

Social Psychology – A First Look

Definition

Social psychology is the study of social behaviour, which occurs when two or more members of the same species interact. Social psychology may be concerned with how people influence each other's behaviour (social influence) or about how our thoughts influence our social behaviour (social cognition).

Social Influence

The study of how the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presents of others. There are three kinds of social influence:

- Conformity – a form of social influence that results from exposure to the majority position. It is the tendency for people to adopt the behaviour, attitudes and values of other members of a reference group.
- Obedience – a type of social influence referring to someone acting in response to direct orders from a figure of perceived authority. There is also the implication that the person receiving the order is to respond in a way that he or she would not otherwise have done without the order.
- Minority influence – people rejecting established norms of majority group members and moving to the position of the majority.