

PY 228

PSYCHOLOGY OF
INTERPERSONAL
RELATIONS

Introduction to Interpersonal Relations

- ▶ **What is Interpersonal Relations?**
- ▶ Interpersonal relations is **an art of using systematic knowledge about human behavior** to improve personal, job and career effectiveness.
- ▶ It is the **study of why our beliefs, attitudes and behaviors cause relationship problems** in our lives and in work-related situations.

- ▶ **What is Interpersonal Relations?**
- ▶ It emphasizes the analysis of human behavior, self-development, prevention strategies, and resolution of behavioral problems.

Benefits of Studying Interpersonal Relations

- 1. Acquiring valid information about human behavior**
- 2. Develop skills in dealing with people.**

Benefits of Studying Interpersonal Relations

- 3. Cope with personal and job problems.**
- 4. Capitalize on opportunities.**

Benefits of Studying Interpersonal Relations

4. Capitalize on opportunities

- ▶ **Soft Skills vs. Hard Skills**
- ▶ 90 % of firing in organizations result from poor attitudes, inappropriate behavior, and problems in interpersonal relationships rather than substandard technical skill.

Benefits of Studying Interpersonal Relations

- ▶ **4. Capitalize on opportunities (cont.)**
- ▶ **Soft Skills vs. Hard Skills**
- ▶ **The 2005 Wall Street Journal/ Harris Interactive business school pool placed the Dartmouth College MBA program number one because Dartmouth students have humble attitudes, strong work ethics, high relationship skills, and mature.**



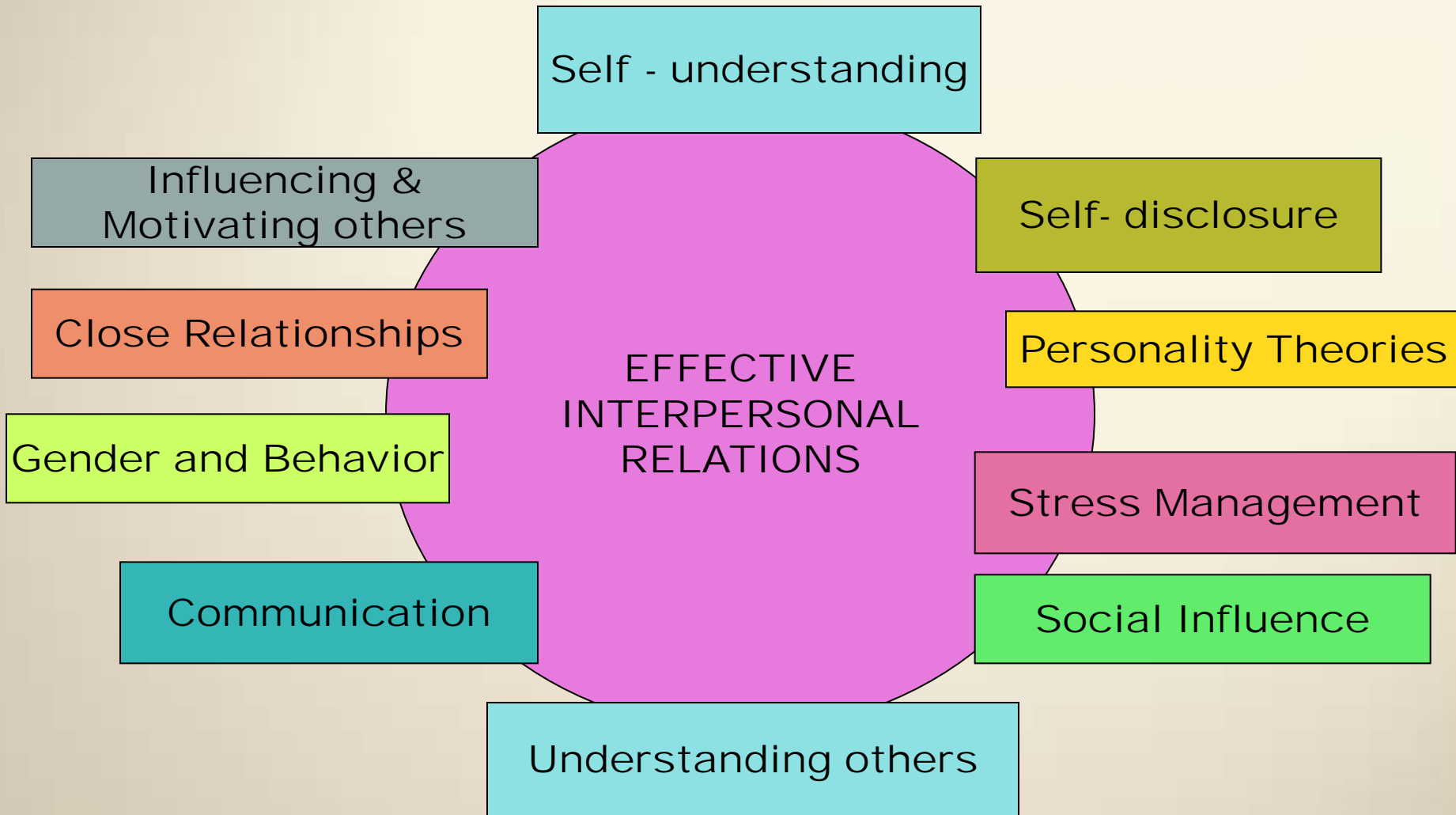
Human Relations begins with Self - Understanding

