

The topic chosen is a high school or college campus shooting. The psychological perspective chosen is social cognitive learning and fundamental attribution error.

Lay people and Social Psychologist Assessment

In the situation mentioned above, the modalities of assessing the situation would be different depending on the level of training. A social psychologist would approach the campus shooting act differently from a common person. A layperson would first ask the aggressor about the reason for shooting at a campus or school. Aronson et al. (2023) report that asking people about the reason for engaging in an activity is ineffective as the individual is usually not forthcoming with the true reasons or is unaware. Moreover, they may make up fictional reasons to justify their acts. Another way a layperson may approach the situation is by using folk wisdom. In this case, they may say phrases such as “Too much freedom is a cause of indiscipline.” Aronson et al. (2023) explain that proverbs are double-edged and cannot be relied on as they cancel each other.

On the other hand, a social psychologist will scientifically research the possible conditions that may have led to the shooting altercation. The objective scientific ways of explaining the shooting include evolutionary psychology, individual differences in personality, social situations, and social, economic, and political factors (Aronson et al., 2023). Aronson et al. (2023) outline that people have different personality traits influencing them to behave and perform certain acts.

Social Psychology Perspectives

Fundamental Attribution Error

According to Aronson et al. (2023), fundamental attribution error is the act of people using personality qualities to explain their or other individuals' behavior and underestimating the impact of social influence and the present situation. Aronson et al. (2023) outline that using personality traits to explain bizarre acts such as murder and shooting gives people a feeling of contentment

that it cannot happen to them as the social world has no influence. In this case, the aggressor is the one who is shooting in a high school and is most likely to have an antisocial personality disorder. People with antisocial personality disorders are impulsive and disrespectful and disregard their safety and that of others (APA, 2013).

Social Cognitive Learning

According to Aronson et al. (2023), people learn social behavior largely by observation, apprentice, making sense of the behavior, and mimicking the observed behavior. In this case, the aggressor may be from a violent neighborhood, watched a lot of violent movies, and plays violent video games such as call of duty. Yao et al. (2019) report that aggressive behaviors of anger, disinhibition, hostility, and anger were positively associated with exposure to violent video games.

Strategies for Reducing Aggression

Individual Level

Catharsis is a method of letting out pent-up emotions by opening up to friends, colleagues, or strangers. Aronson et al. (2023) report that expressing anger through communication enables one to gain insight into the situation and analyze the relationship dynamics in detail. Outline that one can also express themselves in writing to unburden oneself with angry deep thoughts and feelings.

Societal Level

The societal strategy for reducing violence, such as shooting in schools, is by halting the rejection-rage cycle. Aronson et al. (2023) report that social rejection is attributable to a significant proportion of suicide, hopelessness, and violence. Strategies for halting the rejection-rage cycle include adjusting the school structure by creating a safe environment where students can express themselves and introducing programs for ending bullying.

References

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- Aronson, E., Wilson, T. D., Sommers, S. R., Page-Gould, E., & Lewis, Jr., N. (2023). *Social Psychology* (11th ed.). Pearson.
- Yao, M., Zhou, Y., Li, J., & Gao, X. (2019). Violent video games exposure and aggression: The role of moral disengagement, anger, hostility, and disinhibition. *Aggressive Behavior*, 45(6), 662-670. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ab.21860>