

REVIEW

Understanding and Exploring Social Psychology in the Context of Human Behavior

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Abstract:

The range of social psychology is explored and broken down to understand the elements that make up the topic. Social Psychology looks at many different points of view and issues that ultimately define what it is. The researchers of this literature review look at the various topics, theories, and aspects related to and linked with social psychology and compose a paper explaining the different elements. Social psychology is the study of social interactions in society. In this research paper, the researchers concentrate mainly on the various moving parts that describe social psychology, such as behavior, peer pressure, happiness, social media, social proof, prejudice and discrimination, inclusion, belonging and love, social influence, etc. There is a plethora of other parts that belong to social psychology. Therefore, these findings and explorations derived from earlier studies will be helpful for future researchers and all those who like social psychology and want to be knowledgeable about its importance and focus, which is determined based on individuals' communications and social behavior in different cultures and societies, which will be more critical.

Keywords: Behavior, Belonging, Happiness, Peer pressure, Prejudice and discrimination, Society, Social influence, Social media, Social proof, Social psychology

Introduction

This literature review is started by focusing on social psychology, which significantly investigates how an individual's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are

affected by social influences. These social influences are considerable. Additionally, social psychology analyzes how everyone's behavior is influenced by their background, culture, and surrounding environment. Considering the background of everyone, which has a different outcome and drive from the culture and society, would be beneficial for better human understanding and advantage of communications. Accordingly, it is required to know what Social Psychology is. Is it essential or not? Why is it important to study this field of psychology, and how can we apply it?

Social psychology is significantly determined as a branch of psychology that deals with social influences and how they influence individuals' attitudes, feelings, and functions (McLeod, 2007). Numerous studies focused on and evaluated the importance of social psychology amongst the different groups of people and cutlers; these researchers believed that this field of psychology could be helpful and beneficial for psychologists and future scholars, as well (Maccoby et al., 1958; Deutsch & Krauss, 1965; Sherif, 1948; Smith, 1996; Lindesmith et al., 1999; Parker & Shotter, 2015). With this knowledge and understanding, social psychologists and scholars work on the factors that direct individuals to perform in a specific way in the presence of others and observe the possibilities under which behaviors, actions, and feelings take place (Rezaei, 2022). Generally, social psychology is defined as investigating how humans act and show interaction with each other, specifically in distinguishing situations. Mostly every individual can recall a time when someone did something that upset them or made them uncomfortable. When those situations occur, it will probably leave you to question a lot, like "Why are they acting this way?", "Why would they do that?" or "Are they okay?". In pursuing social psychology and its importance, The Social Learning Theory of Aggression, created by Bandura (1963), states that "individuals become aggressive by emulating role models." For instance, suppose a child is raised around constant acts of aggression shown by their parents, siblings, or other possible role models. In that case, the child will adapt to this behavior and repeat the same form of aggression. Social Psychology plays a significant role in understanding an individual and addressing mental health issues. The social learning theory of aggression instructs how aggressive customs develop, what generates individuals to behave aggressively, and what remarkable things help these actions after they have been initiated.

Most mental health issues nowadays have socio-psychological causes, such as loneliness, troubles within their marriage, or trauma from a toxic work/home environment. Without the study of social psychology, being able to come up with diagnoses and treatments for mental illness would be highly challenging. This field of psychology is consequential because it can give a better understanding and more transparent view to pinpoint and address these causes. Knowing the importance of social psychology can be beneficial for having successful communication and a better understanding of each other. This knowledge can somehow guarantee successful relationships in different aspects and categories.

Importance of social psychology on individual psychology

It is complementary that many theories and aspects would not be answered without studying social psychology and focusing on it comprehensively. When it comes to individual psychology, social psychology plays a massive part in it. Its study helps individuals to be able to manage their stress, depression, and other

social issues to improve their decision-making and future behavior and performance. Based on the article "The Social in Social Psychology" by Greenwood (2014), the author pointed attention to the "social-ness" in individual psychology and social psychology. In the report of McLeod (2008), many psychologists in this field, like Wilhelm Wundt, believe that all behaviors we see occur in a social context. Wundt, the father of experimental psychology, was one of the first to distinguish between individual and social psychology. After his experiment, Wundt recognized that an individual's mindset, emotions, and behavior could be caused by a social community or group, like family, religion, culture, and even social media. However, it can also be influenced by thoughts and beliefs. As Greenwood mentioned, the researcher believes that racial prejudices between black and white people were "generated not by inductive interference from interactions with a Black person with negative qualities but by the social adoption of the prejudices of their White reference group." This statement calls attention to many things, like the reason behind these behaviors and mindsets that the black community has dealt with for many years from the white community. These actions are all caused by one social group who brainwashed their communities to act like that. Most White individuals who despise Black people do not have a reason to do so. This idea of hating someone based on their skin color was brainwashed into them from the beginning (as a child), and they will soon grow up and normalize and celebrate this hatred within their community, which is truly sad. Social influences affect society and minds more often than they think, but it is now up to whether they want to stand out or blend in.

