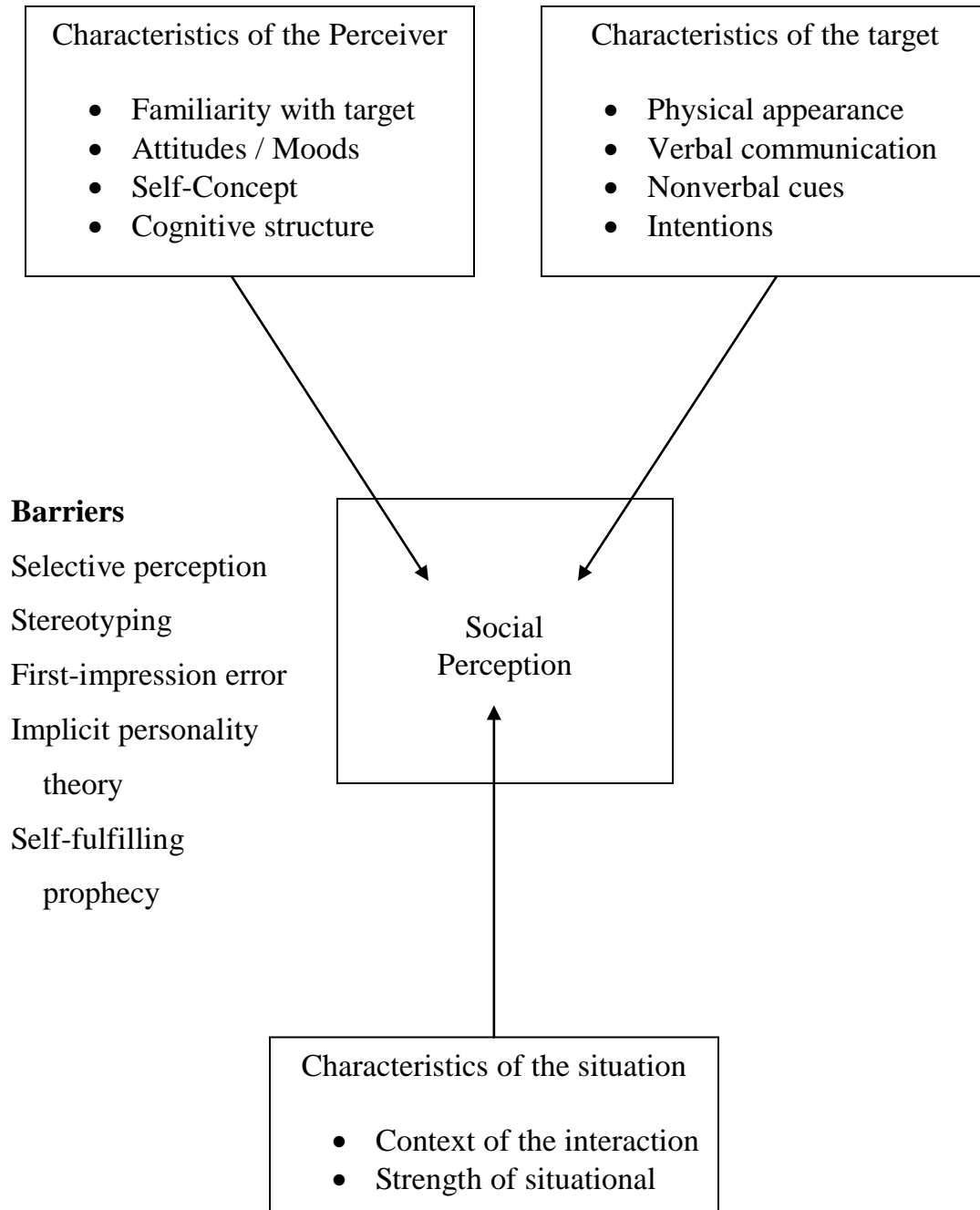
Mention must also be made of the role of the intentions of the target as inferred by the perceiver. More often than not, we quickly infer that our creditors have come to demand payment for debts we owe to them whenever they appear at our doorsteps. However, this

is not always the case as he has come ask you to render him an advice in your area of professional competence.

3.2.3 Situation-Specific Characteristics: This is a very significant factor that affects the impression that is formed about someone by an individual. In other words, the Social context of the interaction is a major influence. For instance, anybody that interacts with the Chief executive of a bank in a political rally would certainly go away with a different impression of him/her compared to meeting him in his/her bank office. “In Japan, social context is very important. Business discussions after working hours are or at lunch are taboos. If you try to talk business during these times, you may be perceived as rude.”

The strength of situational cues often provides clear indications of behaviour that are acceptable within certain environmental contexts. Thus, there are particular situations that influence the behaviour of an individual, which do not necessarily affect the disposition of that individual. This is what is referred to as the discounting principle in social perception. An illustration of this principle is when you come in contact with a sociable bank marketing officer that goes ahead to find out about your pastime, and knowledge of service delivery in the Nigerian banking industry. Would then be correct to attribute this behaviour to the marketing officer’s personality? You may not attribute this to his/her personality “because of the influence of the situation.” Basically, in this context, this person is prospecting for customers to whom he intends to introduce the services of his/her bank.

FIGURE 3.1: MODEL OF SOCIAL PERCEPTION



Source: quick and Nelson (1977)

3.3 THE PERCEPTUAL PROCESS

The Perceptual Process: Generally, the quality of input that a process attracts determines the quality of output that the process gives out. Correspondingly, “the perceptual inputs are first received, and then processed by the perceiver and the resultant output becomes the lease of the behaviour.” Figure 3.1 contains a simple model of the perceptual process.

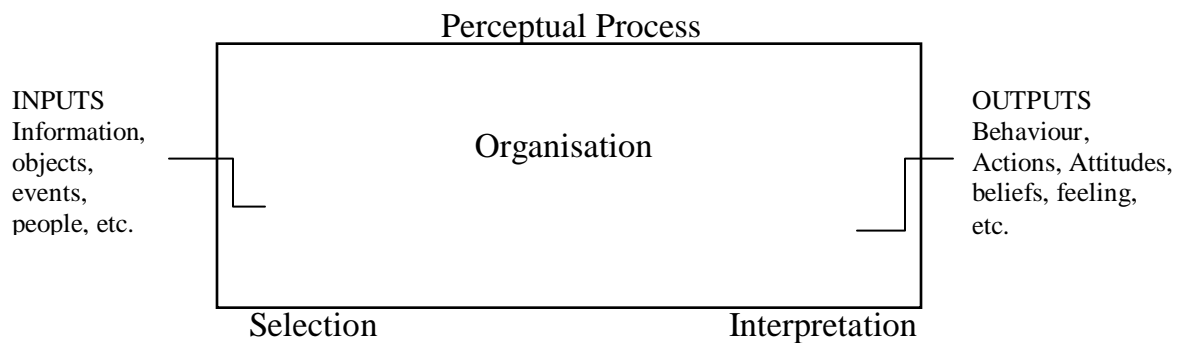


Figure 3.3.1. Model of the perceptual process

Variables in the perceptual process:

- Inputs** : Perceived inputs are the objects, events, people, etc. that are received by the perceiver.
- Process** : The received inputs are processed through selection, organisation and interpretation.
- Outputs** : Through the processing mechanism, the output (feelings, actions, attitudes, etc.) is derived.
- Behaviour** : Behaviour is dependent on these perceived outputs. The perceiver’s behaviour, in turn, generate responses from the perceived and these responses give rise to a new set of inputs.

Note: Adapted from organization theory and behaviour by Rao V.S.P and Narayana.

3.4 Self-Assessment Exercise

With the aid of the Social Perception model describe the main features of social perception.

4.0 Conclusion: You can see from what we have studied in this unit that social perception is a complex phenomenon that derives from the characteristics of the environment, the perceiver, and the perceived. The perceptual process (consisting of inputs, process and output) was also discussed, before it concluded with the internal and external factors affecting perception.

5.0 Summary: This unit on perception described the factors that inform the opinions that individuals or groups form about others. It identified the characteristics (individual-specific, target-specific and situation-specific) underlining perception and captured this in a diagrammatic framework.

6.0: Tutor-Marked Exercises:

- I. Define perception and outline five elements of your definition.
- II. Write short notes on the following:
 - a. Individual-Specific characteristics of perception
 - b. Target-Specific characteristics of perception
 - c. Situation-Specific characteristics of perception
- III. Describe the following characteristics of the perceptual mechanism:
 - a. Perceptual Selection
 - b. Perceptual Organisation
 - c. Perceptual Interpretation
- IV. What are the internal and external factors or determinants of perception?

7.0 Reference/Further Readings

Dearborn, D.C. and Simon, H. A. (1958), Selective Perception: A Note on Departmental Identification of Executives, *Sociometry*, Volume 21, p. 35

Quick, D.L. and Nelson, J.C. (1997), *Organisational Behavior: Foundations, Realities, and Challenges*, (New York: West Publishing Company), pp. 83-84.

Maslow, A. H. (1972), *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*, (New York: Viking Press), pp. 41-53

Michener, H. A., DeLamater, J. D. and Myers, D. J. (2004), *Social Psychology* (Australia: Thompson Wadsworth), (Fifth Edition), p. 106.

Rao, V. S. P. And Narayana, P. S. (1998), *Organisation Theory and Behaviour*, (Delhi: Konark Publishing Company), (329-330)

UNIT 2: PERCEPTION: DEFINITION AND FEATURES (PART II)

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Perceptual Mechanism
 - 3.2 Factors Affecting Perception
 - 3.3. Self-Assessment Exercise
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit ‘Perception: Definition and Features (Part ii)’ extends our understanding of the features of perception by focussing on the Perceptual Process, Mechanism and Factors Affecting Perception.

2.0 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- (a) Understand the Perceptual Mechanism, and
- (b) Factors Affecting Perception

3.0 MAIN CONTENT: PERCEPTION: DEFINITION AND FEATURES (PART II)

3.1 INTRODUCTION:

The Perceptual Mechanism: The perceptual process operates regularly “between us and reality” through three well established perceptual mechanisms. These mechanisms are

referred to as the process of selection, organization and interpretation. Let us discuss these mechanisms in more details.

- I. **Perceptual Selection:** This process occurs because the perceiver cannot absorb everything that he/she observes about an individual or group of people. Considering that the perceiver is exposed to numerous stimuli, his/her first basic approach to the perceptual process is to select those stimuli that he/she considers relevant. You should note that the selection process is stimulated by the fact that no individual is capable of assimilating all his/her observations, rather, they prefer to use only those details that they consider relevant to avoid perceptual overload.

Basically, the process of selecting the relevant information is shaped by such factors as the individuals “interests, background, experience, and attitudes of the perceiver.” Though this process of “selective perception” enables us to “speed read” other people, it however has the risk of producing incorrect perceptions.

Though there is the tendency for people to perceive others in predetermined ways, things that are bright and unusual tend to be more easily perceived than those things that are dull and familiar. For example, it is not unusual for parents to single out their children from a multitude “before others enter into their field of perception.”

In a study conducted by Dearborn and Simon (1958:35, in Rao and Narayana, *op cit*: 333), they observed that managers of the various departments in an organization tended to highlight the problems of their departments as the most central. People therefore tend to prioritise their own problems as the most important under any circumstance. “Individuals select the information that is supportive and satisfying” or the information they rate as the most important. Two basic principles are involved in selective perceptions:

- II. **Figure Group Principle:** This principle enables a perceiver to distinguish factors that are significant for further study from those factors that are insignificant and accordingly abandoned. While the meaningful/significant details are referred to as the “figure”, the seemingly meaningless/insignificant portions are classified as the ground. But more importantly Rao and Narayana (*op cit*: 334) argue that “what becomes group or what becomes figure is largely influenced by our needs and expectations.
- III. **Relevancy:** Generally, perceivers tend to perceive those things that not only satisfy their “needs and desires” they pay less attention to or completely ignore those that threaten these needs and desire. Events that affect those people who are close to us appear to be of interest to us as against events that are not.
- IV. **Perceptual Organisation:** This refers to the way in which the perceiver organizes the information he receives into “meaningful pictures to the perceiver. Organising the information that is incoming into a meaningful whole called organisation. This process is also called gestalt.” (i.e. organizational) process.” In order to accomplish the process of organization the perceiver has to embark on grouping, closure and simplification, that are expatiated hereunder:
- a. **Grouping:** Under this process, people and events are “grouped on the basis of similarity or proximity.” Thus, similar events are classified and perceived as a group. Similarly, “objects that have close proximity are also grouped under one head howsoever they unrelated. But perceptual distortion can occur when people who relate in only certain ways are grouped.

- b. **Closure:** The tendency for people to “fill in the missing gaps”, in a stimuli in order to make it more meaningful is known as closure. This simply means organising the perpetual stimuli to form a complete message
- c. **Simplification:** Whenever perceivers receive an information overload, they strive to simplify then for better understanding. This is done so that the perceived world will not continue to remain meaningless. “simplification is an important step because in its absence, received stimuli remain complicated to the perceiver.

V. **Perceptual Interpretation:** This is perhaps the most crucial component of the perceptual mechanism process. This process is undertaken to create meaning out of the perceived world. “Interpretation is subjective and judgemental process.” Interpretation is influenced by the following factors:

- a. **Halo Effect:** This is the process of arriving at a general conclusion from the analysis of a single personality trait. This is because, a single trait is thought to “override the characteristics of the individual.” Halo effect is a snap shot approach to perceiving speedily. Understandably, this process is usually more often wrong than right.”
- b. **Stereotyping:** When you draw conclusions about a person based on his/her belongingness to a group, you are simply stereotyping. That is, you are situating people into categories based on their ethnic, occupational or characteristics. Stereotyping is common in Nigeria where we associate individuals of certain ethnic origin with certain behaviour or traits.

Stereotyping helps the perceiver to quickly simplify a complex world of information. But at obstructs the perceiver from giving vent to the capabilities

of an individual. Furthermore, stereotyping may not always certain the actual facts that informs the basis of judging others.

- c. **Attribution:** This is that attachment of cause-and-effects to the character of an individual. Thus, “the more the particular action is attributable to the behaviour the more is the intensity of perceptual judgement by a manager” (i.e. a perceiver. Attribution is unique in perception because it makes room for behaviours that are similar to be viewed differently. For example, two people that are guilty of the same kind of crime can respectively implicate poverty and peer group influence for their actions. The status of people is another factor that affects attribution. For instance, while the overtime work of a senior management staff in an organization to prepare the budget for the following year may attract favourable commendation, that of a junior personnel could be attributed to monetary motivation.

- d. **Impression:** On a daily basis, people form impressions about other people that they are probably meeting for the first time in their lives. Often these impressions are formed with little or next to no knowledge of the character of the perceived, which sometimes results in perceptual inaccuracies. For instance, a trail looking employee may be associated with low productivity whereas the reverse might be the case. Conversely, the well built staff who is being associated with high result orientation might just be the weak link in the production process. A well known fact is that first impressions appear to stay longer in the mind of the perceiver unless new facts emerge to counteract them subsequently.

- e. **Inference:** This addresses the common tendencies for perceivers to draw conclusions about others without enough information. For instance, a person working on a computer all day long may be adjudged a focused member of

staff by a manager that is matching from afar. But this same person may be chatting on the internet.

3.4 FACTORS AFFECTING PERCEPTION

The perceptual mechanism is basically affected by two factors, namely the internal and external.

I. **Internal factors:** Amongst the internal factors are:

- a. **Needs and Desires:** Basically the perception of relatively satisfied people differs significantly from those of frustrated individuals. In the words Rao and Narayana (*op cit*: 341) “People at different levels of needs and desires perceive the same thing differently.” Furthermore, the expectations, motivations and desires of people also shape their perception of other and situations around them.
- b. **Personality:** Individual characteristic behaviour is another strong influence on what you perceive about that individual. “It is a trite say that optimistic people perceive the things in favourable terms, pessimistic beings in negative terms.” According to Maslow (1972:41-53, in Rao and Narayana, *op cit*: 341), between the optimist and the pessimist exist a category of people who are capable of perceiving others “accurately and objectively.” They sum this issue this issue in the following outline:
 - Secure individuals tend to perceive others as warm, not cold.
 - Thoughtful individuals do not expose by expressing extreme judgement of others.
 - Persons who accept themselves and have faith their individuality perceives things favourably.

- Self-accepting individuals perceive themselves as liked, wanted and accepted by others.
- c. **Experience:** Combined with knowledge, experience has a perpetual impact on the perception of an individual. “Successful experiences enhance and boost the perception ability and lead to accuracy in perception of a person where as failure erodes self-confidence.”

II. **External Factors:** Listed under this sub-head are:

- a. **Size:** Perceptual stimulus of larger sizes has higher chances of being perceived. This is due to the fact that the factor of size is commonly associated with dominance and others to standing out for selection. A straight-forward example is that a full. Page advert catches more attention than those less than a page.
- b. **Intensity:** This factor has to do with promoting the chances of a stimuli being selected. For example, some of the strategies that foster intensity are underlining or bolding or italicising words in a written text. “The greater the intensity of a stimulus, the more likely it will be noticed.”
- c. **Frequency:** Addresses the attention that accrues from the steady repetition of a particular stimulus. That is, the art of repetition simply attracts our alertness and provost our sensitivity to the message being sent across. The stimulus that is repeated with greater intensity is more likely to qualify for selection as it were.
- d. **Status:** The status of a person being perceived exerts a lot of influences on a perception. Within an organization, highly placed officers expectedly influence employees than persons who occupy lower rings of the organizations hierarchy.

- e. **Contrast:** Stimulus that share common features with the environment are less likely to qualify for selection by the perceiver compared to those that contrast sharply with the environment. For example, a person that spots riotous colours or dress like father Christmas in June would certainly attract more attention that those that put up normal appearance.

3.5 Self-Assessment Exercise

With the aid of the Social Perception model describe the main features of social perception.

4.0 Conclusion: You can see from what we have studied in this unit that social perception is a complex phenomenon that derives from the characteristics of the environment, the perceiver, and the perceived. The perceptual process (consisting of inputs, process and output) was also discussed, before it concluded with the internal and external factors affecting perception.

5.0 Summary: This unit on perception described the factors that inform the opinions that individuals or groups form about others. It identified the characteristics (individual-specific, target-specific and situation-specific) underlining perception and captured this in a diagrammatic framework.

6.0: Tutor-Marked Exercises:

- V. Define perception and outline five elements of your definition.
- VI. Write short notes on the following:
 - a. Individual-Specific characteristics of perception
 - b. Target-Specific characteristics of perception
 - c. Situation-Specific characteristics of perception
- VII. Describe the following characteristics of the perceptual mechanism:

- a. Perceptual Selection
- b. Perceptual Organisation
- c. Perceptual Interpretation

VIII. What are the internal and external factors or determinants of perception?

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UNIT 3: DISTINCTION BETWEEN PERCEPTION & OTHER CONCEPTS (PART I)

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Social Perception and Sensation
 - 3.2 Perception
 - 3.3 Perception and Sensation
 - 3.4 Similarities and Differences
 - 3.5 Self-Assessment Exercise
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit focuses on the distinction between Perception and other related concepts beginning with Sensation

2.0 UNIT OBJECTIVES

In terms of specific objectives, you should be able to better appreciate the:

- (a) Distinction between Perception and Sensation,
- (b) Similarities and Differences between Perception and Sensation

3.0 MAIN CONTENT: DISTINCTION BETWEEN PERCEPTION AND OTHER CONCEPTS

3.1 SOCIAL PERCEPTION AND SENSATION: You will recall that in Unit 1 of this module, we examined the concept of perception and its associated features. But in this

unit, you will be introduced to the basic distinctions between perception and other related social psychological concepts with which it (i.e. perception) is frequently confused. After studying this unit, you will develop a better understanding of these concepts and be in position to apply them more appropriately in your daily discourses and professional contexts. In order to accomplish the task at hand we shall examine the essential features of each of these concepts and highlight their commonalities and differences.

3:2 PERCEPTION: Let us begin our study of perception in this sub-section by considering a brief hypothetical case study. On the first working day of the week, that is, a Monday morning, Benson had not shown up at work as at 11:00am when the company's General Manager was asking after him. But, just as the General Manager was instructing Benson's Head of Department to ask Benson to see him immediately he reported for work on that day, the door opened and Benson stepped into the office. Without wasting any time the General Manager immediately invited Benson to his office for an intimate interview.

After several questions that pertained to the distance of Benson's residence from the office, his family-related challenges, social life, job description, and relationship with other members of staff, the General Manager arrived at what he described as the inevitable conclusion that Benson was an unserious employee and a habitual late comer.

Consequent on the foregoing, the General Manager who had received several previous reports on Benson's recent habit of lateness to work within the past two months, felt justifiably compelled to recommend to the Managing Director that Benson should be dismissed, a recommendation that was promptly implemented. However, unknown to the General Manager, the Head of Department, the Managing Director and other employees of the organisation, Benson who was a highly punctual and productive employee until recently, was experiencing a very serious challenge within his compound. This challenge

had to do with the constant early morning delays caused by a co-tenant to whom Benson is indebted to the fine of One Hundred Thousand naira only.

Nevertheless, the actions of the General Manager of the organisation can be structured into a series of sequence that fit perfectly into the process of social perception, for instance, the General Manager and his Head of Department. The General Manager then thought through the information available to him (i.e. processed the received information) to form an opinion before prescribing the disciplinary measures that was subsequently meted out to Benson. Thus, the conceptual approach to social perception by Michener, DeLamater and Myers (2004:108) confirms that with which we are already familiar, that “social perception refers to constructing an understanding of the social world from the data we get through our senses. More narrowly defined, social perception refers to the process by which we form impressions of other people’s traits and personalities.”

An important fact contained in the foregoing hypothetical case is that the General Manager attempted to determine the behavioral pattern of Benson through the impressions he obtained from the interview he had with him together with the reports from his (i.e. Benson’s) Head of Department. The General Manager tried to bring Benson’s family, movement to work and his work related environmental factors into context. This is a person that social perception shares with the concept of attribution. Before we embark on a more detailed engagement with attribution, it is sufficient for now to state that it involves the process of making inferences backward to the causes of social phenomenon on the basis of prior observations or findings.

The common features of both concepts (i.e. attribution and social perception) transcend the mere acknowledgement of the stimuli that strike our senses. What we expect as individuals and our knowledge of issues somehow influence the things we take notice of and interpretation we give to things. This implies that individuals tend to concentrate on

knowledge that is appropriate to the situation and interpret information based on the calculations of the people's characteristics.

On most occasions, we form correct impressions about other people that tend to facilitate our relationship with others. Nevertheless, the process of perception and attribution could sometimes produce uncertain outcomes.

3.3 SENSATION AND PERCEPTION: Compared to perception, sensation describes the physiological mechanism cum process that is involved in the receipt of stimulation from the external environment. Whenever, this concept is mentioned in social psychology, you should quickly remember that it concerns itself with the organs associated with hearing (i.e. the ears), seeing (i.e. the eyes), smell (i.e. the nose), and touch (i.e. the other parts of the body). Sensations equally encompass those psychological mechanisms that are responsible to relaying messages to the brain. An important fact that you may wish to underline about sensation is that it deals with the experience of our environment. In other words, it attempts to shed light on the functions of the sense organs, the way in which they respond to certain kind of stimuli, and the pattern in which convey they received information. At this point, it is important to briefly highlight the functions of some of the physiological mechanisms that underlie the process of sensation before comparing and contrasting it (i.e. sensation) with the process of perception:

- I. Hearing is experienced when sound passes through the external auditory canal into the ear drum, a rather flexible membrane. But sound is specifically experienced when it on arriving at the eardrum generates a vibration in it. This vibration progress into the hammer, the anvil, the stirrup before ultimately hitting the oval window. The vibrating window sends waves to the basilar membrane, which then relays the waves into the neural impulses of the hair cells that carries it along the

auditory nerve to the brain. However, our main aim here is to draw attention to the external source of sensation (i.e. sounds) that the ear receives and relays.

- II. Taste describes the four types of sensations (sweetness, sourness, saltiness, and bitterness) that our taste buds process at the edge and behind the tongue. These taste receptor cells, numbering about ten thousand in all, also includes the soft palate, pharynx and the larynx.
- III. Smell is a sensation that is comparatively of lesser significance to humans regardless of the fact that it enriches the human experience, especially with respect to enhancing taste. The mechanism (i.e. receptors of smell are situated in the mucous substance (i.e. membrane) of the upper nose, which send messages to the olfactory bulb in the brain, that is linked with the olfactory cortex.
- IV. Touch conceptualises human sensitivity to different kind of stimuli - through skin receptors that respond to pains, pressure and temperature. Through our skin we are able to respond to extremes of temperatures compared to absolute temperature.

3.4 SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES: Perception and sensation share the following basic similarities and differences.

Similarities:

- I. Both processes basically depend on the external environment to generate information or the data that is processed
- II. Both processes also involve the organisation of the acquired data or information.
- III. Both perception and sensation equally draw inferences from the processed data to inform actions of some sort.
- IV. Both are also affected by a person's internal state, attention or subjects of interest.

Differences:

- I. Perception is basically an interactionist process. That is, during the process of perception, data is gathered through the process of social interaction with people or human beings. Perception involves the formation of opinions about people or groups of people based on social relationships, interviews or observations. Conversely, sensation deals with the utilisation of the biological endowments (eyes, tongue, ears, skin) of an individual to harness the behavior of people (through sighting), the consequences of their actions (sound created), or through tasting or feeling something on one's skin.
- II. The time lapse between processing and drawing conclusion from obtain information is longer under the perception process that is sensation. In other words, the sensitisation and reaction involved in sensation happens as an instinct. For example, the speed with which an individual bats the eye lid on sighting an object moving rapidly in the direction of the eyes, the reaction of people to sound and sharp objects that touches the skin are examples of instinctive behaviors based on processed information.
- III. Thus, both perception and sensation depend on sensory organs, but while this dependence is general more towards the preservation of the self in sensation, the group often benefit from it in perception.

3.5 Self-Assessment Exercise

Describe the essential points of difference between Perception and Sensation.

4.0 Conclusion: In this unit we defined Perception from both the lay man's and professional perspectives, distinguished it (i.e. Perception) from the concept of Sensation and describe the characteristics of these concepts.

5.0 Summary: The principal objectives of this unit were to highlight the similarities and differences between perception and the concept of sensation as basis for you to deploy these concepts more professionally.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments:

- I. Write short notes on the distinction between perception and Sensation
- II. Mention and discuss the psychological mechanisms that underline the process of perception
- III. There are no basic differences between perception and sensation only similarities. Discuss.
- IV. How is the lay man's definition of perception different from that of the psychologist?

7.0 Reference/Further Readings

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UNIT 4: DISTINCTION BETWEEN PERCEPTION & OTHER CONCEPTS (PART II)

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Social Perception and Attitude
 - 3.2 Components and Sources of Attitude
 - 3.3 Perception and Attribution
 - 3.4 Self-Assessment Exercise
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit focuses on the distinction between Perception, attitude and attribution.

2.0 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit you are expected to be able to:

- (a) Distinguish between Social Perception and Attitude,
- (b) Describe the components and sources of attitude, and
- (c) Distinguish between Perception and Attribution

3.0 MAIN CONTENT: DISTINCTION BETWEEN PERCEPTION & OTHER CONCEPTS (PART II)

3.1 INTRODUCTION: SOCIAL PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDE: Attitude is a concept in social psychology that conceptualises “a predisposition to respond to a

particular object in a generally favourable way” (Ajzen 1982, in Michener, DeLamater and Myers, 2004:139). Basically, the perception and responses of an individual are basically influenced by the attitude of that individual. This implies that a person’s attitude determines his/her interests or attention as the case may be. Furthermore, this same factor of attitude also determines the behavior of people toward others, objects, laws and the social facts of society. Attitude is therefore one of the most fundamental determinants peoples predisposition to respond. But, it is important to note that, “a particular attitude does not exist in isolation” (Michener, Delamater and Myers, 2004:139). “If attitudes determine behavior”, it therefore follows that we can basically alter the behavior of people by changing their attitudes. This explains why most of the organisations that occupy the position of product leadership in their various sectors of the economy invest million in advertisement annually.

Attitude ordinarily describes the mental condition of an individual, which implies that attitude exist inn the mind of a person. In order to make a clear distinction between perception and attitude, we shall briefly explore the components, sources and functions of the latter.

3.2. Components and Sources of Attitude:

3.2.1 Components: The attitude of a person is made up of cognition, an evaluation and a behavioral predisposition:

Cognition: This sub-component encompasses the label of an object, regulations that influence the labels application, together with, and group of cognitions or knowledge structures associated with that label (Pratkanis and Greenwald, 1989:139). Individuals that either like or dislike certain objects or activities basically do so because they harbor certain perceptions about these objects or activities. In this way, perception features as an important modifier of cognition.

Evaluation: This is the affective or evaluative sub-component of attitude whether we are talking about such emotions as boredom, dislike, loathing or hatred; we are involved in the process of negative evaluation. Conversely there are positive evaluation such as love, excitement, and happiness. What this implies is that there are both positive and negative aspects to evaluation and an affective behavior. Evaluation thus, involves direction (negative or positive) as well as an intensity (that ranges from the very weak to the very strong). But more importantly, evaluation specifies the basic distinction between cognition and other forms of cognitive factors.

Behavioral Predisposition: Involved in an attitude, is the predisposition to react or tendency to behave towards an object. Therefore, when we describe an object or activity as boring, we express a tendency to avoid all classes of that object. Similarly, we could indicate intentions to attend to our jobs by simply stating that we like our jobs. “People having a specific attitude are inclined to behave in certain ways that are consistent with that attitude (Michener, Delamater and Myers 2004:140).

3.2.2 Sources of Attitude: In social psychology, attitude is generally believed to originate from the process of social learning or socialisation. Deriving from this, it is apparent that an attitude could be acquired through the mechanism of learning and sharing labels that are considered acceptable or unacceptable by the society. However, attitudes are generally developed or acquired through the processes of:

- I. Reinforcement or Instrumental conditioning.
- II. Associations of Stimuli and Responses (Classical Conditioning), or
- III. Observation or Observational Learning,

Reinforcement or Instrumental conditioning: This describes the process of learning involved in having direct relationship with an object. Thus, if you acquire a favourable experience from relating with an object, you will most likely develop a favourable

attitude. In this regard, a job from which you earn well, gives you feelings of fulfillment, and acknowledgement from your other staff members, is likely to elicit favourable attitudes from you. On the other hand, you may dislike a job that does not offer these and other better conditions. But when it has to do with which we do not have direct experience, we learn related attitudes through third parties (that share their experiences with us). During the process of socialisation, we pick up a couple of attitudes (e.g. divorce, politics) from our parents (Glass & Dunham, 1986; Thornton, 1984, in Michener, Delamater, Myers, 2004:140). Parental reward to children for adopting certain attitudes is another form of behavioral influence.

Other sources of attitude include friends and peer group influences.

Associations of Stimuli and Responses (Classical Conditioning): This occurs when we acquire attitudes and prejudice toward a particular group through classical conditioning, in which a neutral stimulus gradually acquires the ability to elicit a response through repeated association with other stimuli that elicit that response” (*Op cit*: 2004:140). For instance, from an early age children are made to learn that laziness, filthiness and stupidity are undesirable characteristics and parents try to discourage their children from engaging in these attitudes through punishment to those that involve in them.

Observation or Observational Learning: The media (television, films, and news magazines) is a powerful influence over people’s attitude. The media does this through its interpretive programmes that create object related frames of reference that shape the attitude of its audience (i.e. readers & viewers).

3.2.3 Functions: As we have clearly demonstrated, attitudes are acquired through learning and sharing knowledge with others. It is however important to note that we retain attitudes because of the following role that they play in our lives (Katz, 1960; Pratkains & Greenwald, 1968, in Michener, Delamater, and Myers, 2004: 141).

First, attitudes are help us in developing favourable predispositions toward objects that reward us and unfavourable attitudes to those that attract punishment towards us. For this reason, “once we form attitudes toward certain objects, they serve as sufficient means of accessing these objects”.

Secondly, attitudes serve as a schematic or knowledge function of providing us with a meaningful context for guiding our behavior. Thus, because of the complexity of our social environment, attitudes help us to group people, objects and events into categories or schemes and develop simplified (stereotyped) attitudes that allow us to treat individuals as members of a category”. (*Op cit*: 141).

Thirdly, attitudes help us in structuring our self concept as well as the maintenance of an individual’s self worth.

3.3 Perception and Attribution: Attribution can be defined as a systematic process that entails the observation of other people’s actions as a basis for making inferences about the causes i.e. intentions, abilities, traits, motives and situational pressures, underlining observed behaviors. “Social perception and attribution involve more than passively registering the stimuli that impinge on our senses. Our expectations and cognitive structures influence what we notice and how we interpret it”. Thus, attribution consists of a conscious attempt to rationalize a person’s behavior into certain cause. This is why the person carrying out the attribution task works backward from observation to causes of behavior. In the same context attribution there is focus on the methods that interpret the behavior of others. For the purposes of this comparison, we shall briefly consider dispositional and situational attribution, along with some other relevant aspects of this subject matter.

