

# Sociocultural Approach to Understanding Behaviour

The sociocultural approach to behaviour investigates the role of social and cultural influences in shaping thinking and human behaviour. An increasing body of culturally informed research has made cross-cultural psychology as well as cultural psychology a contemporary topic of debate among psychologists working in the field. Theories, concepts and research studies provide the background for a more nuanced understanding of the variety and complexity of human behaviour. This is important in the modern globalized world where issues related to migration and integration are on the rise.

Key figures in the field of modern social psychology have often favoured experimental methods to understand how social context influences behaviours, identities, attitudes and cognitions, however, by studying acculturation in terms of intergroup relations, we can start to understand that the same processes may be seen in the interaction between cultural groups. Social and cultural psychologists are now also using qualitative research methods in order to get a better understanding of intergroup relations as well as the process of acculturation.

## **The individual and the group**

- Social identity theory
- Social cognitive theory
- Stereotypes

## **Culture and its influence on behavior and cognition**

- Culture and cultural norms
- Cultural dimensions

## **Cultural influences on individual attitudes, identity and behaviours**

- Enculturation and acculturation
- Universalism/relativism
- Emic and etic perspectives
- Factors underlying cultural change

## **The influence of globalization on individual attitudes, identities and behavior**

- How globalization may influence attitudes, identities and behaviour.
- The effect of the interaction of local and global influences on behaviour.
- Methods used to study the influence of globalization on behaviour.

## **Relevant to all the topics are:**

- the contribution of research methods used in the sociocultural approach to understanding human behaviour
- ethical considerations in the investigation of the sociocultural approach to understanding human behaviour.