How social influence is significant to individual psychology and group psychology

By looking at society's Influence on an individual and group of people, one should start to understand the mind's inner workings and why certain decisions are made. Social Influence comes in many different shapes and forms; it can be seen in conformity, socialization, obedience, leadership, persuasion, minority influence, social change, and peer pressure. The study of Social Influence is central to social psychology and understanding group processes and intergroup relations (McLeod, 2001). In the article "Social Influence in Action" by Smith et al. (2011), the researchers stated that "Social influence is a common feature of everyday life: we either try to influence others or are influenced by them many times each day." This statement is true. Social Influence is a part of people's everyday lives and affects them and their decisions without them even realizing it sometimes. It occurs when an individual's thoughts, feelings, and actions are affected by other individuals' thoughts, opinions, and lifestyles (Wang, 2013). The most common forms of social Influence are persuasion and peer pressure. The common idea is that youth are influenced efficiently. This can be true. However, it all depends on how this human reacts. Therefore, individuals obviously cannot be peer pressured if they do not surrender to what they are being pressured to do.

According to Steinberg (1986), peer pressure is more common between the ages of fifteen and eighteen. This age is the peak of an adolescent's high school career. The first year is when we are introduced to all the highs and the lows of high school. This is a perfect pipeline for children in that age group to influence and be influenced by others. Peer pressure gets aggressive and plays a significant part in this adolescent's adulthood. Because of social media, growing up in an easily

influenced society is undoubtedly a disadvantage for future generations. It has a direct way of peer pressuring these young adults to do what is unacceptable (Clasen & Brown, 1985). If an individual who is a non-smoker spends a night out with friends who smoke, the individual may feel pressured to smoke because everyone else is smoking. However, if the individual is not tempted, their friends who do smoke could peer pressure them and persuade them to try it. Individuals usually conform because they want to fit in with groups without being left out or appearing foolish. Has must explain that without the study of social psychology, understanding and supporting one another and their actions would not be possible, or it is better to say impossible, which is why they must value the information fellow psychiatrists, psychologists, and sociologists provide.

By considering the social influence, group psychology, and importance of social identity theory, it has to be determined that Social identities are most influential when individuals consider membership in a particular group and influence on members according to the effects of society and environment, which are central to their self-concept and feel strong emotional connections to the group. Social identity theory likewise presents the vision of social identity to explain intergroup behavior. This theory explores the phenomenon of the 'ingroup' and 'outgroup' that usually influence personal feelings and reactions. It is based on the view that identities are formed through a process of distinction defined relatively or flexibly depending on the activities one engages in (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). In general, association with a group grants self-esteem, which permits sustaining the social identity. Likewise, the social identity theory in social psychology studies the interplay between personal and social identities. Social identity theory aims to identify and indicate the possibilities under which individuals think of themselves as individuals or group members.

Additionally, Social identity theory explains that they derive esteem from a group they positively identify with and favor it. They assign more aids to the ingroup to maximize the difference between their ingroup and outgroups to achieve identifications that categorize people according to their birth. Examples of social identity that are assumed necessary in social psychology include race, ethnicity, gender, sex, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, age, religion and beliefs, national origin, and emotional and developmental disabilities and abilities. Social identity theory is generally a theoretical analysis of group processes and intergroup relations. It assumes that groups influence their members' self-concepts and self-esteem, mainly when individuals categorize themselves as group members and identify with the group (Tajfel et al., 1971; Tajfel, 1982; Chi, 2015; Tajfel & Turner, 2004).

Emotional intelligence (EQ)

Emotions are assumed as feelings commonly considered by different groups of psychologists, sociologists, and scholars because they believe that emotions, most of the time, are effective and change individuals' approach, reactions, and feelings based on their activities and everyday lifestyle. Additionally, EQ is well-defined as the capacity to distinguish, assess, and revise the emotions of self and others in private and social life to determine individuals' performance. EQ likewise consists of four main factors: 1) perception of emotion, 2) managing own emotions, 3) managing others' emotions, and 4) utilizing emotion, which explains how individuals show their emotions in private and social life (Mehrad, 2020).