There are two general frameworks within an observer of a person’s behavior can situate the cause of his/her observation. While the first, dispositional attribution, attempts to

locate the individual's behavior within the actor's internal state, the second, situational attribution, owes the individual's behavior to factors in his/her external environment. Thus, under the dispositional attribution an individual may infer backward that a certain person is probably unemployed because he is irresponsible, lazy, used to asking for alms, completely dependent of family support, lacking in ability or incompetent or out rightly too enmeshed in pleasurable activities or fun seeking. "These are dispositional attributions, because they attribute the causes of behavior to his internal state or characteristics". (*op cit*: 125). Conversely, attempts could be made to explain an individual's lack of job into the dearth of job opportunities in his chosen profession, or discriminatory employment policies, recession caused by the global economic contraction, and the failure of the capitalist economic system. As we can see these are situated attributions considering that they attribute the individual's unemployed state to external courses.

Then how can we ascribe a person's behavior to dispositional or situational attribution?

One Important factor is the power of the situational pressure that is brought to bear on the person being observed. "These pressures may include normative role demands as well as rewards or punishments applied to the person by others in the environment". To use a simple illustration, while we may consider a judge that sentences a person to death as tough at first observation (a dispositional factor), this view might change to a situation one if we later discover that the state laws stipulate this death penalty for that kind of offence.

In order to better understand this logic, social psychologists have formalised this process as the substance rule. The rule "states that when making attribution about personal dispositions, the observers subtracts the perceived impact of institutional forces from the personal disposition implied in the behavior itself (Trope & Cohen, 1989; Troupe, Cohen & Maoz, 1988, in Michener, Delamater and Myers, 2004:125). Thus, while the death sentence passed by a judge may portray him/her as having a tough disposition, this

attribution may change when the subtractive rule is applied requiring the observer to subtract the effect of the state law, which is a “situational pressure from the disposition implied in the behavior itself. The subtractive law there leaves the observer with an alternative conclusion that not portray the judge as an unnecessarily tough person but one who finds himself/herself implementing state laws on specific acts of criminality. Though, the subtractive rule obviously strengthened the situational attribution in this instance, it sometimes happens that people persistently identify with behaviors that are condemned by the majority, which clearly strengthen dispositional attribution and weakens situational attribution.

3.7 Self-Assessment Exercise

What are the major characteristics of the concepts of Perception, Attitude, and Attribution?

4.0 Conclusion: You may have noticed that the concepts of sensation, attitude, and attribution share certain common features. Besides, these concepts also have unique characteristics that set them apart from each other.

5.0 Summary: While perception deals with the process of interpreting information about another person, and attitude deals with the predisposition to respond to a particular object in a generally favourable way, attribution deals with the systematic process of observing other people’s actions and inferring the underlining causes (i.e. intentions, abilities, traits, motives and situational pressures) of the observed behaviour. Our understanding of these concepts was also deepened by our focus on the characteristics of each of them.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments:

- V. Write short notes on the distinction between perception and the following concepts:
 - Attitude

- attribution
- VI. Mention and discuss the major sources of component and attitude
- VII. Describe the main distinctions between instrumental conditioning and observational learning.
- VIII. Attribution is basically a function of perception. Discuss.

7.0 Reference/Further Readings

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UNIT 5: CONFLICT: MEANING AND FEATURES

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Meaning of Conflict
 - 3.2 Features of the Definitions of Conflict
 - 3.3 Types of Conflict
 - 3.4 Causes of Conflict
 - 3.5 Constructive and Destructive Consequences of Conflict
 - 3.6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit ‘Conflict: Meaning and Features’ introduces you to the meaning of conflict together with its features, types, causes and its consequences.

2.0 UNIT OBJECTIVES

It is expected that after studying this unit, you should be able to understand the concept of conflict and other important features associated with it. At the end of this course you should be able to:

- (a) Definition of conflict,
- (b) Mention and explain the characteristics the various definitions,
- (c) Describe the types and causes of conflict, and
- (d) Discuss the constructive and destructive consequences of conflict.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT: CONFLICT: MEANING AND FEATURES

3.1 Meaning of Conflict: Conflict is a basic fact of human relationships. That is, it occurs wherever people interact in associational life and also experienced by individuals that seek to make one kind of decision or the other. Basically, conflicts occur when people have perceptions and values that are contradictory. It also occurs when people are assigned to roles that entail competitiveness or groups have to compete for scarce resources. From this brief introduction, you may have noticed that “the management of conflict is an essential prerequisite to sound human relations (Rao and Narayana, 1998:396). But what is conflict.

The concept of conflict is derived from the Latin word *confligere* that means “to clash, engage in a fight.” Thus, it describes the confrontations that occur between people or social groups. In the literature, many authors have tended to focus their definition on aspects of conflict that emphasise the causes, manifestation and consequences of the phenomenon. From the perspective of Coser (1956:8) conflict encompasses “the struggle over values or claims of status, power and scarce resources, in which the aims of the groups or individuals involved are not only to obtain the desired values but to neutralize, injure or eliminate rivals. In the view of Moaz (1982:1) conflict denotes a:

...state of incompatibility among values, where the achievement of are value can be realized only at the expense of some other values. Conflict may arise within single organisms pursuing multiple goals as well as between organisms striving at incompatible goals.

According to Robbins (1974; in Rao and Narayana, 1998:398), “conflict is a process in which an effort is purposely made by one person or unit to block another that results in frustrating that attainment of the other’s goals or the furthering of his or her interests”.

Furthermore, Nelson and Quick (1997:398) define conflict as any situation in which incompatible goals, attitudes, emotions, or behaviours lead to disagreement or opposition between two or more parties.

3.2 Features of the Definitions of Conflict: On closer examination, you may have identified the following features from the foregoing definitions:

- I. Conflict results when several people attempt to secure mutually exclusive objectives, values or events. Clearly, conflict therefore occurs whenever the interests of people are incompatible.
- II. Conflict occurs when a party perceives that his/her goals are incompatible with those of others and has an opportunity to frustrate the goal attainment of the other party.
- III. Conflicts arise out of deliberate actions. One party deliberately attempts to prevent another from realizing his/her goals.
- IV. Though conflict generally addresses the visible aspects of the phenomenon, it does have a latent aspect.
- V. There is a distinction between conflict and competition. The target of conflicting parties is to prevent each other from accomplishing goals. But in situations of competition, both parties strive to achieve success with blocking each others opportunities (culled from Rao & Marayana).

3.3 Types of Conflict: There are different types of conflict that individuals, groups and organizations encounter on a daily basis. However we shall restrict ourselves to the following four types:

- I. **Intrapersonal Conflicts:** This is the type of conflict that happens within a person or an individual. Some common examples of this kind of conflict are conflicts around the choice of spouse, use of time, career choices, and moral questions. In work settings, examples of intrapersonal conflicts are the intra-role, inter-role and person-role conflicts.

- II. **Interpersonal Conflicts:** This is the type that takes place between several people. It arises mainly from such individuals differences that bother on personality, values, attitudes, perceptions, etc (Nelson and Quick, *op cit*: 385). Here is a simple illustration of interpersonal conflict. Godwin intends to use the family car to work on a Saturday morning just as his wife plans to use the same car to take advantage of the Saturday morning market where foodstuffs are relatively cheaper. While Godwin argues that he may be unable to go to work without the car, bus wife argues that the Saturday morning market is vital to the management of their home up-keep resources. This is a classic case of interpersonal conflict.

- III. **Intra-group Conflicts:** This is the conflict that takes place between individuals within a given group. Examples of such group are a political party, school, church, office, etc. A clear example is the argument for or against the adoption of the Federal Character principle by members of a political party.

- IV. **Intergroup Conflicts:** This is the type of conflict that occurs between distinct groups, teams, organizations, tribes, communities or nations. This form of conflict is usually very complex to the extent that the underlining needs and value of the groups that are involved are usually difficult to identify.

3.4 CAUSES OF CONFLICTS

There are two broadly defined causes of conflict in society or organizations: the structural and personal causes that have associated factors to which we now turn.

- I. **Structural Factors:** Within an organization the following are of the conflict instigating factors that arise from the structure of the organization.

- II. **Specialisation:** Specialisation requires that individuals develop highly specialised skills in specific areas. Thus in most organisations people develop expertise in accounting, engineering, sales, database management, credit administration etc. But the problem that causes conflict under such circumstances is that those experts hardly know what each other is doing. Nelson and quick (ibid 380) illustrates with a sales expert that makes delivery promises without understanding whether the production department can meet his target, and mainly because he lacks the technical knowledge necessary to develop realistic delivery deadlines.”

- III. **Interdependence:** means that people and departments have to rely on each to get jobs done. However, the process is hardly straight forward resulting in trading of blames when problems occur. An interdependence-related conflict occurs particularly when the performance of one assignment depends on the completion of another. For example when workers that are responsible for saving are delayed by those that are responsible for cutting the fabrics in the first instance. This could cause frustration of significant proportions.

- IV. **Common Resources:** Whenever people or groups find themselves in situations where they have to share scarce resources, the potential for conflict is lightened. In organizations that rely on one secretariat and where the various departments attach utmost importance to the role of their department, there is high potentials for

conflict. A more familiar example is the conflict being generated by Nigeria's dependence on oil situated in the Niger Delta (NO) region.

- V. **Goal Differences:** Conflict arises when there is goal incompatibility. Nelson and Quick (*op cit*: 381) illustrated this issue with what happened when the sales department pursued a goal of rapid sales that the service department could not keep pace with in terms of promptly responding to supplies. This resulted in delayed orders, which could have been avoided had both departments been aware of their objectives.

- VI. **Authority Relationships:** When people became too authority-conscious and start ordering other around at will, the tendency for conflict become very high. In addition, some bosses are more autocratic than others; this compounds the potential for conflict in the relationship.” (Nelson and Quick, *op cit*).

- VII. **Status Inconsistency:** Naturally, in organizations statuses differ between the management and non-management personnel. On this account, the top managers tend to have access to benefits (e.g. un-official telephone calls, flexible break hours/durations and schedules, etc), that non-management personnel to not enjoy. This clearly structural defect is capable of generating result and conflict.

- VIII. **Jurisdictional Ambiguities:** This simply refers to the problems of authority line that are unclear within an organisation. Sometime you visit an organization to make complaints about a product that is probably not functioning properly and there is nobody to attend to you. Instead, they staff start referring you from one department/person to another – a clear structural problem.

Personal Factors: These are:

- I. **Skills and Abilities:** where skills and abilities differ significantly the highly skilful and experienced worker is easily frustrated working alongside relatively unskilled colleagues. This frustration and attendant conflict could be increased where jobs are interdependent, and a competent staff is meeting for an unskilled colleague to complete his/her role before commencing hers/his.

- II. **Personalities:** It is basically an error for nay person to expect everybody to like him/her at the work place or anywhere for that matter. However, an abstractive personality is certainly one that many people find resentful (Nelson and Quick, *op cit*: 382). These authors state that “an abrasive person is one who ignores the interpersonal aspects of work and the feelings of his colleagues”. Though an abrasive personality could be highly competent and goal-oriented, however, they generally tend to make others feel unimportant as it were. Hence abrasive personalities tend to create intense conflicts around themselves. The authors argue.

- III. **Perceptions:** Errors in the perception of factors in employee motivation is a fundamental source of conflict. This particularly the case where managers and employees do not share the same perception about the reward system. This conflict occur because managers avail employees with what they think members of the organization want and contrary to the actual need of the employees.

- IV. **Values and Ethics:** What the more established older workers want in an organization are things like company loyalty and integrity. Hut to the relatively younger and never employees, mobility could be central. Though, this is not applicable to all workers of these categories discussed. In reality many organizations have in their employment personnel that have their own ethics and values that they seldom apply in their workplace. Some strive to satisfy the ethical

standards of others, some attach very little importance to approve from others, while some simply do not care about ethics at all. But “when conflicts over values and ethics do arise, heated disagreement is common because of the personal nature of the differences.”

- V. **Emotions:** Oftentimes workplace conflicts have their sources in the moods created by situations from the home. Basically, the moods created from the home front are really very difficult to resolve at the workplace.
- VI. **Communication Barriers:** Some of the communication barriers that are capable of distorting meanings are; physical distance, language, and the listeners value judgement.

3.5 Constructive and Destructive Conflicts

Generally, whenever the term conflict is mentioned, its destructive implications readily come to mind. However, conflict has been analysed and found to possess many positive implications. In this sub-section, the constructive and destructive implications of conflict are discussed.

Constructive Consequences of Conflicts: Amongst the positive implications of conflict are the following:

- I. **Motivation for change:** Conflicts generally have the impact of calling attention to the problematic issues that need to be addressed for positive change to occur. In addition, it stimulates the necessary authorities to budget resources to address the problems and come up with solutions. Therefore, it also stimulates strategic thinking that other sectors can benefit from.

- II. **Groupthink is Avoided:** Without strong disagreement, groupthink could overpower a highly cohesive group, preventing it from making rational decisions based on fact. Conflict also counter acts the lethargy that often overtakes organizations.”
- III. **Conflicts Promotes Creativity and Innovation:** Conflicts generate interest on issues that causer person’s in authority position to work towards achieving progress. Furthermore, wherever there is conflict people tend to field numerous innovative suggestions aimed at reinstating peaceful co-existence in society or organisations. Under challenging situations of the top produced by conflict people tend come up with critical thinking. In other words, conflict stimulates the innate capacities of the individual to learn and share.
- IV. **Cohesion and Satisfaction:** Paradoxically conflict between groups has the unintended consequence of fostering closer inter group relationships. During intergroup conflicts, members of a particular group tend to be more cohesive within their group that is, the group becomes more cohesive and satisfying to its members. Basically, group members tend to close ranks in the face of a common enemy.
- V. **A minimum level of conflict is Optimal:** Conflict is sometimes considered essential for the accomplishment of some measure of internal group stability. Interestingly, balance of power accrues from the occasional inter-group crises that occur within groups. Similarly, it helps people to vent out bottle deep anger and frustrations that would have accumulated overtime. “A good fight clears the air” (Rao and Narayana, *op cit*: 400).

Destructive Consequences of Conflicts: In this sub-section, three of the most destructive consequences of conflicts are discussed. They are:

- I. **Conflict Creates Stress in People:** Conflicts generally affects the physical and mental health of those involved in direct combat. Conflict becomes very intense it creates a general atmosphere of fear, guilt, frustration and aggression. Naturally, groups that are at the receiving end of conflict feel traumatised and humbled, the winning side tend to increase these ill-feelings by their actions, which in turn create an atmosphere of suspicion distrusts, and distance between people. “Discussion replaces cohesion. Losers indulge in non-cooperation and pay scant attention to the needs and interests of other group members.”

- II. **Diversion of Energy:** The fact that groups in conflict channel their resources (time, energy, human, material and financial resources) to pursuit of victory is a serious diversion from group goals, and values. During conflict, an organisation’s long terms goals are relegated to the background because attention is usually focused on how to contain the crises in the short run.

- III. **Instability and Chaos:** During conflicts actions such as group and individual collaborations dwindle significantly or sometimes disappear completely. Tension that dovetail into complete breakdown in communications are common features. Resources that would have been committed to positively transforming the lives of community inhabitants are wasted in prosecuting the war efforts. In the final analysis, the all aspects of the fabric and social structures of society are disintegrated.

3.6 Self-Assessment Exercise

Based on your own understanding, define conflict and discuss some of the major characteristics of the concept

4.0 Conclusion: One of the most important things that you are expected to note is that conflicts are not entirely destructive; they have some constructive values as well.

5.0 Summary: This unit has taken us through various definitions of conflict and its diverse characteristics. You may also recall that we also deal with various types of conflicts, namely; interpersonal, intrapersonal, intergroup and intragroup. The unit discussions moved into the causes of conflict (structural and personal) and concluded with examination of the constructive and destructive consequences of conflict.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments:

- I. Define conflict and examine some of its major characteristics
- II. Describe the causes of a community conflict with which you are familiar
- III. Mention two functions of conflict and explain their major characteristics
- IV. How can the knowledge you have gained in this unit improve your efficiency as a manager

7.0 Reference/Further Readings

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UNIT 6: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEPTION AND CONFLICT

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Relationship between Perception and Conflict
 - 3.2 The Perception Characteristics Framework
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit ‘The Relationship between Perception and Conflict’ basically enables you to make comparisons between perception and conflict.

2.0 UNIT OBJECTIVES

It is expected that after studying this unit, you should be able to draw clear distinctions between the features of the concepts of perception and conflict. At the end of this course you should be able to:

- (a) Distinguish between perception and conflict,
- (b) Discuss the perception characteristics framework,
- (c) Describe the causes of conflict framework, and
- (d) Identify barriers to social perception and why managers study perception.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEPTION AND CONFLICT

3.1 Relationship between Perception and Conflict: In course of our discourses of perception and conflict (units 1 and 2) you may have noticed some of the impact of perception on conflict. In this section more light will be shed on the relationship between perception and conflict to further your understanding of the subject.

Basically, conflicts arise when individuals and people in communal and organisational settings perceive that others represent threats to the accomplishment of their goals regardless of whether these threats are real or imagined. In order to strategically approach this subject, we shall guide our discourses with two frameworks, namely 1) the perception characteristics framework, and 2) the causes of conflict framework.

3.2 Perception Characteristics Framework: Under this framework we shall examine the relationship between the five characteristics of perception and conflict.

- I. Perception and the Environment** (people's actions, emotions, feelings and thought processes): The way in which a person perceives the environment largely determines the way he/she will react to it. If an individual perceives that the environment is friendly, accommodating and appreciative of his/her personality he/she is less likely to be aggressive to the environmental actors. Conversely, where the perceiver concludes that the environment represent significant threats to him/her then he/she may resort to defence mechanisms that gain expression as aggressive behaviours, which are simply conflict-oriented behaviours.

- II. The perceptual process and meanings:** The relationship between perception and conflict also draw significantly from the degree of accuracy of the meanings

obtained from an individual perceptual process. The framework of this process consists of receiving information (inputs) which is then selected/interpreted (organised) before the perceiver embarks on his actions/reactions (outputs). From this framework, it is evident that conflict can ensue if the perceiver does not receive complete inputs or is incapable of processing the received information correctly due to its huge volume. You will recall that stereotype is one factor that prevents a perceiver from acquiring detailed information about someone being perceived.

- III. **Transition from Perception to Action:** The time lapse between perception and the perceiver's responses is another factor that links perception to conflict. When perceptions are built on stereotypes, such as the ethnic stereotypes that exist across Nigeria, the attendant actions are usually quick and not subject to deep consideration. This is one factor that is probably responsible for the ethnic conflicts we frequently experience in Nigeria. But where there is sufficient time lapse to subject the information received by the perceiver to thorough scrutiny, it is less likely to result into an aggressive behaviour or conflict.
- IV. **Perception and Cognition:** The relationship between the information that a perceiver receives and the knowledge he acquires from processing it definitely has bearing on the manifestation of conflict. Basically if the acquired knowledge is not thoroughly processed, the perceived group/individual will not be thoroughly understood, appreciated and treated with dignity. Under such circumstances, the perceived may react to his/her uncharitable treatment to precipitate crises. But the potentials for conflict can be drastically reduced if the perceived is carefully understudied and understood before appropriate reactions are targeted at him/her.
- V. **Perception and Needs Satisfaction:** Where the perceiver situates the perceived as a threat to the accomplishment / satisfaction of his/her needs, he is most likely to

behave aggressively towards the perceived. On the other hand, where the perceiver does not envisage any iota of threats to attainment of his/her needs from the perceived, he/she will most surely behave responsibly towards the perceived.

3.3 Causes of Conflict Framework: Under this framework the relationship between perception and conflict will be discussed using the following causes of conflict as guide:

- I. **Perception and common Resources:** The relationship between perception, common resources and conflict appears to be one on the most direct to determine. This is particularly the case where the common resource is scarce or exhaustible by nature. Thus, when a certain group perceives that another group that is competing with it is likely to block its access to the resource in question the perceiver-group could become highly aggressive. In Nigeria, conflicts have occurred around such common resources as land, water, school and other infrastructural resources. In the mid-1980s the Umuleri-Aguleri conflict centred on a parcel of land bordering the two communities. There was also the Ekpan-Ubeji conflict that occurred around the ownership of the land on which the Nigeria National Petroleum Company Refinery is sited. The recurrent crises on the ownership of portions of Warri between the Urhobo and Itsekiris on the one hand, and between the Ijaw's and Itsekiri's on the other, were land resources-based conflicts. You cannot also forget the Ife-Modakeke Land-related conflict in a hurry. Outstanding conflicts in the middle-belt of Nigeria include the Tiv-Jukun conflict that occurred in Benue state; the indigene-settler conflict in Plateau state, not forgetting the Berom-Fulani pastoralist conflict over grazing lands. However, the armed youth resistance against the Federal government over the exploitation of oil resources appears to be the most complicated conflict in Nigeria. A common feature of these conflicts is that they all seem to be informed by the wrong perception that one party is either obstructing the other's access to or enjoyment of the resources or deliberately having access to an unfair share of the resources in

question. At the level of individuals, perceptions that another person constitutes threat to access to certain resources has also informed conflicts in Nigeria. Frequently, we read in the newspapers about how people struggle over the properties of a departed parent. Properties around which these individual conflicts occur include the immovable (e.g. land, economic trees, buildings, companies/business premises etc.), and movable (e.g. cars, furniture etc.), financial resources held as bank balances and investment in stocks/shares.

II. **Perception and Values:** Wrong perception of the values of other groups has also been a source of conflict in society and organizations in general. Conflicts at this level, are usually the most difficult to appreciate and settle. This is because the basis of any social group is the value to which they subscribe. These values are usually our system of beliefs that we are usually not ready to compromise no matter how “backward” they portray us to the outside world. When groups in negotiation talk about fairness, transparency, equality, honesty and commitment they are basically calling issues of values into existence. Conflicting parties usually stand up to defend their position with all their might when it concerns their values. Actions that are based on wrong perception of the values of any social group causes resistance by the wrongly perceived group. Similarly, individuals whose values are mis-perceived expectedly react aggressively. For example, if you perceive some as having an abrasive personality which he really does not have, any relationship with such a person based on this wrong diagnosis will be met with aggression.

III. **Perception and Psychological Needs:** To wrongly perceive the social psychological requirement of a group is a sure invitation to conflict. In many Nigerian societies the still attach a lot of importance to large families that derive from one man having several wives and children. Individuals in certain societies still feel great about the exploits about their past war heroes and ability to prepare

potent charms. In some parts of Nigeria, a woman that is considered as a complete woman. In fact, where women are quarrelling she dare not open her mouth because she will be ridiculed. Also, women are celebrated for giving birth to a certain number of male children in parts of Nigeria. These are most psychological values that a perceiver may be criticizing at the right of attracting aggressive behaviour to him/her. Perception is therefore a major determinant of conflict as we have clearly demonstrated.

3.4 BARRIERS TO PERCEPTION

Barriers to Social Perception: In the course studying this unit you may have come across most of the barriers to social perception that will be treated in this sub-section. Therefore, the purpose of the brief discourses is to bring the barriers into sharper focus for your attention. The barriers are:

- I. **Selective Perception:** This barrier derives from the perceiver's attempt to filter the huge amount of information that he/she receives to support his/her viewpoint. In doing this the perceiver tend to leave out those pieces of information that are capable of threatening or bringing discomfort to them in one way or the other. Nelson and Quick (*ibid*: 87-88) illustrates this factor using the analogy of an employee who does not complete his monthly sales report promptly. But because this employee consistently brings in the highest number of new sales contracts his manager always gives him/her positive performance evaluation reports. Indicatively, the manager is applying selective perception leading him to overlook the negative information being generated from the employee's constant failure to complete his/her sales report promptly.

- II. **Stereotyping:** This "is a generalisation about a group of people" (Nelson and Quick, *op cit*). Furthermore, these authors explain that working with stereotypes helps perceivers to decrease the "information about a people to a workable level,

and they are efficient for compiling and using information.” Sometimes stereotypes could become genuine perceptual frameworks when they turn out to be accurate. But, when stereotypes do not portray the correct picture, which is mostly the case, they harm the perceived. Attractiveness is also a stereotype to the extent that it projects the perceived as sensitive, warm, sociable, outgoing, etc.

- III. **First Impression Error:** Forming long-lasting impression about the perceived “based on initial perception” is what this concept describes. One of the reasons for which we tend to maintain first impressions is because they tend to be easily kept in mind. The fundamental error in first impression arises from observation of a little part of the perceived and generalising as a true characterisation of the perceived.
- IV. **Implicit Personality Theories:** this explains the usually inaccurate “mini-theories” that we harbour in our minds for determining the appearances and behaviours of the perceived. These theories basically help us structure our thoughts and map out short cuts to our perceptions. In other words, perceivers tend to “group traits and appearances into clusters that seem to go together” (Nelson and Quick, *op cit*). You should note that personality theories constitute barriers to admitting new information even when available.
- V. **Self-fulfilling Prophecies:** This category of barriers addresses how our expectations affect our interaction with people and the accomplishment of that which we desire. Nelson and Quick (*op cit*) illustrate that “self-fulfilling prophecy is also known as the Pygmalion effect, named for the sculptor in Greek mythology who carved a statue of a woman that came to life when he prayed for his which and it was granted.”

3.5 MANAGERS AND PERCEPTION

The management process is indeed complex. What makes it complex derives from the fact that it requires that judgement be made about the actions of people at work. Thus, whether managers are aware or not they are involved in the perceptual process on a daily basis. This is because, whether as a manager you are undertaking a performance appraisal, conducting an employment or promotion interview, settling disputes between two employees that are equals or having a senior-junior relationship, handling an employee's case of dwindling performance, an inter-departmental conflict, cases of perpetual lateness to work, rudeness or that of an excellent employee who feels too superior to relate appropriately with other staff members you inadvertently need to deal with the perception of people. In other words, the management process places you in a situation whereby you need to make decisions about the motives, values and actions of people within your organisations.

Therefore the manager ought to be able to distinguish between the ideal and the real world. The manager needs to be aware of the fact that just as he reacts to his perception of his employees, the employees in turn react to him perceptively. Thus, it is irrelevant whether the employees find their roles in the organization sufficiently motivating or whether the manager's role is truly supportive to the process of employee's task management. What are most important are the inter-personal perceptions that occur between the manager and employees. But more importantly, the perception of the manager's actions by employees should interest the manager the most. According to Rao and Narayana (1998: 331) "a manager can improve his perceptual accuracy if he becomes aware of how perceptions are formed and distorted." But majority of managers appear to have been arriving at employee-related decisions through observations and trials and error approaches. These authors listed the following examples of some of the assumptions that guide manager's dealings with their employees:

- I. The notion that people are basically lazy and should be controlled.

- II. The notion that organizations are basically successful because they are large.
- III. The notion that leaders that have mastered the art of speaking are logically good leaders.
- IV. The notion that organisations that are insensitive to their employees are usually the large ones.
- V. The notion that people tend to be generally emotional.
- VI. The notion that a productive employee always turns act a satisfied worker.

However, a critical assessment of those statements reveals they are not axiomatic or always correct. In as much as managers may work with these kinds of perceptions, they are, nevertheless, encouraged to strive for perpetual precision or accuracy. Lawler and Rhode (in Rao and Narayana, *op cit*: 331) posit that:

Experiencing the environment is an active process in which people try to make sense out of their environment. In this active process, individuals selectively notice different aspects of the environment, appraise what they see in terms of their own experience, and evaluate what they experience in terms of their needs and values. Since people needs and past experience often suffer markedly, so do their perceptions of the environment.

From the foregoing, it is apparent that a manager's knowledge of the perceptual process is the most profound step towards achieving effectiveness as head of his department or unit or organisation.

3.6 Self-Assessment Exercise

Based on your understanding of issues in this unit, describe the relationship between perception and conflict.

4.0 Conclusion: You may wish to observe that perceptions could be fed into the processes of conflict as well as the reverse, that is, conflict can also influence perception in society.

5.0 Summary: In this unit, you have been led to make further distinctions between perception and conflict. To achieve this aim, your attention was drawn to two frameworks (the perception characteristics and the causes of conflict). Furthermore, we concluded with a consideration of the reasons for which the study of perception is important to managers.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments:

- I. What are the similarities and differences between the concepts of perception and conflict
- II. Describe the essential features of the perception and the causes of conflict characteristics frameworks for distinguishing between perception and conflict
- III. Distinguish between perception and conflict using the barriers to perception as a guide
- IV. What are the benefits of the study of perception to managers in organisations?

7.0 Reference/Further Readings

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UNIT 7: PERSPECTIVES IN CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Context and basic Concepts
 - 3.2 Comparison with Related Concepts
 - 3.3 Perspectives on Conflict Transformation
 - 3.4 Self-Assessment Exercises
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will be introduced to the idea of conflict transformation, concepts that are related to it as well as the main perspectives of this subject.

2.0 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- a. Define of conflict transformation,
- b. Differentiate between conflict transformation and conflict termination, settlement, resolution and management,
- c. Mention and explain the perspectives on conflict transformation, and
- d. Apply any perspectives of conflict transformation to managing a typical conflict in Nigeria.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT: PERSPECTIVES IN CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

3.1: Context and basic Concepts: You will recall that in Module 1, Unit 2, we examined the issue of conflict in some respective details. Nevertheless, it is important to refresh our knowledge on the concept as basis for understanding the notion of conflict transformation. Power is a crucial cross cutting concern which you will frequently come across in course of our discourses on conflict transformation. Essentially, leaders and the led basically share the responsibility for conflicts in terms of creating, further escalating them and initiating the processes for transforming conflicts in the society. It was on the basis of this that Folger (1997: 95) depicted power as the “architecture of conflict.” Let us now build on this background by briefly defining the concept of conflict and proceeding to an examination of conflict transformation and its perspectives.

Conflict basically describes the confrontations that occur between individuals and social groups. As we saw earlier, the term has been defined from various perspectives, which have tended to place emphasis on the root causes of conflict, its manifestation together with the implications of it on society. Coser (1956: 8) captures this perspective in his conception of conflict as the “struggle over values or claims to status, power, and scarce resources, in which the aims of the groups or individuals involved are not only to obtain the desired values but to neutralize, injure or eliminate rivals.” The notion is further clarified by Moaz (1982) as a “..state of incompatibility among values, where the achievement of one value can be realised only at the expense of other values. Conflict may arise within single organism pursuing multiple goals as well as between organisms striving at incompatible goals.”

There are several kinds and foundations of power but, according to French and Raven (1950) five types are central to the issue of conflict. These are expert power, referent power, legitimate power, reward power and coercive power.

Conflict Transformation: The fundamental objective of this latest concept is to transform unfair social interactions. The International Alert (1996: I:1-, II: 37) conceptualises conflict transformation as a:

..particular approach which aims to recognise the grievances, needs and issues of all the parties. It focuses on the processes by which conflict develops into violence, rather than focusing exclusively on how to bring a violent conflict quickly to a cease fire for settlement. It addresses the *structural reality* of inequality, rights and injustice in the society involved, and offers alternative ways of addressing those matters. This approach aims to transform a conflict from violence and destruction into a constructive force which reduces social change, progressively removing or at least reducing the conditions from which the conflict and violence have arisen. The peace, which develops, can then be well-founded and sustainable...

Conflict transformation is essentially integrative conflict resolution orientation that aims at positively altering those perceptions, communication and root factors that instigate conflicts. This laborious approach is preferred because it focuses on:

- I. Producing transformation in the whole conflict environment
- II. Producing transformation in the relationship of the conflicting parties,
or
- III. Producing empowerment-based transformation in parties to the conflict
(Burgess and Burgess, 1972: 285-286).

3.2 Comparison with Relate Concepts: Conflict transformation is relatively recent addition to the body of concepts that have been developed to deal with situations of

conflict. This presupposes that there are other related concepts (e.g. conflict termination, conflict settlement, conflict resolution, and conflict management) which we should now briefly clarify to shed light on our main subject of interest, conflict transformation:

Conflict termination: This means the strategy of bringing a conflict to an abrupt end. It commonly refers to a “zero sum” game situation that emerges from the termination of conflict through the defeat one of the parties involved in the crisis. Sometimes, conflict termination could come about when a truce or compromise is struck (Kobben 1977: 19) either by the conflicting parties themselves or through a mediator.

Conflict Settlement: This consists of the process of bringing conflict to an end by arriving at agreement(s) that is/are mutually acceptable. This idea suggest that the structural or root causes of the conflict would have been eliminated even when it still exists (Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse, 1999: 21). Due to this faulty assumption many conflicts that had been supposedly resolved have been known to re-surface.

Conflict Resolution: This concept shares the same limitation(s) with that of conflict settlement in assuming the removal of the root causes of conflict. Its other assumptions are the positive change from the hostile attitudes and actions of the conflicting parties, and total change in the structure of the conflict. In other words, it presupposes the healing of both the wounds and scars associated with conflicts, which is quite difficult to accomplish by mediators. What is however practicable is the healing of wounds and not of scars as is being alleged.

Conflict Management: Last but not the least, conflict management is canvassed by those who hold the opinion that it is more sensible to manage or control conflicts rather than attempting to terminate, settle or resolve them. Thus, this viewpoint concerns itself with attempt at:

- I. Bringing down or lessening the violent or destructive outcomes of conflict
- II. Controlling the growth in resort to mass destruction weaponry, and
- III. Managing the lateral expansion of conflicts into other areas

Thus, conflict management enables a violent conflict to be handled from its violent manifestation into less wasteful proportions, which enables mitigating strategies to be adopted. In other words, the principal value of this strategy is checking conflicts before they become uncontrollable.