- ▶ **Important starting point: self – examination**
 - **Public self: what a person communicates about him/herself and what others actually perceive about the person.**
 - **Private self: what a person thinks he/she is.**

Human Relations begins with Self - Understanding

- ▶ Two self – evaluation traps:
 - **1. Become more self - aware and make comparisons to some arbitrary standard of behavior. (too low evaluation)**
 - **2. Overestimate competence (too high evaluation)**
- ▶ Antidote is to search for honest and objective feedback to supplement self – evaluation. (360 degree feedback)

Major Themes in Interpersonal Relations



Interpersonal Relations and Adjustment in Today's World

The Paradox of Progress

- ▶ What is the “Paradox of Progress”?
 - Today, we enjoy more technological advances, more leisure time and choices than ever before.
 - However, we are not happier. In fact, our perceived quality of life seems to be worse.

The Paradox of progress

1. Time: Time-saving from technology versus not enough time

The Paradox of progress

Point : Modern technology has provided time saving devices

(automobiles, mobile phones, personal computers etc.)

Counter points:

- Not having enough time. (Why?)
- 51% of the adult respondents would rather have more time than more money (Weil & Rosen, 1997)
- American society suffers from an episodic of sleep deprivation.

The Paradox of progress

2. Economics : Abundance versus dissatisfaction

The Paradox of progress

Point:

In late 1990s, the amount of money spent on luxury goods increased four times faster than overall spending (Frank, 1999).

5 – 6 % of American population are troubled by a compulsive buying syndrome.

The Paradox of progress

Counterpoint:

- Americans were least satisfied with their finance
(among 13 aspects of their life satisfaction, Myers, 2000)
- People who are more concerned with money and possessions tend to report lower levels of happiness than others.
- Is good life "the goods life."????

The Paradox of progress

3. Choice : appeal versus regret

Point: Life choices have increased exponentially.

(consumer products, education, work, life styles, personal appearance etc.)

One local supermarket: 285 varieties of cookies, 61 suntan lotion, 175 salad dressing

Work: flexitime, telework

Life styles: single mom, remarriage, cohabitation, homosexual relationship



The Paradox of progress

Counterpoint:

- Having more alternatives increase the potential for rumination, postdecision regret, and anticipated regret.
- Choice overload undermines individual's happiness and contribute to depression and anxiety.



The Paradox of progress

4. Technology : Progress versus devastation

- Point: Modern technology has gradually provided us with unprecedented control over the world around us.
- (agriculture, water supply, medicine health technology etc.)

The Paradox of progress

- Counterpoint: Modern technology had a devastating negative impact on the world around us.
- (global warming, water pollution, destruction of the ozone layer etc.)

The Paradox of Progress

- ▶ Why aren't we happier with more technological advances, more leisure time and choices than ever before?

The Search for Direction

- The greatest challenge of modern life may be our search for meaning in life or a sense of direction.
- What is your meaning of life?

The Search for Direction

- In desperation, people turn to many ineffective and/or self-destructive sources for enlightenment
- (e.g., radio personalities, cults)

The Search for Direction

- One of the most prominent sources is self-help books.
- But, how valuable are they?

The Search for Direction

- What to look for in an ineffective self-help book:
 - 1. Their message is too vague to be useful
 - 2. They are not based on solid, scientific research
 - 3. They don't provide explicit directions for changing behavior
 - 4. They encourage a self-centered approach to life

(Let your heart follows your instinct)

The Search for Direction

- What to look for in a good self-help book:
 1. Clarity in communication
 2. Realistic (don't promise too much)
 3. Books that focus on a particular kind of problem or behavior
 4. Advice that is grounded in a theoretical framework supported by research
 5. Explicit directions for changing behavior



The Roots of Happiness

An Empirical Analysis



Group the following variables in terms of their importance to your happiness. (a. What are not important? b. What are moderately important? c. What are very important?)

1. Money

2. Parenthood

3. Physical attractiveness

4. Intelligence

5. Health

6. Friendship and friends

7. Religion

8. Love and marriage

9. work

10. Gender

11. Age

12. Genetic

The Roots of Happiness

- Conclusions regarding roots of happiness:
 1. Subjective feelings of happiness are more important than objective measures.
 2. Happiness is *relative*.
 - We evaluate our happiness relative based on:
 - a. what others around us have
 - b. relative to our own expectations.
 3. It is hard for people to predict what will make them happy.

The Roots of Happiness

4. Happiness is affected by *hedonic adaptation*.

(e.g. when circumstances improve, such as income, our baseline for happiness increases as well, so we don't feel happier.)

Reading Assignment

- ▶ The Scientific Approach to Behavior P. 11 – 17.