EQ as an influential inner factor can cause growth or improve all facets of individuals' behaviors and feelings; therefore, understanding EQ as the central part of internal feeling supports individuals in identifying diverse situations and selecting applicable items in their life (Hashempour & Mehrad, 2014). To understand social and individual psychology, one must realize EQ. Indeed, EQ is important because, growing up, we all have different perceptions of how emotions should be shown and acted upon. In general, our parents give us the foundation, and we, as human beings, build it up from there. However, only some could have emotionally intelligent parents. If someone does not have a specific trait in themselves, how are they supposed to teach it to others? Many parents have suffered emotional, generational, and personal trauma that should be tended to before having children. When an emotionally unstable parent is looking to raise a child, they present them with whatever emotions they have grown up to believe are right. This ultimately is what passes down not only personal trauma but generational trauma as well. EQ is a subject that should be taught in school from a young age. Many students need help comprehending why they are supposed to be the way they are. It is sometimes challenging to apprehend why we believe the way we do—knowing why certain emotions presented to us at a young or teenage age would have been extra beneficial to how we go about our life. It would have taught us how to deal with certain emotions we might not understand.

"EQ plays a key role in social results because it is represented as a variety of social and emotional skills that enable people to be more effective in their personal and social lives." (Robles-Bello et al., 2022). According to the Help Guide, the skills needed to practice EQ would be self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship management (Furnham, 2012; Radtke, 2022; Segal et al., 2022). These four aspects are necessary for emotional intelligence to be achieved. Self-management focuses on taking care of oneself. Self-management includes self-care, punctuality, self-motivation, working toward achieving goals, and much more. Once someone can put themselves in line and get their priorities straight successfully, they can move on to self-awareness. Self-awareness looks like managing our masterly, setting boundaries for ourselves and others, and helping others become more self-aware. The more we know, the more we can help others. According to the Department of Education, social awareness should include acknowledging, valuing, and supporting cultural values, "understanding social and ethical norms for behavior," and appreciating multiple and diverse perspectives. Lastly, according to Open Library, relationship management communicates well with others, creates, and maintains friendships and relationships, and works well in teams.

EQ would be easier to come by with each of these four attributes. It is different from our concept; constructing EQ takes a lot of building and time. As mentioned before, EQ is something that should be taught at an early age by parents. If the parents do not have these attributes within themselves, they cannot push them onto their children. It is impossible to teach something we know nothing about, so it is entirely understandable why young children do not develop emotional intelligence. The issue with not being taught is not wanting to learn. If these young people grow older and do not try to create and work on their emotional intelligence, with time, they will notice why their lives are continuing the way they are. Overall, attention to the vital role of emotional intelligence in social psychology must be considered and evaluated; in fact, EQ is assumed as an essential factor for better analyzing social psychology in different cultures or societies.

Social influences in lifestyle communication

Considering the social influence and the importance of its effect should be bold that outsiders highly influence human beings. Many people construct their personalities based on the world's opinions and mindsets. This is a given for people and society with different backgrounds and attitudes. Individuals are put into schools at a young age and are exposed to many different personality traits and attributes. They use these personality traits or factors and attributes to create their personas. At these young ages, as adolescents, individuals are usually put into boxes separating their differences. Growing up, people might know what group they belong to, but others might not. This can cause an issue for a human being's young self. Having the feeling that you do not belong within yourself can be detrimental to the growth of a young person's brain. "The feeling of exclusion can be painful. It can shape our future interactions and attempts to belong in other social contexts." (Allen, 2020). As mentioned before, children are a product of their environment. Young children are known to be like sponges. They soak in all the information fed to them, then let it all out, especially at home. The data they hear and see at a young age is essential. It sets a scene for the rest of their lives. It creates a sense of not knowing whether they belong in society. If a child is placed in a situation where they feel excluded, they might never even want to involve themselves in that situation again. For instance, in the concept of social influence on lifestyle, college is where students find all social groups and classes of social influences. Also, it is where they can find their true selves. Since there are so many different social groups, one might attempt to conform and, in the long run, feel as though they are lost. All they did was try and look for ways to fit into society. They were trying to fit in, leading to falling to peer pressure, conformity, and obedience. These factors determine whether people are achieving their goal of finding their true selves or setting themselves back by a lot.

Based on the personal experience of one of the current study's researchers, a student has always been influenced by what is around her. She grew up in a city where everything someone does can and will get around. From a young age, she chose the right circle and people to be around, impacting her individual and social life immensely.

In general, all people's personalities joined to become one. Now, this does not mean the people turned into the same person; they adopted different traits of one another and applied them to their lives. It is easy for young teenage girls to fall under peer pressure, but they are not as exposed to many things as others.