3.3 Perspective on Conflict Transformation: There are several viewpoints on the subject matter of conflict transformation. Fortunately, Vayrynen (1999: 156-7) has articulated the major structural, behavioural and attitudinal components of these viewpoints into the following five logically inter-related perspectives of conflict transformation:

Context Transformation: Underlining this perspective is the argument that conflict is rooted in a definite context that must be largely considered as means of finding workable resolutions to any conflict. By way of illustration, it has been ascertained that conflicts in Central America, Southern Africa, and some other parts of the world became less difficult to control when the Cold war itself came to an end. This is, however, not to do away with the fact that the Cold war created some other fresh challenges of its own.

In the contention of Vayrynen, it would be extremely difficult for the process of conflict transformation to occur under situations where the environment within which the conflict is disregarded in one way or the other. In other words, the prospect for lasting peace is strengthened when efforts are particularly targeted at transforming the environment within which conflict is unfolding.

Structural Transformation: In his discourse of the second perspective, Vayrynen explained that every conflict is typically characterised by certain structures (actors, relationships, issues and goals) which understanding constitute the fundamental background for achieving sustainable peace within every community where conflict exists. Thus, it is not unusual for groups (religious or ethnic) that have been exposed to relative deprivation/oppression for a reasonable length of time to find themselves resorting to the use of arms mainly to resist the identified deprivation and oppression rather than for defending or propagating an ethnic or religious principle respectively. Samples of specific concerns of social injustice that can be attributed to the situation of conflict include poverty, and other forms of social, political, and economic marginalisation. Except these situational factors are intimately studied, recognised and attended to, any attempts at finding solutions to the conflict might just turn out to be an exercise in futility. In all likelihood, poverty is one of the most profound root causes of the conflict being experienced in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially Nigeria. For the sake of emphasis, it should be noted that Africa has metamorphosed into an arena of war and stress mainly as a result of poverty. This is because, many of the unemployed and poor youth in contemporary therefore easily conscripted into the scores of ethnic nationality resistance and politics of opponent intimidation/assassination that is flourishing in many countries of Africa. As captured by Scraton and Chadwick (1996: 289) “poverty and long-term unemployment increases the propensity of the poor to commit ‘survival’ crime.” In this regard, a well conceptualised and delivered programme of poverty that is meant to uplift the lives of the people would constitute an effective strategy of conflict transformation as it were.

Actor Transformation: Under this perspective an actors simply constitute groups or parties that are involved in conflict situation. It recommends that during actual conflicts its actors should make out time to step back for the purposes of evaluating their bearing. The viewpoint recommends that this evaluation should lead the abandonment or modification of certain goals and the probable adoption of strategies that would better

serve their objectives. What this implies is that this evaluation should produce transformation of values, beliefs and leadership of the conflict process if this is considered expedient. It is important to note that because of the far-reaching adjustment involved it often results in inter-group conflict. But more importantly, it ultimately culminates in fostering a new sense of direction for a more constructive management of the crisis to the benefit of the parties in conflict. Thus, a properly managed conflict leads to reduced destruction of lives and property.

Issue Transformation: This perspective deals with attempts at re-conceptualising the main issues of the conflict in the direction that would enhance the prospects for realistically resolving the conflict. For this laudable objective to be actualised, the position, needs and interests of the conflicting parties would have to be redefined. When these issues, for instance, concern political power sharing or the formula for appropriating economic benefit, their underlining principles may need to be redressed.

Personal and Group Transformation: This option considers the prospects that certain positive changes exist in the heart of every person that could be harnessed to positively transform conflicts. Basically, reciprocal respect for one another must be harnessed to correct misrepresentations, mistrust, extreme dislike, deliberately distorted perceptions, etc. It advocates the need for individuals to be willing to reach settlement with others with whom they had conflicts in time past. That is, people should be open minded about the idea of reconciliation rather than being rigid and deliberately prejudiced. Or, to state this principle more clearly, community-wide reconciliation efforts cannot result into any meaningful achievement in situations where individuals are blocking efforts to their personal transformation. It thus emphasises the need for individuals to embrace the idea of forgiveness and entertain the idea to start anew with their former adversaries or enemies. Therefore, it is significant for the community elites or opinion leaders to be persuaded by the personal transformation agenda in order to for them to run with it to appropriately manage the conflict.

3.4 Self-Assessment Exercises: What do you understand by conflict transformation?

4.0 Conclusion: Conflict transformation is thus a veritable tool of crisis management with which practitioners of peacebuilding and leaders that strive for good governance ought to be acquainted.

5.0 Summary: The unit focused on conflict transformation which it recognised as an all encompassing process of managing conflict from the level of grievances, needs and issues, through the strategies for controlling violent conflicts, to understanding the structural realities that produces lasting social change. To further clarify the subject, other notions (conflict termination, conflict settlement, conflict resolution and conflict management) with which it might be confused were defined. In the final analysis five perspectives of conflict transformation were mentioned and explained, namely:

- I. Context transformation
- II. Structural transformation
- III. Actor transformation
- IV. Issue transformation, and
- V. Personal and group transformation.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

- I. What are the differences between conflict and conflict transformation.
- II. Write short notes on the following:
 - Conflict termination
 - Conflict settlement
 - Conflict resolution
 - Conflict management
- III. What are the similarities and differences between:
 - Context transformation and structural transformation
 - Actor transformation and issue transformation

IV. What role can the person and group transformation perspective play in the resolution of ethnic crisis in Nigeria.

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MODULE 2 THEORIES OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN SOCIETY

Unit 1: Meaning and Types of Psychological Theories

Unit 2: Psychological theories of Aggression/Violence

Unit 3: Perspectives in Child Aggression

Unit 4: Theories of Attribution

Unit 5: Social-Psychological contexts of Genocide and Ethno-national conflicts

Unit 6: Social-Psychological determinants of racism

Unit 7: Social Psychology of Terrorism

UNIT 1: MEANING AND TYPES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES.

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3.0 Main Content

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3.2 Role theory

3.3 Reinforcement Theory

3.4 Cognitive Theory

3.5 Symbolic Interaction theory

3.6 Evolutionary theory

3.7 Self-Assessment Exercise

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments

7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit on psychological theories provides the framework for understanding the entire course on perception and conflict. Please read it with total concentration.

2.0 UNIT OBJECTIVES

The objective is to lay a theoretical foundation that will guide the study of all other units in this course. At the end you should be able to:

- (a) Define and explain the concept of theory,
- (b) Identify the types of psychological theories and their features, and
- (c) Apply the psychological theories wherever the need arises throughout this course.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT: MEANING AND TYPES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES

3.1 What is Theory: In this section, you will be introduced to the concept of theory and the various types of psychological theories. According to Michener, De Lamator and Myers (2004:6) “a theory is a set of interrelated propositions that organises and explains a set of observed phenomena. Theories usually pertain not only to particular events but to whole classes of events.” These authors draw from the view of Warren (in Michener, DeLamater and Myers, *op cit*: 6) that, “a theory goes beyond mere observable facts by postulating causal relation among variables. Therefore a valid theory provides a framework for explaining the phenomenon being observed and additionally guides the prediction of future events. ”

Within the field of social psychology distinction is usually made between middle-range theories and theoretical perspectives:

“Middle-range theories are narrow, focused frameworks that identify the condition that produce a special social behaviour. Basically theories of this nature appeal to the scientific processes of cause and effect. An example of a

middle-range theory would be that which attempts to explain the processes through which altitudinal changes can be achieved through persuasion.”

On the other hand, theoretical perspectives are broader frameworks that explain a wide range of social actions under various situations. Basically these theories are based on clear assumptions that pertain to the nature of man (i.e. human nature). Theoretical perspectives set standards for the assessment of a variety of social behaviours. Its major significance rests with its applicability to many situations, for which it provides a frame of reference.

The five (5) theoretical perspectives that will be discussed in this unit are:

- I. Role Theory
- II. Reinforcement Theory
- III. Cognitive Theory
- IV. Symbolic International Theory and
- V. Evolutionary Theory.

3.2 Role Theory: Roles define a body of rules (that guide the expectations of other people) and serves as a blueprint for a person’s behaviour. On a daily basis we all perform roles either as member of a family, church, an organization, a community Development Association (OA), or professional association etc. Role-playing is made easy by the setting of goals that are reduced to tasks and the specification of required performances.

The role theory posits that most of the behaviours we observe on a daily basis consist of people implementing roles assigned to them.

The role theoretical perspective is built around the following propositions:

- I. Much of the lives of people is spent as participating in groups and or organizations.

- II. These are statuses (i.e. positions) that people occupy within the group to which people belong.
- III. These positions have roles or duties that people will play attached to them. Thus, the expectations of others are a major determinant of how you may play your role.
- IV. In order to institutionalize these expectations, groups normally establish norms. Norms are rules detailing a person's expected behaviour, performance, related reward and the penalty that is attached to nonperformance.
- V. There are mutual checks on each other by group members meant to ensure compliance with the group norms. Thus, there are rewards for group members that satisfy their role expectations, which are applied in the form of approval, monetary gifts, acceptance and related measures. On the contrary, a non-performing member is usually embarrassed, punished or excommunicated from the group in extreme cases. It is this expectation of sanctions that motivates members into performance.

Role theory therefore posits that the behaviour of the occupant of a specified position can be predicted if information about the role is known. Therefore, a simple way to change in a person's behaviour is to first change the roles being played by that person and the associated expectations of other people or by simply shifting that person into an entirely different role (Allen and Van de Vliert, 1982, in Michener, De Lamater and Myers, *op cit*: 8).

As you may have noticed the major postulation of the role theory is that a change in a person's roles changes his behaviour together with his beliefs and attitudes. This is because people tend to align their attitudes with the expectations that define their roles, hence a change in the roles assigned to a person changes his attitude.

Limitations: In spite of its wide applicability, the role theory is fundamentally weakened by the fact that, as a tool, it is unable to explain deviant behaviour that does not conform

to any specified roles. In other words, contrary to deviant behaviour this theory seems to assume that people are generally conformists.

3.3 Reinforcement Theory: This theory is premised on the fact that human (social) behaviours are driven by extraneous events. Its major proposition is that people will put up specific behaviour when they perceive a pleasurable outcome or the removal of an aversive situation. On the other hand, the likelihood that an aversive situation would occur or a pleasant thing removed will likely cause people to refrain from carrying out a particular behaviour. (The reinforcement theory operates with certain concepts. The Theory explains that behaviour is eternally determined and therefore observable. Thus, events that cause a change in human behaviour are referred to as stimulus e.g. drivers move on when the traffic light changes to green. The favourable result that a response attracts is called a reinforcement, which ordinarily “strengthens the response.” - that is it increases the probability it will be repeated. When a child is rewarded (the reinforcement) for exhibiting a positive behavioural change, the child is most likely to repeat the behaviour that attracted that reward). Thus, reinforcement is a powerful learning instrument, especially through conditioning. Conditioning is the bond established between an individual’s response and the reinforcement it attracts.

On the converse, stimulus discrimination is a concept that captures the precise conditions that would cause a response to be rewarded. In the above example of a child that was rewarded for good behaviour, if that particular conduct is not suitable for other environmental conditions (e.g. greeting people good morning when it is past 12 noon), it will be erroneous to reward the child and thereby reinforce an incorrect behaviour. There are two other forms of learning under the general reinforcement theory. These are:

- I. **Social Learning Theory:** This variant of the learning theory stipulates that behaviour change (i.e. new responses) could be obtained by one person that is observing another person’s behaviour (the model.) The process of learning by observation, also called imitation, does not required the learner to respond neither

does he/she receive any reinforcement. As a matter of fact, most of the learning, particularly associated with children takes place through imitation. This simply requires the learner to observe the models actions, understanding it and attempt to behave in like manner. This form of learning does not require reinforcement from external sources. But the consequences of performing the learned behaviour, that is , in terms of receipt of reinforcement could be crucial to the learners behaviour. Social learning theory therefore sum's up thus; Learners develop new behaviours through conditioning and imitation that are vital processes of socialisation.

II. **Social Exchange Theory:** This perspective emphasizes that stability and change in individual relations is achieved through reinforcement. It assumes that individual's are always confronted with opportunity for making choices between alternatives when confronted by certain situations. This is because all human actions produce rewards (such as money, goods, servants, prestige, statuses or approval by other people) and association costs. The theory recognizes "that individual s are hedonistic – they try to maximize rewards and minimize cost." Thus, they settle for behaviours that yield the most reward and avoid those that less returns.

This theory portrays social relationship as "product of exchange of goods and services among persons;" in which individuals involve themselves to achieve profitable results. In order to determine the best outcomes individuals embark on comparison of levels of alternatives of relationships (Thibaut & Kelly, 1959, in Michener, DeLamater and Myers, *op cit*:11).

The social exchange theory applies to personal relationships just as it is a predictor of the relationships that involve exchanges or those that need to be restructured. According to Michener and others, "a state of equity exists in a relationship when participants feel that the rewards they receive are proportional to the costs they bear. But a relationship could be potentially unstable when there is inequity between the rewards and the costs. This state of inequity is usually difficult for individuals to tolerate, because they feel cheated, exploited and therefore angry.

The theory concludes that in reaction to an inequitable relationship people always resort to modification of the rewards and costs of a relationship by re-allocating costs.

Limitation: The main criticism of this theory is portraying individuals as solely responding to stimulus as against possessing creative thinking or initiatives, invention and innovation.” Secondly, this theory does not have a place for other sources of innovation, seeing social action as a result of profit maximization.

Within this context, altruistic and martyrdom are outside its purview.

3.4 Cognitive Theory: This theory, centres on the premises that the mental processes cognitive processes of people is of prime significance in determining social actions. These mental processes relate to an individual’s perception, memory, judgment, problem solving and decision making capabilities. This theory equally recognises the role of external sensitization but explains that the stimulus-response process is rather than being mechanical, mediated by cognitive processes. And this is informed by the rational behaviour of the individual in the active process of subjecting stimulus to interpretation before selecting appropriate actions or responses for the stimulus.

This theoretical perspective is a product of the gestalt school which posits that individuals react to configurations of stimuli as against a single stimulus. “Meaning that individuals comprehend the details of stimulus when regarded as an entire system of elements (gestalt) within which it is situated. This means that in order to understand the meaning of a single element, the whole system of which it is comprised must be examined. Thus, contemporary cognitive theorists (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Markus & Zajonc, 1985; in Michener, DeLamater and Myers, 2004: 12) “depict humans active in selecting and interpreting stimuli.”

Individuals therefore do not react to stimulus in an unstructured manner, they do after carefully throughout cognitive processes. This implies that: people carefully select the

stimuli to which they react and they consciously control the classes of concepts that they deploy to analyse the environmental stimuli. Hence, several people can arrive at diverse opinions based on the same environmental stimuli.

Cognitive theory is centered on what is referred to as cognitive theory structure and schemas. While the structure deals with the organizational forms for cognitions that include beliefs and concepts, the schemas are the cognitive structure that processes the complex data about others, either as individuals or groups. In social relationships, schemas enable people analyse the environment reasonably, especially in developing first impressions about people. This is especially true when we encounter people with similar characteristics.

Under the cognitive theory perspective the principle of cognitive consistency is prominent. Heider, (1958) and Newcomb (1968) posit that this principle ensures that individuals struggle to maintain ideas which are consistent or congruous as against those that are inconsistent and congruous.

Some significant contributions of the cognitive theory to the field of social psychology include; self concept, perception and attribution, attitude change, impression management and group stereotypes.

Limitations: This theory has tended to oversimplify the inherently complex process of information management. Furthermore, it suffers from the problem of non-observability, causing inferences to be drawn from the utterances of people. Thus, this theory is difficult to subject to empirical verification.

3.5 Symbolic Interaction Theory: This theory gives primacy to the role of interactions between individuals and their societies in the cognitive process. Michener, DeLamater and Myers (*op cit*: 14) point out that “the basic premises of symbolic interactionism is that human nature and social order are product of symbolic communication among

people. In this perspective a person's behaviour is constructed through give-and-take during his or her interaction with others." Rather than being a product of external stimuli or instincts, this theoretical perspective attributes behaviour to continuous interaction and communication with others members of society, which involves the following processes;

- I. **Negotiating Meanings:** Successful communications emerge from the meanings that individuals ascribe to objects. The meanings that objects assume are a function of the plans of individuals and the features of the objects in question. For instance, whereas a farmer might see a cutlass as a farm implement, a butcher might see it as an effective slaughtering tool while another individual may yet see it as a handy weapon of self defense.

The theory considers human beings as "proactive and goal seeking" (Michener, DeLamater and Myers *op cit*: 14), they consciously draw up goal-oriented plans of action that require the cooperation of other members of society to achieve. This is the reason that people need to cooperate with each other to share meanings of objects. Without this, the likelihood is that the meanings of objects become unclear and subject to contestation that must be resolved before cooperation can be restored. Symbolic interactionists therefore believe strongly in the definition of the situation to clear up ambiguities in the meaning of objects or social relationships. The symbolic interaction process therefore depends on a continuous process of negotiating and reaffirming meanings, which makes social relationships somewhat unpredictable and indeterminate.

- II. **The Self in Relation to Others:** The symbolic interaction perspective stipulates role-taking as a process for establishing cooperative relationship. Through this perspective, a person can undertake self-perception, self-control and self-assessment in the same way that he/she assesses, controls and perceives others. The understanding of self, that is, identity is crucial to the determination of action plans put forward by parties in a relationship. However, there are instances when a person is associated with an unusual identity, which results in difficulties in interacting with such a person. "Persons with unusual identities can create

problems in social interaction and they make it difficult to achieve consensus.” Basically, the achievement and sustenance of social order largely depends on the self concept. People are perceived as always striving to maintain self-respect even as they strive towards role taking which places the self instead of others that they relate with. But individuals appear to care more about the view point of some significant others, that is, individuals that are in charge of significant rewards or who have achieved high statuses in society. Therefore these are highly influential people in the society.

Limitation: This theory has tended to emphasise rational behaviour at the expense of emotional actions. A second drawback is the other-directed personality that strives to accomplish the standards of others. Furthermore, its emphasis on cooperation tends to downplay the reality of conflict in social contexts.

3.6 Evolutionary Model: Evolutionary psychology situates the foundation of social action in human genes thereby linking the social psychological with the biological (Buss, 1999; Symons, 1992; Wilson, 1975). In other words, the genetic composition that is transferred at birth is the major determinant of social behaviour. Physical evolution explains those features that sustain the central tendencies of a population. Social behaviours equally follow this pattern.

This view of social evolution has been used to develop explanatory schemes for numerous social actions. In this regard, the “altruistic or selfless behaviours” represent contradictions to evolutionary theorists. Because, it seems to suggest that it is possible for a person to limit his/her own opportunities of survival for the benefit of others. But Dawkins (1982) explains that “individuals are most likely to assist those to whom they are genetically related. Because individuals share genetic materials with those they assist, they are helping to pass on their own genetic code.”

Evolution theory has also tried to explain parenting practices. For instance, in postulating that men show lesser commitment to parenting children that probably emerge from single sexual acts compared to women that bear pregnancies for a duration of nine months.

Unlike the social exchange and cognitive theories, the evolutionary perspective attempts to explain the mechanisms that are responsible for social actions that is, in terms of harmonising all the other perspectives that have focused on specific areas.

3.7 Self-Assessment Exercise

What is a psychological theory and its characteristic features

4.0 Conclusion: The fundamental lesson you should take away from this unit is that theories provide explanations whole classes of events and not just a particular event.

5.0 Summary: This unit focused on the treatment of psychological theory, which it defined as “a set of interrelated propositions that organises and explains a set of observed phenomena. There are also middle range theories that identify the conditions responsible for definite social actions in society. Further to this, the unit considered the following types of psychological theories, namely; the role theory, reinforcement theory, cognitive theory, symbolic interactionist theory and the evolutionary model.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments:

- I. Define psychological theory and distinguish between it and middle range theory
- II. Mention the five types of psychological theories and explain two of them in detail
- III. What are the general characteristics of psychological theories
- IV. Distinguish between the social learning and the exchange theories of reinforcement

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UNIT 2: PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES OF AGGRESSION/VIOLENCE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 What is Aggression
 - 3.2 Aggression as Instinct
 - 3.3 Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis
 - 3.4 Aversive Emotional Arousal
 - 3.5 Social Learning and Aggression
 - 3.7 Self-Assessment Exercise
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit “Theories of Aggression” introduces you to the concept of aggression and the theoretical underpinnings of the aggressive behaviour of individuals and groups in society.

2.0 UNIT OBJECTIVES

It is expected that after studying this unit, you should be able to understand the concept of aggression and other important features associated with it. At the end of this course you should be able to:

- (a) Define aggression,
- (b) Mention and explain the four theoretical perspectives on aggression, and
- (c) Compare and contrast the four theories of aggression with relative ease.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT: PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES OF AGGRESSION/VIOLENCE

3.1 Basic Definition: In the social and behavioural sciences, especially social psychology, aggression is considered as any behaviour that was intended to bring harm to an individual, which the targeted individual seeks to prevent. From this definition, it is apparent that the factor of intention is central to the consideration of any behaviour as aggressive (Krebs, 1982).

But, it should be noted that there are certain behaviours that can not be included under this definition even when they result in deaths to one of the parties involved. For instance, a medical doctor may not be considered as an aggressor just because one of his patients died in the course of receiving treatment from him. Similarly, the predatory behaviours and those associated with self-defense between members of different organisms also situate the acts of aggression. Thus, while a futile attempt to murder an individual involves a potential hurt that the target would certainly desire to evade, a kidney transplant that was intended to improve the health of a patient but ends up in death falls outside the definition of aggression. Generally, the type of harms that are subsumed under aggression could be physical, psychological or social (e.g. where an attempt is made to tarnish the reputation of an individual). Though people tend to use aggression and assertiveness interchangeably (in referring a salesperson as aggressive), both terms should not be confused.

3.2 Theoretical Perspectives: However, the main concern of this unit is to shed light on the underlining theoretical motivation for the remarkable capability of one human being or group to visit harm on another human being or group. In their book *Social psychology*, Michener, DeLamater and Myers (2004: 272-276) discussed the following four theoretical perspectives or notions of aggression, namely;

- I. Aggression as Instinct
- II. Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis

- III. Aversive Emotional Arousal
- IV. Social Learning and Aggression

3.3 Aggression as Instinct: This postulation revolves around the view that aggression is a biologically determined rather than a fundamentally socially conditioned behaviour. One of the foremost exponents of this theoretical perspective was Sigmund Freud (1930, 1950). According to Freud, during conception every human being inherits the genetic materials that direct his/her urge to be either creative or destructive, as the case may be. He goes further to describe this natural human urge as a *death instinct* that is comparable to that of breathing in all individuals. But more importantly, he explained that this innate urge is responsible for the hostile inclinations that underlie human aggression towards each other, the tendencies for humans to harm themselves (suicide), and the internal imbalances that controls both physical and mental illness.

Most proponents of this school of thought draw their inferences on the instinctive nature of human beings from research into the animal behaviour. One of such researchers argued that animals have largely flourished as a result of the expression of their survival instincts in their habitat (Lorenz, 1966, 1974). In the context of this postulation, the most successive animals were those that had the impulse to engage in fighting to protect their terrain, obtain attractive mating partners, and protect their offsprings. But as a result of evolutionary developments animals have tended to refrain from aggressive behaviours whenever they noticed a sign submission on the part of an opponent. However, human beings are considered to be more treacherous and destructive than animals because they do not seem to be able to curtail their aggressive instincts once set in motion.

In the view of this postulation, the tendency to harm another person is an integral party of the genetic inheritance of every human being. Accordingly, this theory expresses high levels of pessimism about the control of human aggression to perhaps undermine the effectiveness of the theory of socialisation and acculturation in society. It however

contends that, at best, human aggression could be mitigated through the organisation of social competitions such as athletics, businesses and competing for academic laurels. But these competitions have to be ordered by social rules that come into force to primarily deter competitors from behaving aggressively toward each other. Even then, the rules have often been unable to curtail human aggression as evident in the violence associated with both footballers and football fans, and the sharp practices with which businesspeople undermine themselves and the institutions of government. This is the reason for which aggression will always be associated with human beings – it is basically instinctive.

Though the aggression as instinct perspective gained initial popularity, most social psychologists were not satisfied with it as an analytic frame of reference. Its major deficiency is thought to lie in generalising the behavioural patterns of human beings into those of human beings. This is more so because animal instincts have been shown to be universal and to occur at specific periods of their yearly life cycle, which cross-cultural studies have not found in human societies. Though the desire for food and respiration may be universal to members of particular species, it is however dependent on the magnitudes of deprivation and satisfaction to which an individual is exposed. On the contrary, this factor of universality of has not been proven amongst human beings. Whereas it appears common in some societies, it is somewhat rare in others. In the same vein, it is yet to be proven that human aggression is periodic. Human aggression has been more conveniently interpreted through the social analytic framework. This is for the reason that the phenomenon of aggression “does not increase when people have not aggressed for a long time or decrease after they recently aggressed”. In other words, though the genetic formation of human beings provides the inherent capacity for aggression it is not a sufficient basis for attributing this human behaviour to instincts.

3.4 Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis: This theoretical perspective basically emerged from attempts at finding an alternative explanation for the aggressive behaviour of human beings. It postulates that aggression is internal to people, but could be made manifest by

some definite actions - it is thus, an elicited compulsion or drive (Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears, 1993). The theoretical formulation rests on two fundamental planks, namely:

- I. That every feelings of frustration precipitates some outward manifestations of aggression in human beings
- II. That every express act of aggression is preceded by some feelings of frustrations

The Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis is clearly demarcated from instinct postulations by virtue of these basic tenets that mainly attribute human aggression to external or environmental factors. In order to lend support to this proposition Baker, Dembo, and Lewin (1941) conducted an empirical study using a group of children whom they made to view an apartment filled with beautiful toys. Consistent with the research design, the researchers then allowed a group of children immediate access to the toys for 20 minutes - ahead of others that subsequently joined the first set of children that had immediate access to play with the toys. What the researchers observed was an aggressive behaviour on the part of those children that did not have immediate access to the toys. This aggressive behaviour occurred in the form of an apparent bid to destroy the toys, which they smashed against the wall and on the floor. The researchers then attributed their findings, that is, the children's aggressive behaviour to the frustration that resulted from initially preventing them (that is, the children) from the beautiful toys. Thus, "by blocking the children's access to the tempting toys, the researchers frustrated them. This in turn elicited an aggressive drive that the children expressed by destroying the researchers' toys."

Nevertheless, there are a handful of empirical studies that questioned the tenets of this proposition in its undiluted form. Zillman (1979) discovered that the correlation between frustration and aggression could be anything but direct, that is, every single act of frustration does not produce a corresponding aggression. This is because the aggressive

tendencies of an individual are always moderated by his/her consideration of the penalty that such behaviours attract.

Data corroborates the fact that whereas violence increases when a few people are laid off, the reverse seem to be the case when the lay-off affects a large number of people. This is based on the fear of job losses by those still under employment (Catalano, Novaco, and McConnell, 1997). The fact that should also be taken into account that frustration could equally be responsible for such outcomes as *despair, depression or withdrawal*.

There is also the contention that aggression can occur independently of the factor of frustration (Berkowitz, 1989). He observed that if given the opportunity any scientist or businessperson could eliminate all other competitors in order to brighten his/her chances of acquiring uninhibited fame and prosperity, even without being frustrated.

Invariably, it would seem *that the nature of the frustration influences the intensity of the resulting aggression*. In this regard, *the strength and the arbitrariness of frustration* are two factors that intensify the aggressiveness of an individual.

- I. ***Strength of Frustration:*** This principle captures the fact that people tend to be more frustrated when they are obstructed from achieving a goal that they earnestly desire. Thus, one feels a higher sense of frustration and expresses more aggression when, after enduring a very long queue, someone appears in front of him from nowhere. In other words, aggressive tendencies are higher when the feelings of frustration are higher (Harris, 1974). It was observed that a confederate that was instructed to fix himself in lines at two points (very close to the front and somewhere far behind in grocery store, theatre and restaurant) received more complaints and abuses from persons in front than those behind.

The frustration-aggression hypothesis also fits into observed instances of the kind of anger expressed by road users. From their research Hennessy and Weisenthal (2001) observed that when you drive too slow on the highway, occupy an only available parking lane, or veer into someone's path without signaling to him/her, that causes frustration, blocking your attempt to reach a goal, such as arriving on time for an appointment. The researchers went on to differentiate between driver aggression (honking, yelling, making obscene gestures) and driver violence (chasing the other car or its driver, throwing objects, shooting at him or her). According to these researchers, the amount of frustration that was felt by individuals was positively correlated with reports of road rage. They also found that while men were more inclined to forwarding reports associated with violence, both sexes actively reported cases of aggression.

- II. ***Arbitrariness of Frustration:*** This principle denotes that the aggression of an individual is a function of his/her perception of the reasons of his/her frustration. Essentially, there is increased tendency for individuals to be hostile especially when they perceive that the source of their "frustration is unprovoked, or illegitimate" rather than being "reasonable, accidental, or illegitimate." Correspondingly, the reaction of people to illegitimate or arbitrary sources of frustration equally turns out to be more aggressive. In an attempt to lend empirical validation to this view, Kulick and Brown (1979), tasked a group of students with some telephone-based charity appeals. Unknown to the students, however, their (that is, the students) targeted donors list were made up of confederates that had been instructed to turn down the students appeal in order to have them frustrated. "In the legitimate frustration condition, potential donors offered good reasons for refusing (such as "I just lost my job"). In the illegitimate frustration condition, they offered weak, arbitrary reasons (such as "charities are a rip-off")." The outcome of this study indicated that "individuals exposed to illegitimate frustration

were more aroused than those exposed to legitimate frustration. They also directed more verbal aggression against the potential donors.”

3.5 Aversive Emotional Arousal Theory: Studies conducted under the framework of this hypothesis seem to indicate that there are other factors in aggression beyond those attributed by the frustration-aggression postulation. During one of the research that was guided by the aversive emotional arousal theory students and residents of a community were asked to identify the incidents that provoke them into aggression (Averill, 1982). Surprisingly, the respondents mentioned their sources of aggression to include the legitimate deeds of others along with some inevitable misfortunes or mistakes. Likelihoods are that people become aggressive when factual insults are directed at them. By factual insults, reference is made to those associated with the valued traits of an individual, such as, his/her sincerity, integrity, traditions, physical presentation or bodily pains. Aggression quite often emanate from physical and verbal harassment, recurrent acts of intimidation by ones contemporaries have also been implicated as strong contributory factors.

According to Berkowitz (1989), misfortunes, abuses, and harassments are capable of provoking aversive affect, which people naturally seek to lessen drastically or avoid completely. Whereas the factor can gain expression as anger, it is also often associated with diverse forms of pains and discomforts such as those produced by extreme temperatures conditions. Hence the aggression that emanates from this kind of situation is usually instrumental, in terms of attempting to ease out the factor responsible for the affect. Examples of instrumental actions include turning on the room heater in a cold room, stabbing and assailant in self defense and physically assaulting an individual that makes you a subject of ridicule in the public.

Thus, social psychologists describe an aggression that is a consequence of an aversive affect as an *affective aggression* as compared to the aggression that is informed by

unfriendly considerations or cognitive processes. In an empirical study by Anderson, Anderson and Denser (1996) to which Michener, DeLamater and Myers (2004:275) referred the researchers made the participants to either look at picture of weapons or exposed them to extreme conditions of temperature. It was observed that while those that saw weapons in photographs did not get angry, the ones that were exposed to extreme weather conditions developed increased anger and hostility. Thus, series of experiments found that highly aggressive responses to harsh criticism were likely among participants who believe aggression will make them feel better.

3.6 Social Learning and Aggression: According to this perspective, the understanding of an individual's aggressive behaviour can be acquired from two processes, namely: imitation, and reinforcement.

- I. **The Process of Imitation:** This framework attributes the aggressive behaviour that an individual exhibit to those characteristics which he/she has acquired from observing the aggressive behaviour of others. Bandura, Ross and Ross (1961) conducted an experiment to demonstrate how this form of aggression is acquired. The study was structured out in such a way that children were made to watch adults play with two types of toys under two settings. Under the first, an adult was made to play with tinkertoys for about one minute. Further to this, the adult then engaged in play with another toy, this time, an inflated rubber Bobo doll. But, in course of playing with the Bobo doll, the adult punched, kicked and sat on the doll in an apparent display of aggression towards the Bobo doll. While this aggressive behaviour towards the Bobo doll was on, the adult also used some uncompromising or aggressive words to qualify it. Compared to this, the adult exhibited a somewhat tender behaviour throughout the period that he played with the tinker toys.

After closely watching the two scenarios all the children were deliberately frustrated and made to have access to both the tinkertoys and the Bobo dolls. At

close observation, it was noticed that while the children that watched the non-violent scenario with the tinkertoys behaved less aggressively, those that witnesses the adult's aggressive behaviour against the Bobo doll attempted to reproduce the aggressive behaviours that they had witnessed.

