

Chapter 10 Summary

- It is an established view in psychology that social perception is culturally rooted. We acquire judgments, attitudes, and beliefs from our cultural milieu.
- One of the most fundamental elements of the process of social perception and social cognition is attitude. Cross-culturally, attitudes help us understand and make sense of the world. They serve an ego-defensive function assisting us to feel better about ourselves. Finally, attitudes serve a function that allows us to express our values.
- Cultures develop, maintain, and justify particular sets of values along the following dimensions: conservatism versus autonomy, hierarchy versus egalitarianism, and mastery versus harmony. There could be collectivist and individualist patterns in human values. There are also debates about the existence of so-called Western and non-Western values.
- Cognitive balance and cognitive dissonance theories suggest that people seek consistency among their attitudes. Notwithstanding limitations, this trend was established among individuals in different countries. One of the forms of consistency seeking is psychological dogmatism, which has a wide range of cultural manifestations.
- Research on social attributions provides some evidence that people across countries, despite many similarities, could express different attribution styles, and these differences are deeply rooted in people's social and cultural background.
- Despite expectations about culture-bound manifestations of locus of control, its general pattern across many countries studied was highly inconsistent.
- Culture can have an impact on various individual manifestations of the fundamental attribution error and other patterns of social attribution.
- Even though general moral principles of behavior may be universal, the interpretations of these principles can be strongly influenced by each particular culture. There are two basic views on morality. The first view, a justice based view of morality, is associated with

beliefs that emphasize the autonomy of the individual and his or her individual rights. The second view, a duty-based view, is based on the belief that obligation to others is the basis of morality.

- Individuals make distinctions between the world within them and the world outside them. Both individual traits and environmental circumstances shape people's self-perception in a variety of ways.
- The process of social perception often makes people simplify the incoming information and categorize it by groups. Stereotypes can lead people to think that all members of a given group have a particular trait. Research suggests that stereotypes could have a number of universal characteristics common in different cultural settings.

Key Terms

Cognitive Dissonance Psychological tensions caused by the perceived mismatch (dissonance) between (1) attitudes and behavior, (2) two or more decisions, or (3) two or more attitudes.

Dogmatism The tendency to be closed-minded, rigid, and inflexible in one's opinions and subsequent behavior.

Locus of Control The generalized beliefs that the control of one's reinforcements rests either on controllable internal factors (internal locus of control) or on uncontrollable external factors (external locus of control).

National Character The perceived predominant behavioral and psychological features and traits common in most people of a nation.

Self-Centered Bias The tendency to take credit for successes and avoid responsibility for failures.

Social Attribution The process through which we seek to explain and identify the causes of the behavior of others as well as our own actions.

Social Cognition The process through which we interpret, remember, and then use information about the social world.

Social Perception The process through which we seek to know and understand other people and ourselves.

Stereotypes Traits or characteristics generally attributed to all members of specific groups.

Unassuming Bias The tendency to explain one's own success as a result of external factors, and one's failure as a result of personal mistakes or weaknesses.

Value A complex belief that reflects a principle, standard, or quality considered by the individual as the most desirable or appropriate.