# History Of Social Psychology

Myers (2014) defines Social Psychology as a scientific study of how people think about, relate to, and influence one another. Social Psychology therefore, tries to understand how thoughts, environment and behaviors can shape an individual's characters. Social Psychology began with theoretical contributions of early scholars in 18th Century. Amongst them are; David Hume, Adam smith, Immanuel Kant, Auguste Comte, Emile' Durkheim just to mention a few.

In 1739, David Hume a Philosopher wrote a book titled "Treatise Human Nature" which focused on enthusiasm, feelings and compassion, which he suggested these would contribute to conformity of an individual to society. Another scholar, Adam Smith in 1759 authored "theory of moral sentiments" in which he claimed that what an individual becomes is mainly created by interaction. In later years, a German philosopher Immanuel Kant came up with theories in areas of knowledge, emotion, the self, and manipulation by others. Kant argued that studying of humans ought to involve the learning of the whole mind in order to appreciate human knowledge of the world.

Social Psychology as a discipline began in the United States of America in early 20th century. In 1898, Norman Triplette, an American Psychologist published the first research paper which became a milestone in the discipline. His empirical study noted that cyclists tended to put much effort when cycling with others than simply racing against a clock. This scientific approach was used to study individual's behavior in a social context hence marked the birth of social psychology. Another scholar Max Ringleman, French Agricultural Engineer, conducted a research published in 1913. His research was a twist of Triplette work as he focused on the effects of presence of others. He noted that individuals tend to perform poorly on simple tasks due to presence of others giving an example of rope pulling. In 1930 Kurt Lewin, one of gestalt psychologists, fled to the United States from Nazi Germany and was instrumental in developing the field.

In conclusion, English Psychologists William MacDougall (1908), Edward Ross and Floyd Allport (1924) are credited for being the first three writers of Social Psychology text books. Their books focus on interaction of individuals and their social setting including much emphasis on use of experiment to establish the unique discipline of social psychology.

## Relevance of Social Psychology to Security Sector

Security relies much on people than it does with technology. Employees in security institutions are much greater to destroy the organizational reputation or make the mission unachievable if workers think, feel and act wrongly. Social Psychology is therefore applicable in security institutions and can improve organizational performance through changing of beliefs and attitudes, and character of individual or groups within. For example, Social psychology can be applied in Malawi Prison Service by recruiting well trained Social Psychologists into the security institution. These can offer internal trainings to Prison Warders or Wardress for them to understand that the reason for putting someone in a Jail is to transform one's thinking, attitudes and behavior rather than personality generalization that all convicts are criminals and deserve corporal punishment. Alternatively, relevance of Social Psychology can be used to study the

minds and behavior of Juvenile convicts in order to shape their cognition and behavior so that they should become reliable citizens. Additionally, Social Psychology can be applied on aged convicts by observing their behavior so that right counseling can conducted to instill for them to be accepted in society.

Social psychology fundamentals can assist top managers to avoid prejudice when conducting job interviews. This can assist to recruit more competent staff in security organizations. For example, well trained Social Psychologist Human Resource Department of Malawi Prisons Service can avoid common biases and prejudice during interviewing of prospective candidate, like only judging the muscular person as fit for the organization and leaving out the slim bodied since hasty generalizations are usually negative. Therefore social Psychologists can assess fully all the candidates to establish their suitability before employment.

Lastly, Social Psychology can help in maintaining the organizational culture of security institutions. Observably, most junior officers in security institutions follow the ethics of their superiors. For example, a prison warder can neglect to put on a hat just because a senior officer rarely put on a hat. This follows the principal of conformity where an individual tend to follow what others are doing within a social setup. Social Psychology therefore can help senior officers in security organs to live by example in order not to dilute the organizational culture.