Michener, DeLamater and Myers (2004: 276) enthuse that the “aggressive behaviours within the family - child abuse, spouse abuse or sibling abuse - can be explained by social learning theory.” They therefore arrived at the conclusion that adults that are involved in child, spouse and sibling abuse are those who may have been brought up in family settings where these behaviours played out when they were growing up (Gelles and Cornell, 1990). By extension, it may be said the children that are bred under an environment where the abuse of others is taken for granted are inadvertently being brought up to accept and subsequently replicate the culture of physical aggression as adults. Thus, these kinds of socialisation processes also help in defining people that occupy certain roles (being husbands, wives, children, siblings etc.) as suitable targets of aggression.

III. **The Process of Reinforcement:** The reinforcement view states that the reward to be obtained from exhibiting aggressive behaviour is the major motivation for individuals that engage in such behaviours. Thus, whether we are referring to *area boys* that physically dispossess victims of their purses or children that forcefully take possession of the belongings of other children to which they are attracted or a footballer that intentionally injures the star player of an opposing team in order to improve his team's chances of winning the ultimate price (or money), the common denominator is the ultimate reward acquired by the perpetrators of these acts. Bandura (1973) summed up the main thrust of the social learning theory by stating that reward is the major determinant of aggression or, to state it more succinctly, reward is the underlining reason people generally obtain and sustain their social behaviour.

Though aggressive actions are generally dependent on the expectation of rewards, it is interesting to note further that the specific acts of aggression to expect from given situations depends on two factors, namely;

- I. The options of aggression to which the individual in question is exposed, and
- II. The cost-reward implications that is perceived by the perpetrator of the aggressive action

In the final analysis, Michener, DeLamater and Myers (*op cit*) conclude that

A person may be skilled, for example, in using a switchblade knife, a Molotov cocktail, or a sarcastic comment to harm others. People also consider the likely consequences of enacting particular aggressive behaviours in a particular situation. They try to calculate which actions will produce the reward they seek, and at what cost. These considerations largely determine which aggressive acts, if any, people perform.

3.7 Self-Assessment Exercise

Define aggression and with describe two situations of harm that are not covered by your definition

4.0 Conclusion: With the theories of aggression that you have studied in this unit, you may now be able to better explain the motives of different aggressive behaviours.

5.0 Summary: We recognised aggression as behaviour that is meant to harm an individual, which that individual attempts to prevent. In this unit, you should also

remember that we mentioned that the death that occurs for the attempts to save lives by medical doctors is not an act of aggression. Thereafter, the unit proceeded to examine such theories of aggression like; aggression as instinct, frustration-aggression hypothesis, aversive emotional arousal and the social learning and aggression.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments:

- I. Define aggression and the physical, psychological or social consequences of it (aggression) on victims
- II. What are the main characteristics of the social learning theory of aggression
- III. Write short notes on any two of the following:
 - Aggression as Instinct
 - Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis
 - Aversive Emotional Arousal
- IV Over the past twenty years, you watched one of your neighbour's raise their only son and child in a house hold where the father of the house was a confirmed murderer. At the age of twenty-one, this only son/child was brought into the neighbourhood in handcuffs for being alleged to have murdered somebody somewhere. Assume that the accusation is correct and explain the son's behaviour with an appropriate theory of aggression.

7.0 Reference/Further Readings

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UNIT 3: PERSPECTIVES IN CHILD AGGRESSION

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Aggressive Behaviour
 - 3.2 Foundation of Aggressive Behaviour
 - 3.3 Indirect Determinants of Children's Aggressive Behaviour
 - 3.4 Models of Deviant Behaviour: Peers and Parents
 - 3.5 Self-Assessment Exercise
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments
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6.0 INTRODUCTION

Primarily, this unit focussed on the various possible sources through which youngsters acquire aggressive or deviant behaviour in society.

2.0 UNIT OBJECTIVES

It is expected that after studying this unit, you should be able to understand the sources of child aggression and more specifically be able to discuss the following issues:

- I. Aggressive Behaviour
- II. Foundation of Aggressive Behaviour
- III. Indirect Determinants of Children's Aggressive Behaviour
- IV. Models of Deviant Behaviour: Peers and Parents

3.0 MAIN CONTENT: PERSPECTIVES ON CHILD AGGRESSION

3.1 Aggressive Behaviour: You will recall that in a previous lesson (Module 1, Unit 6), we dealt extensively with the theories of aggression. At the beginning of the treatment of the subject matter we defined aggression as any behaviour that was intended to bring harm to an individual, which the targeted individual seeks to prevent. We then noted from this definition that intention is central to the consideration of any behaviour as aggressive (Krebs, 1982). Following this, we proceeded to examine four theories of aggression, namely; aggression as instinct, frustration-aggression hypothesis, aversive emotional arousal, social learning and aggression.

In the present unit we shall discuss some perspectives on the development of aggressive behaviours in children. In his book, *Aggression: Its Causes, Consequences, and Control*, Berkowitz (1993: 162-163) attributed the acquisition and persistence of aggressive behaviour in children to:

too little love and affection from their mothers and fathers, harsh and erratic parental discipline during their formative years, genetic heritage and neurological makeup, the level of stress in their lives and the degree to which they have failed to satisfy their personal and economic wishes, the attitudes and values regarding aggression that are prevalent in their segment of society or that are shared by their friends and acquaintances, the extent to which they see others using aggression to solve their problems (in real life and or on movie and TV screen), and how they have learned to view their social world.

As you may have noticed each of these factors can be explained by one of the theoretical perspective or the other earlier discussed. Berkowitz (*op cit*: 165), emphasises that, though, it is erroneous to entirely attribute the development and persistence of aggressive behaviour in children to any single factor we shall, for the purposes of this discourse,

limit ourselves to his explanations of the influence of the family and peer group in the occurrence of this phenomenon. In his already book to which we have already made reference, Berkowitz (1993) carried out detailed analysis of the direct and indirect influences on the development of aggressive behaviour by children. Let us now shift our discuses to these factors.

3.2 Foundation of Aggressive Behaviour: There are two broad direct determinants of the aggressive behaviour in children to which Berkowitz (*op cit*: 167-186) has drawn attention in his thoroughly researched book on aggression. These influences to which we now turn are the aggression-induced rewards and the parent-induced unpleasant situations:

Reward-Induced Aggression: In as much as we would have wanted, it is regrettable that we still cannot specifically pinpoint the incidents that are capable of reinforcing aggressive behaviour. Reward is a relatively powerful and effective instrument for encouraging persistent behaviour, particularly, in children. Though, it must be said that the extent of this power can not be ascertained. There are two basic strategies for using rewards to influence the behaviour of children, namely; as *incentives* for inciting actions or as *reinforcement* for approved behaviour.

Box 3.2: An Illustration of Parent-Induced Aggression

All the kids were fusing and fighting, and he would never fight. His sister would always have to take up his battle for him. So one day my husband took off his belt and said, "listen, you're coming home and crying all the time, saying 'somebody hit me.'" So my husband was watching through the bathroom window one day, and we saw two little boys. They were really fighting him (Glen). So he went up, took off his belt, and said, "Glen, I am going to tell you something. You're going to whip these boys or else I am going to whip you." So he made him stand up and fight both of them.

Source: Berkowitz (1993: 165).

Berkowitz (*op cit*: 167) enthuses that rewards motivate actions when:

..... we anticipate the pleasure we would experience upon receiving a reward, and this anticipation stimulates us to do what we believe will be necessary to actually achieve the desired outcome. Glen may have regarded his father's approval as an incentive in this sense, wanting the praise and affection of his father could give him, he was motivated to fight back when another child assaulted him. Since Glen's aggression was prompted by the hope of gaining an external reward - his father's approval – it could also be said that the boy's behaviour constituted instrumental aggression.

On the other hand, when Glen's father praised him for hitting those who attacked him, this parental approval might have automatically strengthened the boy's tendency to react aggressively to provocations, thereby maintaining Glen's aggressiveness. As a reinforcer, the reward promotes the more or less thoughtless acquisition of aggressive reactions to certain kinds of situations and thus increases the chances that the aggressive behaviour will be repeated.

Some specific patterns of reward that Berkowitz (*op cit*: 168-174) implicated for behavioural change in children include, though not limited to the following:

Rewards Unrelated to Victims of Aggression: Under this category we shall discuss the distinctions between the caretaker's endorsement, peer-motivated rewards, negative reinforcement, and the victim's vulnerability as reinforcement:

Caretaker's Endorsement: This was further divided into two factors for the purposes of discussing the issues involved with clarity. These consist of:

Directly Rewarded Actions: This deal with the high probability that rewarded actions holds very high probability of being sustained or repeated. For instance, from an experiment it has been discovered that “a caretaker’s rewards influenced the likelihood of openly aggressive reactions to a frustration” (Davitz, 1958, in Berkowitz, *op cit*: 168). Davitz exposed groups of youngsters (four each) to training in course of which one group (A) was commended for their aggressiveness to certain situations, while the other (B) received commendations for “playing instructively and constructively in the other condition” (Berkowitz, *op cit*: 168). From subsequent exposure of both groups to some form of frustration, the first group A was found to have responded more aggressively compared to the second group’s B cooperative disposition. Thus, children could either behave aggressively or constructively depending on the kinds of behaviour that are endorsed by their caretakers.

Reinforcing Related Behaviours: Sometimes rewards could result in far-reaching consequences. Though, in the case illustrated above (Box 3.2) Glen’s father clearly wanted his son to be a man of his own, he also inadvertently endorsed the son’s aggression beyond situations of self defense to that of intimidating other children. In other words, the impact of a reward could be wider than the context for which it was applied. As Berkowitz captured it, rewards “can also strengthen not only the intended actions but also other tendencies of the same general nature” (Berkowitz, *op cit*: 168).

Peer Endorsement: Outside the home peers serve as formidable agents of socialisation and under certain circumstances, children identify role models from among their friends and acquaintances. These mentors inadvertently teach what they consider appropriate behaviour, either through their actions or the rewards and commendations they issue to youngsters outside the home. The impact of peer occurs through:

Group Pressure: Berkowitz (*op cit*: 170) avers that “it’s no mystery that many youths are especially susceptible to influence by their peers.” He continued by attributing this to the tendency “to be valued by others of their own age”, which underscores the eagerness in these youth “to seek the company of other youngsters who might appreciate them.” From

this a general pattern appears to have emerged in which aggressive youths are drawn together as friends that share common behavioural characteristics around their antisocial tendencies.

Loyalty to Group Code of Behaviour: Though, anti-social youth groups basically tend to serve as platforms of security and social status, these groups also promote interactions that foster behavioural norms to which its members become loyal. These norms enable the youth to behave in certain predictable patterns under certain conditions. The youth therefore have common norms and standards that basically influence their behaviour within the group.

They realise that, whether they are alone or with others, they can either win the approval of their fellow gang members or by adhering to the gang's standards or be rejected by them if they don't live up to the gang's expectations (Berkowitz, *op cit*: 173).

Victim-Centered Motivation: This simply focuses on instances of aggression that are encouraged by the reactions exhibited by their victims.

Negative Support: Berkowitz (*op cit*: 172) contends that a huge proportion of the aggressive acts of individuals, including children, is attributable to responses to situations which people consider unpleasant. Thus, it is not uncommon for us to react aggressively in order to stop acts of provocation from others. For instance, in family settings aggression happens when members attempt to control the behaviour of each other. "Moreover, the aggressor's attempted coercion is often aimed at ending the target's annoying behaviour. we can say that the brother's hitting is, negatively reinforced, in that his action has terminated an unpleasant (i.e., negative) state of affairs" (Patterson, 1986, in Berkowitz, *op cit*: 173). The most significant development about negative reinforcement is that it increases the chances that aggressors will extend their acts of aggression to others without provocation. According to Berkowitz (*op cit*: 173):

The more often their counterattacks had been successful, in other words, the more frequent *their own later* aggression. Instead of being peaceful because they knew how unpleasant it is to be a victim of aggression, their rewarded aggression tended to make them become more bullying themselves. This effect is another demonstration of how hard it is to keep rewarded aggression within narrow limits.

Pain and Defeat Shown by Victims: The manner in which victims exhibit pains and sense of defeat related to aggression also encourages the sustainability of aggressive behaviour. In other words, some aggressors tend to reinforce their aggressive behaviours on ascertaining information about their victim's discomfort. From an experiment by Richard Sebastine (1978, in Berkowitz, *op cit*: 174) Berkowitz surmised that the more the victims of revenge reacted to pains the more satisfied those avenging earlier assaults became. Similarly, it was observed that those avenging earlier pains also enjoyed opportunities to inflict injuries on innocent people. This implies that their tendency for aggression had increased as a result of the opportunity to hurt someone else.

From the foregoing, Berkowitz (*op cit*: 174) draws a distinction between *instrumental aggression* (aimed at acquiring a desired object or a means to an end) and *emotional aggression* (that arouses satisfaction in the aggressor that successfully inflict harm on someone else).

Distasteful Situations Produced by Parents: Berkowitz (*op cit*: 175) contends that children who are exposed to the following conditions are equally likely to acquire aggressive behaviour:

Parental Mistreatment: The kind of mistreatment that fall under this category ranges from those of general nature to more specific cases of *parental rejection*, *harsh parental treatment*, and *inconsistent discipline* (Berkowitz, *op cit*: 175-180).

In order to avoid these instances of mistreatment parents need to be able to **explain their disciplinary actions** on children thus:

- I. By setting definite behavioural principles for their children,
- II. By patiently explaining the benefits of adhering to the standards to children,
- III. By explaining errors in children's behaviour to them whenever they occurs,
- IV. By exercising consistent love and affection to your children while also taking pains to explain why they should be subjected to discipline,
- V. By consistently expressing parental disapproval to breaking rules, which may have implications for withdrawal of some privileges and love sometimes.

3.3 Indirect Determinants of Children's Aggressive Behaviour: This sub-section examines a second broad category, referred to as indirect determinants, of children's aggressive behaviour. Berkowitz (*op cit*: 186) captures the main thrust of this section in stating that "the youngster's personality can also be affected, at least to some degree, by indirect influences that are not intended to have an impact on him specifically." Though, Berkowitz admitted that "cultural norms and poverty and other situational stressors" could be implicated for this development, we join him in focussing on the rather wide embracing frameworks that profile the indirect effects of family-based conflicts and antisocial modelling.

A handful of social scientists and lay persons contend that broken homes are basically responsible for the phenomenon of juvenile criminality in society. The argument is advanced that besides being raised under conditions of poverty, the incidence of single parenthood has been found to be unsuitable for an adequate transfer of the norms and values of society to youngsters in society. Nevertheless, the literature generated from studies by McCord (1986: 344-345) in the United States and Great Britain reveal that there are very little empirical facts to substantiate this assertion. She was able to demonstrate from her empirical studies

that when poverty is held constant differentials in family stability (i.e. whether homes were broken or intact) did not significantly affect the rate at which youngsters involve themselves in juvenile delinquency. She clarifies that the significant issue is not whether the homes were broken but the process through the broken occurred. In other words, “homes broken by the death of a parent are less criminogenic than those broken by divorce or separation.” Thus, that a home is broken “appears to be a proxy for other more potent variables” (McCord, *op cit*). This implies that “other factors that often accompany family breakdown may actually be responsible for the child’s antisocial tendencies” (Berkowitz, *op cit*: 187).

Parental Discord: The salient point being made here is that parental disagreement rather than the more visible fact of broken home is responsible for the delinquent tendencies expressed by children from broken homes (McCord, *op cit*). From her Cambridge project on criminogenic youngsters that was re-assessed by Farrington (1978), Berkowitz (*op cit*: 187) surmised that:

in a disproportionate number of cases, their mothers and fathers had quarrelled and fought with each other during the children’s early adolescence. Further, the parents’ quarrelsomeness apparently preceded the boys’ strong aggressive dispositions. Family tension had evidently heightened the youngsters’ aggressive inclinations. Several American studies also highlighted the aggression-generating effects of parental disharmony.

From the foregoing, it is apparent that parental antagonism or disagreement is an underlining factor of juvenile delinquency in society. This is also true even where youngsters find themselves witnessing neutral adults in violent disagreements.

Conflict and Separation: Intense conflicts between parents that terminate in divorce have also been associated with aggression in youngsters or children. This fact was confirmed by a longitudinal study of four-year olds on the subject matter for duration of two years (Hetherington, Cox and Cox 1979). These authors concluded that:

many of the boys in the study seemed to be upset by the breakup of their families, and their disturbance persisted for a period of time. In comparison to their counterpart from intact homes, the youngsters with divorced parents exhibited higher levels of both emotional and instrumental aggression, physically as well as verbally, even a year after the separation.

They equally discovered that the youngsters were very quick to anger and less effective in their used of aggression to achieve an end.

Modeling: Another factor that indirectly influences the aggressive inclination of young people is the examples that are inadvertently or consciously provided for them. Based on his seminal theory on the subject which he referred to as *modeling*, Bandura (1965) conceptualised the phenomenon as the behavioural outcome of observing another person (the model) behave in specific ways which is then put into practice by the observer.

3.4 Models of Deviant Behaviour: Peers and Parents: Youngsters can often be influenced from several sources like peers and parent. **Peers** influence their dressing, choice of music, speech patterns, mannerisms, as well as response to social problems and conflicts. It is therefore less difficult for youngsters and low status deviants to emulate antisocial models that enjoy high status in their groups, even up to the point of drug addiction.

Parents also happen to be very strong models of deviant behaviours to their youngsters in society. Farrington (1986) avers from his Cambridge project that most young deviant adults had criminally involved parents before they attained adolescence. Though, McCord emphasises that this relationship is not one-on-one.

Conditions Affecting Modeling: Though peers and parents are the most common models, the following are some other conditions that affect the deviant tendencies of youngsters:

Predisposition to act in the Models Manner: This explains the likelihood “that persons who are watching a model are most likely to imitate the model’s behaviour if they are already disposed to behave the way the model is behaving” (Berkovitz, *op cit*: 190). The indications in McCord’s (*op cit*) study are that youngsters that emulated their father’s deviant behaviour may also have had their own antisocial inclinations.

Relative Influence of the model on the Youngster: In the final analysis, in line with what was discovered about the *socially deviant fathers* in Massachusetts, models that exercise strong control over their youngsters admissibly influence them profoundly as well.

3.5 Self-Assessment Exercise

Mention and discuss the characteristics of the two major sources of adolescent aggressive behaviour in society.

4.0 Conclusion: The main lesson from this unit is that whatever the social context in which we find ourselves as adults, we must watch our actions and reactions. This is because, as the unit has shown others, especially youngsters are watching and forming far reaching opinions and characters based on our behaviours.

5.0 Summary: The unit examined various sources from which children acquire aggressive behaviour in society. It analysed the roles of reward and the reaction of victims in the reinforcement of aggressive behaviour. Furthermore, direct and indirect influence of child aggression was discussed before the unit came to an end with

consideration of modeling influences on the development of antisocial behaviour by youngsters. But more importantly, most of the discourses featured the place of the family, peers, situational as dispositional factors in analysis of the phenomenon of child aggression.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments

- I. What do you understand by child aggression? What are the roles of the caretaker and peer in the endorsement of aggressive behaviour in children?
- II. Define the concept of parental mistreatment and outline how it can be corrected?
- III. Write detailed notes on the following indirect determinants of children's aggressive behaviour:
 - Parental Discord
 - Conflict and Separation
 - Modeling
- IV. Compare and contrast the roles of peers and parents in the modeling of deviant behaviour in society.

7.0 References/Further Readings

Berkowitz, L. (1993), *Aggression: Its Causes, Consequences, and Control*, (Boston: McGraw Hill)

Unit 4: THEORIES OF ATTRIBUTION

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Concept of Attribution
 - 3.2 The Theories of Attribution
 - 3.3 Dispositional Attribution
 - 3.4 Inferring dispositions from acts
 - 3.5 Covariation model of attribution
 - 3.6 Self-Assessment Exercise
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit considers the theories of attribution. It begins by defining the concept before examining dispositional and the Covariation theories of attribution.

2.0 UNIT OBJECTIVES

The main objective is to provide you with a framework for understanding the underlying causes and motivation of the actions of people towards you and vis-a-vis. Thus, you will learn how to:

- I. Infer disposition from the behaviour of people, and
- II. To make attributions using the Covariation model

3.0 MAIN CONTENT: THEORIES OF ATTRIBUTION

3.1 Concept: Critical analysis of the subject matter of the social sciences disciplines appears to indicate its preoccupation with the diverse aspects of attribution. This is because; social sciences basically apply the methods of science to the interpretation (that is, explanation of the motivation or causes) of human behaviour and generalising wherefrom, which is attribution. Thus attribution can be more specifically defined as “the process that an observer uses to infer the causes of another’s behaviour.” (Michener, DaLamater and Myers, 2004: 125). It therefore focuses on how we arrive at the motivation for or assigning causation to the actions of other people. In other words, attribution addresses the need to ascertain the reasons for the behaviour of others, which can be done through the inferences we draw. Thus it is due to the need to understand attribution, that a simple act of favour from a person usually elicits the following kind of questions: why has this person done this favour to me? Could this person be a naturally generous individual? Does this person intend to compromise me with this favour in the foreseeable future? Could this favour be as a result of this person’s lawful duties? Or might this person have been compelled to extend this favour to me? As a matter of fact these questions are necessary to enable us ascertain the underlying causes of the person’s action as a basis for informing our behaviour towards the person in question.

Michener, DaLamater and Myer (2004: *op cit*) again enthuse that “in attribution, we observe another’s behaviour and infer background to its causes to the intention, abilities, traits, motives, and situational pressures that explain why people act as they do.”

3.2 Theories of Attribution: Consistent with the focal point of the subject matter, theories of attribution mainly shed light on the methodology for interpreting the behaviour of other people and drawing inferences backwards to the origin of the behaviour. Thus, these theories try to analyse why we attribute human activities to a

particular set of behaviour rather than others (Kelly and Michela, 1980; Lipe 1991; Ross and Fletcher, 1985).

3.3 Dispositional versus Situational Attribution: In his original formulation, Heider (1944, 1958) posited that the application of common sense thinking is central to an individual's knowledge of the causes of other people's behaviours. Based on this understanding, persons in the position of attribution tend to behave like "native scientists" through discernment of the behaviour of others through procedures similar to the scientific method. Heider proposes that whether an individual's interpretation of another person's behaviour is scientific or less so basically derives from the individual's beliefs. It is for this reason that analysis of the common sense causes is vital to understanding the behaviour of others.

Nevertheless, there is the observer's challenge of attributing an individual's behaviour to either his/her internal conditions or state (or dispositional attribution). A very common illustration within the Nigerian environment is that of attempting to proffer (that is, make attributions) reasons for the joblessness of, perhaps, a neighbour. In doing this, it is not uncommon for observers to trace a neighbour's joblessness to factors such as his/her outright irresponsibility, slothfulness, pleasure-seeking attitude or inability to work. In attempting to link the neighbour's joblessness to factors that are internal to the neighbour, the observer implicates the neighbour's dispositional attributes for his/her state of joblessness. However, where the observer implicates such external factors as scarcity of job opportunities in the neighbour's area of specialisation, discrimination in the distribution of jobs, economic depression or the peculiarities of the capitalist economic structure, for the neighbour's state of joblessness, he/she would be referring mainly to situational attribution. There are several factors that underline the interpretation of an individual's behaviour to his/her disposition or situation. Central to this interpretation is the relative pressure of the situation on the individual. Some of these pressures have to do with the normative role expectations coupled with the specific punishment or rewards to

which the individual is exposed in the environment. Let us illustrate with a judge that was observed sentencing a criminal to death in his/her court. Basically, it is not unusual for an observer to consider the judge as being on the tough side (dispositional attribution). But, where this same observer comes into more information, such as the state legislation that explicitly stipulates the death penalty for the kind of offence in question, he/she may want to understand the judge as responding to the pressures of his/her roles (situational attribution). Michener, DaLamater and Myers (2004: 125-126) paraphrased the interpretation of Trope and Cohen (1989); Trope, Cohen and Moaz (1988), thus:

The logic has been formalised as the subtractive rule which states that when making attributions about personal dispositions, the observer subtracts the perceived impact of situational forces from the personal disposition implied by the behaviour itself. Thus, considered by itself, the judge's behaviour (imposing the death penalty) might imply that she is tough in disposition. The subtractive rule, however, states that observer must subtract the effect of situational pressure (the state law) from the disposition implied by the behaviour itself. When the observer does this, he or she may conclude that the judge is not especially tough or overly inclined to impose the death penalty.

From the foregoing, it can easily be noticed that when the subtractive rule was applied to the death penalty that was imposed by the judge, it clearly reduced the dispositional attribution and increased the explanatory value of the situational attribution. Under certain circumstances, it is the reverse that actually happens. That is, the application of the subtractive rule weakens the situational attribution while strengthening the dispositional attribution. Dispositional attribution is easily recognised where an individual characteristically replays a behaviour that is contrary to communal or societal expectations. For instance, it is clearly the factor of dispositional attribution that would lead an individual to persistently canvass the positions of a competing radical political

party during his or her party's convention, even when being cautioned by other party members. In the words of Michener, DaLamater and Myers (2004: 126):

Applying the subtractive rule, we subtract the impact of situational forces from the personal disposition implied by the behaviour itself. This means we subtract a negative quantity (the negative reaction of others) from the disposition implied by the behaviour itself. The net effect is to increase or augment the dispositional attribution.

To conclude with one very strong possibility for the individual's action is to admit that he/she nurses deep radical convictions.

3.4 Inferring Dispositions from Acts: According to Jones (1979) and Jones and Davis, (1965), two important steps are required for the identification of personal dispositions. These steps consist of, first, attempting to infer the precise intentions underlining an individual's objectives. This implies striving to seek out what an individual's actions were initially intended to achieve. Secondly, an observer would need to concern himself/herself with the original (or prior) disposition that may have driven the individual to nurse that kind of intention.

But in inferring dispositional from other behaviours there is the challenge of the multiple effects to which an individual's behaviour give rise. This underscores the need to make precise attributions, meaning that observers are required to distinguish between the real effects being targeted by the individual and that incidental to his behaviour, which is quite a challenge to accomplish. However, the ability of an observer to determine the actual effects that an individual seeks to accomplish depends on the following factors:

1. Commonality
2. Social Desirability, and
3. Normative Expectations

The Factor of Commonality: This describes the multiple effects that results from each action of an individual, which definitely increases the difficulty of inferring disposition by an observer. For instance, when behaviour leads to a single effect, it will always be easy to identify clear causes of dispositions.

In the submission of Michener, DaLamater and Myers (2004: 127) “because of the multiplicity of effects, however, observers attributing specific intentions and dispositions to a specific person find it informative to observe the persons situations that involve choices between alternative actions.”

The Factor of Social Desirability: This simply attributes the behaviour that people put up under certain social environment to the factor of social desirability. This is quite apart from the fact that those that put up these socially desirable behaviours attempt to conceal their real dispositions by communicating the impression that their behaviours are normal. Now, let us use the analogy of Miller (1976) as captured by Michener, DaLamater and Myers (2004: 127): It states that:

Suppose, for instance, that you observe a guest at a party thank the hostess when leaving. What does that tell you about the guest? Did she really enjoy the party? Or was she merely behaving in a polite socially desirable fashion? You cannot be sure - either inference could be correct. Now, suppose instead that when leaving, the guest complained loudly to the hostess that she had a miserable time at such a dull party. This would likely tell you more about her, because observers interpret acts low in social desirability as indicators of underlying dispositions.

The Factor of Normative Expectations: This factor points at the observer’s consideration of the normativeness of an action when inferring disposition from observed behaviours. McGillis (1976) defines normativeness as the behavioural expectations that an average individual exhibits when he/she is under a specific

environmental setting. The main features of normativeness are compliance with social values or norms and conformity to roles that a group expects from its members. Thus, actions that reflect conformity to the expectations of society barely reveal enough information about people's dispositions, while behaviours that deviate from expected roles reveal multiple characteristics.

3.5 The Covariation Model of Attribution: This model of attribution theory is so named because it basically describes instances in which numerous observations are made about the behaviour of an individual - which is quite different from the other perspectives that focus on the observation of individual behaviour under one situation. This approach therefore yields more information about the behaviour of an individual either under a single or a variety of situations in comparison with other sources. The main contribution of the Covariation model is the range of assessment it brings to bear on the causes of attribution.

The question that engages the mind then relates to the means through which observers can use the process (i.e. multiple observations) to explain the causes of an individual's behaviour. In an attempt to answer this question, Kelley (1967, 1973 in Michener, DaLamater and Myers, 2004: 129) further worked on the proposition of Heider by contending that multiple observations ought to provide observers with the scientific basis for evaluating information or acquired data. In other words, efforts should be made to ascertain the different actors, objects and context that may either be present or absent as root causes of the occurrence of a particular behaviour. It is for this process of discovering the underlining causes of human behaviour that this principle of Covariation comes handy. The principle, thus, ascribe human behaviour both factors that exist when particular behaviours take place together with factors that are absent when this same behaviour does not take place.

Let us illustrate this point with a hypothetical example. Let's assume that, in your compound (context), you heard your next door neighbour (actor) levelling some very

serious allegations against another co-tenant (object) at the top of his/her voice, just as people were preparing for work in the early hours of Monday morning. What attribution(s) would you deduce from the behaviour of your raging neighbour? In the view of social psychologists, what happened could be traced to three plausible causes, namely, the *actor* (i.e. the raging next door neighbour), the *object* (i.e. verbally assaulted co-tenant), and *context* (i.e. the compound setting). Thus, the high pitch verbal assault could have resulted from the actor's peculiar nature (actor's character), to the neighbour's uncooperative attitude to community protection matters (object's character) or factors within the context that encouraged the actors outbursts.

In Kelley's already cited proposition, three kinds of information should be given serious consideration whenever the Covariation perspective is being deployed as a yardstick for the causes of individual's behaviour. This information relates to:

1. Consensus
2. Consistency, and
3. Distinctiveness

1. **Consensus:** This information attempts to ascertain whether a particular behaviour is carried out by all actors involved in a situation or only few of the actors. Thus, it may be of interest to ascertain whether all the other neighbours in the compound criticise the same co-tenant (high consensus) or he is criticised by only the actor in our hypothetical story (low consensus)?
2. **Consistency:** Information relating to this factor the extent to which the actors behave uniformly at various times and under diverse situational contexts. Thus, the neighbour that verbally assaulted a co-tenant would be rated high on consistency if he/she were known to do this on various other occasions. However, he should be considered low on consistency if that was his/her very first time of verbally assaulting the co-tenant in question.

3. **Distinctiveness:** Here, attention should be focussed on whether the behaviour of an actor is uniform to all or turns out to be different when it concerns a particular object. From our illustration, the neighbour's verbal assault would dovetail into distinctive if it is established that it is only usually directed at the co-tenant in question and not other tenants living in the compound. But where it is established that the neighbour directs equal verbal attack at other co-tenants his/her action could be rated low in distinctiveness.

Basically, the process of attributing causation to other people's behaviour by observers is significantly dependent on the specific mix of information about the factors of consensus, consistency and distinctiveness that are at his/her disposal. In line with our earlier illustration, an observer would most likely trace the source of observed behaviour to an actor who action is low in two informational factors (consensus and distinctiveness) but high in consistency. Conversely, the object is implicated for observed behaviour in situations where such behaviours rate high on the three informational factors of consensus, distinctiveness and consistency. But, where behaviour is attributed to only the environmental context, the element of consistency is usually low.

According to Hewstone and Jasper, (1987); McArthur, (1972); Pruitt and Insko, (1980) many theorist have drawn on these three factors (consensus, consistency and distinctiveness) in designing their theoretical formulations in the past. Though, it must be underscored that the effect of consensus on attribution is weaker compared to those of consistency and distinctiveness on attribution (Winschild and Wells. 1997).

3.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Outline the fundamental differences between the dispositional and Covariation models of attribution.

4.0 CONCLUSION: This unit should hopefully broaden your outlook, as a manager, to begin to examine those things that you need to take into account in order to arrive at better conclusions about people and issues.

5.0 SUMMARY: Attribution basically addresses the process through which people attach causes to the behaviour of others. The unit undertook a comprehensive discourse of dispositional and Covariation models of attribution.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

- I. Describe the practical benefits that you have acquired from the study of the various aspects of attribution
- II. Define dispositional attribution and describe the factors that could guide you in inferring disposition from and act
- III. What are the essential elements of the Covariation model of attribution?
- IV. The file of an employee with whom you are very familiar has just been delivered to you. The file contains all the information that you require to arrive at you decision on the next line of action as the manager. What factors will you draw on to arrive at your decision?

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Unit 5: SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTEXTS OF GENOCIDE AND ETHNO-NATIONAL CONFLICTS

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
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 - 3.2 Genocide and Ethno-National Conflicts
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- 5.0 Summary
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit focuses on one of the most dangerous consequences of intergroup relations, genocide. It tries to explain the socio-cultural and psychological impact of genocide.

2.0 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to explain:

- I. Meaning of Genocide
- II. The Socio-Cultural determinants,
- III. The Psychological Determinants, and
- IV. Relatively identify the characteristics of the genocidalist

3.0 MAIN CONTENT: SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTEXTS OF GENOCIDE AND ETHNO-NATIONAL CONFLICTS

3.1 Introduction: In this and the next two units (6 and 7) you will be introduced to a couple of problematic issues that derive from intergroup relations. In specific terms we shall be dealing with such fundamental issues as:

- I. Genocide and Ethno-national Conflicts (unit 5)
- II. Racism (unit 6), and
- III. Terrorism (unit 7)

Though we shall primarily be focusing on the social and psychological determinants of these issues (genocide, ethno-national conflicts, racism and terrorism), you are strongly advised to study this two units with knowledge the theories that you have learnt throughout this course at the back of your mind.