How people are raised is a significant part of rising and creating a persona. Parents are tremendously responsible for how their children turn out: behavior and reaction, obedience, peer pressure, and conformity. People should be taught right and wrong from the moment they understand it. If they are not taught the importance and value of doing what they think is right at a young age, they can grow up accepting different pressures.

Social proof in social psychology

According to the report of Talib and Saat (2017), social proof or informational social cue is assumed as a psychological phenomenon where individuals consider the actions of others to be the correct behaviors to follow. These researchers explained that the actions of others around us or communicating with us are

essential guides when decision-makers need clarification about the value of the decision to be made. Unconsciously, the collective information of the society or social community influences and contributes to our findings. Regardless of how independent we think we are, our decisions to do or not do certain things are conditioned by others around us. Social proof is the force that influences our daily choices (Rao et al., 2001).

Case studies apprehend a range of perspectives and data (Salmon, 2017). As opposed to a single view from an individual, case studies allow people to see multiple perspectives and ideologies using surveys, observations, and interviews. Case studies are super beneficial for research because it gives the possibility to achieve more excellent knowledge and the idea of the subject at hand, it also reduces the potential for any bias by diluting the agenda of a particular individual. They also allow researchers to observe and record information about rare, impractical, or unethical conditions and behaviors. In a case study, psychologists got a group of actors to stand outside on the street and look at the sky. This led the people around them to look up at the sky, even though there was nothing notable in the sky. In this case study, psychologists are trying to prove how sometimes, when we see other people doing something, we often think they have a good reason behind doing that thing and follow along with them. Generally, this study illustrates a phenomenon known as Social Proof (West, 2022).

Social Proof is a term that was made back in 1984 by author Robert Cialdini in his book *Influence* (Aronson et al., 2010). This phenomenon of Social Proof, also known as informational social influence, is the idea that people copy the actions of others to reproduce the same behavior in certain situations. For example, if an individual is unsure how to act or respond in a social case they may have yet to encounter before; they tend to take clues from the people around them. If someone were to attend a college party for the first time, it is natural to observe their surroundings to ensure they fit in and act the way everyone would expect them to work.

Another example where this occurs is in marketing. Social proof is seen when individuals shop online. They look for reviews, recommendations, and ways others have used a product before purchasing it. Therefore, online shops and stores aim to have guests leave honest product reviews. They want people to be truthful about the quality, materials used, purpose, convenience, and likelihood of returning to buy from them or repurchasing the product. Product reviews are a valuable form of social proof that works wonders in increasing the number of people making purchases. As we have shown many examples of social proof, it still occurs in many different shapes and forms, with other categories. When the majority overrules, we can witness social evidence in people we like, celebrities, experts, customers and users, friends and family, and large groups. As Social psychology gets more in-depth every day with new theories, aspects, ideologies, and questions appearing, case studies help us gain and analyze concrete, contextual, in-depth knowledge about the subjects. With the help of case studies, new evidence to support future psychological theories and aspects is possible, undoubtedly.

Positive attitude and happiness

According to the importance of a positive attitude and Happiness in personal and social life in the context of social psychology, Happiness is letting go of all that is sad; it is appreciating what people have, the little moments with the ones they

love, and finding pleasure in even the tiny things in their life. Nowadays, everyone looks happy but miserable, trying to keep up with the comfortable aesthetic. People are losing sight of what Happiness is. Happiness is living in the moment and appreciating every second of it. Many people are depressed because they are not where they want to be in life but to get there, individuals must start by being okay with where they are now. Individuals must find the things that bring them joy, even small ones. Whether a hobby, a person, a place, or an object, they should find joy in something. These things make life worth living and are kinds of satisfaction. Steptoe (2019) explained that Happiness plays a considerable role in individuals' well-being and has become an essential topic in psychology over the past decade. The researcher explained that Happiness contributes considerably to physical sickness, which should also be considered. Happiness is essential in the context of mentality and physical (Black et al., 2015; Buman et al., 2010). Only some individuals can seek Happiness, and it comes as quickly. One reason for this is the environment individuals are living in. If a person lives in a dark, gloomy city, has a hard life, and comes from a broken home, Happiness assumed as far harder to achieve. This fact shows that environmental conditions affect an individual's happiness level. It also involves giving themselves another chance and working on themselves. It is easier said than done for most people because we all cope differently and come from different backgrounds, so Happiness takes time and effort for others. Also, they must be considerate of those who have childhood traumas or any trauma that makes it harder for them to thrive in life (Easterlin, 2003; Frawley, 2015).

