INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS (IR)

Discussion Questions
1. Define interpersonal relationship.
2. List types of interpersonal relationship.
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of interpersonal relationships?
4. How do cognitive, affective, and dispositional characteristics influence interpersonal relationships?

The concept of IR
- It is a relatively long-term association between two or more people.
- This association may be based on emotions like love and liking, regular business interactions, or some other type of social commitment.
- Healthy and unhealthy relationship
- Research on IR focuses on those relationships that are close, intimate and interdependent (i.e., the behavior of each affects the outcomes of the other).
- Close relationship is always related to love, trust, commitment, caring, stability, attachment, meaningful and significant.

The concept of IR

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Types of Relationship

- IR take place in a great variety of contexts, such as family, friends, marriage, work, clubs and neighborhoods.
- Close relationship is always related to love, trust, commitment, caring, stability, attachment, meaningful and significant.
- Relationships can also be established by marriage, such as husband, wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, uncle by marriage, or aunt by marriage.
- They may be formal long-term relationships recognized by law and formalized through public ceremony, such as marriage or civil union.
- They may also be informal long-term relationships such as loving relationships or romantic relationships with or without formal recognition.
- In these cases the "other person" is often called lover, boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Friendships consist of mutual liking, trust, respect, and often even love and unconditional acceptance. They usually imply the discovery or establishment of similarities or common ground between the individuals.
- Internet friendships and pen-pals may take place at a considerable physical distance.

- Brotherhood and sisterhood can refer to individuals united in a common cause or having a common interest, which may involve formal membership in a club, organization, association, society, lodge, fraternity, or sorority.
- Partners or co-workers in a profession, business, or common workplace also have a long term interpersonal relationship.
- Soulmates are individuals intimately drawn to one another through a favorable meeting of minds and who find mutual acceptance and understanding with one another.
  - Soul mates may feel themselves bonded together for a lifetime and hence may become sexual partners, but not necessarily.
- Platonic love is an affectionate relationship into which the sexual element does not enter, especially in cases where one might easily assume otherwise.
Types of Interpersonal Relationships

- Friendship
- Family relationship
- Romantic relationship
- Professional relationship

Advantages & Disadvantages of Interpersonal Relationships

- **Advantage:**
  - Alleviate loneliness
  - Secure stimulation
  - Gain self-knowledge
  - Enhance self-esteem

- **Disadvantage:**
  - Pressures to reveal self to others.
  - Emotional and temporal obligation

Advantages & Disadvantages of Interpersonal Relationships

- **Advantage:**
  - Belief about relationship.
  - Values and purpose.
  - Choices in establishing & dissolving relationships.
  - Rules and roles in relationships.

- **Disadvantage:**
  - Pressures to reveal self to others.
  - Emotional and temporal obligation

RELATIONSHIP PROCESS

- **COGNITIVE PROCESS**
- **AFFECTIVE PROCESS**
- **DISPOSITIONAL INFLUENCES**

Culture & Interpersonal Relationships

- Advantage:
  - Alleviate loneliness
  - Secure stimulation
  - Gain self-knowledge
  - Enhance self-esteem

- Disadvantage:
  - Emotion and temporal obligation
COGNITIVE PROCESS

- All relationships begin with two people who are strangers to each other
- Impression formation of strangers is of great consequence for understanding relationships
- Our mind begins processing clues to the stranger’s nature (e.g. person’s appearance)
- Over time and many interactions, we may come to know the person well
- Knowing another person – How we come to know another person can be viewed as the process by which we learn to accurately predict how that person
  - Over time we may know some people better than they know themselves

Expectancies
- The beliefs we hold about the probable behavior of other people and the probable occurrence of other future events
  - Influence most human behavior
- Social expectancies vary along 4 dimensions
  1. Certainty
     - the subjective level of probability associated with the occurrence of the future event
  2. Accessibility
     - the ease and speed with which the expectancy comes to mind
  3. Explicitness
     - refers to whether or not the individual is consciously aware of holding the expectancy
  4. Importance
     - refers to the extent to which the expectancy is relevant to the individual’s needs, motives or values
Consciousness and the Mind’s Activities

• The principal mission of cognitive psychology is to understand the psychological structure of the human mind and the processes by which it operates.

• Typically, we are aware of only a few of products of the mind’s work when they appear in consciousness.

William James (1890) characterized consciousness as the “ultimate mystery” for psychologists to solve.

Cognitive psychologists now know that intuition, gut feelings, chemistry and vibes are manifestations of the workings of the extraordinary efficient and powerful human mind.

Long-term memory is also called as associative memory system (Smith & Decoster, 2000)

The associative memory system may possess another important feature that has many implications for relationship phenomena.

