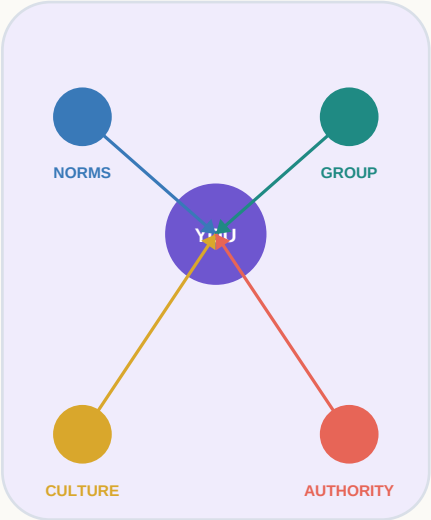
AP PSYCHOLOGY | UNIT 4

TOPIC 4.3

Psychology of Social Situations

Behavior changes with norms, groups, authority, culture, anonymity, and the presence of other people.



THE SOCIAL SITUATION LENS

INFLUENCE

norms, persuasion, conformity, obedience

GROUPS

decisions, effort, identity, performance

HELPING

responsibility, norms, costs, bystanders

BY THE END, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO...

1. Distinguish social influence, persuasion routes, conformity, and obedience.
2. Identify major group processes and cultural influences.
3. Explain conflict reduction, workplace psychology, and prosocial behavior.

BIG IDEA

Connect the social condition to the behavior. A change in group size, authority, anonymity, task difficulty, or responsibility can change what people do.

1 Social influence, persuasion, and groups

Identify the source of pressure, the persuasion cue, and the group condition changing behavior.

WHY PEOPLE FOLLOW OTHERS

NORMATIVE INFLUENCE

Conform to fit in, gain approval, or avoid rejection.

INFORMATIONAL INFLUENCE

Use other people as evidence about what is correct.

CONFORMITY	group pressure	**OBEDIENCE**	authority directive

PERSUASION ROUTES AND REQUESTS

CENTRAL ROUTE

careful processing of strong arguments

PERIPHERAL ROUTE

surface cues, attractiveness, halo effect

FOOT-IN-THE-DOOR

small request, then larger request

DOOR-IN-THE-FACE

large request, then smaller request

SIX GROUP EFFECTS

GROUP POLARIZATION

Discussion strengthens initial views.

GROUPTHINK

Harmony pressure weakens decisions.

DIFFUSION

Others present -> less responsibility.

SOCIAL LOAFING

Less effort on a shared group task.

DEINDIVIDUATION

Anonymity reduces self-awareness.

SOCIAL FACILITATION

Others improve easy or learned tasks.

For social facilitation, task difficulty matters: easy or well-learned tasks benefit most.

2 Culture, conflict, work, and helping

Social behavior reflects shared values, competing goals, workplace conditions, and responsibility cues.

CULTURAL EMPHASIS

INDIVIDUALISM

independence and personal goals

COLLECTIVISM

interdependence and group goals

MULTICULTURALISM

multiple cultural identities and perspectives

CONFLICT AND COOPERATION

SUPERORDINATE GOAL

A shared goal requires rival groups to cooperate and can reduce conflict.

SOCIAL TRAP

Individual self-interest produces a harmful outcome for the group.

I/O PSYCHOLOGY

Studies work performance, management, relationships, and burnout - work-related exhaustion and reduced engagement.

PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR

ALTRUISM

selfless helping

RECIPROCITY NORM

help those who helped us

RESPONSIBILITY NORM

help those who need help

THE BYSTANDER DECISION PATH

NOTICE → INTERPRET → TAKE RESPONSIBILITY → HELP

BYSTANDER EFFECT

Other people can diffuse responsibility and reduce helping. Making one person clearly responsible can interrupt the effect.