In the research paper "Happiness," Veenhoven (2011) states, "... 'art of living' denotes special life-abilities; in most contexts, this quality is distinguished from mental health and sometimes even attributed to slightly disturbed persons." By saying this, he wants the readers to understand that learning to deal with problems contributes to how happy you will be in life or enjoy it. It would be best if individuals gave value to their life to understand the notion of happiness. Veenhoven also states, "Humans can also judge life cognitively by comparing life as it is with notions of how it should be." people are in a period where they are entirely in repudiation of each other misery and flaws and refuse to try to better themselves. People overlook seeing things as all right when they need help, such as therapy, meditation, and self-care. People never really talk about how important their health is in their happiness. It takes good habits such as waking up early, eating a well-balanced meal, not skipping any, and ensuring they are active. Health problems start with the way people live vitality. If you wake up late every day and eat junk food all the time, you will have a very depressive lazy attitude about life. Those who maintain their health are more likely to be happier in life. In general, happiness is all based on your mindset, and you must preferably be conscious of the things that make you sad and are not worth your energy to move on from them or learn to deal with them. By considering Happiness importance, Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI) also examined the feelings of individuals towards the environment, relationships with other people, and factors in the context of well-being that can affect their attitudes which be of practical use for future studies and apply the results to social psychology and social science area (Hills & Argyle, 2002).

Belongingness and inclusion

As Slee (2019) has explained in his study, belonging is an accoutrement of privilege. Moreover, privilege is not just reckoned or applied according to a material calculus. Other identity features intersect to form separation markers, characteristics of not belonging. As previously mentioned, belonging is assumed as a significant part of growing up. Picking the social group, you feel you belong to can be challenging. Choosing who to associate yourself with, be friends with, and relate to the most is a matter of choosing. It is the way of determining the future outcome.

As hard as belonging and inclusion might feel when people are young, it is still an issue they must deal with when they get older. The people start jobs and create different friends where they should feel like they belong. Feeling included is an essential part of when they start working. An individual should feel included in their workplace. It is the place where they thrive within their profession. If they do not feel included, how can a person succeed? It creates a sense of distance and separation, which differs from how one wants to think while potentially doing what one loves. Feeling like you do not belong can be stressful in workspaces. According to Harvard Business, "Nearly eight billion dollars each year on assortment and inclusion (D & I) training misses the mark because they ignore our demand to feel included." (Carr et al., 2019). Many workplaces might focus on having a diverse environment but do not focus on belonging or the inclusion of their workers. This report is detrimental to the person's growth and work area.

Knowing and evaluating the importance of belonging and dependency among people can create a situation that influences their environment and interpersonal relationship that must usually be supported by parents (Rejaän et al., 2021). Frequently, individuals look at belonging as an idea that someone belongs in a specific box, but at the end of the day, belonging is the idea that a person feels as belonging. One might feel as though they do not belong in a relationship. Feeling like you are in a two-way relationship means being in love and having mutual respect toward each other. You want your significant other to include you in some of the decisions you make regarding your relationship. These touch upon financial decisions, children, and where a person wants to take the relationship. Many different opinions and inclusions go into relationships. Individuals have other religions and beliefs as well as different morals. The topic might differ for each person, but if they make a mutual and respectable decision, each partner should feel comfortable and solid in their choices. These ensure inclusion in the relationship. No decision should be made solely by one partner, and the other should feel included in anything.

Discrimination and prejudice

According to Kite and Whitley (2016), the psychology of prejudice and discrimination delivers a comprehensive overview of what psychological approach and investigation have to say about the nature, causes, and lessening of prejudice and discrimination. Discrimination and prejudice are a shortcoming in social psychology. This part of the discipline shows the negative aspects of social psychology. Discrimination can be defined as behavior or actions, usually hostile, towards an individual or group of people, primarily based on sex/race/ and social class. It is necessary to mention that that is not only limited to these groups and

is sometimes more related to the culture and background of the individuals who want to show discrimination behaviors. Additionally, there are some types of unlawful discrimination examples faced in every society; various examples: Disability, Sex, Race, Religion or belief, Sexual orientation, Transgender, Equality success stories, Positive action, The public sector equality duty, and Reasonable adjustment duty (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2016).

In contrast, prejudice can be defined as an unjustified or incorrect attitude toward an individual based exclusively on the individual's membership in a social group. A prejudiced person may not act on their mood. Therefore, someone can be prejudiced towards a particular group but not discriminate against them. When discussing prejudice and stereotypes, one must consider the issue of colonialism, practices/policies of control by individuals, and power over other public and land. Although colonialism seems to be a part of history that happened long ago, it still has detrimental effects on today's world. Because of colonialism, the world works like it does, with specific alliances and disorders between countries. Discrimination and prejudice are based on the stereotypes one concludes in the head of an individual or group. These stereotypes include but are not limited to race, sex, gender, ethnicity, religion, and birth origin. Throughout history, there have been mass genocides committed solely because of the stereotypes people create about others, for instance, the Holocaust and slavery. Although those are the most prevalent to come to mind when thinking of discrimination, much more is still rooted in much of a country's culture today (Minard, 1952; Pettigrew, 1959; Rogers & Frantz, 1962).