Controlled/Rule Based Information

• It is associated with conscious decision-making and problem solving.
• Often apply rules and strategies we have learned or trying to learn.
• Fast-learning memory system
  – Integrate the slow learning, short term, long-term and associative memory system
  – Allows to remember a single occurrence of an event
• Dual process theorists of social cognition believed that we use the more demanding and effortful controlled/rule based processing under two conditions:
  1. When we are highly motivated to make accurate predictions about another’s behavior
  2. When we have time to engage in effortful processing
FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND RELATIONSHIP

The first impressions are critical to the relationship for at least 2 reasons:
1. Will determine whether there will be subsequent interactions
2. If the interaction continues, the partners’ first impression of each other will influence the nature of their future interactions

RELATIONSHIP PROCESS

- AFFECTIVE PROCESS

Emotions effect the relationships with others
- Includes a wide range of observable behaviors, expressed feelings, and changes in the body state
- “The word emotion includes a broad repertoire of perceptions, expressions of feelings and bodily changes.”

DEFINITION OF EMOTION

1. Emotion is a feeling that is private and subjective.
   - Humans can report an extraordinary range of states, which they can feel or experience.
   - Some reports are accompanied by obvious signs of enjoyment or distress, but often these reports have no overt indicators.
   - In many cases, the emotions we note in ourselves seem to be blends of different states.
   - Feelings generally have both physiological and cognitive elements that influence behavior
2. Emotion is a state of *psychological arousal* an expression or display of distinctive somatic and autonomic responses.

   - This emphasis suggests that emotional states can be defined by particular constellations of bodily responses.

3. Emotions are *actions commonly "deemed"*, such as defending or attacking in response to a threat.

   - This aspect of emotion is especially relevant to Darwin’s point of view of the functional roles of emotion.

   - He said that emotions had an important survival role because they generated actions to dangerous situations.

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**Categories of Emotion**

- Wilhelm Wundt, the great nineteenth century psychologist, offered the view that emotions consist of three basic dimensions:
  - pleasantness/unpleasantness,
  - tension/release
  - excitement/relaxation.

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**Some researchers add two others aspects:** motivational state and cognitive processing.

**Plutchik suggests that there are eight basic emotions grouped in four pairs of opposites:**
- joy/sadness
- acceptance/disgust
- anger/fear
- surprise/anticipation

- In Plutchik’s view, all emotions are a combination of these basic emotions.
- Close relationships are the setting in which humans most frequently experience intense emotion, both positive and negative.
BASIC EMOTIONS
(anger, fear, disgust, surprise, joy, sadness)

The Function of Emotions

- To prepare for action
  - A link between events in our environment and our responses
- To shape future behavior
  - Act as reinforcement
- Effective interaction
  - Act as a signal to observe, allowing them to better understand what we are experiencing and to predict our future behavior

RELATIONSHIP PROCESS – DISPOSITIONAL INFLUENCES

- Certain dispositional properties (e.g., depression) of individual can influence both the quantity and quality of his or her interpersonal relationships he or she forms with others.
- The interaction between 2 persons is influenced by their properties and situation

Interaction = f (Situation, properties of A, properties of B)

(Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003)
Maleness and Femaleness

- The attributes of maleness and femaleness – both biological sex and psychological gender are associated with a variety of relational experiences and outcomes.
  - Examples:
    - Emphatic Accuracy: women > men
    - Coping behavior: women ≠ men
    - Self-Disclosure and Intimacy: women ≠ men
    - Physical and verbal aggression: men > women

Theoretical Explanations for Sex Differences

- Two general categories
  1. Social factors
     - Sex differences in social behavior because of social learning and socialization
  2. Biological or genetic influences
     - Differences in male and female biology, including neurotransmitter activity and sex hormone levels

- Personality traits, chronic affective states, needs or motives, and interpersonal belief systems also play a role in relationship initiation and maintenance.

BEHAVIOR

- Broadly defined as covert responses and overt responses that are observable and measurable
  - A behavior is considered observable when it can be seen and measurable when it can be counted

- Human behavior is influenced by
  - Culture
  - Attitudes
  - Emotions
  - Values
  - Ethics
  - Authority
  - Rapport
  - Persuasion
  - Coercion
  - Genetics
Behavior doesn’t automatically or inevitably follow internal processes such as thought and feelings. Human behavior depends on meaning.

### Goal, Plans, Intentions

- One important type of meaning links an action to a goal.
- A goal is an idea of some desired future state.
- A goal tells you how to pursue and uphold your values.
- A person's goals reflect the influence of both inner processes and cultural factors.
- Culture sets out a variety of possible goals, and people choose among them depending on their personal wants and needs and also on their immediate circumstances.

Pursuing goals includes planning and carrying out the behaviors to reach goals.
- Both conscious and automatic systems help in the pursuing goals.
- People have goal hierarchies; some goals are long term and some are short.