3.2 Genocide: According to the **United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide** (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum) which its signatories have accepted to check and penalise, genocide captures “the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- I. Killing members of the group;
- II. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- III. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- IV. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- V. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

From the foregoing, genocide can simply be defined as a deliberate attempt at eliminating the members of another group that may have been distinguished by racial, religious, ethnic or other considerations that are different from those implementing the act. Woolf and Hulsizer (2006: 101-128) state that genocide occurs when a combination of social psychological factors come into interaction with one another. Some of these factors that they attributed to human reliance on mental processes during perceptions results in other-directed violence that is largely fed by cognitive errors, confirmation prejudices (biases), belief-perseverance, and misleading relationships. But more importantly, conflict, the mass media along with leaders of the course of genocide should be underscored as some significant drivers of the process wherever it has occurred. Let us now examine the socio-psychological determinants of genocide in a little more detail.

3.3 Socio-Cultural Determinants of Genocide and Ethno-national Conflicts:

Wherever these phenomena have occurred in human history, the twain factors of economic and political disturbances have been mainly implicated. For instance, the German Holocaust was largely attributed to the combined consequences of the political crisis that originated from the First World War and great economic depression in which the whole world experienced during the same period. Similarly, whether we are referring to the Armenian and the Bosnian genocides or the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970) it is difficult to detach these incidents from the political and economic developments that foreshadowed them.

Genocide and ethno-national conflicts have also been commonly associated with societies where multiple ethnic, religious, and racial groupings exist and unfortunately place emphasis on those factors that encourage division. Thus, when this cleavages gain expression as political and economic deprivation within the context of previous historical crisis, genocides and ethno-national conflicts often occur. The examples of Rwanda-Burundi and Sudan clearly indicate that these phenomena could easily play out under situations of authoritarianism. Some authoritarianism-induced enablers of these events

include the availability of an easily gagged and manipulated media, which the elite then deploy to promote uneasiness and hostility.

Leadership: Woolf & Hulsizer (2006: *op cit*) contend that a leader's influence immensely significant in precipitation of acts of genocide. This fact is further supported by empirical studies on characteristics of genocide leaders that have established relationships between their personalities, intellect, quest for power and control, self-assurance, self-direction and (Chemers & Ayman, 1993:18; Bass and Stogdill, 1990: 8; Hollander, 1985; Simonton, 1984:45).

Generally, these leaders tend to take advantage of the poor existential conditions being experienced by the people that would take part in the process. It is for this reason that genocide leaders usually hide behind the veil of poor political, economic and conflict situations as witnessed during the ones that took place in the twentieth century (Staub, 2003: 68). One common feature of these genocides is that immense economic benefits it conferred on those that led it as evident in the status of the Hutu and Nazi leadership (Woolf & Hulsizer, 2006: *op cit*).

Cultural Dynamics: Another predisposing factor for the occurrence of genocide and ethno-national conflicts has been identified as prevalence of the dynamics of violence within a culture. In confirming this position, Staub (2003: 63) avers that these phenomena easily come to play where there is an identifiable record of violence, war and conflict, or where aggressive behaviour is endorsed as a means for dispute resolution. Woolf & Hulsizer (2006: *op cit*) lend further support to this view by stating that genocide and ethno-national conflicts are not uncommon in societies with the history of aggression and the glorification of violence in the forms of military displays, and a daring media. Thus, in societies where genocide is a norm participants are highly esteemed and considered compliant while nonconformists are sanctioned with social exclusion, as well as physical and verbal reprimands (Levin & Paulus, 1989). It is in this regard that members deny

themselves of so much pleasure in order to do what is acceptable to the in-group (Woolf & Hulsizer, 2006).

A finding generated from the obedience studies that was conducted by Milgram (1965) indicates that an authoritative personality was usually responsible for eliciting conformity to in-group norms by members. From another slightly modified research, Haritos-Fatouros (1988) discovered that an uncompromising authoritative figure is required to manage the commitment to in-group compliance, which often commences from seemingly little things to more significant issues as time progresses. This is what is simply referred to as the foot-in-the-door modus operandi, which has been commonly deployed by most of the leaders of genocide and ethno-national conflicts or other forms of violence.

Group Orientation: The predisposition to violence is usually boosted wherever groups are formed and sustained. This is more so where these groups are able to uphold some perception of secrecy and relatively absorb the members' individual identities (Festinger, Pepitone and Newcomb, 1952). This factor has contributed immensely to the incidence of violence for leading to the reduction of the individual's self-awareness and his/her perceived commitment to in-group norms.

Moreover, group-think, a situation where in-group members share common issue-based ideas and beliefs easily emerges when there are group norms. According to Myers and Bishop (1970), unfortunately, prejudice can equally be more easily promoted when it happens to creep into the group-think. Oberschall (2001: 28) contends that this phenomenon (group-think) was said to have been exploited by Slobodan Milosovic when he removed the people with moderate and reformist tendencies from the Serbian Central Committee in order to create an avenue for his ethnic cleansing mission. Barker (2004) also captures the fact that Hutu extremist leaders similarly launched an attack on Hutu moderates as part of the groundswell of events leading to the 1994 Rwanda genocide.

3.4 Psychological Determinants of Genocide and Ethno-national Conflicts: Some of the most elaborate insights into how these acts (genocide and ethno-national conflicts) are committed have mainly attempted to implicate the psychological composition of the individual. These perspectives that draw heavily from psychoanalysis canvass the view that genocide derives largely from the neurotic-psychopathic character of genocidal leaders like Hitler. The psychoanalytic school contends further that there are innate psycho-pathological desires within some individuals that predispose them to either undertake genocidal behaviours or deliberately enlist or organise the elites to influence public sentiments to commit these acts. Adorno (1950) and Altemeyer (1988) attribute these deviant behaviours (genocide and ethno-national conflicts) to the institutionalisation of societal norms that favour the socialisation of children both at home and educational institutions to produce the psychodynamics for sustaining these acts.

Beyond the cultural context, there are scholars such as Milgram (1974) and Browning (1992) that typically implicate situational factors for the genocidal tendencies of individuals that are absorbed into these acts. They believe strongly that situational factors could convert even an uninitiated individual into perpetrator of genocide. The kind of people they assume this would work well with are those described as median personalities that are experiencing very wild situational fluctuations.

Studies based on social cognition focus largely on the relationship between people's self perception and certain essential features of the social environment that deal with how people make decisions, bear issues in mind to arrive at inferences/decisions. In all of these, people's attitudes, group symbols and schemas constitute frameworks that are useful to the definition of the social characteristics of oneself and that of others. These attitudes, symbols and schemas equally constitute the structural foundation around which its associated prejudices and social identity theory rests. One of such perspectives is the social role theories dealing with "internalised role designations corresponding to the social location of persons" (Stryker, 1987: 84), which emphasise the important

behavioural expectations. A common context in which this has featured is the tendency for participants in genocide to say that they were simply carrying out the instructions of their leaders to kill members of a particular ethnic or religious group. This concept of social role was most distinctly depicted by Lipton (1986) who sought to know why Nazi doctors participated in killings, apparently, against the Hippocratic oath guiding the medical profession. In response, the medical doctors reported that they were driven by the desire to prevent the German race from being contaminated by an inferior race and untermenschen (a disease). But more importantly, the action of these medical doctors clearly points at the extent to which people could be manipulated into social roles to serve purposes that are as treacherous as genocide.

There are those that have also focused on the processes of cognitive distinction and individual categorisation under situations of conflict. These theorists of social categorisation and self-labeling propose that the in-group and out-group divide can be made more distinct by the perception of competition around scarce resources resulting in members of an in-group being favoured. According to Tajfel and Turner (1986) there is a natural tendency for people to order their relationship with others within a world partitioned into 'us' and 'them', in-groups and out-groups, a categorisation that informs the basis of favour to in-group members, simply described as in-group bias. Thus, when positive in-group opinions are juxtaposed with negative out-group opinions it, in all likelihood, lead to prejudicial and stereotypical behaviours deriving from feelings of in-group supremacy (Staub, 2003: 55).

For the avoidance of doubts, the in-group and out-group defining characteristics are very profound predictors of (Baumeister, Smart & Boden, 1996). For instance, one fundamental factor that underlined the Rwanda genocide (Woolf & Hulsizer, 2006) was that throughout the Hutu leaders generally thought of their people as superior beings to the Tutsis whom they described as cockroaches. In the same vein, the Nazis leadership created the impression and belief that their race, the Aryan race, was extremely more

superior compared to others like the Jews, Slavs and gypsies (Adalian , 1997: 60). Also, the Hutu leadership effectively disseminated fear as a basis for separating their tribesmen and women from the Tutsi people (Barker, 2004).

In the contention of Bob and Hutchings (1996) it is not out of place to expect prejudice and aggression as some of the perceived-threat implications of in-group bias. Thus, in an environment where perceived-threats has been elevated to a norm constant readiness for conflict is not uncommon due to the belief that others are equally imbued with the same threat-orientation (Woolf & Hulsizer, 2006). Again, the Nazi Leadership took advantage of this apparent stereotype to foster the wrong threat-perceptions that were represented by the Jews as bases for violence against them. Using diverse media of communication the Nazi leadership sensitised its citizens of that the Jews constituted a serious menace that must be removed. Adalain (1997: 63) recalls a particular motion picture 'The Eternal Jew' through which the proliferation of the Jews was likened to that of rats that must be curtailed. Mamdani (2001: 70) explained the threat-perception schema into which the Tutsis were fitted, that is, as an invasion army in an apparent disregard of their strong historical affinity to the same region.

Woolf and Hulsizer (2006) enthuse that the efficiency with which people process information contributes in no small measure to the incitement and nurturing of the factors of dislike and aggression in society. The virtue of the concept of 'cognitive miser' that interprets the natural human propensity to engage in minimum thinking agrees with Fiske and Taylors's (1991: 13) proposition that people tend to identify with the less demanding endeavours compared to the more demanding challenges. In other words, to draw from the conclusion of Nisbett and Ross (1980: 13-14) this less demanding cognitive path or short cuts to processing information usually results in errors.

Generally speaking, individual's naturally concentrate on seeking information that complement their values and pay less attention those that contradict their beliefs. This practice, which was referred to as confirmation bias (Swann and Read, 1981) was very prominent in the Yugoslavian media distortion of evidence meant to foster ethnically and politically based. Excerpts from the Helsinki Watch (cited in Woolf & Hulsizer, 2006) have it that "The constant invocation of history to bolster ethnic nationalism has impeded the search for lasting and equitable political solutions to ethnic strife in Yugoslavia."

There is also the factor of deceptively associating issues that bear no apparent interrelationship, which is referred to as 'illusory correlation'. Unfortunately, the phenomenon, 'Illusory correlations' is deployed as a means of somehow strongly upholding existing systems of value in spite of being apparently untrue (Ward and Jenkins, 1965). Regrettably, people find it extremely difficult to do away with set of values become well established, a phenomenon that Ross, Lepper and Hubbard (1975) called 'belief-perseverance.' 'Belief-perseverance' interprets why some social groups tend to stick steadfastly to incorrect values about other social groups over very lengthy time spans - as it is common with ethnic groups which are associated with long accounts of disaffection and marginalisation. What must be noted about this is the fact that leaders have traditionally taken advantage of this kind of situation to promote violence (Woolf & Hulsizer, 2006).

Another cognitive factor is that of the attribution error. This factor involves the error of attributing the actions of others entirely to their internal dispositions while blanking out the impact of situational considerations. Consistent with the 'actor-observer-effect' it is not unusual for people to formulate attributions for the actions of people while apparently avoiding their own personal assessment. Applying this (actor-observer-effect) to a whole social group has led to the emergence of the concept of 'ultimate attribution error' (Ross, Lepper and Hubbard, 1975: *op cit*). Furthermore, this concept has also been used to fuel the idea that enmity exists between opposing social groups. Essentially, the Yugoslav and

Rwanda genocide experiences applied this concept to generate primordial disaffections that drew from inherent social identity, which sidelined previous political, social and economic links. This development somehow influences the judgement of bystanders' enthusiasm to intervene or forestall the spread of the situation (Woolf & Hulsizer, 2006).

Lerner (1980: 7) observed that groups have also tried to shift the blame for victim's plight to the victims themselves as genocidal groups attempt to combine fundamental attribution errors with the need to identify with social justice. In this sense, attempts were made to partially hold the Jews responsible for the Holocaust (Woolf & Hulsizer, 2006).

3.5 Self-Assessment Exercise

Define the concept of genocide and describe the methods for developing a full blown genocidalist by the genocide organisation?

4.0 Conclusion: Genocide is basically a threat to the defenceless civil populace that often fall victims of the phenomenon.

5.0 Summary: This unit discussed genocide extensively by considering factors that promote the phenomenon, such as; leadership, cultural dynamics, group orientation, the genocide organisation, and its psychological underpinnings.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments:

- I. Do you agree that genocide is normal behaviour? Give reasons for your answer.
- II. What are the strategies of the genocide organisation
- III. Discuss the view that the genocidalist is simply a fame seeker.
- IV. Write notes on the following:
 - a. The socio-cultural determinants of genocide
 - b. The psychological determinants of genocide

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UNIT 6: SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL DETERMINANTS OF RACISM

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Background on racism
 - 3.2 Socio-Psychological Considerations
 - 3.3 Nationalism and racism
 - 3.4 Property and racism
 - 3.5 Science and Racism
 - 3.6 Self-Assessment Exercise
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit you will learn about racism, its characteristics, particularly, attempts to use legislations and science to justify the phenomenon.

2.0 UNIT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are to introduce you to the:

- I. Concept of racism
- II. Socio-Psychological Considerations in racism
- III. Factors of nationalism and racism, and
- IV. Factors of property and racism

3.0: MAIN CONTENT: DETERMINANTS OF RACISM

3.1 Background on Racism: Though racism is believed to date to as far back as the 17th century it began to receive scientific appraisal in the later part of the 18th century. Consequently, racism has since been articulated into an ideologically suitable framework for the interpretation of social, economic and political conflicts, which ironically lent credence to the British capitalist economic scheme around the world. It must be said that racism is a universal phenomenon that transcends every ethnic and racial groups in the world. Thus, in course of the 19th century various attempts were undertaken to classify the populations of the world along racial lines consisting of groups that share common phenotypical characteristics like skin complexion, physical appearance, hair texture, eye colour, cranial structures etc. This classification referred to as racialisation was central to the eventual development of the ideology of racism. But what is racism and what characteristics might we use to identify racial tendencies?

You may define racism as a social construct that describes the ill-treatment and subjugation to which a targeted group is exposed as a result of their creed, colour and origin or other phenotypical characteristics. In the apt words of Biddiss (1967: 245-250) racism denotes the “relatively systematic attempts at using race as the primary or even the sole means of explaining the workings of society and politics, the course of history, the development of culture and civilisation, even the nature of morality itself.” The term was first actively used to illustrate the treatment that the Nazi meted to the Jews during the Second World War. By this definition, it stands to reason that just as the groups that suffer racism may not necessarily remain the same from one generation to the other the shape that racism similarly undergoes change over time. Similarly, the perpetrators that consciously or unconsciously define the phenomenon equally experience change from generation to generation. But you must note that it is the prevailing socio-political conditions of any period that dictates the dynamics of the sufferers and perpetrators of racism. From the foregoing, the following features of racism can be identified:

- I. Racism is a social construct that is exposed to modification with the passage of time
- II. It typically operates where there is an aggressive in-group that defines itself as normal and an out-group at which oppression is targeted
- III. The out-group is perceived by the in-group to be naturally substandard or inferior
- IV. The self-defined superior and aggressive in-group represses and subjugates the 'other out-group' because of their socially constructed limitations.

3.2 Socio-Psychological Considerations in Racism: Since racism was first deployed for the characterisation of the Nazi act of violence against the Jews many scholars have come up with attempts at explaining the phenomenon. In what follows you will be introduced to some of the viewpoints as a basis for stimulating further thinking on the subject. You may also wish to take note of the ways in which the theories that we studied in this course have featured in the viewpoints highlighted hereunder:

Ideological Viewpoints: The mainstream tenet of the ideology of racism sub-divides humanity into several distinct natural groups that corresponds with its member's behaviour and expected level of success. By reason of the discrete inherent qualities of this characterisation group members are only expected to achieve certain relative levels of development. In other words, biological features are being centered as predictor of the socio-cultural differences observed among social groups. Thus, it contends that some social groups are naturally superior and therefore naturally positioned to dominate others, that is, the inferior races. This ideology therefore raises racial inequality to the level of an axiom.

The ideology assumes that human differences that have to do with their behaviours and intelligence derive from nature, which can not be changed by environmental circumstances. Groups therefore situate at the upper or lower rungs of the social ladder as a natural consequence of their respective superior/inferior biological make-up that social

environmental factors can not influence. People with racial tendencies outrightly reject the idea of integrating groups with different racial characteristics for fear of diluting their superior features. The three prominent postulations of the racist ideology are:

- I. Differences in biological characteristics give rise to corresponding cultural differences
- II. Differences in biological composition decide the socio-cultural accomplishments of groups, and
- III. A groups level of culture is determined by its biological composition

These propositions are fundamentally wrong because, beyond the biological, behaviour is also largely determined by socio-environmental factors. Besides, these propositions have tended to ascribe too much significance to the biological significance of the concept of race.

Colonial and Nationalistic Viewpoints: Colonialism appears to be one of the single most important events that gave impetus to the idea of racism. In his popular book *The Races of Men*, [Robert Knox](#) (1850: 9-35) referred to what he found to be the perceived basis of the sub-divisions that was prevailing between human societies and the natural characteristics with which they were being identified. However, these racial characteristics were found to be mere somatic features in which being black particularly became the symbol of inferiority, which then informed the schema for placing the human race into a hierarchy of some sort. But, it must be noted that this basis of categorisation has been found untenable and effectively discredited by various scholars and socio-scientific evidences that have occurred in human history.

Though Knox and those that came up with related postulations prevailed for a while they could, however, not explain the deep involvement of Europeans at the highest levels of totemism. This fact clearly weakened their postulations which apparently derived from the observations of the limited occurrences within their immediate environment.

From the foregoing, it is evident that the theory of racism was already in existence prior to colonialism, which was erroneously being held responsible for the development. Nevertheless, it must be noted that colonialism was the single most important vehicle that articulated the phenomenon into a theory through the subjugation and operations that it encompassed. Evidently, the basic philosophy of differential superiority that informed racial prejudices is clearly traceable to socio-political environmental conditions.

3.3 Nationalism and Racism: The history of humankind cannot be complete without the immense social, political and economic transformation that took place during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Also, the scientific discoveries of the period being considered causes wars to be fought in new dimensions coupled with revolutions that combined to activate human thoughts into new horizons. Integral to these was the idea of nation states out of which emerged the perception of the outsider or someone who does not belong to ones country or group. Then, territorial boundaries emerged to further define in-group membership as against out-groups that existed outside the boundaries.

On the surface, it would seem as though nationalism does not have anything to do with racism. This is more so when it is considered that nationalism deals with the issue of common purpose, compared to racism's preoccupation with biologically determined classification and discrimination. However, the basic association between nationalism and racism derives from the occurrence of racism within national boundaries where in-groups and out-groups are identified and correspondingly discriminated against. The practice of racism within geographical boundaries raises the contention of its linkage with colonialism and its application to biological characteristics, but, not originated by colonialism as it was being supposed.

As community or national consciousness grew and gained increasing acceptability, so did the idea of racism in the context of the in-group and out-group- based exclusion. It was around this nation state idea that the belief of which superiority over the blacks revolved. Though, the point must be made that the idea of racial differentiation has a far deeper

root than what these manifestations represented. What was already in existence was simply adapted to the requirements of colonialism and justification for utilization of slave labour.

Within and Without the In-Group: It is arguable that from the period of hunting and gathering group consciousness had always existed. This became more so as tribes-based communities emerged that had their own politically determined boundaries. These tribally-based political boundaries were, thus, some of the earliest indications to the feature of racism.

Thus, colonialism only fostered the development of the theories of racism and not the causes of the phenomenon. Racism had existed long before it was officially conceptualised and applied to the biological classification of the Negriod, Caucasioid, Mongolioid and other groups of people.

3.4 Property and Racism: During the era of slavery in early America there was a lengthy controversy that pertained to the status of slaves. That is, were they to be considered as human beings with rights or as the property of owners? In other words, this paradox concerned whether slaves were human beings or property. Or, within this context which takes precedence, the slave's human rights or the master's property rights? But this debate did not hang out for too long due to American legal position that gave priority to the owner's property rights over those of slaves as it were. For instance, while delivering judgment on the Dred Scott litigation (Wikipedia) Chief Justice Roger B. Taney (Wikipedia) submitted that "Negroes were seen only as property; they were never thought of or spoken of except as property", which meant that they "were not intended by the framers of the Constitution to be accorded citizenship."

But, to facilitate the dehumanization of people as mere properties requires that their basic human characteristics would have to be eliminated. To achieve this grand task, a range of literature emerged that began to represent the blacks or Negro stock as savage and

inhuman that were even worse than the ways in which the Irish had earlier been portrayed. This was a major transformation in thought about who Africans were. In the words of George Fredrickson (1987) there were hardly any "open assertions of permanent black inferiority" hitherto to 1830. He continued, however, that towards the middle of the same century the philosophy of "negro inferiority" had become a common feature of academic undertakings.

3.5 Science and Racism: The early project of racial discrimination that was undertaken in America was unique in one particular respect, which had to do with the application of science to efforts at lending legitimacy to the ideology. Scores of researchers came up with supposedly empirical justifications to support the view that Negroes were naturally lower human species. In one of such publications that emerged towards the end of the eighteenth century it was posited that Negroes probably deviated from the original scheme of God's creation into a degenerate state or emerged from an entirely strange evolutionary origin.

Many authors developed mutually exclusive racial classifications in utter disregard of genuine calls for exercise of restraints by Blumenbach who drew attention to the fact that it was practically impossible to establish such divisions around the races due to their rather organic interrelationships.

The commencement of the discipline of Craniometry by Samuel Morton (an Anthropologist) perhaps provided, up to that time, the best scientific impetus to proponents of racial ideology. Through the measurement of the inner part of the crania that he acquired from several groups of people he arrived at the conclusion that the brains of white people were bigger than those of Indians and blacks (with the latter having the smallest). Morton also attempted to provide scientific explanations for whether blacks and whites emerged from one or multiple processes of creation, given the anomaly of the biblical explanation of this event.

What this viewpoint suggests is that the ideology of racial differentiation has gained so much ground that black had already been accepted as inferior human beings in the American society of those days. This much was captured by the submission of Justice Taney that "the negro is a different order of being." With this mindset it was therefore not difficult for him to affirm the rights of slave-owners to their "property" consistent with the prevailing portrayal of Africans in America.

This situation was not improved by scientists that continued in their struggles to reel out scientific materials to corroborate this popular opinion on the superiority of white people. Opinion leaders were not left out in this race to lend credence to white supremacy as documented in the Charleston Medical Journal that continued related publications beyond the death of Dr. Morton. In one issue it submitted that "We can only say that we of the South should consider him as our benefactor, for aiding most materially in giving to the Negro his true position as an inferior race". Gliddon (1854), who co-edited a very popular scientific volume *Types of Mankind*, came out with his opinion that Negroes probably share closer descent with apes rather than human beings. He then went ahead to develop a hierarchy or continuum between whites and Negroes before distributing the books, particularly, among southern politicians as a basis of support to the institution of slavery. *The Bell Curve* (Jacoby and Naomi, 1995) was an equally popular volume that supported the doctrine of white superiority and black inferiority in those days in America.

While discussing the post-slavery fate of Negroes in the U.S Senate, James Henry Hammond declared in 1858 "somebody has to be the mudsills of society, to do the menial duties, to perform the drudgery of life" and these are the Negroes. Unfortunately, this was the role consciously carved out by the American society for the Negro race, as they were called, roles based on cultural values which made their re-assimilation impracticable. For many decades after the American civil war in the many decades since the Civil War the Negroes were still circumscribed from society by these potent cultural values. Thus, all

through the twentieth century social policies and these values continued to stifle the growth of millions of Negroes in American society.

In spite of these fundamental racial perspectives in America, it is necessary for us to remind ourselves that they were essentially meant to give impetus to processes of inequality that had already taken deep roots in society and by which virtue groups have access to power, influence, authority, wealth and all forms of opportunities that abound in the society. The fact is that this racial ideology was simply borne by colonialists and further articulated to serve their purposes of dominance and exploitation.

Race is basically a social creation and the attempt to introduce biological determinism into it has only served to make this fact more glaring.

3.6 Self-Assessment Exercise

Mention and explain the most critical factors underlining the phenomenon of racism.

4.0 Conclusion: Racism is generally not good because it imposes unnecessary limitations on people on the basis of perceived socio-economic determinants.

5.0 Summary: The unit has attempted to describe racism, the tendency of an in-group to see an out-group as inferior based on biologically and socially determined characteristics. Some of the socio-psychological determinants of racism that we discussed included the ideological, nationalistic, and the propertisation of human beings. In this latter regard, we referred to the Dred Scott litigation that led Chief Justice Roger B. Taney to rule that slaves are basically properties without human rights. Samuel Morton's attempts to provide scientific justification for racism also featured prominently in this unit.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments

- I. What are the socio-psychological justifications for the existence of racism
- II. State the scientific justification for racism and present an alternative position.

- III. Racism is basically an in-group and out-group phenomenon. Discuss.
- IV. What can society do to effectively eliminate racism from the society

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UNIT 7: SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF TERRORISM

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Introduction
 - 3.2 General features of terrorism
 - 3.3 Classification of terrorism
 - 3.4 Terrorist strategies
 - 3.5 Typical responses to terrorism
 - 3.6 Nature of terrorism
 - 3.7 Self-Assessment Exercise
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces you to the general environment of terrorism and helps you in understanding its classification, strategies, nature and responses to it.

2.0 UNIT OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this unit are to assist you in understanding the:

- I. Concept of terrorism
- II. General characteristics of terrorism
- III. Strategies deployed by terrorists
- IV. Typical response to terrorist acts, and
- V. Nature of terrorism.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT: SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF TERRORISM

3.1 Introduction: "Terror" is a word obtained from Latin and it simply means "to frighten". Terrorism is a term that is frequently used in connection with a broad range of systematically planned and executed violence or coercion meant to accomplish specific objectives. But the United Nations considers it as acts "intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or an international organisation to do or abstain from doing any act" (UN, 2005).

Because of this rather broad nature of the subject there have been difficulties in arriving at a generally acceptable conception of the term (Deen, 2005). One of its crucial features is the unleashing of violence amongst the civil populace to primarily attract attention to the cause of a group. Other common characteristics are that terrorism is carried out to generate anxiety while pursuing an ideological objective, usually, in the midst of the civil populace.

Basically, groups that deploy terrorism are aware that it is one of the least result-oriented political strategies to adopt (Max). But, members of terrorist organisations continue to be instigated by the strong common values that constitute the basis of their cohesion with in-group members of the organisation (Max, 2008: 86–89).

Mention terrorism anywhere and people get emotionally as well as politically excited and this has been responsible for the emergence of more than one hundred concepts of the term. Besides, the term is also contentious because while some countries describe such activities of adversaries as illegal the same states often do not see anything wrong in violence directed at their enemies.

Alternatively, terrorists are referred to as violent non-state actors and have historically included radical and conservative political parties, religious organisations, nationalist groupings, rebellious groups, national governments, etc (Bruce, 1998: 32).

3.2 General Features of Terrorism: The literature on terrorism is clear about the fact that there are official government appraisal and response to the phenomenon just as there are from the terrorist organisation. Basically, these responses have primarily complicated the issue of legitimacy and illegitimacy. Combining these issues with the analysis of the target, motives and objectives of terrorism as well as those that commit the act has led to identification of the following features of terrorism:

Aggression, Coercion or Violence: Walter Laqueur avers that "the only general characteristic of terrorism generally agreed upon is that terrorism involves violence and the threat of violence". Though it should be noted that aggression, violence or coercion do not capture the entire manifestation of terrorism that have been known to subsume [warfare](#), [rebellion](#), organised criminal activities and various dimensions of physical attacks.

Creation of Fear: Quite often terrorist organisations undertake prolonged attacks on the civil populace with the sole intention of creating fear in the minds of the people. Thus, they attack large gathering of people, public buildings/infrastructure, important government functionaries and other targets that lack the capacity for immediate response. They use this strategy to destabilise government, create a general atmosphere of insecurity, boost the visibility of the terrorist group and popularise its philosophy.^[11]

Political Motivation: Many acts of terrorism are more commonly undertaken for political than any other reasons. Terrorism is basically a political strategy that is resorted to when the groups involved are convinced that it is the only available avenue to arriving at a desired state of affairs. It is to the extent that the change expected from the act is so much needed that the civilian lives it would cost should not cause it to be aborted,

especially when it concerns terrorism and religion. This is essentially the context within which political failures during tussles over ancestral homelands or religious places are (e.g. Jerusalem and Israel) regarded as spiritual disappointments (Juergensmeyer, 2000), which attracts higher priority compared to defenseless civilians. Hence this definition by George C. Marshall of the Center for European Security Studies quoted by Carsten Bockstette (2008) is very appropriate:

Terrorism is defined as political violence in an asymmetrical conflict that is designed to induce terror and psychic fear (sometimes indiscriminate) through the violent victimization and destruction of noncombatant targets (sometimes iconic symbols). Such acts are meant to send a message from an illicit clandestine organization. The purpose of terrorism is to exploit the media in order to achieve maximum attainable publicity as an amplifying force multiplier in order to influence the targeted audience(s) in order to reach short- and midterm political goals and/or desired long-term end states.

Intentional Targeting of the Civil Populace: more often than not acts of terrorism are carried out among the civil populace. When this is being one defenseless women, men, children, the aged and other civilians are usually maimed and killed. Most of these victims are targeted for reflecting the terrorists world perception "symbols, tools, animals or corrupt beings" rather than for their threat value. The agonies experienced fulfil the terrorists' desire of driving fear into the civilian populace and communicating the demands of their religious and political programmes (Juergensmeyer, 2000: 127–128).

Illegality: Seen from the viewpoint of actions that do not have the official support of the government terrorism constitutes and illegality or an unlawful act (Federal Bureau of Investigation, (1999). It therefore follows that even when acts that are seemingly terrorist in orientation occur within the framework of government backing they are not considered as terrorism. Thus, to deploy the army of a state to wipe out an entire community would

not be considered as terrorism provided it has an official government authorisation. However, there is a basic limitation that relates to the fact that state terrorism does not exist, which is quite contentious. Legitimacy, defined by availability or non-availability of official state support, has become central to the consideration of acts as either terrorists or non-terrorists in orientation (Cambridge International Dictionary of English) it is therefore not surprising that the legitimacy principle has failed to receive universal acceptability.

Negative Implications: *In most situations, terrorism is used to capture a derogatory political act, to describe condemnable acts of violence, aggression, or other forms of extremely deviant behaviours that involve social groups. While those on the official government side talk about terrorists the so called terrorists, however, consider themselves as separatists, [freedom fighters](#), liberators, [revolutionaries](#), [vigilantes](#), [militants](#), [paramilitaries](#), [guerrillas](#), [rebels](#) and other related meanings. This has meant both parties referring to each other as terrorists.*

Scholars have attempted to rationalise these opposing government and terrorist positions in the literature. From the perspective of Rodin (2006) whatever the good to be obtained by any act of terrorism that usually targets the civil society, it cannot outweigh the corresponding evil that it causes. In his (Robin) words, “the harmful effects of undermining the convention of non-combatant immunity is thought to outweigh the goods that may be achieved by particular acts of **terrorism**” Conversely, [Michael Walzer](#) enthuses that terrorism is morally admissible when "a nation or community faces the extreme threat of complete destruction and the only way it can preserve itself is by intentionally targeting non-combatants, then it is morally entitled to **do so**".^[21]

But, Hoffman (1998) has this to say on the subject:

On one point, at least, everyone agrees: terrorism is a pejorative term. It is a word with intrinsically negative connotations that is generally applied to one's enemies and opponents, or to those with whom one disagrees and would otherwise prefer to ignore. 'What is called terrorism,' Brian Jenkins has written, 'thus seems to depend on one's point of view. Use of the term implies a moral judgment; and if one party can successfully attach the label terrorist to its opponent, then it has indirectly persuaded others to adopt its moral viewpoint.' Hence the decision to call someone or label some organization 'terrorist' becomes almost unavoidably subjective, depending largely on whether one sympathizes with or opposes the person/group/cause concerned. If one identifies with the victim of the violence, for example, then the act is terrorism. If, however, one identifies with the perpetrator, the violent act is regarded in a more sympathetic, if not positive (or, at the worst, an ambivalent) light; and it is not terrorism.

The illustration of Nelson Mandela informs us that you could become a terrorist while fighting for the liberation of your country and eventually metamorphose into a statesman when you succeed and become your **country's national leader**.