In 1914 a ship, *Koma Gata Maru*, full of passengers from India, traveled to Canada for a better life of what they thought would be full of opportunities; however, they were turned down by the Canadian government who stated, "We have the power to exclude and deport certain immigrants we deem unworthy of Canadian citizenship." (Palmer & Driedger, 2015) Canada, a British colony, could not legally ban Indian immigrants because India was also a British colony; it found a loophole by stating that the journey must be nonstop. The *Koma Gata Maru* had made two stops in China and Japan, meaning Canada had the right to turn them away. This ignited a standoff that lasted two months, where the passengers were stuck on the ship with no food and water before higher forces, the navy, came to force them back to India. When arriving in India, British troops opened fire on the passengers, killing at least 20 and arresting several more. They stated that it was an act of rebellion against the British Empire.

Apartheid, which happened much more recently, consisted of the ruling government of South Africa, the white British Empire that aimed to protect white domination in 1948. "On paper, it appeared to call for equal development and freedom of cultural expression, but how it was implemented made this impossible." (Thomas, 2021). Laws such as the population registration act of 1965 forced individuals to classify as black African, mixed race, or white African. Other actions included but were not limited to discrimination in school, with some including black children being forced into manual labor, no mixed marriages, and cops being allowed to use violence. All of this caused an uproar of opposition from the native Africans to which riots started in hopes of ending apartheid for good. Ultimately the apartheid did not end till 1994 when Nelson Mandela finally evolved the first black president of South Africa.

These are just two endless examples of discrimination and prejudice worldwide that are still prevalent today. Over time, these injustices have been brought to light in conversations across the globe and between alliances of different countries, helping stop violent and criminal acts related to discrimination. However, this does

not stop the infiltration of prejudice that still lies deep within individuals. Families vary from household to household, but the beliefs and values of each member travel down to the generations to come. This has created an overall generation gap between the ages present today. The thoughts, beliefs, and values of the older generation that lived through World War II are in complete opposition to what today's generation believes, deals with, and thinks about others. However, with this comes the teachings of the older generation to either change or stay the same, which is notable in today's generation and those to come. Discrimination is based on stereotypes that individuals typically cannot control, which shows how much of a detrimental effect it can have on an individual and their mental health. These stereotypes, actions, and the beliefs of others ultimately mold an individual into who they are and what they decide to become. It is, therefore, a vital aspect of social psychology; it deserves both attention and research to discover why phenomena like this happen and how to change them to create a better and more sustainable future.

Social media and social psychology

To answer how social media is connected to social psychology should state that social media is a broad collection of digital platforms that radically alter how individuals interact and communicate (McFarland & Ployhart, 2015); it is a kind find external relation between individuals' attitude and their surrounding life. There is an evident relationship between social media and mental health, although it is a reasonably new subject with new research. The association fluctuates to a great extent. In some cases, it is seen to help mental health, while in others, it is seen to cause harm. As it is a relatively new subject, the sample group often falls in the laps of adolescents, and this goes even further as the new generation is the first to rise with social media in their hands.

In some cases, it is seen as beneficial because individuals find themselves isolated and alone in the real world; they turn to social media for connections and find similarities or follow their interests. However, turning to social media opens doors to relationships needing to be more accurate or leads to risky behavior, as often the people they connect with are strangers. This is especially true for adolescents, as teenage years yield the most treacherous behavior, not growth. Like most things in life, social media must be utilized moderately, with a specific focus on adolescent years, as it can lead to harmful mental health but may also reap some benefits. In a study by Weissenbacher et al. (2018), shared tasks were distributed among teams regarding information about health in social media. The units use several systems that detect, extract, and normalize health-generated content in a public virtual space. The teams analyzed and reviewed the data to ensure the systems pulled the correct data. The health-generated content included drug mentions, health mandates related to Covid, changes in medication treatment, self-reporting age, Covid symptoms, self-reported vaccination status, self-reported domestic violence, self-reported chronic stress, and disease mentions. The purpose of this study was to collect just how much data is present in virtual public spaces regarding health and individuals being open about their health. Overall, this article shows how individuals use social media and allow it as a space to open up about personal issues (Valiavska & Smith-Frigerio, 2022).

