Social Cognition and Perception

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**Social perception**

Social perception is the study of how people form an impression and how they make inference about other people. It also explains why others behave like the way they do. Nonverbal communication could be an important source of social perception. Nonverbal communication provides lots of information to others. Nonverbal communication is the transfer of emotions without words. That can be done through facial expression, gestures, tone of voice, body moment and position, and facial expressions. The nonverbal cues communicate personality types and those traits (Aronson, Wilson, Akert, & Samuel R., n.d.).

The primary expressions are mostly shown on faces, and facial expressions have a major impact on social perception. These nonverbal forms of communication are specific to species and are not culturally specific. Researchers have found out that fear face helps to develop perception and disgust face tend to minimize it. The major emotional expressions for anger, fear, surprises, happiness, and sadness are similar. However, the nonverbal expressions to show pride are decoded and encoded cross-culturally (Aronson et al., n.d.).

**Social judgment about another person**

Decoding these expressions is sometimes difficult. Some good situations are easy to pick. When we first met someone, we make a quick assumption of that person. People make perception of the other person very quickly. Today I met a person at a bus stop who looked drunk and broken. I never met this person before and his body moment, gesture, and get up showed that he is over drunk and mentally retarded. Based on my past experience of interaction with such person, my automatic thinking responded that the person would be mentally ill and alcoholic. My schema helped me to interpret his situation. As he started walking towards me, I thought he is going to steal something from me because I have come in contact with such person on the past and that accessibility of schema made me run away from him. It was my schema that made me develop a particular perception regarding that person.

The other thing that might have helped to interpreted various situation is the cultural values that have helped to develop an analytical thinking style. This style helps an individual to focus on the properties of an object, and it makes to pay less attention to the situation or the context that surround that individual. A person with very odd getup and has less control over bodily moment made, we think of him as an alcoholic, mentally ratardid and a thief as well. I made dispositional attribution for the person’s behavior because such people in our culture are considered as mentally ill and involved in crimes. I looked at the person based on the commonalities in the personality with another alcoholic that I came in contact with on a daily basis.

However, individuals who observe the behavior of someone they spontaneously conclude the situation and trait that are causing the behavior of those persons. These processes of inferences are called spontaneous situation inferences and spontaneous trait inferences. These interferences are depending on cultural variation as well. Western people make such interference very often due to their individualist social orientation (Lee, Shimizu, Masuda, & Uleman, 2017).

When I met one of my friends for the first time, I thought of her as very introvert because she was not very talkative and did not express any behavior when we were in a group. I did not see her behavior as situational, but I thought that she has this trait of being calm, and I used spontaneous trait inferences to define her personality. That made me make automatic thinking about her personality without focusing on the surrounding situation. I related a dispositional attribution to her personality because I did not grow up in an individualistic society where people are confined to their personal boundaries. So Social perception about people can be shaped by individual cultural values, situational interpretations, and different ways of expressions.

References

Aronson, E., Wilson, T. D., Akert, R. M., & Samuel R., S. (n.d.). Social Psychology (10th ed.).

Lee, H., Shimizu, Y., Masuda, T., & Uleman, J. S. (2017). Cultural differences in spontaneous trait and situation inferences. 627–643.