3.3 Classification of Terrorism: *The literature on the subject identifies the following typologies of terrorism:*

- I. **Civil Disorders:** This happens as communal or group disobedience that interferes with the peace, security and orderly running of the society.
- II. **Political Terrorism:** This is politically motivated terrorism that is basically intended to create fear in the society.
- III. **Non-Political Terrorism:** This consists of deliberate efforts at creating and sustaining fear with the intention of achieving personal and or collective political goals.

- IV. **Quasi-Terrorism:** These are actions basically resemble but, however, fall short of the main ingredients of terrorism. Quasi-terrorists deploy the strategies to achieve the main outcomes of terrorists though the creation of fear is not his main objective. An example of a quasi-terrorist would be an escaping criminal that takes some people hostage - he uses the terrorist strategies with completely different objectives.
- V. **Partial Political Terrorism:** As against the full-blown version that is underlined by revolutionary tendencies, this is done for [ideological](#) or [political](#) purposes that are not meant to be in command of the [State](#).
- VI. **State or Structural Terrorism:** This refers to nations that govern on the basis of fear and repression to achieve objectives comparable to those of terrorists. It is considered structural when a nation factors terrorist strategies into its political or foreign policy objectives.

3.4 Terrorist Strategies: *Terrorist acts are usually well planned in advance of implementation. They have been known to employ modern communications equipments and their own information gathering agents. Some of the most familiar strategies deployed by terrorists are:*

- I. [Secession](#) of a territory to form a new sovereign state
- II. Dominance of territory or resources by various ethnic groups
- III. Imposition of a particular form of government
- IV. Economic deprivation of a population
- V. Opposition to a domestic government or occupying army

3.5 Typical Responses to Terrorism: *After carefully studying the activities of terrorists the following measures have been developed as responses to the act. As you may observe, some of these measures are designed to forestall terrorism altogether:*

- I. Targeted laws, criminal procedures, deportations, and enhanced police powers
- II. Target hardening, such as locking doors or adding traffic barriers
- III. Preemptive or reactive military action
- IV. Increased intelligence and surveillance activities
- V. Preemptive humanitarian activities
- VI. More permissive interrogation and detention policies

Mass media: *There are contradictory views about the relationship between terrorism and the media. While some attribute terrorism to attempts at attracting media attention others like Wilkinson, (1997) argue that it is undertaken to control the media. More specifically, Wilkinson believes that terrorism occur because a thoroughly gagged media would not give vent to alternative viewpoints. But this opinion has significantly been weakened by the recent radical improvement in access to the media through the internet. At another level, it is arguable that the media could actually instigate more terrorist activities as a result of the attendant publicity they get. Terrorism is largely as effective as the amount on media coverage it receives.*

3.6 Nature of Terrorism: *The execution of acts of "suicide terrorism" ordinarily defies all forms of rational thinking. Be that as it may, the act involves:*

- I. *The killing of defenseless civilians, particularly, women and children, and*
- II. *The commission of suicide contrary to the human survival instincts*

According to Merari (1990: 206), "personality disintegration (is) the single most important factor in suicide". From this psychopathological perspective he enthused that:

Terrorism suicide, like any other suicide, is basically an individual rather than a group phenomenon: it is done by people who wish to die for personal reasons. The terrorist framework simply offers an excuse (rather than the real drive) and the legitimation for carrying it out in a violent way

Based on further analysis Merari (2002) brought the influence of the organizational factor into his analysis when he stated that:

The key to creating a terrorist suicide is the group process. Terrorist suicide is an organizational rather than an individual phenomenon. ..., there has not been a single case of suicide terrorism which was done on the suicide's personal whim. In all cases, it was an organization that decided to embark on this tactic, recruited candidates, chose the target and the time, prepared the candidate for the mission, and made sure that he/she would carry it out

In line with the foregoing, it is evident that there are both dispositional and situational factors are involved in the decision to undertake suicide terrorism. But, Moghadam (2003) harmonises the thesis in the view that terrorist groups simply engage people that have the necessary psychological tendencies that are not essentially psychopathological. Moghadam also identifies with Merari's individual and organisational motivations for suicide terrorism but states that these motivations are not necessarily the same. In what follows suicide terrorism is analysed from the individual, social, and organisational perspectives.

Individual Perspective: Included under this umbrella are such factors as:

Self-Assertion. Suicide bombers are generally between 18 and 27¹ during which time they produce high amount of testosterone. According to a study by Bernhardt (1997) testosterone increases the desire for dominance and results in aggressive behaviour when this desire is frustrated in males. Origin from countries with high political repression and humiliation (Kruger, 23); together with low civil liberties are factors that make young males susceptible to suicide terrorism.

Furthermore, during this transition period (18 and 27) young people experiencing uncertainties about how to conduct their lives Moghadam (2003) suddenly have huge responsibilities trusted in their hands, far away from their families and at the mercy of social and organisational pressures. Moreover, they find themselves under highly charismatic father-figures giving out definite instructions that appeals to the needs of their transitional lives. Finally, this is the phase during which young people strive for autonomy, take risks, easily embrace new ideas, implement social responsibilities, alcoholism, smoking, drug use, rebellious acts and among others committing suicide etc.

Quest for significance: This factor describes the attention that teenage suicide terrorists receive from participating in the process. It is simply a quest for recognition outside the family social organisation. This quest for significance is most easily acquired from suicide terrorism as it were. Securing a place in the heavenly paradise, dignity, honour, huge financial rewards and, ultimately, martyrdom are also associated with the act (Brooks, 2002; Moghadam, 2003)

Rebellion as Conformity: Under this scenario young people are simply acknowledged as conformists for participating in suicide terrorism. But while the emphasis appears to centre on conformity sight is lost of the underlining motivation of rebellion.

Surmounting the Fear of Death: The suicide terrorist is equally brought up or trained to surmount the fear of being killed that may happen in the course of perpetrating the act.

Social Perspectives: Under this framework are such factors as:

Social reality: This deals with the psychological processes that come into play when a person identifies with the course of a terrorist organisation. Brooks (2002) discloses that she/she is first introduced into a social reality that extols martyrdom. They are given spiritual training, told that they are guaranteeing a place for their families and themselves in heaven, and made to see death as a laborious process of sickness, old age, and betrayal. The task is represented to the youth as a call to duty that is filled with honour and spiritual glory. The enemies are described as sub-humans (Bandura, 1990; Bar-Tal, 1998) that do not need to be respected and tagged with different derogatory names like “dogs” as well as being fought with any means no matter seemingly illegitimate.

Ideological Orientation: The suicide terrorist is made to realise that he/she has elected to die because of his/her love of God and country. According to Berman and Laitin (1998) terrorists are motivated by the “religious promise of eternal grace” besides the individual sacrifice leaving his/her footprints in the sands of time. **Makiya and Mneimeh (2002: 21)** write that:

The sense throughout is that the would-be martyr is engaged in his action solely to please God .. the dominant message of the text is a focus on the eternal. To feel connection with God and the work of God, to feel the peace of submission to God’s will - these are the imperatives and the promises of the text. Invocations and prayers are to be offered at every stage of the journey; the last night, the journey to the airport, boarding the plane, takeoff, taking over the plane, welcoming death. The reader is reminded that fear is an act of worship due only to God. If killing is necessary, the language of the text makes the killing a ritual slaughter with vocabulary that refers to animal sacrifice, including the sacrifice of Isaac that Abraham was prepared to offer.

Spiritual purification and praying for forgiveness are major rituals that are performed by Palestinian suicide bombers before carrying out their missions (Moghadam, 2003).

Appeals to ethnic and nationalistic sentiments also feature in the ideological raining as has been seen in Sri Lanka and the Japanese *kamikaze* pilots that consider themselves as “dying for their land”, while fighting against the Israeli occupation (Moghadam, 2003).

Epistemic Authority: These are the people in whom they deeply believe that explain everything to the suicide terrorists. There are two types of epistemic authorities, the expert and the group. The expert is the supreme spiritual leader to whom the field soldiers look for endorsement of a plan. While the group is another level of epistemic authority that sanctions or decides the legitimacy of an action before it is carried out.

Commitment: Moghadam (2003) points out that all in-group members must be committed to the goals and survival of the organisation. To this extent defection is inadmissible and therefore forestalled through emphasis on commitment, social pressures and martyrdom (Berman & Laitin). Merari (1990, p. 208) calls this as the creation of a psychological “point of no return” that is hard to overcome by most people involved in the organisations. He/she is made to write letters, videotaped bidding farewell and urging others to follow his/her footsteps.

The Organisational Factor: This is the factory that produces the suicide terrorists, draw up political programmes and maps out target for the terrorists. The organisation decides the social, political, geographical and economic suitability of a process prior to its implementation and gauges the public opinion (Merari, 2000). It also decides the most cost-effective strategy to be deployed (Moghadam, 2003; Pape, 2003). The 9/11 attack was said to have cost below \$100,000 but inflicted damages worth billions of dollars. The major drawback of the organisational factor is that it provides a target for counter terrorism. But the organisation is a base for training that must be secured. The organisational factor also has the positive side of providing a platform on which to negotiate with others.

3.7 Self-Assessment Exercise

Describe the general characteristics of terrorism.

4.0 Conclusion: *Terrorism thrives on well thought out processes and the basis of these responses to it should equally be well thought out (with emphasis on redressing its root causes).*

5.0 Summary: *For the purpose of this course you may adopt the UN definition of terrorism as acts “intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or an international organisation to do or abstain from doing any act.” It generally rides on the waves of intimidation, coercion, fear, political instigation, targeting of the civil populace, and is considered illegal by most incumbent governments. In response to the phenomenon governments have typically resorted to laws, increased surveillance, military actions and interrogations among others.*

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments

- I. Define terrorism and assess responses to the phenomenon against the backdrop of the problems it is creating in society.*
- II. Terrorism is function of the media attention it receives. Discuss this statement in the context of the main features of terrorism.*
- III. The fear of death is supposed to be universal. But, how have the suicide terrorists managed to overcome this fear/*
- IV. Write short notes on the following:*
 - The organisational factor in terrorism*
 - The factor of epistemic authority in terrorism*
 - The ideological factor in terrorism*

- *The factor of self-assertion*
- *The factor of rebellion as conformity*

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MODULE 3: TOWARDS A PEACEFUL SOCIETY

Unit 1: Theories of Inter-Group Relations (Part I)

Unit 2: Theories of Inter-Group Relations (Part II)

Unit 3: Introduction to Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA)

Unit 4: Dimensions of Non-violence

Unit 5: Conflict Handling Strategies (Part I)

Unit 6: Conflict Handling Strategies (Part II)

Unit 7: Understanding Tolerance and Intolerance

Unit 1: THEORIES OF INTERGROUP RELATIONS (PART I)

CONTENTS

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3.2 Realistic Group Conflict Theory

3.3 Social Identity Theory

3.4 Self-Assessment Exercise

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments

7 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit examines the first two (realistic group conflict, social identity) of the four theories of inter-group relations that are meant to explain conflicts resulting from group relationships.

2.0 UNIT OBJECTIVES

In terms of objectives, the unit attempts to:

- I. Explain the meaning of inter-group relations
- II. Realistic group conflict theory, and
- III. Social identity theory

3.0 MAIN CONTENT: THEORIES OF INTERGROUP RELATIONS

3.1 INTRODUCTION: Groups represent an important feature of society that dates back to the beginning of human association for the purpose of hunting, gathering and later living in settlements. In human society, there are different types of groups. Some of the most common ones relate to the; family, school, church, village, community, political, professional, ethnic associations, age grades, and amongst others, religion. For political administrative purposes, the Nigerian state is organised into various segments that can easily be categorised as groups. These include wards, senatorial districts, local governments, states and geo-political zones. At the international level, the entire Nigerian state can be considered as a group to the extent to which it articulate values and positions to advance the interests of her citizenry compared to other countries.

There is a fundamental fact about groups that must be stated here, its members often gain increased sense of cohesion from establishing uniform values and interests which usually shape their perception of other groups with which they come into contact. But, the conflicts that result from group relations largely depend on how they react to their perception of each other. But more importantly, groups conduct their inter-relationships to consciously maximise gains for themselves. This implies that intergroup conflicts can easily occur where resources are scarce and one group perceives that another group threatens its access to the resource in question. Under such circumstances opposing group members could develop attitudes of antagonism towards each other that result in conflict.

When the express actions of group members are allowed to blossom, they tend to have damaging effect on or complicate the conflict resolution processes.

Conflicts at all levels usually emanate from competing beliefs, norms and values. Especially, when actions considered normal in one group are seen as inappropriate by members of competing groups - thus, conflicts are driven more by group beliefs, norms and values systems than individual interests and conducts.

Inter-group conflict is a term often used in two specific contexts in social psychology. First, to denote conflicts involving organised groups with members acting on the basis of clearly defined interdependent roles and goals. Secondly, to explain the relationship between people belonging to different social classes or categories that do not necessarily belong to organised groups but share certain emotional characteristics. An example of this kind of conflict is that involving individual members of ethnic groups that may not be associated with any organised groups.

In this unit, you will be introduced to the theoretical underpinnings of the phenomenon of inter-group conflicts through:

- I. Realistic Group Conflict Theory, and
- II. Social Identity Theory

3.2 REALISTIC GROUP CONFLICT THEORY: The realistic group conflict theory is a classic perspective that has attempted to facilitate shed light on the fundamental issues involved in inter-group conflicts. The basic principles of this theory are that:

- I. An *opposition of interest* occurs when social groups are involved in the pursuit of goals/objectives that can only be attained, in practical terms, at the expense of one of the aspiring groups i.e. only one group can achieve the goal being sought by two groups.
- II. This factor of interest opposition results in the frustration of in-group members that in turn develop aggressive behaviours toward out-group members.

- III. Resulting from the unfavourable attitudes and negative perceptions of other groups the perceiving group become more cohesive or attached to their groups, and
- IV. As the various groups become increasingly more cohesive internally, the chances of the occurrence of open conflict are also increased between the groups. To this extent, open confrontations can be triggered by the slightest of provocations.

3.3 SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY: Apart from the factor of interest, the strong sense of identity that members share in a group is another profound determinant of conflict. It is believed that under circumstances of opposed interests, the factor of group identity easily emerges as a basis of conflict between groups that are in interaction. However, where conflict of interest does not precipitate conflict, biases toward an external group could emanate from a profound sense of group identification. However, when discrimination occurs where the perpetrator do not obtain any direct benefits, the realistic conflict perspective has definitely been unable to offer an explanation. Interestingly, this drawback is adequately accounted for by the social identity theory of inter-group behaviour (Tajfel, 1981, 1982a; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

The social identity theory of inter-group behaviour is guided by the assumption that people always attempt to “hold a positive self-concept (Michener, DeLamater and Myers, 2004: 384). In the view of this theory an individual’s self-concept is made up of two parts, namely; “a personal identity and a social identity.” But more importantly, the self-concept of an individual is enhanced wherever that individual is able to improve his/her evaluation on both of these components of the self-concept. Primarily, social identity is determined by the social groups that an individual belong to, which in turn serves as the framework for evaluating and comparing ones group with other groups. Consequently, an individual feels a sense of positive social identity whenever the comparison of his/her in-group with other out-group leads to a favourable conclusion.

According to the studies conducted by Gaskell and Smith (1986, in Michener, DeLamater and Myers: 384), “if a person ascribes greater importance to belonging to a particular group, he or she will rank that group higher relative to other groups.”

Deriving from the foregoing, individuals tend to respond to the pressure to assess their own in-groups positively as a basis for sustaining a favourable self-concept to others. Thus, as a minimum individuals assigned to groups have the tendency of perceiving their in-groups as being in better stead than out-groups as a basis for identifying with “higher personal self-esteem” (Rubin and Hewstone, 1998). It is for this reason that such an individual will willingly commit resources to the course of the in-group.

Tajfel and others (*op cit*) are of the view that groups that exist in natural environment react to social identity in one of several ways:

- I. By discontinuing the membership of the negatively evaluated group and joining a more positively evaluated group.
- II. By attempting to deny their relationship or association with the negatively evaluated group (e.g. gays disguising as heterosexuals, Blacks posing as whites in Smith Africa etc), and
- III. By collectively protesting the unfavourable evaluation of the group with a view to enhancing the estimation of the in-group with which they identify.

3.4 SOCIAL IDENTITY AND ETHNOCENTRISM: The theoretical perspective portrayed by social identity has been used as an interpretative tool for understanding critical social behaviours such as ethnocentrism and discrimination in society.

In the context of ethnocentrism, Summer (1906, in Michener, DeLamater and Myers, 2004:382) explained that individuals naturally tend to regard their in-groups highly while simultaneously exhibiting dislike for other out-groups. For this reason, highly committed

in-group members are inclined to projecting positive behaviour towards the group and directing negative behaviour at other groups. Thus, according to Summer (*op cit*), ethnocentrism denotes “the tendency to regard one’s own group as the centre of everything and as superior to out-groups.”

Ethnocentrism is basically a “stereotyped positive imagery and favourable attitudes regarding the in-group, combined with stereotyped negative imagery and hostile attitudes regarding the out-groups” (Summer, *op cit*) ethnocentrism encourages:

Table 3.3: Ethnocentric Orientation towards In-Group and the Out-Group

Member Orientations toward In-Group	Member Orientations toward Out-Group
Consider themselves as superior	Consider the out-group as inferior
See their values as universal and intrinsically correct	Reject out-group values
Consider themselves as strong	Consider the out-group as weak
Sustain cooperation with in-group members	Deny cooperation to the out-group
Obey authority in-group authority	Disobey out-group authority
Willingness to retain in-group membership	Rejection of out-group membership
See in-group members as trustworthy	See out-group members as untrustworthy
Show positive affection to in-group members	Show negative affection to out-group members
Take credit for in-group success	Blame out-group for in-group problems

Source: Adapted with slight modifications from Michener, DeLamater and Myer, *Social Psychology*, (2004: 383).

Summer therefore concludes that ethnocentric behaviours are capable of causing members of an in-group to disregard the members of an out-group apparently leading to tendencies that are discriminatory. In itself, discrimination conceptualise actions that portray out-group members in disadvantageous positions. “In circumstances entailing competition or direct opposition of interest between groups, ethnocentric attitudes will often produce discriminatory responses towards the out-group” Summer, (*op cit*). Thus, even where “an underlying opposition of interest” cannot be identified, the simple fact of classifying individuals as members of an out-group can instigate discriminatory behaviours from members of an in-group. Thus, simply categorizing individuals into randomly classified groups that do not have significant meanings is often enough to elicit discrimination from members of in-group towards members of an out-group.

3.5 Self-Assessment Exercise

Explain the characteristics of the inter-group relations and mention and explain the two theories discussed in this unit.

4.0 Conclusion: Through an intensive study of this topic you are expected to gain more understanding of the dynamics of inter-group conflicts in Nigeria and elsewhere.

5.0 Summary: The unit explains the idea of inter-group relations and attempts to define groups that cohere as organised units, which relate with other groups on the basis of role-interdependence, and groups that are united by emotional considerations like ethnicity. The main body of the unit focussed on the following theories of intergroup relations, namely:

- I. Realistic group conflict theory
- II. Social identity theory

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments:

- I. How would you explain the idea of intergroup relations to someone who does not have any idea on the subject?
- II. Define ethnocentrism and explain its negative and positive consequences on intergroup relations
- III. Distinguish between the social identity and realistic group theories of intergroup relations.
- IV. With the aid of a table describe the role of ethnocentricity in the orientation of in-group members toward the members of an out-group.

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Unit 2: THEORIES OF INTERGROUP RELATIONS (PART II)

CONTENTS

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 - 3.3 Equity theory
 - 3.3 Relative Deprivation theory
 - 3.4 Self-Assessment Exercise
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit concludes our study of inter-group relations by examining two additional theories (equity and relative deprivation).

2.0 UNIT OBJECTIVES

The objective here is to highlight the main characteristics of:

- IV. Equity theory, and
- V. Relative deprivation theory

3.0 MAIN CONTENT: THEORIES OF INTERGROUP RELATIONS

3.1 INTRODUCTION: You may refer to the introduction in the first part of our study of the theories of inter-group relations. In it, we explained the concept of a group and mentioned some very common examples of groups that exist in society. Attention was

also drawn to the fact that values play an important role in group relationship and recognition of the outsider. In the final analysis, we defined the two contexts within group conflicts take place.

In order to conclude our study of the theories of inter-group relations, we shall now focus on the explanation of two more theories, namely:

- I. Equity Theory, and
- II. Relative Deprivation Theory

3.2 EQUITY THEORY: Equity is a principle that is said to prevail where rewards are equitably distributed to members of a group on the basis of their contribution to the survival or success of the group in question. By way of illustration, workers whose jobs demand higher professional skills, responsibilities and man-hour commitment should ordinarily look forward to receiving better remunerations than workers who are low on these indicators. In the same vein a footballer that contributes more to the success of a team would expect to be better remunerated than other members of the team. Basically, “equity judgements are made when one group member compares his or her own outcomes and inputs against those of another member” (Michener, DeLamater and Myers, 2004”365).

As an alternative perspective that seeks to postulate a general framework for the explanation of social phenomena, the underlying idea of the equity theory (Brokner, and Wiesenfeld, 1996; Greenberg and Cohen, 1982; Homans, 1974; Walster, Walster, and Berscheid, 1978) is expressed in the equation that follows thus:

$$\frac{\text{Person A's Outcome}}{\text{Person A's Inputs}} = \frac{\text{Person B's Outcome}}{\text{Person B's Inputs}}$$

Logically, therefore, equity prevails “when the ratio of person A’s outcomes to inputs is equal to the ratio of person B’s outcomes to inputs”. What is however crucial to all equity

relationship is not the status of outcome or inputs rather it is the ratios of outcomes to inputs.

In order to drive home this theoretical perspective more concisely, you may wish to consider this brief case. Two employees of the same firm are exposed to differential conditions of employment. Employee A receives a senior level annual salary of N6, 000,000.00, in addition to the latest Mercedes Benz Jeep as an official car, an official residence (a duplex), and a sponsored vacation to any part of the world chosen by this employee. In comparison, employee B earns an annual salary of N3, 500,000.00, allowed access to an office pool car and vacation to anywhere of interest within Nigeria.

Basically, it is doubtful whether both employees would consider this reward structure equitable, especially under conditions where both can lay genuine claims to equal contributions to the organisation. Likelihoods are that while employee B might consider the firms reward system as discriminatory, distressing and depriving, employee A might equally nurse feelings of guilt and discomfort.

However, if there is considerable evidence that employee A is far more qualified, more skilful and more productive than employee B, and suppose that employee A takes higher level of risks, undergoes more work-related stress and is more directly responsible for the financial performance of the company than employee B, how then will both employees regard their aforesaid salaries and associated fringe benefit differentials? Michener, DeLamater and Myers (2004:366) emphasise that “under these conditions both A and B may feel that their outcomes, although not equal, are nevertheless equitable” Thus, equity seem to be relative as it were, in this case, to the employee-specific qualifications, namely; the skills, experience and risks for which he/she is responsible at work.

Though, the above scenario clearly portrays the distinctions between relationships that are either equitable or inequitable, it is however helpful to note that the determination of

what is equitable in the ordinary business of life is laden with a lot of challenges. This is because two people can consider one issue from different points of view and have serious disagreement on the most appropriate approach to the evaluation of specific inputs and outcomes relating to it. Where a certain employee that has a university degree is compared with an employee that has acquired more than 10 years experience, the question might then be asked concerning the employee that is making the most important contribution to the firm. Furthermore, disagreement might also arise from determination of the inputs and outcomes that may be applied to the computation of a “universally” acceptable equity. Might we accept a university degree as an appropriate input regardless of its relevance to the job requirement? Or should the criterion of seniority be the basis for dispensing rewards even when it does not significantly impact the performance of an employee at work? These are very critical questions that are thrown up by the equity theory.

3.3 RELATIVE DEPRIVATION THEORY: The theory of relative deprivation interprets the perception of discrepancies that emerges from the comparison of ones general living conditions with others or some general standards. In other words, relative deprivation exists when there is “a gap between one’s desired level of actual satisfaction and one’s actual need satisfaction” (Michener, DaLamater and Myers, *op cit*).

Comparison could be undertaken by individuals that are performing the task on behalf of themselves or the group to which they belong. This clearly means that the feelings of relative deprivation develop from the logical process of assessing the living conditions of an assessor and or his/her group. To drive home the point more clearly, Michener, Delamater and Myers (2004:498) explain that:

An African American person might experience relative deprivation by comparing his/her own salary to the salaries to White, or by comparing to what that individual think is a fair salary level. Thus, even if things are

improving, as was the case for the French peasants, relative deprivation can still occur - if the standard for comparison is improving even faster.

Studies designed to test the effectiveness of the theory of relative deprivation seem to have produced contradictory results and schools of thought. In this regard, some researchers have worked with the hypothesis that relative deprivation could enhance the out break of collective behaviour to empirically refute these hypothesized relationships (Gurney and Tierney, 1982, in Michener, DeLamater and Myers, 2004:498-499). In other words, this of category studies could not establish a relationship between relative deprivation and the willingness of people to participate in protests. Or to state the point in more obvious terms the studies could not implicate deprivation for the participation or non-participation of people in protests.

Conversely, other researchers have equally established a relationship between relative deprivation of individuals and groups to violent behaviour. From another category of studies, Corning and Myers (2002), Michener, DeLamater and Myers (2004:499) conducted research on or evaluated the frustration of women that were involved in comparing their group with others and discovered that those women with higher scores were more inclined to participating in protests or collective behaviours in the immediate or foreseeable future.

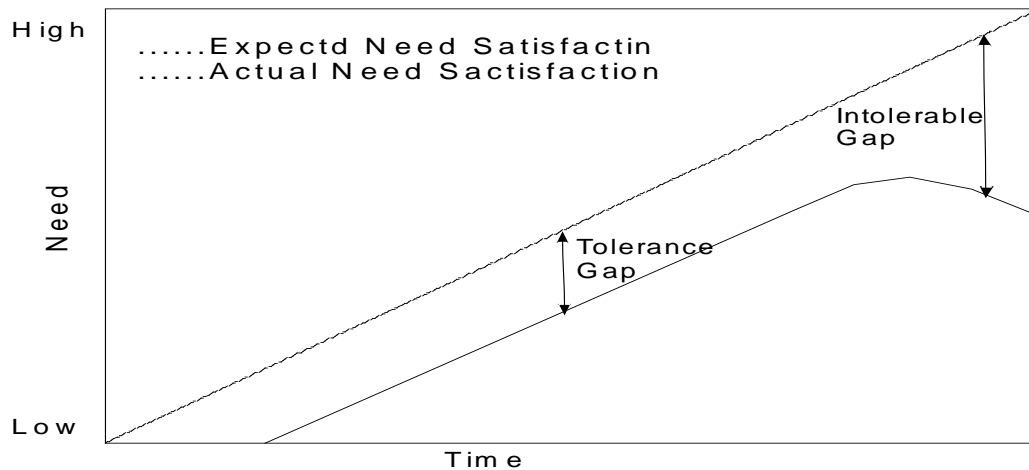
According to Michener and others, “this other research suggests that it is the feeling about one’s group being deprived that is most important rather than feelings about our own individual conditions” (Begley and Alker, 1982, Guimond and Dube-Simard, 1983, in Michener, DeLamater and Myers, 2004:499).

Another context within which the theory of relative deprivation has been most applicable is in the explanation of strikes, that is, the collective withdrawal of the labour of a union to compel an improvement in the condition of service of its members. Strikes have been

found to occur more under conditions of economic prosperity where a yawning gap exist between the expectation of workers and what the management actually offers (Snyder, 1975).

Deriving from an analysis of the cause of the French Revolution of 1789, Davies (1962, 1971) designed a systematic perspective to interpret the event, which he called the J-curve theory, “the state of mind of citizens determines whether there is political stability or revolution.” It explains that external environment largely influences the ways in which people define the expectations that concern the fulfilment of their needs. Often, these expectations originate from the personal experiences of individuals or those derived by comparison with other social groups.

Under certain conditions, people expect that their needs should be provided for on a continuous basis. Understandably, when these expectations are met, people tend to be satisfied and the polity consequently experiences stability. But if the gap between expectations and reality becomes too great, people can become frustrated and engage in protest and rebellious activity. Davies (1971) posit that revolutions happen when there is reduction in real satisfaction under conditions of increasing “expectations and their relative satisfaction” Fig 2:1 is a graphical presentation of the J-curve model.



Source: Michener, Delamater, and Myers, 2004:499

As depicted in the J curve model, revolutions happen at the level of the intolerable gap where the disparity between peoples needs satisfaction expectations and the real satisfaction experience is widest.

3.4 Self-Assessment Exercise

Mention and explain the main characteristics of two theories of inter-group relations that we have treated in this unit?

4.0 Conclusion: Through an intensive study of this topic you are expected to gain more understanding of the dynamics of inter-group conflicts in Nigeria and elsewhere.

5.0 Summary: The unit explained the idea of inter-group relations and focussed attention on the basic factors of comparison that motivate individuals and groups into protests. To guide our understanding of the subject matter we depended on the following theories of inter-group relations, namely:

- III. Equity theory, and
- IV. Relative deprivation theory.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments:

- V. Attempt a brief description of the concept of inter-group relations using examples from the Nigerian environment.
- VI. Identify and explain the theory to which the equation below relates:
- $$\frac{\text{Person A's Outcome}}{\text{Person A's Inputs}} = \frac{\text{Person B's Outcome}}{\text{Person B's Inputs}}$$
- VII. Describe the theory of relative deprivation and explain the two schools of thought that have emerged from research around this theory.
- VIII. With the aid of a diagram write short notes on the following:
- The tolerance gap
 - The intolerable gap

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UNIT 3: INTRODUCTION TO PEACE AND CONFLICT IMPACT ASSESSMENT (PCIA)

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Basis and Meaning of PCIA
 - 3.2 Characteristics and Implications
 - 3.3 Pre-Project Assessment Considerations
 - 3.4 Post-Project Assessment Considerations
 - 3.5 Self-Assessment Exercise
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Though, projects are meant to deliver services to improve the lives of people, they have regrettably contributed and are still contributing to conflicts in many societies, particularly, in Nigeria. This unit takes a look at what can be done to correct this anomaly through the lenses of the Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA).

2.0 UNIT OBJECTIVES

The unit objectives are intimate you with:

- I. The basic meaning of PCIA
- II. Its features and implications
- III. Pre-project assessment considerations
- IV. Post-project assessment considerations, and

V. Other relevant issues

3.0 MAIN CONTENT: INTRODUCTION TO PEACE AND CONFLICT IMPACT ASSESSMENT (PCIA)

3.1 Basis and Meaning of PCIA: Ordinarily, development interventions or projects are designed and implemented to provide specific services that either never existed within beneficiary communities or needed to be made available to other of its members. Ideally, every community would like to be self-sufficient in terms of containing all imaginable social amenities like good schools, health care, roads, portable water, uninterrupted electricity supply, affordable housing, well paying jobs, and efficient transport/communications and, among others, trustworthy financial institutions. Unfortunately, the capacity of government, Donor Agencies (DAs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Philanthropic Organisations (POs), etc. to provide these social amenities is effectively limited by the availability of the required financial resources to do so, particularly, in Less Developing Countries (DCs) such as Nigeria. In other words, the amount of social amenities that is provided for the use of the communities within a society is relatively a function of the (scarce) resources that society is able to generate and channel into these sectors (i.e. social service provision).

At this point it may be appropriate to ascertain the relationship between PCIA and the provision of social services. What you quickly need to know as background to answering this vital question is that whether you refer to them interchangeably as social services, projects or development interventions, they basically represent resources to beneficiary communities. In other words, you may recall that in one of our earlier discourses (Module 1, Unit 2), competition over resources was identified as one of the root causes of inter-communal and intra communal conflicts - and the occurrence of these kinds of conflicts over social resources are not unknown in Nigeria and elsewhere. Having said this much, we now turn to the relationship between PCIA and development interventions.

PCIA emerged from the observation that large numbers of development projects were riddled with the unintended consequence of either intensifying conflicts within or between communities or initiating entirely new foundation of disagreement. On the basis of this:

The first wave of PCIA work in 1997-98 was a response to these gaps, *cri de Coeur* for more careful assessments of the impact that humanitarian and development interventions were having on political dynamics in conflict-prone societies, and for starting these assessments earlier in the process, *ex ante*, to minimise negative impacts and maximise the potential for peacebuilding (International Alert: 2002: 1).

Ken Bush (1998: 4-18), one of the pioneering scholars on the subject made a noteworthy effort to propose a feasible methodology within which context he defined PCIA thus:

A means of evaluating (*ex post facto*) and anticipating (*ex ante, as far as possible*) the impacts of proposed and completed development projects on: 1) those structures and processes which strengthen the prospects for peaceful coexistence and decrease the likelihood of the outbreak, reoccurrence, or continuation of violent conflict, and; 2) those structures and processes that increase the likelihood that conflict will be dealt with through violent means.