Another study in 2021 was made up of multiple studies focused on social media's effects on adolescent mental health and the effects of their reaction in society.

Ultimately, the conclusion was that much of the research fluctuated between social media's negative and beneficial impacts on adolescent mental health. However, all the studies pointed toward causal conclusions not being warranted. Instead, the research is cross-sectional, meaning the observational data indicates many outcomes, but there needs to be solid evidence for one specific development. Although there is evident research showing that there are, in fact, effects on adolescent mental health by using social media, there needs to be more evidence to indicate whether social media will benefit or negatively affect individuals. "After all, each adolescent is subject to unique dispositional, social-context, and situational factors that guide their SMU and moderate its effects." (Valkenburg et al., 2021).

In another research study focused on the relationship between social media, psychological adjustment, college belongingness, and Covid-19 that proposed by Arslan et al. (2022), the researchers reported that all these variables depended laboriously on each other during the pandemic and worked emotions, and create a hostile or beneficial impact on mental health and belongingness; also, Mehrad (2020) emphasized that uncommon events and phenomena such as Coronavirus (Covid-19) can be the cause of several challenges in the human lifestyle and individuals feelings, emotions, and performances. These variables show a considerable impact on surfaces. These researchers focused on the effect of Covid-19 anxiety on college belongingness and explored the role of college belongingness and social media addiction during Covid-19. The research, which used Turkish university students as their sample, revealed that Covid-19 anxiety significantly predicts college belongingness and psychological adjustment: social media addiction moderates college belongingness and overall psychological adjustment during Covid-19. All in all, pressure increased during Covid-19 leading to a consequential effect on psychological adjustment and college belongingness. In correlation with this, increased social media use during Covid-19 led to lower Covid-19 anxiety and higher college belongingness, ultimately affecting psychological adjustment. The use of social media provided the sense of belongingness that was taken away from students when Covid-19 mandates were set in place, allowing them to prosper rather than negatively impacting college belongingness and psychological adjustment. The evidence in this study shows that social media can fill the gaps when specific opportunities are taken away, in this instance, the disconnect from Covid-19, positively impacting college belongingness and psychological adjustment. By reviewing these three studies, there is transparent information on both the harmful and beneficial impacts of social media use on mental health. The first study shows how many individuals use social media as an outlet for what is going on in their personal lives. The second reviews multiple studies that indicate that social media use has a beneficial and harmful impact on adolescents' mental health. The previous study shows how social media can fill gaps in the real world to provide a sense of belongingness and connection. Some limitations for future research are the chosen wording and consistent updates. Across all three studies, the words used for social media use varied, confusing both the reader and context, having one broad term for social media use and a more unambiguous indication of social media addiction or general technology use. Lastly, research needs to be consistent as social media use is ever so changing and varies amongst every individual and their circumstances. Overall, social media, directly and indirectly, manages individuals' atmosphere and considerably impacts their daily social behavior and communication.

Theories and approaches: Social psychology

Social psychology contains mainly interpersonal influence, conformity, the minimal social situation, collective arrangement, and double interaction (Weick, 2015). The importance of social psychology is mentioned in different definitions and meanings; various theories support and cover this field of psychology by other scientists, psychologists, and scholars in the social science area, which must be considered comprehensively. For instance, Floyd Henry Allport (1920) focused on social facilitation; he described three ways societal behaviors may be analyzed, co-acting, reciprocal, and co-reciprocal. Allport questions the definition of time, space, and degrees of quality because they represent large-scale behaviors that relate to social psychology, not individual traits, or differences. He believes this method and the results will promise a contribution of practical and theoretical value in human relationships and communications (Allport, 1937).

Bandura (1963) focused on social learning theory that considered process social behavior, which proposes that new behaviors can be acquired by observing and imitating others. Additionally, he intensely focused on the social world. Another researcher was Festinger (1950), who mentioned Cognitive dissonance. He explored the importance of behavior, attitudes, and cognitions in the context of social psychology (Bandura & Walters, 1977).

Tajfel (1971) likewise mentioned the social identity theory and focused intensely on the importance of prejudice. He was the first to focus on social identity; he mentioned the importance of in-group and outgroup behavior, which is more related to social psychology (McIntyre, 2014).

