

## Quadrant II - Transcript

Welcome everyone to this lecture on Social Psychology.

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Today I will be taking a lecture for the second year Arts students of Psychology semester three. Course code of the subject is PSC 103. We're going to cover the second unit, understanding the social world. The module name is impression formation and management, module number is 11. We're going to focus on impression formation and management, Asch's research tactics for looking good to others. The learning outcomes of this lecture are describing first impressions, forming first impressions and their accuracy using various tactics of impression management.

Impression formation and impression management. When you meet another person for the first time, you are flooded with information. You can see how they look, how they dress, how they speak, and how they behave now. This amount of information is very large. We combine it into an initial first impression of this person, mental representation forming a basis of our reactions to him or her. Impression formation is a very important aspect of social perception.

Now we'll see Asch's research on first impressions that are central and peripheral traits. Now forming first impressions seems effortless. How do we manage to do this? How do we form unified impressions of others in the quick and seemingly effortless way that we often do now? These are some of the questions that Asch set out to study.

Social psychologists at that time were very much influenced by Gestalt psychologists. There are a lot of principles which are put up by Gestalt psychologists on perception. One of those principles was the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. For example, if I show you a picture of a table which has a vase with flowers. When I ask you what is there on the table, you are not going to name the flowers, individual flowers like roses, lilies or carnations. You are going to tell me it is a flower pot, or which has a lot of flaws. So that is the meaning of the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Asch said, we form impressions by adding together all the traits that we observe in other people. We perceive traits in relation to one another, so that traits cease to exist individually and become part of an integrated dynamic whole. What Asch did in order to study this is, he gave individual list of traits possessed by a stranger. They had to indicate their impressions of this person by putting a check mark next to the traits, they felt fit their overall impression of the stranger.

These are the traits which were presented to the participant. You have traits like intelligent, skillful, industrious, warm, determined, practical, cautious. The second list had intelligent, skillful, industrial, cold determined, practical and cautious. These two lists if you look at them carefully, they differ with respect to just two words. The word warm and the word cold. The people reading the first list, they viewed the

stranger more positively than the second list. The words, warm and cold were the central traits. These other ones which shaped the overall impressions of the stranger.

Asch in another study, substituted words polite and blunt for warm and cold. These two lists yielded highly similar impressions of the stranger. Polite and blunt according to Asch are not central traits to color the entire impression of the strangers. Asch concluded, forming impressions of others involves more than just combining individual traits.

Research by Willis and Todorov, they say we form first impressions of other people very quickly. What they did is they showed their participants male and female faces for 1/10th half a second and one second. So 1/10th of a second, half a second or one second. What the participants had to do is they had to rate these people on several traits. What are the traits, you have trustworthiness, you have competence, you have ability, you have aggressiveness and you have attractiveness. Now the second group i.e. another group of participants, they were shown the photograph so they were told to examine the photographs but there were no time constraints or no time limits which were told to them. If we form first impressions quickly, ratings of the two groups should be similar. Whether we look at other's faces for longer period of time or just a fraction of a second. Correlation between these two sets of ratings, the ones which were done without any time limits and once completed at short exposure times, range from about 0.62 zero point 75. So, that means we form impressions of others very quickly. We do not take a lot of time to process, but we form them very quickly.

The next topic. Impression management.

Now all of us have a desire to make a very favorable impression on others. Most of us are going to try to look our best to others whenever we meet them for the first time. Impression management; What is impression management? It is a part of your self presentation, these are efforts which you make to form good impressions or you just want to portray good impressions of your efforts to make good impressions on others. Impression management has many advantages in many situations. Now will see some tactics of impression management.

We have two categories of impression management: self enhancement i.e. efforts to increase one's appeal to others and the next one is other enhancement. Other enhancement is basically efforts to make the target person feel good in various ways. So one is for you and one is for the others. Now we'll see some strategies which are used by people for self enhancement. Now what you do over here is you boost your physical appearance or your style of dress, then also you engage in personal grooming. You use different props to enhance your appeal like fancy bags or gadgets like phones and all that. You appear very skilled or highly skilled. You describe yourself in positive terms how you overcame daunting obstacles i.e. you had a very distressing childhood, so you had to go to a lot of troubles, so you just speak about that.

Some more strategies used for self enhancement: describing themselves in favorable terms more favorable than they deserve. This is basically done to impress people who they want to date. Then you

also bend the truth to enhance your own appeal, i.e. your social media profiles are always with exaggerated qualities and sometimes fake pictures. Then you also use this particular self enhancement techniques which happen both in cyberspace as well as in face to face meetings.

Now will see other enhancement strategies now. First one which is used flattery. You praise the target person. You praise the traits, the accomplishment, the organization which the target person is associated with. You express agreement with the target person's views even though you do not like them. You show a high degree of interest in this person, even if it's a boring conversation you are going to pretend you like that person, the topic whatever he is discussing. You do small favors for these people. You ask them for their advice and feedback in some manner, even if you don't follow or you are not going to follow that advice, you express liking for them nonverbally i.e. high levels of eye contact, you keep on nodding in agreement. You smile at whenever they are talking,

Now we have Wayne and his colleagues, who said that several social skills, especially impression management, they are the best predictors of job performance, rating and assessments of potential for promotion of employees. Studies also indicate impression management tactics when they are used, they are going to succeed in enhancing the appeal of people who use them effectively. If you overuse them or if you use them ineffectively, they can backfire and they can also produce negative rather than positive reactions from others.

With that, we come to the end of this lecture. These are some of the references and books for additional readings.

Thank you very much.