3.2 Characteristics and Implications: Following the above definition Bush (*op cit*: 4) proposed prioritisation of the following characteristics during any PCIA to prevent the process from being reduced to a mere catalogue without an established methodology for responding to the key questions thrown up in his definition:

- I. That high priority should be attached to the locations of conflict and peacebuilding outcomes (that is, the specific levels, places, and sectors).
- II. The need to define appropriate indicators and identify the situations that would cause the above impacts could occur. Implying that the PCIA process should be responsive to environmental dynamics like the kind, character, and phases of conflicts, and whether the conflict is active or dormant.
- III. The need to distinguish between projects designed for social advancement and those meant for peacebuilding. Though, he stated that *all* projects of social transformation have peacebuilding implications.
- IV. The need to make distinctions between assessment of project impact before it is implemented and, particularly, the peacebuilding effects after the project has been implemented. This distinction is vital because a project may have negative developmental impacts but be highly successful from the peacebuilding perspective. Similarly, the reverse could be the case that the peacebuilding outcomes may be negative while its developmental outcomes are positive.

3.3 Pre-Project Assessment Considerations: Following this characterisation Bush (1998: 12-19) pointed out that assessing impact before implementation helps to measure the likely consequences of the conflict tendencies on the project when it is eventually implemented. Subsequently, bush identified the *location, timing, political environment and other relevant issues* as the focal areas of the pre-assessment exercise. This is because these concerns adequately capture the required conflict dynamics, its historical effects on the leadership structures, modus operandi, and relationships, including the economic, infrastructural, human and social capital consequences. It is only after successfully dealing these conflict dynamics that Bush advises assessors to shift attention to the three crucial subject matters, namely:

I. Environmental/Contextual Considerations: Under this sub-head the type of issues on which the pre-project implementation assessor or evaluator may focus his/her attention include:

- Determining the predictability of the political, legal, and security institutions of the proposed project environment. That is, an evaluation of the extent to which the conflict has eroded the effectiveness of these institutions and the threats that this institutional weakness represent to the project.
- Assessing the status of existing social infrastructure. This is done with a view to ascertaining the ways in which the proposed project might complement the local development process or how the infrastructure on ground might hinder the effectiveness of the proposed project.
- Scanning the environment to ascertain whether opportunities are expanding or reducing for the political, social and economic dynamics to promote or frustrate the project. Lessons from post-apartheid South Africa suggest the expansion of such opportunities does not automatically guarantee peacebuilding success.

II. Project-Specific Considerations: Some issues to which the pre-project assessor needs to respond here concerns:

- Ascertaining whether the project possesses the precise mix of resources.
- Determining the competences of the lead organisation to deliver on the project together with the comparative advantages it possesses to operate within the proposed project environment. To achieve these assessors would have to focus on the organisations track record, partner networks, and project-related skills, or competences.
- Establishing the project capacity to tolerate and adjust properly to unforeseen contingencies, unnecessary extensions, threats, losses, and alterations.

- Determining the lead organisation's personnel status from the perspectives of both technical competence and the capability to develop the right partnerships to enable it scheme about the political environment.

III. Project-Environment Correspondence: The sensitive issues to be looked at from this perspective relate to:

- Determining of the degree of political support that the organisation could receive for the project implementation. While the first source of support is basically from external political stakeholders (local, regional, national), and the civil society (donors, international and local NGOs), the second source of support is from within the lead organisation itself.
- It is equally significant to know whether the project has the backing and approval of the community and associated authorities. In other words, have all segments of the community carried along by the project idea?
- Have issues of the project sustainability been determined? In other words, will the project continue to create the human, financial and institutional assets that it needs to operate over a long post-project implementation phase?

The main value of pre-project implementation assessment using the foregoing indicators is for necessary adjustments to be made to the timing, configuration and objectives of the project. Thus, the assessment is fed into the decisions to either continue with the project as initially conceptualised, revise and replace it with an improved or complementary version or simply hang on to the project objectives until environmental challenges necessitate resort to adjustments. More strategically, the pre-project assessment provides a solid primary baseline for the implementing and evaluating peacebuilding outcomes.

3.4 Post-Project Assessment Considerations: Building on the foregoing, Bush (1998: 22-24) proposed the following four frameworks within which post-project peacebuilding evaluation could be undertaken:

- I. **Project-Related Improvements in Access to Material and Non-Material Resources by Individuals or Group(s) in the Community:** This can easily be justified where the implementation of the project increases the accessibility of more people to amenities like pipe borne water, land for personal or societal use, food, political structures and processes, economic means, enhanced socio-cultural status, information, legality, and influence.
- II. **Project-Related Socio-Economic Tensions:** Post-project implementation assessors are equally interested in determining whether the project has increased or reduced the social and economic tensions within the community. That is, to what extent did the project improve the access of one certain individuals or groups at the expense of other individuals or groups, especially, in issues relating to education, economic empowerment, agriculture, etc. The extent to which the project has changed the community's pre-project hierarchies and dependencies also comes in here.
- III. **Project-Related Changes in the Society's Economic Sustenance or Food Security Base:** What new methods did the project introduce to influence the community livelihoods, and how has this affected the political economy of the warlords? For instance, it may also be of interest to know whether the project has created new centres of economic influence that have gained independence from the economic control of the warlord (Anderson: 1999).
- IV. **Project-Related Changes in Control over Existing Social, Political, and Economic Structures:** Furthermore, post-project assessors will try to find whether the project has empowered individuals or groups that now seek to challenge the existing social, economic and political order by attempting to develop alternative or parallel community administrative structures.

PCIA AREAS	EXAMPLES
Institutional capacity to manage/ Resolve violent conflicts and to Promote tolerance and build peace	Impact on the capacity to identify and respond to peace and conflict challenges and opportunities; organisational responsiveness; bureaucratic flexibility; efficiency and effectiveness; ability to modify institutional roles and expectations to suit changing environment and needs; financial management.
Military and human security	Direct and indirect impact on; the level, intensity, dynamics of violence; violent behaviour; security and insecurity (broadly defined); defence/security policy; repatriation, demobilisation and reintegration; reform and retraining of police and security forces/structures; disarmament; banditry; organised crime.
Political structures and processes	Impact on formal and informal political structures and processes, such as: government capabilities from the levels of the state government down to the municipality; policy content and efficacy; decentralisation/concentration of power; political ethnicisation; representation; transparency; accountability; democratic culture; dialogue; conflict mediation and reconciliation; strengthening/weakening of civil society actors; political mobilisation. Impact on rule of law; independence/politicisation of legal system; human rights conditions; labour standards.
Economic structures and processes	Impact on strengthening or weakening equitable socio-economic structures/processes; distortion/conversion of war economies; economic infrastructure; supply of basic goods; availability of basic investments capital; banking system; employment impact; productivity, training; income generation; production of commercial products or services; food insecurity. Impacts on the exploitation, generation, or distribution of resources, especially non-renewable resources and the material base of economic sustenance or food security.
Social reconstruction and empowerment	Impact on; quality of life; constructive social communication (e.g. those promoting tolerance, inclusiveness and participatory principles); displaced people; adequacy of health care and social services; incompatibility of interests; trust/distrust; inter-group hostility/dialogue; communications; transport; resettlement/displacement; housing; education; nurturing a culture of peace.

Source: Bush, 1998: 25.

In conclusion, Bush (*op cit*: 25-31) suggested five variables in an illustrative framework (Table 3.4) for PCIA practitioners that seeks to assess the impact of past or conflict situations. However, he advised that the questions thrown up by his framework are meant to stimulate thinking because it is the project peculiarities that should determine the actual questions and impacts to be assessed.

3.5 Self-Assessment Exercise

Define and explain the main characteristics of Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment.

4.0 Summary: It is clear from this unit that well intentioned development interventions or project could end up increasing conflict in society if not properly planned, studied and administered.

5.0 Conclusion: The PCIA process basically examines that impact of development projects could have on strengthening the structures of peace or reducing the structures of conflict in society. PCIA could be carried out before or after a development intervention is implemented.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Exercises

- I. Define and explain the most important features of PCIA
- II. Mention and explain three pre-project assessment considerations of the PCIA process
- III. How does post-project assessment differ from pre-project assessment in the PCIA processes?
- IV. What background factors do you need to consider before implementing a PCIA?

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UNIT 4: DIMENSIONS OF NONVIOLENCE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The idea of Non-violence
 - 3.2 Commonalities of Non-violent actions
 - 3.3 Obedience versus vengeance
 - 3.4 Respect for Human Liberty and Egalitarianism
 - 3.5 Self-Assessment Exercise
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Our interest in this unit is essentially to deal with the concept and common features of non-violence or non-violent actions, as means for achieving peaceful and orderly change.

2.0 UNIT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are:

- I. To introduce to the notion of Non-violence
- II. To acquaint you with the common features of nonviolent actions, and
- III. To stimulate thinking on the application of nonviolent actions in your pursuit of future endeavours

3.0 MAIN CONTENT: DIMENSIONS OF NONVIOLENCE

3.1 The Idea of Non-violence: From the traditional standpoint power resides with the government and occupiers of hierarchical structures that expect obedience from the masses. Under this formulation the exercise of power is based on the possession of special knowledge, wealth and other social variables with which violence is enforced. This theory therefore endorses resort to violence as the only means through which those that seek power can enthrone themselves and exercise power.

Contrary to the foregoing, the perspective of nonviolence declares that power basically belongs to the people that give the mandate to form government. In other words, political

power is characterised by change and derives from the inevitable cooperation of the people. Therefore, consensus and cooperation is the main ingredient of power and, when withdrawn, governments are confronted by the crisis of legitimacy. As can be seen, nonviolence is not synonymous with irrational submissiveness, and inconsiderate process of change, neither does it presuppose freedom from oppression. Its meaningfulness lies in the correct perception of the domain of government power, the people. Thus, when the people go against the government the statement they are making is that they are withdrawing their support. But, people do not always withdraw their collaboration because they obey passively on the one hand and on the other government deploys the instruments of coercion and incarceration, which some people contravene and are dealt with to serve as deterrent to the majority.

Gaps in government defenses include, first, the fact that government repressive system essentially depends on the collaboration of people and, second, government repression subsists because of minimum opposition from the people. Basically, as opposition increases to bring pressure on government, it cracks the system. When an articulate campaign of nonviolence is sustained against a violent government, it generally increases the cost and reduces the viability of administering violence against nonviolence.

3.2 Commonalities of Nonviolent Actions: There are several approaches to the implementation of the programmes of nonviolence. Towering figures like Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela respectively fought for the socio-political emancipation of their people and nations using the instrument of nonviolence. While Martin Luther King fought from the pulpit the other did same from the political platform. The message from these and countless other practitioners of nonviolent agitations is that an egalitarian society can be achieved without resort to violence by government and the opposition respectively. Nonviolence is a veritable change agent that is capable of sidelining resort to wars and socio-political means of coercion. Nonviolence

simply appeals to the human hearts and intellect that there are superior traditions rooted in education, communication, egalitarianism, and the strength of persuasion. Options to achieving nonviolence include (but not limited to):

3.3 Obedience versus Vengeance: Non-violence does not in any way constitute weakened resistance to administrative immorality nor is it an aggressive response to them. The common tendency is for society to either cope with injustice submissively or defend its constitutional rights by violent means, which inadvertently results in oppressing others. While fairness seldom emerges from the killings and wanton destruction associated with military confrontations, passively accepting the unfavourable condition imposed by government often signals weakness and cowardice that is suitable to further repression.

But, the numerically disadvantaged and less affluent can insist on their rights through the principles of morality. The beauty of nonviolence is that it eventually appeals to hitherto neutral observers and even some aggressors without infringing on the parties in dispute. Nonviolence could be effectively used by everyone (the affluent, powerful, youth, advanced, women, adolescents, physically challenged, governments, institutions, etc). its power derives from “the spiritual qualities of love, understanding communication skill, and persistent endurance.”

To adopt the strategies of nonviolence is to identify with change that does not instantly intimidating the adversary even when they become resentful to its objectives and violently repress the proponents. To manage this aggression the nonviolent activist must not retaliate but persistently refuse to bow to intimidation. Succumbing will motivate the aggressors into meting more punishment as deterrence. The nonviolent strategy causes the opponent to basically respect you and reconsider their options. But nonviolence does not completely eradicate the use of violence by the opponent but it is the most result-based approach to overcoming them and for reducing violence.

4.2 Absolute Openness: The most potent weapon of nonviolence is of absolute love. This universal love fosters mutual understanding based on giving and receiving from whosoever wishes to associate with it. By virtue of this love the entire world becomes a single family unit where all opinions are entertained. Absolute openness enables us to discover that our differences should not constitute the basis for our disagreement. It dictates that we should be friendly to our selves and, particularly, those that do not share our viewpoints as a basis for understanding them thoroughly. Love and companionship is the most important contribution of this perspective to the healing process.

Absolute openness subscribes to placing all ones card on the table rather than exploiting the ignorance of others as well as being receptive to positive suggestions from others. Absolute openness equally entails open communication, association, and cooperation while being discernible of the morally justifiable, which implies that we scrutinise prior to identifying any opinion(s).

The perspective encourages constant love based on friendliness, openness, non-discrimination and egalitarianism. Love for people and their attitudes is distinguished from the love their callings. This means that human beings should be first loves as human souls before any consideration is given to their roles that we may find inadmissible.

3.5 Sincere Communication: In the view of Gandhi the life of the nonviolent campaigner should be characterised by Satyagraha. That is, satya (truth) a term obtained from sat referring to truth or reality and graha (steadfastness). In other words, Satyagraha describes holding steadfast to truth as a spiritual reality of our being as confirmed by what Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life.” But nonviolence is not based on religion but on commitment to truth in your daily interaction with human beings.

Human beings are blessed the ability for clear communications through utterances and language that deploy concepts, objects and relations that may not precisely capture they seek to put across. Thus, man could lie or err during communication. Deception is

violence in the sense that connotes disrespect to others and reality. Love reaches out to every situation and person. According to Gandhi the truth is the highest God.

To love somebody is to tell him/her the truth even if it means letting them know that some of their actions constitute inconveniences to us. This means being truthful to others and ourselves. To avoid conflict and being misconstrued, we should not allow bitterness to accumulate so that we can improve the world around us.

We need to be accustomed to our feelings to enable us respond properly to our surroundings. This is not to be understood as burdening others with all our personal problems for which we been to be responsible. Our efforts should always be geared towards making positive contribution to the bigger picture and this is where honest communication comes in handy.

We should always remember that the credibility of the nonviolence movement rests on open truth and trustworthy leadership contrary to the surprise and secrecy characteristic of military strategy. Nonviolent activists canvass their objectives to everyone in a peaceful atmosphere so that compromises can be openly achieved. Though strategy is central to the amount of information disclosable it important to guide against all elements of conscious deceits that may negative impact on public confidence.

4.4 Respect for Human Liberty and Egalitarianism: At the heart of the non-violence agenda is the expression of love for human liberty and egalitarianism, which does not obtain under military dictatorship centered on issuance of orders. The non-violence approach respects freedom, equality, sharing, listening, group interest, and collective decision making. Of course the individual's concern is considered before group decisions and actions are taken.

We insist on the human rights and liberty of the collectivity as a basis for insisting on our own. Nonviolence is not possessive and resentful to the use of force to effect desired change. We love and esteem the decisions and liberties of others. Even when the

nonviolent activist is being hurt he/she remains non-confrontational while bringing pressure to bear on his adversaries. This means the nonviolent activist does not resort to violent confrontation to correct perceived wrongdoings. Tough, some measure of inconveniences may come to society during nonviolent actions, they are basically accidental. Ultimately nonviolent actions are meant to profit every individual in the society.

As people who are critical of the social policies and actions of other people the nonviolent activist does not esteem him or herself above other members of their society. We know that all human beings are prone to errors hence we humbly and patiently urge others to assess the moral value of their actions. While not insisting on the immediate change of heart of others, we look forward to their consideration of this option. This process is facilitated by availing others with clear choices, which sometimes leads to our self-denial when incorrect choices are made.

4.5 Courageousness: It is rather unfortunate that people associate nonviolence with weakness or cowardice because it is clearly not. It certainly demands far more courageousness than participation in direct violence or war. Truth is that weapons are used by those who fear that weapons might be used to devour them but nonviolence is maintained even when weapons are being used by the opponent.

Activists generally use courage to overcome fear to do that by which they are persuaded. It is true that those that bear weapons to fight are certainly more courageous than others that passively co-exist with injustice and life threatening situations. Nevertheless, ultimate courage belong to the nonviolence activists that rise to work against and change repressive situations and injustices simply with superior logic, love, integrity, egalitarian values, etc. as his/her weapons of warfare. The clear message here is that courage is not achieved by the aimless destruction of others that violence endorses by the willingness to lay one's life on the line in order to bring about improvement in the human condition. In other words, to love and to trust, as against hate and fear, are the genuine hallmarks of

courageous. "Courage" is derived from the French word for heart (Coeur). Thus, we need to possess the heart to convince our neighbours (opponents) in the human virtues of nonviolence-centered reconciliation?

Through compassion practitioners of nonviolence show empathy with the challenges being confronted by other but equally move to take corrective actions about the situation. Compassion is therefore the action dimension of love that causes man to share the pains of others in order to salvage them and those committing the wrongs. The ideal nonviolence activist is one who has risen above the rage and hatred of his/her opponents to the level healing and care.

Situations like starvation and chronic malnutrition amidst wasting surplus food resources are ideals that should motivate people with compassion into mitigating actions. In this vein, we should exercise the same sense of responsibility, even beyond our national boundaries, when we discover regimes that are wasting their state resources (financial, human and technological) to oppress the poor masses. The sight of environmental degradation, unsustainable depletion of our earth resources, regimes embarking on meaningless exploitation and cover up propaganda, and our hearts tell us that we are in a position to mitigate the situation then compassion informs us of the responsibility to act.

4.6 Faith-Oriented Trusting: To drive our love on the tide of faith is to ensure that our actions do not negatively affect others in order to achieve results for the good of everybody. This process avoids threat and centre communication and conciliation. Even when we confront weapon bearers with bare hands we are trusting in the human spirit that they will not destroy us with their weapons. But, if it so happens, it will be on record that we acted when it was expedient to do so hoping that the wrongs will be corrected at a future date.

The fullness of trust is attained with the participation of others in the nonviolence process. This is to ensure that we do not restrict the collective spirit by insisting on

specific outcomes that may introduce prejudice into the process. A simple strategy to achieve this and avoid disappointment is to order our actions through goals and specific objectives while detaching ourselves from the result that eventually emerges. Our actions should be oriented towards the common good and not immediate success or the receipt of credit for our efforts.

The requirement of detachment and trust should not be mistaken that we encourage blindness, monitoring must be combine with constant objective-oriented actions. We must watch what others do to prevent them taking undue advantage, betraying, deceiving us before bringing such actions to their attention. Protest to wrongdoing is a continuous process that must be undertaken with integrity, control, unconditional love, and effective communication. Under certain circumstances, we could withhold our cooperation from errors but not our love.

Proper detachment creates emotional freedom that releases us from undue attachment to the specific experience of others, which does not question our care for others that our actions attest to. A detached activist is not subject to the manipulation of others or situations, but is able to rise above his/her fears, requirements, dislikes, aspirations, etc to appreciate the common good. This is the basis of their peace of mind.

However, the nonviolence activist shows emotions but in the context of being compassionate, but does not allow himself to be controlled by his emotions. What he/she does is to harness his/her feelings in ordering his/her communication with other people. Depending on the circumstances, we weep or express happiness to protest situations that we consider blameworthy. Watch out that your detachment is not affected by these feelings so that you can genuinely communicate the observed apprehension. Always remember that feelings are veritable tools of communication that should receive adequate attention. It is therefore not healthy to repress our natural feelings consciously or unconsciously. Thus the entire society will be healthier only if people truly respond to their natural feelings.

4.7 Persistence: **Jim Douglass** describes persistence as a revolutionary quality, which others fail to see in the nonviolent activist whom they accuse of not being patient enough to accommodate progressive and orderly change. But, these critics fail to understand that patience is not synonymous with docility, but a virtue that underlies the endurance and persistence guiding the measures of the nonviolent activist. Deep thinking is needed to excel in these pursuits in which emotions sometimes boil over and during such situations utmost patience is required to determine the consequences of our actions. Another benefit of patience is that it enables you to reflect and calculate the strategies that can simultaneously nonviolent and result yielding. For this purpose the activist would rather let some opportunities pass ye while exercising patience instead of making overly foolish decisions. Occasions for action will always crop up so we need to have our thinking cap on all the time.

Nonviolent actions relatively slower better planned and based on enough warning compared to military actions that are characteristically swift and decisive. We serve notice to enable our opponents have sufficient time to come up with their counter reaction strategies. We declare our identity and strategies to give them enough time to respond to us more intelligently.

While military approaches are swift and vicious the nonviolent options flow and nurture like water to plants. While many advocate the need to “Fight fire with fire,” we think that it is a lot more sense to fight fire with water. Just as water flows persistently through a country rock and wear it down the success of the nonviolent movement depends on persistence to wear down usually hardened opponents, which has historically yielded significant breakthroughs. Examples abound in the successes registered by Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jnr., Nelson Mandela, American women, and others that fought for the social, economic and political emancipation of their countries over a very long period of time. All these confirm to us that we simply need to persist to enter into a dispensation of progress in communication, education, and public awareness in the desired conditions

of change. Violence is the surest avenue to moral trustworthiness. Nonviolent actions often results in our arrest or facilitate change in the situation we seek, both of which call attention to our course and difficulties in sustaining those wrongdoings.

Persistence goes hand in hand with flexibility; therefore, if a certain strategy is not effective an alternative is tried out. Similarly, we move from one resolved issue to the other. Also another avenue is sought out if one happens to be blocked in the course of carrying out our actions. In the same way, we try to sustain the interests of people through constantly designing creative options to solving problems, renewing our spiritual resources, persisting in our drive towards social change, and love for everybody.

Ultimately, the goal of nonviolence is not to register victory over the opponent but coming up with pleasant means of co-existing with everyone in our society.

3.5 Self-Assessment Exercise

What are the essential features of nonviolence?

4.0 Conclusion: The main thrust of this unit is that nonviolent actions could paradoxically be very stressful and highly successful.

5.0 Summary: The concept and practice of nonviolence revolves around the fact that the power of government is the power of the people. Thus, when people protest against government it is clear indication that they are withdrawing their support and basis of government legitimacy. Further to this, factors of obedience, openness, sincere communication, courage, patience, etc. were discussed as characteristics of nonviolence.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments

- I. Highlight the main characteristics of the concept of nonviolence
- II. Discuss the view that absolute openness and obedience are core values of nonviolent actions
- III. What are the major threats to nonviolent actions in Nigeria
- IV. Write brief notes on the following attributes of nonviolent actions:
 - Respect for human liberty and egalitarianism
 - Courageousness
 - Faith-oriented trusting
 - Patience

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UNIT 5: CONFLICT HANDLING STRATEGIES (PART I)

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Framework
 - 3.2 Unproductive and ineffective technique
 - 3.3 Result-oriented or effective techniques
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 - 3.5 Conflict management styles
 - 3.6 Conflict handling mechanisms
 - 3.7 Self-Assessment exercise
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit discusses conflict handling strategies and places emphasis on the factors that promote mutual satisfaction in all the processes discussed.

2.0 UNIT OBJECTIVES

The intention of this unit is to enable you to:

- I. Distinguish between result-oriented and unproductive techniques of conflict management
- II. Understand the approaches to negotiation, and
- III. Appreciate conflict management/handling styles/mechanisms

3.0 MAIN CONTENT: CONFLICT HANDLING STRATEGIES (PART I)

3.1 FRAMEWORK: There are a number of strategies which can be used for conflict management within an organisation and communities. While some of these strategies are considered effective the others are seen as ineffective. However, effectiveness of conflict handling strategies can be assessed by looking at the extent to which it delivers a win or loss outcome to the conflicting parties and this can be measured by using the competitive or cooperative framework (Table I). The competitive framework is based on win-lose suppositions and has less-than-honest communication, suspicion, and inflexibility as its main features. On the other hand, the assumptions of the cooperative framework consists of “the potential for win-win outcomes, honest communication, trust, openness to risk and vulnerability, and the notion that the whole may be greater than the sum of the parts” (Nelson and Quick, 1997: 393).

Table I: Win-Lose versus in-Win-Win Strategies

STRATEGY	DEPARTMENT A	DEPARTMENT B	ORGANISATION
Competitive	Lose	Lose	Lose
	Lose	Win	Lose
	Win	Lose	Lose
Cooperative	Win-	Win-	Win

Source: Nelson and Quick, *Organisational Behaviour*, page 392.

Let us consider the interpretation of the above table as presented in the box below:

Suppose there is a conflict in a telephone company between service representatives (who deal with customers calling in with problems) and installers (who go to customers' homes to put in telephones). The service representatives (Department A) feel that the installers are not doing quality work and that this lack of quality increases the customer complaints that the service reps must handle. The installers (Department B) feel that the service

representatives make unreasonable promises to customers about scheduling their telephone installations.

If no action is taken, both departments and the company as a whole are in a losing mode. Customer complaints will continue to increase, and hostilities will continue to increase, and hostilities between the departments will continue. This is a lose-lose approach.

If the installers demand that the service reps adhere strictly to a reasonable schedule for taking customer orders, it will eliminate part of the conflict. Or, if the service reps insist that the installers begin a service quality programme, part of the conflict will be handled. Both of these scenarios, however, are win-lose approaches that do not completely solve the conflict. One group gets its demand satisfied, whereas the other group does not; therefore, the company ends up in a losing posture regarding the conflict.

To construct a win-win solution, the groups must cooperate. The service representatives could adhere to a reasonable schedule, consulting the installers when exceptional cases arise. The installers could institute a service quality program, which could help reduce the complaint calls fielded by the service representatives. This represents a win-win solution whereby the company is in a winning position following the conflict. Both parties have conceded something (note the “win-” in Table I), but the conflict has been resolved with a positive outcome.

Source: Nelson and Quick, *Organisational Behavior: Foundations, Realities, and Challenges*, p. 393

3.2 Unproductive or Ineffective Techniques: From the foregoing analysis it is apparent that not all the conflict management techniques are result-oriented. Thus, the following techniques have been proven to be unproductive or ineffective:

- I. **Nonaction:** As its name clearly suggests this is the approach in which nothing is done about an existing problem in the false belief that it would fade away with time. This is a very poor crisis management strategy that leads to frustration as the problem refuses to disappear.

- II. **Secrecy:** Under this strategy, attempts are made to conceal the conflict from the people and create suspicion in the process. “An example is an organisational policy of pay secrecy” (Nelson and Quick, *op cit*: 394).
- III. **Administrative Orbiting:** This entails deliberately applying delays as a means of buying time. To achieve this organisations simply misinform its members that something is being handled or thought about whereas. Dissatisfaction and anger has generally been the end product of this strategy.
- IV. **Due Process Non-action:** This is the bureaucratic approach that is traditionally very expensive, time-wasting or loaded with risks to the extent that people avoid using it. The sexual harassment policies of some companies require bureaucratic procedures that complainants consider too labourious. Thus, there is a conflict management avenue which people, however, avoid because of its cumbersomeness.
- V. **Character Assassination:** This is characterised by labelling or discrediting the opponent in a conflict. This strategy often boomerangs and portrays the user as a wicked liar.

3.3 Result-Oriented or Effective Techniques: Luckily, there are other conflict management techniques, such as the following, which are considered to be highly result-oriented:

- I. **Super-ordinate Goals:** When an organisation or community has a goal that is of prime significance to all parties in a conflict compared to their separate goal, such a goal is a Super-ordinate goal. Super-ordinate goals are usually accomplished collectively by all the parties and not only one party. Super-ordinate goals usually derive from larger corporate objectives that highlight their common interests rather than points of disagreements. In the example showcased above, both departments (A&B) could have adopted a Super-ordinate goal of *superior customer service*, which may only be achieved through proper and timely installation of telephones, as well as, effective handling of customer complaints.

- II. **Expanding Resources:** This strategy works effectively in situations where conflicts originate from the scarcity of common resources, where all that is required is increasing the provision of the resources in question to the conflicting parties. However, the effectiveness of this strategy is limited by unavailability of resources for an organisation or community to attend to the needs of all parties. But, it is a worthwhile strategy.
- III. **Changing Personnel:** In situations where conflicts become prolonged and protracted it becomes necessary to change personnel. Sometimes, the best option may be to outrightly relieve an employee of his/her appointment, but this should be done with the context of due process.
- IV. **Changing Structure:** Under certain conditions it is necessary to change the structure of the organisation as a conflict management approach. Within this, a sub-strategy is to appoint an integrator, usually a neutral party, for the purposes of liaison with all the conflicting interests in the organisation or community. This strategy opens up communication and dialogue between parties that would not ordinarily approach a common roundtable.
- It may equally be effective to change the organisational structure through the use of cross-functional teams to manage a conflict. This strategy works well for coordinating the contributions of various departments into a single product and improves their cooperation.
- V. **Confronting and Negotiating:** Sometimes, it is vital for the parties in conflict to confront themselves and negotiate. However, the negotiators need to possess requisite skills for the process, planning and negotiation. To negotiate entails transparent discussion of problems and arriving mutually beneficial solutions. The negotiation strategy is useful when:
- Several parties are involved in an inter-group negotiation process
 - Conflict of interests exist between the parties, such that they are all interested in common resources

- Parties are willing to negotiate and believe that their benefits can be improved by identifying with the other party
- Cooperation is preferable to open confrontation, severing relationships or inviting mediators

3.4 Approaches to Negotiation: The two most familiar approaches to negotiation are:

I. The Distributive Bargaining Approach: Here the goals to which one party aspires directly conflict with those of another party with which one is competing. Conflict of interests occurs because resources are scarce or insufficient to satisfy the needs of contending parties within the community or organisation. This is a typical competitive or win-lose situation or strategy to negotiation.

This strategy is counterproductive because it pays too much attention to the differences of the negotiating parties as against their similarities. But, sometimes distributive situations arise when there are grounds for the interdependence of the negotiating parties. But, “if a negotiator wants to maximise the value of a single deal and is not worried about maintaining a good relationship with the other party, distributive bargaining may be an option” (Nelson and Quick, *op cit*: 395).

II. The Integrative Negotiation Approach: On the other hand, the integrative negotiation approach is that “in which the focus is on making it possible for both sides to achieve their objectives” (Nelson and Quick, *op cit*: 395). This is often a win-win approach because it concentrates on the advantages of the issues at stake. For this approach to succeed there must be common goals, existence of reliable problem-solving competences, conviction that the positions are equally valid, and desire for cooperation, mutual confidence, and understandable communication.

3.5 Conflict Management Styles: Several options are available to professional conflict managers or managers that find themselves in situations in which they have to handle conflicts. These are the avoiding, accommodating, competing, compromising and collaborating styles. In the classifications that follow we shall focus on the relative

assertiveness (the drive to accomplishment of ones goals) and cooperativeness (willingness to see the goals of others accomplished):

Avoiding Style: The main characteristics of this style are its low ratings in assertiveness and cooperativeness. Parties adopting this strategy either deliberately fail to act or keep away from conflicts altogether. Exxon applied this strategy when it quietly pulled out of Argentina in response to the kidnapping of its U.S top executives in 1973 and 1974 (Gladwin and Walter, 1980: 54-68). Basically, it is better to use this strategy when tempers are still high and parties need time to cool down. Its main drawback is that it attracts negative assessment from others when deployed too often.

Accommodating Style: When a party in conflict expresses interest in the realisation of an opposing party's goal and relatively less interested in his/hers he/she is simply being accommodating and this behaviour is high in cooperation and low in assertiveness. It is in order to accommodate when you are in error, when you make compromises in return for future favours, or when the relationship is of high priority to you. From this perspective, the accommodating styles can be said to be a strategic move. However, differing too frequently to other might cause a party to lose respect and his/her need to remain unmet.

Competing Styles: This style is very high in assertiveness and very low in cooperativeness as the case may be. Here, a party seeks to accomplish his/her personal goals at the expense of the other party's. Assertiveness is appropriate when you are sure that your moves are correct and you may not realise your goals unless you put down your foot. For instance, environmental rights activists were said to have cause Shell to abandon their plan to build a refinery in Delaware following their "To Hell with Shell" campaign (Gladwin and Walter, *op cit*: 228). The strategy is weakened by the refusal of individuals, groups or organisations to admit their wrong doings and be surrounded by people who are too timid to disagree with the competitive persons or groups.

Compromising Style: According to Nelson and Quick (*op cit*: 398), "the compromising style is intermediate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness, because each party must give up something to reach a solution to the conflict." Compromises come in handy when unions and management race against time during their negotiations. This strategy is

equally useful when a strategy is required to backup an unsuccessful or collapsed collaboration process.

Collaborating Style: This is apparently the most successful conflict management strategy because it is equally high in assertiveness and collaboration. In order to work effectively within this framework discussions must be comprehensive and attended with openness and the solution arrived at must be acceptable to all the parties. Collaboration is an effective strategy when the parties involved in negotiations need to express faithfulness to an ultimate solution or when diverse views need to be harmonised into a final solution.

In the final analysis, note that even though managers tend to prefer one of the five styles, they do not hesitate to change when the situation warrants it (King and Miles, 1990:222-243). But, while the combination of competing and avoiding styles have been found to be ineffective (Baker, Tjosvold, and Andrews, 1988: 167-178), this same combination resulted in frequent conflicts and reduced performance compared to the collaborating style impacts (reduced conflicts and improved performance) (Chan, 1989: 95-104). The style of conflict management adopted by managers is also influenced by the cultural background from which they originate (Kozan, 1989: 787-799).

