



Theories in social psychology: A Review

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Abstract

Most contemporary volumes on social psychology emphasize applied research, while neglecting to address the important theories that shape the discipline. A deeper understanding of the theoretical framework that underlies social psychology allows researchers the opportunity to reflect on current work and become inspired for future areas of enquiry.

Theories in Social Psychology addresses this substantial deficiency in current literature by bringing together the work of a range of distinguished scholars who have written critically within the area of social psychology. Twelve social psychological theories relating to social cognition, social comparison, social reinforcement, and self are critically discussed in depth: cognitive dissonance, reactance, attribution, social comparison, relative deprivation, equity, interdependency social identity, social categorization, self-perception, symbolic interactions, and impression management.

Key words: social, psychology, Theories, cognitive etc.

Introduction

Psychology is a discipline that focuses on the study of human mind and behavior. It attempts to understand and explain the way a human thinks, feels, and acts. Philosophy and biology are the two major roots of psychology. In fact the discussion on psychology can be traced back to the great Greek philosophers such as Aristotle and Socrates. The modern psychology would probably emerge upon a Wilhelm Wundt's experiment in 1879 on the human mind's composition. This new perspective gave rise to psychology as an independent discipline. As the psychology discipline continues to evolve along time, several schools of thought have emerged. Among the major schools are structuralism, functionalism, psychoanalysis, behaviourism, cognitive, and humanism. Each school has its own dominance at its own period of time. The cumulative knowledge of the different schools adds on to better understanding of human thought and behavior. Different schools adopt its own perspectives, producing several psychology theories which stay popular until today. Some of the widely accepted research methods in psychological studies are correlation evaluations, experiments, and longitudinal researches.

History of Social Psychology

Early Influences

Aristotle believed that humans were naturally sociable, a necessity which allows us to live together, whilst Plato felt that the state controlled the individual and encouraged social responsibility through social context. Hegel (1770–1831) introduced the concept that society has inevitable links with the development of the social mind. This led to the idea of a group mind, important in the study of social psychology.

Lazarus & Steinthal wrote about Anglo-European influences in 1860. "Volkerpsychologie" emerged, which focused on the idea of a collective mind. It emphasized the notion that personality develops because of cultural and community influences, especially through language, which is both a social product of the community as well as a means of encouraging particular

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