Wiener explained Attribution theory (1986), which referred to the experience of success and failure. This theory is concerned with how individuals interpret events and how this relates to their thinking and behavior, mainly focusing on social psychology. Heider (1958) was the first to propose a psychological theory of attribution, but Weiner and his colleagues developed a theoretical framework that became a significant research paradigm of social psychology. Attribution theory assumes that people try to determine why people do what they do, i.e., attribute causes to behavior. A person seeking to understand why another person did something may attribute one or more causes to that behavior. A three-stage process underlies an attribution:

1. The person must perceive or observe the behavior.
2. Then the person must believe that the behavior was intentionally performed.
3. Then the person must determine if they believe the other person was forced to perform the behavior (in which case the cause is attributed to the situation) or not (in which case the cause is attributed to the other person).

Additionally, Weiner focused his attribution theory on achievement (Sullivan & Weiner, 1974). He identified ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck as the most critical factors affecting attributions for achievement. Attributions are classified along three causal dimensions: locus of control, stability, and controllability. The locus of control dimension has two poles: internal versus external locus of control. The stability dimension captures whether it causes change over time or not. For instance, the ability can be classified as a stable, internal cause, and effort can be categorized as unstable and internal. Controllability contrasts because one can

control, such as skill/efficacy, with causes one cannot control, such as aptitude, mood, others' actions, and luck (Sperlich, 1976; Wilson et al., 1985; Lewis et al., 1990; Daley, 1998).

Milgram (1963) described the Shock experiment that was based on learning and type of communication with participants; his experiment(s) on compliance to control figures was a sequence of social psychology experiments performed by Yale University psychologist Stanley Milgram (Blass, 1999).

Heaney et al. (1973) described The Stanford Prison Experiment based on social roles and interaction. As it is apparent in all these views and approaches, the importance of individual communication, behavior, attitude, and interaction among individuals is evident. This is the exact fact that social psychology speaks about and emphasizes the role of individuals and their understanding and communication in every society and environment. This experiment was back in 1971 when Philip Zimbardo tried to show that correctional officials and criminals would manage to slip into predefined roles, acting in a way they believed was required rather than using their judgment and morals. Zimbardo was trying to demonstrate what happened when all the individuality and dignity were denied away from a human, and their vitality was thoroughly controlled. He wanted to show the dehumanization and loosening of social and moral values that can happen to guards immersed in such a situation.

In general, all the mentioned theories and aspects tried to show the importance of social psychology and its relation to people's behavior, performance, and attitudes in different ways (such as doing some tests and experiments) and analyzing all based on different situations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the main topics of the current research paper focused on the importance of social psychology in lives, belonging and inclusion, a positive attitude, satisfaction, happiness, social influence, discrimination and prejudice, social proof, and social media. These topics are just a handful of the different social psychologies and scholars. The researchers of this study focused on these specific topics that are deeply related to social psychology; because they are what the researchers studied while studying abroad in Barcelona, Spain. The study researchers had the chance to experience how humans react in social environments and research and analyze the abovementioned topics. Learning about this gave them all a microscope perspective and view on social psychology. It helped them additionally to understand not only themselves better but the environment around them as well. In fact, by reviewing all the reports and studies, social psychology only functions with human beings and societies coming together to experience life together. A lot goes into studying and analyzing social psychology because people differ. While learning about other communities and how they function, you look back on your own and compare their differences.

Social Influence is assumed to be a significant factor in understanding social psychology in group relations. It is how people are affected by the real or imagined pressure of others. This Influence is mainly by the media. Social Influence is common in everyday life, whether we are the ones being influenced or are the ones influencing others. This happens when your thoughts, feelings, and actions are affected by another person. The different forms of social Influence are conformity, socialization, peer pressure, obedience, leadership, persuasion, minority influence,

social change, etc. This research paper generally focused on understanding the fundamental social influence processes and how they can be involved in the real world. The research paper also focused on the Influence of social influences on an individual's life in social settings and how they go about certain obstacles. It is unique how the different social worlds function within and with others.

Recommendations and limitations of the study

This study is intended for but is not limited to, students studying social psychology. It is also for different researchers to have a point of reference when writing a research paper on social psychology or any of the topics listed above or focusing on social science areas. The topics of this research that the researchers have discussed are to give future researchers a summary of social psychology and how it plays a part in your day-to-day life.

Additionally, the limitation of this study would have to be that this research paper is based on already written research/previous studies, which could be an issue if the information needs to be more accurate. Therefore, if future researchers focus on quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods studies and collect data in different populations and locations will be valuable in the social psychology area; and will be helpful for other societies, cultures, and individuals. This information creates appropriate conditions for better communication and recognition of individuals with different backgrounds. Another one would be that the researchers of this study needed more data, statistical testing, and a large population of candidates to gather information. Still, the time limitation did not create this possibility. Lastly, self-reporting is limited because it rarely can be independently verified. This is because it could include discrimination, attribution, or exaggeration.

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