3.6 Conflict Handling Mechanisms: Under this sub-section we shall focus on third party mechanisms for handling conflicts between individuals and groups. As we are about to see, the extent to which the conflict parties take part in the search for solutions vary from one mechanism to the other (see Figure I). The left hand side of the continuum feature mechanisms with minimal mutual involvement or participation. These mechanisms include adjudication, arbitration, negotiation, arbitration and reconciliation which we shall now briefly discuss:

Force: This captures resort to use by a conflict party to force the other party to accept a solution.

Adjudication: This model is close to the use of force because it is a third party that, in this case, imposes the solution. Regardless of this basic fact, this mechanism attracts a higher degree of participation in the solution compared to that occasioned by the use of force. Nevertheless, under this process the parties are given the chance of convincing the adjudicator under a supposedly level platform about why each of their arguments should be considered as the main thrust of the solution. But, more importantly, “the choice of the solution is made by a third party, and the decision is backed by force (enforced), which ensures that the losing party complies” (Assefa, 1999).

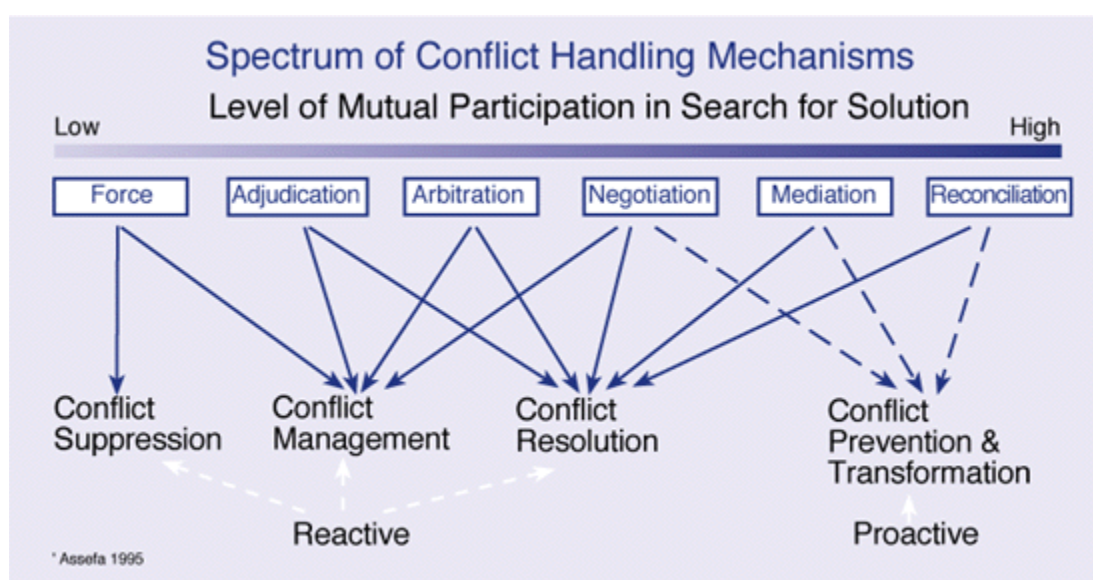


Figure 1 Source: Assefa, *The Meaning of Reconciliation*

Arbitration: On the immediate right to adjudication is the process of arbitration. In the case of arbitration, the conflict parties’ involvement is ever higher because they are involved in the choice of the arbitrator that would decide on the subject matter, which is quite different from adjudication in which an arbitrator is appointed for the parties by the state. Furthermore, conflict parties could equally decide whether the arbitrators ruling will be binding or non-binding in addition to determining the grounds around which they prefer the decision of their case. But, in spite of this high degree of participation by

conflict parties, the final outcome resides with an outsider, the arbitrator, on the basis of the type of arbitration opted for by the conflict parties.

Negotiation: Negotiation occurs to the right of arbitration because the degree of conflict party's involvement in the search for an acceptable remedy is considerably higher.

Basically, the parties are intimately involved in issue formulation and the resolution that is considered pleasing to them. However, whether the negotiation is of the bargaining or problem-solving nature (Fisher and Ury, 1991: 3-14), what is finally decided is largely influenced by the powers of the conflict parties and to a lesser extent on the most plausible solution to the topic at issue. In this case, the better placed conflict party in terms of bargaining power often comes away with the juiciest outcomes from the negotiation process.

Mediation: Mediation is a unique form of negotiation that uses the assistance of third parties to augment its search for mutually acceptable resolutions. Basically, the major role specified for the third party consists of attempting to reduce obstacles besetting the negotiation process. But its uniqueness lies in the fact that the conflict is basically resolved by the agreement worked out by the conflict party themselves.

Reconciliation: Assefa describes reconciliation as an approach that "tries to find solutions to the issues underlying the conflict but also works to alter the adversaries' relationships from that of resentment and hostility to friendship and harmony." Though, for this transformation to occur, the conflict parties must possess equal awareness and opportunity to participate comprehensively in all phases of the conflict resolution process. Assefa summarises the essential features of reconciliation include:

- I. Honest acknowledgment of the harm/injury each party has inflicted on the other;
- II. Sincere regrets and remorse for the injury done;
- III. Readiness to apologize for one's role in inflicting the injury;

- IV. Readiness of the conflicting parties to ‘let go’ of the anger and bitterness caused by the conflict and the injury;
- V. Commitment by the offender not to repeat the injury;
- VI. Sincere effort to redress past grievances that caused the conflict and compensate the damage caused to the extent possible;
- VII. Entering into a new mutually enriching relationship.

The conflict handling mechanisms constituted into the above framework (Fig. I) can further be re-arranged into three categorisation schemas, namely; conflict management, conflict resolution, and conflict. The conflict management mechanisms are targeted more at reducing the destructive outcomes of conflicts rather than resolving the root causes of conflicts. The conflict resolution mechanisms basically go beyond concerns for control to that of resolving the substantive and relational root-causes. It is vital to note that conflict management and resolution are mechanisms designed to react to actual conflicts, compared to the conflict prevention mechanisms that work towards preventing the envisaged harmful effects of conflicts. Assefa’s further clarification on this distinction goes thus:

Most of the mechanisms identified on the left hand of the spectrum are conflict management approaches. The use of military force for deterrence or in peace-keeping (separating the conflict parties from each other so that they do not keep inflicting harm on each other) are typical conflict management strategies. To the extent that adjudication, arbitration, and bargaining negotiations do not become avenues to solve the underlying issues of the conflict, and in most instances they do not, they become mere stop-gap conflict management measures. But if they provide an opportunity to work out not only differences on substantive issues but also negative relationships, they can become conflict resolution mechanisms.

3.7 Self-Assessment Exercise: Mention the five styles of conflict management and discuss each of their features.

4.0 Conclusion: To effectively handle conflicts at any level some of the best options are those that lay emphasis on the involvement of the parties involved.

5.0 Summary: In this unit, we saw that the effectiveness of any conflict handling strategy depends on the extent to which it is able to deliver satisfaction to the parties involved. As you may have noticed, this is the factor that runs through the approaches to negotiation, conflict management styles, conflict handling mechanisms, as well as what makes the difference between an effective and ineffective conflict management technique.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments

- I. Why might reconciliation be preferred to other conflict handling mechanisms?
- II. Mention and explain the differences between the effective and ineffective techniques of conflict handling?
- III. Define negotiation and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the approach to negotiation with which you are familiar
- IV. A personnel manager friend of yours is presently facing a wage-related crisis in his/her organisation, what advise would you give to enable him handle the conflict to the mutual satisfaction of all the parties (management and labour) concerned?

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UNIT 6: CONFLICT HANDLING STRATEGIES (PART II)

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Social psychological aspects of conflict handling
 - 3.2 Measures of the social psychological aspects
 - 3.3 Negotiations and social psychology
 - 3.4 Eliminating fears and mutual legitimacy
 - 3.5 Self-Assessment Exercise
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments
- 8.0** References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit discusses the psychological considerations that are so often forgotten in conflict handling.

2.0 UNIT OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you will be familiar with:

- I. The social psychological aspects of conflict handling
- II. Measures of the social psychological aspects of handling conflicts
- III. Negotiations and social psychology relating to handling conflicts, and
- IV. Eliminating fears and mutual legitimacy

3.0 MAIN CONTENT: CONFLICT HANDLING STRATEGIES (PART 1)

3.1 Social Psychological Aspects of Conflict Handling: Generally, the physical devastations associated with conflict attracts so much attention and steers so much emotions that the psychological impact of conflict on people has virtually been consigned to the back burner of the rehabilitation process and conflict management. Nevertheless, it is of utmost significance to place the social psychological implications of conflicts on the victims in proper perspectives for the following amongst other reasons, first and foremost, the need to eliminate those negative attitudes and opinion that people nurse about others, which are eventually fed into full blown conflicts, and second, the need to come into more comprehensive appreciation of the psychological underpinnings or motivations for the behaviours that people and society manifest. In other words, conflicts causes a lot of unseen stresses and pains which appear not to receive the attention it deserves in peace and other forms of rehabilitation processes. The logical outcome of this is that in order to achieve a veritable and an enduring peace in post-conflict societies, the peace plans and actions must, of necessity; factor in the social psychological consequences of destructive wars on society.

The viewpoint being canvassed here is that the social psychological analytical framework would only further enhance the benefits derivable from strategic conflict management that was hitherto limited to consideration of economic and political concerns. Without doubts, the approach of conflict management through the more traditional economic and political perspectives remain immensely useful for analysing the root causes of conflicts and managing it to reasonable levels of success. The economic perspective provides a useful framework for understanding the basic factors of imbalance and unfairness that operate in conflict affected communities, whereas, in order to comprehensively capture the forms of governance that was responsible for the observed inadequacies, the political tool has been very successful. However, these two perspectives appear to have failed in fundamental ways to mainstream the social

psychological experiences of victims in the conflict management processes mainly because of the intangible nature of these concerns. Nonetheless, the social psychological aspects must be considered along side the economic and political components of conflict management to make the process all encompassing and effective.

3.2 Measures of the Social Psychological Aspects: The social psychology of individuals or groups is a very crucial determinant of the nature of conflict that occurs in any society. Though, past experiences, individual and group perceptions, and identity are factors that can conveniently be implicated for the intensification of conflicts, these same factors are fundamental to the sustainable management of post-conflict peace processes in societies. The discourses that follow measures the roles that past experiences (that is, history), perceptions, compassion (that is, empathy), legitimacy, and people's apprehensions play in the conflict management calculus.

3.2.1 Analysis of History: There are numerous beneficial lessons that one can acquire from undertaking an analysis of conflict from a historical perspective. Basically, this analysis focuses on the patterns and progression of events that led to violent confrontations within the society. The main idea is that multiple and complex type of interactions that take place between communities on a daily basis. Out of these inter-community or personal interactions certain patterns inevitable emerge with the passage of time. These experiences that are often repetitive have been proven to be strongly related to the formation and consolidation of opinions and beliefs of oneself and those of other groups. It must be mentioned that these perceptions sometimes gain expression as instruments for the reinforcement of the relationships between two communities/individuals that trust and cooperate with each other, which could again produce negative results under conditions of war or conflict. Ordinarily, parties tend to consider each other as threats, especially, when they find themselves competing over power and or designated resources. Oftentimes, past conflicts constitute vital aspects

of a people's shared experience or collective history, which they strive to transmit from into the memory of successive generations. Thus, the existence of a history of repression of one group or party by the other potentially leaves very little or no room for trust and cooperation as it were. Experiences of this nature are certainly bound to influence the present and future relationships between communities.

As the historical experiences pile up, people and the groups to which they are affiliated eventually organise themselves against out-groups that are perceived to be harmful, which then elicit the aggressive tendencies towards those that are defined as harmful others. When conflicts become persistent or threatens quite frequently it often results in the phenomenon of vested interests, which manifests itself in the different facets of conflict, resistance or defense, and antagonism. Basically, the various components of vested interest constitutes Each of these interests becomes an interconnected feature of the dynamics of conflict, which sometimes works against the cessation of hostilities because it endangers their own remedial survival.

3.2.2 Recognising the Remedial Role of History: An important feature of the social-psychological explanation of conflict demands that the remedial role of history should be recognised. This implies that past incidents of wars or acts of aggressions that took place within and between communities and which negatively affected their mutual trust do not fade away from their memory effortlessly. This is to the extent that refutation of previous historical realities often fails to eliminate the fact that they ever occurred. As a matter of fact, increased sense of uncertainty, insecurity, fear, and vigilance are among the characteristics exhibited by victims of conflict when the perpetrators of conflicts deny their roles in the act. Such denials also tend to question the survival of out-group communities, heighten uneasiness, and the manifestation of conflicts in society.

Thus, the single most important lesson being relayed here is that the unpleasant

incidents and implications of the past should be recognised as basis for toning down inter communal conflicts and confrontations. In this way too, worries could be restricted to issues that are incidental to present day relationships, which can also be regulated and transformed for the benefit of everybody. The point being made is that honest recognition of the distressful phases of the past (in the life of a nation) is an indication of the willingness of that nation to undergo positive development, ensuring that lessons are learnt, shared and used for building relationships of trust and confidence.

3.2.3 Relationships and Perceptions: Perceptions are some of the inevitable outcomes of the day to day relationships in which people find themselves in associational life. To this extent, and as time progresses, perceptions are developed during national and communal relationships. Some factors that can be implicated for the perception that people form and work with include out-group threats and associated values, the distribution of power, and the control of resources especially those situated within communities.

The realist theory of international relations attributes the emergence of conflicts to the shifting relative power base between individuals and communities and the implications of this shift for the exercise of strength. From the social-psychological analytical perspective, what is of utmost significance is the way in which power is perceived and not particularly the individuals or groups presently clinging to power.

Thus, it is important to acknowledge the fact that power is mostly appreciated in military, political and economic contexts by individuals and communities that constitute nations. Furthermore, we must understand that conflicts frequently occur or increase in social systems where power is perceived in zero-sum terms. But where the perception of the underlining powers in conflict are moved from the zero-sum levels to the positive levels, the likelihood is that the chances for the successful resolution of

the conflicts are significantly improved.

3.2.4 Recognising the Remedial Role of Empathy: In order to eliminate the effects of the wrong perceptions that emerge from the relationship between individuals and communities, the remedial roles of empathy must be recognised. This is more so when considered from the perspective of Kelman's (1978: 162-186) theory of the mirror image. The central thesis of this theory is that parties in conflict or post-conflict relationships tend to form parallel perceptions about each others out-group. But, while this perception portrays the in-group in positive terms it however paints the out-group in very disgusting and negative terms. In this formulation or perception, all acts of war and aggression are attributed to the out-group that is usually considered inconsiderate, oppressive, bellicose, etc while the attributes of justice, tolerance, cooperation, etc are ascribed to members of the in-group - which is indicative of some form of indictment even before any form of mediation process is initiated. As we saw earlier, where these perceptions are coated in falsehood it increases the sense of fear and insecurity in the community. In his folk theory of war, Deutsch's (1973), he describes the familiar situation as one within which each party in conflict considers itself forthright, while the other is essentially wicked and evil, but, insists that this kind of self-fulfilling prophecy, more often fuels the incidence of violence. Thus, he recommends that the adoption of empathy is one of the most effective tools for countering this negative mirror-imaging together with the comparison of the good versus the wicked or evil.

Generally, perceptions that are formed in the formative years of life could become permanent when they are not corrected at the appropriate time. Paradoxically, there are inherent dangers in perceptions to the extent that they primarily originate from the existential conditions of community life and are capable of developing their own reality, which is the self-fulfilling prophesy. However, the point is that since perception does not adequately represent the true picture of reality it could be

transformed through social relationships. Naturally, the communal experience provides an opportunity for new values, interests and perspectives to be learned and shared through exchange courses, focusing on learning empathy, building trust and communicating openly. In the final analysis, it is hoped that this kind of programmes can help in fostering the sensitivity that is needed to appreciate members of the out-group.

3.2.5 Individual and Group Identity: In social psychology identity conceptualises the social norms, practices, traditions and beliefs with which an individual orders his relationship with his environment, or interacts with society. When it relates to the individual (otherwise referred to as self-perception), it communicates the idea of identity, a notion that is a fundamental to social psychological explanations. This is for the fact that the concept of identity and self-perception offers a veritable platform for the assessment of other individuals or out-groups. Fortunately, the concept of identity is subject to changes in structure depending on the factors of time and space. Thus, the conflicts that arise in society are influenced by the specific notions of identity that is applied. Regrettably, this concept is still being largely sidelined from efforts at comprehending the sources of aggression or conflict as well as strategies for effectively handling it.

3.2.6 Recognising the Remedial Functions of Building Awareness: Identity is a highly flexible concept that is fortunately adaptable to the social circumstances of history. It is in this quality that its strength as a conflict management tool resides. For instance, while it is very possible to utilise the issue of national identity to foster negative perspectives about the out-group, it could as well be effectively manipulated to positive peace yielding effects. Deliberate management of national identity issues should naturally arouse suspicions because this was precisely what led to the kind of hyper-nationalist within which people were called to participate in genocide in Rwanda and Bosnia.

Luckily, those in the position of leadership and peacebuilding endeavours have very huge opportunities to effect change in the form of transforming the identity of individuals and entire communities. Options that can be used to achieve identity transformation include enhanced self-awareness together with instigating a process of uniform perception of other on the platform of cultural exchange, high profile dialogues, sharing the historical experiences of each other, and sharing each others culture and tradition with a view to mutually strengthening each others social identity.

3.3 Negotiations and Social Psychology: The process of negotiation is central to the return of post-conflict society to relative normalcy. Negotiation recognises the power distribution significance of perception. Perception, a social psychological factor, is central to the commencement of negotiation and not the political and economic dimensions that have been made paramount. In the view of Zartman (1989), there are specific conditions that should prevail for negotiations to be initiated. These conditions that are described as “ripe” include:

the occurrence of a recent or incipient national crisis, a change in the military situation, leading to the perception of a real and immediate threat of new or heightened violent conflict, the perception of a mutually hurting stalemate, a perception that continued violence is more costly than the negotiations themselves, a change in power to a more equitable distribution. If parties perceive that power is distributed more equitably, they are more likely to come to the negotiating table.

3.4 Eliminating Fears and Mutual Legitimacy: Ordinarily, parties involved in post-conflict negotiations usually entertain fears or tend to be sceptical about the compromises that produce negotiated settlements. These fears generally work at cross purposes to the individual and collective sense of security of the negotiating parties;

often hindering their willingness to participate in the process in the first instance. Be that as it may, the social-psychological perspective offers conflict management techniques that help to instil confidence in prospective negotiating parties to participate in the peacemaking arrangement. To do this effectively, the parties have to be able to acknowledge their mutual suspicions/fears and perception of one another. This primarily means their willingness to equally acknowledging their mutual legitimacy or fundamental human rights. The peacebuilding process can further be promoted by third parties to augment the process by consciously applying measures to enhance the confidence of all the parties. Beyond the negotiations, negative opinions could be transformed through workshops on conflict management, which are also advantageous for dealing factually with history, and rectifying identity-related issues that were counter-productive. In course of rendering support to the fears and perceived threats of individuals and groups, peacebuilding strategies or initiatives could enhance the movement towards sustainable peace from conflict experiences.

3.5 Self-Assessment Exercise

Describe the major characteristics of the social-psychological perspectives of conflict resolution.

4.0 Conclusion: From what has been revealed in this unit it is apparent that the peacebuilding process can be made more sustainable if the social-psychological considerations are factored into the process.

5.0 Summary: The significant lesson to be taken from this unit is that without consideration of the psychological aspects of conflict handling, all the traditional focus on economic and political factors of the process will yield less than expected outcomes.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Exercises

- I. In what basic ways is the psychological approach different from the traditional approach to conflict handling?

- II. What are the essential characteristics of the social psychological aspects of conflict handling?
- III. Perception, a social psychological factor, is central to the commencement of negotiation and not the political and economic dimensions that have been made paramount. Discuss.
- IV. Write short notes on the following:
 - Negotiation and social psychology
 - Eliminating fears and mutual legitimacy

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UNIT 7: UNDERSTANDING TOLERANCE AND INTOLERANCE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 What is Tolerance
 - 3.2 Significance of Intolerance
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit defines (in)tolerance, its causes and consequences, the mechanism by which it is perpetrated and the strategies for handling intolerance.

2.0 UNIT OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of the course are:

- (a) Define of tolerance and intolerance,
- (b) Identify the characteristics of tolerance and intolerance,
- (c) Describe the Mechanisms of intolerance, and
- (d) The strategies for handling intolerance.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT: UNDERSTANDING TOLERANCE AND INTOLERANCE

3.1 What is Tolerance: Across the world individuals, communities, religious groups, international organisations, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations have increased calls for intolerance to be eliminated from all human affairs. Intolerance is more commonly associated with inter-religious relationships, but, ethnic, political, tribal, and other forms of intolerance have also been identified in the literature. Intolerance is a phenomenon that describes the tendency of an individual or group to be critical or resentful of the religious, ethnic, political, etc beliefs/views of others. Thus, the lack of tolerance has been implicated for most of the crisis that have occurred in the world. It is in this context that advocacy has been stepped up for people to imbibe the virtue of tolerance. At this point it is important to dwell on the concept of tolerance in some meaningful details.

The concept of tolerance is a rather complicated one to approach because it deals with a complex range of feelings that are potentially explosive. Thus, in defining the concept, one cannot be unmindful of being trapped in the paradox that people confront in, for instance, being tolerant to certain ideas, things, or person/people under certain circumstances and not being so tolerant under another set of circumstances. It therefore implies that it is not reasonable to expect people to treat you with tolerance under every situation in which you find yourself. This much appears to have been underscored by the various perspectives in *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (759-760):

- I. The act or practice of tolerating: *especially*: sympathy or indulgence for beliefs or practices differing from one's own
- II. The allowable deviation from a standard (as of size)
- III. The body's ability to become less responsive over time to something (as a drug)

In the context of the foregoing definitions the problem that arises relates to the response of people with religious beliefs to others that do not identify with their beliefs? However, the common thread that runs through these definitions is that individuals should lean to co-exist peacefully with each other.

From the foregoing, tolerance may be more properly defined as the acknowledgement of the inherent differences that exists within our society and the way in which knowledge informs our capacity for mutual co-existence and respect. Tolerance therefore describes the capacity to apply an objective attitudinal disposition that is accommodation to those opinions, practices, religion, nationality that are different from those to which we identify (The American Heritage Dictionary, 1994). In other words, "tolerance is not just agreeing with one another or remaining indifferent in the face of injustice, but rather showing respect for the essential humanity in every person." (Ury, 1999: 127).

On the other hand an individual is said to be intolerant when he/she fails to acknowledge and esteem the practices, opinions and beliefs of others. The continuously growing incidence of intolerance between the Palestinians and the Israeli Jews is believed to be fuelled by concerns associated with security, identity, self-determination, statehood, the rights of refugees to a homeland, among others, the status of the city of Jerusalem, that underlie the intolerance which have precipitated their numerous inter-group conflicts.

3.2 Significance of Tolerance in Society: The issue of tolerance poses a particular challenge of how one can accommodate or be tolerant to an individual that poses threat to his/her life or who does not believe in tolerance. Or to state the question in another way one may ask whether it is advisable to put up with intolerance just because one is being tolerant.

On the basis of the foregoing, it would seem as though the idea of tolerance is unattainable in practice. Nevertheless, the practice of tolerance cannot be abandoned because it is central to reducing aggressiveness and apprehension involving individuals or

groups and facilitating the speedy return of the community to normalcy. In an atmosphere tolerance is the norm; there is a high and constantly improving degree of integration, social cohesion, mutual respect as well as appreciation. When tolerance achieved in a society that has recently emerged from violence, it promotes inter-group reconciliation, helps to soothe the pains of the victims of violence, and rate at which the conflict-related differences are resolved. This was precisely what helped the Hutus and the Tutsis of Rwanda to achieve the relatively speedy reconciliation process that helped them to drastically reduce their bitterness and hatred towards themselves. Thus, for the purpose of clarity tolerance is significant because:

- I. Tolerance provides an enabling environment for us to understand underlining reasons for the choices in which others are involved. We are therefore able to accommodate people outside of our own predetermine conceptual framework of what is wrong or right, which may be culturally specific.
- II. Tolerance broadens our worldview to such an extent that we are able to render assistance to the less privileged instead of disrespecting, exploiting and oppressing them by reason of our social, political, and economic advantages. Without doubts, this implies that tolerance will enhance the sense of mutual safety and eliminate the potential threats of violence that emerges from social discriminations.
- III. Obviously, tolerance breeds love, emotional balance, the spirit of sharing, learning, education, and peace that facilitate social, economic, and political development in society.

3.3 Intolerance: Causes and Consequences: There are several probable causes of the phenomenon called intolerance that appears to have existed as long as human history. Generally, people tend to develop attitude of intolerance toward others who are believed to have suffered their exposure to social, economic, and political deprivations. History also records that wherever people have been dehumanised, suppressed, discriminated against, sidelined, and collectively violated they have tended to take their destiny into

their own hands by resorting to violence, which often occurs when we can no longer continue to be tolerant. This was the typical experience when Kosovar Albanians who were enmeshed in poverty and economic redundancy joined forces with the Serbs to assault their Bosnian Muslim and Croatian neighbours.

Intolerance is certainly not an attitude that should be encouraged for the following amongst other reasons:

- I. It opens and continues to widen the social distance between groups that may have had historical background of peaceful co-existing. The illustration of apartheid South Africa is a classic case in point. There, studies have confirmed some measure of individual level separation between white and black South African notwithstanding the abolition of apartheid laws since 1990 (Malan: 2003:6). The unfortunate thing is that this development is affecting the Black-White inter-group conflicts in the society.
- II. Intolerance is also a powerful or an enormous limitation on the ability of people to grow beyond the frontiers of their familiar beliefs. In other words, it confines you to one belief, trend of thought, frame of reference, system of appreciation and You are limiting yourself and others to one belief, one way, one trail of thoughts, one reference, one aspect, one approach, one understanding, and amongst others, one kinship.

3.4 Mechanisms of Intolerance: *Intolerance is a process that thrives in the thoughts, actions and utterances of people in their individual and group formation. The following are some of the mechanisms through which it flourishes:*

3.4.1 Assumptions play very significant roles in shaping the relationships, opinions, and impressions that **individuals** share about each other in society. However, the power of assumptions lie in their profound ability to negatively or positively influencing the belief systems of people with whom we come into regular contacts or even those that are

important to the choices made by these people, which may include members of their families, especially parents elders, wives children, educators, colleagues, opinion leaders, intimate friends, role models, traditional leaders, and amongst other, religious leaders.

3.4.2 The influence of the **Media** is another vital agency that has been manipulated for the transmission of intolerance in society. Strategically, what those that have access to the media do is to portray unfavourable images about targeted out-groups with a view to instigating individual attitudes against them from the in-group. An illustrative case was the way in which the various Serbian communities were believed to have been projected by the western media to provide justification for the NATO bombing in Kosovo and Serbia (Sachs, 2001). The contention here is that in all likelihood, the intensive anti-Serbian media campaigns was largely responsible for decision of western countries to embark on the bombing of Serbia to submission. Nevertheless, there are a handful of empirical evidences to support the fact that it is not in all situations that the media is capable of motivating individuals into action. For instance, in some towns of southeastern Australia, a study on stereotypes found that they rejected the negative stereotypes which the media had attempted to attach to Muslims there (Hague, 2001: 185-196).

3.4.3 Through the mechanism of **education** school syllabuses and textbooks have been manipulated to provide incorrect pasts of the various world civilizations. The basic truth is that myths driven on the wheels of education or the school system has the capability of fostering negative opinions and values about others or fostering appreciation and culture of tolerance of the diversities that exists between others and us.

3.5 Intolerance Handling Strategies: *While intolerance harbours the seed of destruction, restriction, and social conflicts, tolerance, on the other hand, fosters the spirit of inclusion, knowledge, and general progress. Thus, in order to improve post-conflict tolerance the following strategies may be utilised by the mediating parties:*

- I. **Improved Inter-Group Interactions:** It has been empirically proven that in communities where the inter-group relations are characterised by casualness, the inherent tensions and bitterness have tended to be intensified. However, as the volume of friendly inter-group relationships increases, people begin to acquire personal opinions to correct apparently prejudicial opinions that had been deliberately communicated to them to fuel previous communal violence. Conscious efforts should be made to sustain these kinds of intimate inter-group relations, especially, for its heuristic value, namely, correcting previous prejudicial communications (Amir, 2000: 162-168).
- II. **Improved Discourses:** Generally speaking, when people have avenue(s) to channel their grievances about each other they tend to experience some sense of relief and satisfaction. Some of the mechanisms through which discourses could be improved include post-conflict dialogue groups, problem solving round-tables/workshops, conferences, etc, that give opportunities to all the parties in conflict to present their needs and expectations. This mechanism for channeling grievance serves to foster a sense of accomplishment to all parties that have been given the chance to express themselves. Particular mention must be made of the effectiveness of victim-offender mediation process called the restorative justice programme, which is widely acclaimed for this type of opportunity. This is because victims are able to demand for apologies from individuals/communities that had offended through the victim-offender mediation setting (The Ukrainian Centre for Common Ground).
- III. **Improved Spirit of Individual Tolerance:** *The major recommendation here is that individuals should consciously embrace the habit of being tolerant of people with whom they come into contact in the course of their daily life pursuits. Thus, people should make efforts to question the stereotypes and presuppositions that had hitherto informed their decisions and behaviours/responses to people with whom they interact daily within*

the neighbourhood, at work, market, church, in traditional festivals, marriage ceremonies, political parties, during a journey, or even when observing their quiet times.

- IV. **Improved Positive Media:** *As we saw earlier, the media could be used as a powerful instrument of persuasion for ill or for good. It is in this regard that we recommend that the media should always focus on disseminating only views that will foster social cohesion, understanding, and sensitivity to the cultural diversities of other people. This is for the likelihood that the persistent exposure of people to favourable media reports about others would reduce the chances that they will fault the behaviours of each other, especially, for groups of people that lack contacts with outside world and depend largely on what the media dispenses to them.*
- V. **Focus on Tolerance by the Educational System:** *Formal and informal educational strategies could be used to promote the ideals of tolerance and communal life. Schools should strive to create an enabling environment for the virtues of tolerance to be transferred its beneficiaries (pupils or students) with emphasis on the need to appreciate and respect the different cultures of their environment. An apt example of this occurred in Israel where an Arab and Israeli community called Neve Shalom or Wahat Al-Salam ("Oasis of Peace") established an educational institution to promote cross-cultural understanding for children to appreciate the value of co-existence in their society (Neve Shalom homepage).*
- VI. **Contributions of Third Parties:** *Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other stakeholders that are committed to peacebuilding and Conflict transformation can provide training to parties in conflict or that just emerging from conflict on how to communicate effectively with each other. For instance, in Nigeria, NGOs are deeply involved in peacebuilding/conflict management efforts in such areas that have*

experienced conflicts like the Niger Delta and the Middle Belt. Elsewhere in Macedonia and Romania, NGO activities also include the promotion of the ideals of democracy and its consolidation; inter religious, ethnic and other forms of tolerance, and the propagation of respect for human rights (Lessons in Tolerance after Conflict, 2000).

- VII. **Contribution of International organisations:** International Organisation should bring pressure to bear on governments, particularly, of developing countries to include the ethics of tolerance into all social policy. In this regard, the United Nations has made The Declaration of Moral Principles on Tolerance. The 185 UNESCO member states have, since Nov. 16 1995, become signatory to this declaration. The declaration stipulates that tolerance is an ethical, political, and legal obligation for persons, social groups, and nation states (UNESCO, 1995).
- III. **Contributions of Governments:** Governments should on their part be receptive to the idea of deploying policies to foster the practice of tolerance in all their structures and institutions. The South African illustration in which its ministry of education advocated for the inclusion tolerance into its schools curriculum is very instructive. In the United States, government has earmarked a week in every year during which educational and other institutions organisations engage in cultural awareness.
- IX. **Nature of Diaspora Community Contributions:** The Diaspora community can make the following contributions towards fostering and maintaining tolerance; supply financial and material resources to reduce stress and influence social policies in ways that should promote communal living amongst within the community. Migrants of Jewish and Irish origin have used this strategy to positive peacebuilding effects from their various destinations in the United States of America (Kriesberg, 2000: 182-198).

3.6 Self-Assessment Exercise: What are the major characteristics of tolerance and

intolerance?

4.0 Conclusion: From what we have studied here the world can be a better place for everybody to inhabit in peace and progress if we make tolerance our guiding principle.

5.0 Summary: The unit took us through tolerance, the recognition of the inherent differences that exists within our society and the way in which knowledge informs our capacity for mutual co-existence and respect for others. We equally examined the its direct opposite, intolerance, before listing the strategies for improving tolerance in the society. Some of the identified strategies included the improvement of inter-group relations, discourses, the media, individual and educational systems knowledge content management, as well as contributions from third parties, NGOs, international institutions, indigenes in the Diaspora and the roles of government.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments:

- I. Compare and contrast the concepts of Why has the call for tolerance continued to increase across the world?
- II. Why has it become necessary to discourage intolerance in society?
- III. Suggest means through which the media and educational institutions can paradoxically promote intolerance and tolerance in society?
- IV. Mention and explain five strategies with which you could handle intolerance in your society?

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