

# Application of social exchange theory in social psychology

Sociology



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According to Thibaut & Kelly (1959), who are often cited for being major contributors to the Social Exchange Theory, they clearly define the theory that “ the concepts of Comparison Level and Comparison Level of Alternatives is used to explain how the parties in an exchange relationship weigh their benefits and costs of the exchange relationship to determine their relationship commitment and satisfaction level” (Thibaut & Kelley, p. 21). To be more specific, based on Social Exchange Theory, they believe that people engage in social exchange with the purpose of achieving their personal goals (Thibaut & Kelley, p. 31).

Additionally, in the textbook Social Psychology, the author states the similar statement, which says, “ Social Exchange Theory starts with assumption that people are motivated to maximize their own feeling of satisfaction”( , P. ). Since the Social Exchange Theory help us fully understand the relationship between friends, I will further explore and explain this theory with two examples and my personal experience. In a study named Factors Related to Initiating Interpersonal Contacts on Internet Dating Sites: A View From the social exchange theory, Dr. Shtatfeld, an education professor in Beit Berl College, Israel, applies Social Exchange Theory into social dating website.

He detailedly explores the “ factors that influence dating-site users to initiate contact with potential romantic partners” (Shtatfeld, Page 19). Based on the research, Dr. Shtatfeld finds that “ dating-site users initiated contact primarily with those having a similar marital status or slightly better characteristics (income, education, writing skills)” (Shtatfeld, Page 19). This means that people are easily attracted by the person with similar background.

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Based on the principles of the Social Exchange Theory, “ the main factors governing interpersonal attraction, according to which people are attracted to or are interested in people similar to themselves and to those who offer meaningful resources (such as appearance, education, income and health) that may be converted into possible rewards” (Shtatfeld, Page 21). Additionally, the Social Exchange Theory states that people are easily attracted to those who offer them benefits. Thus, the behaviors of dating-site users are explained in the Social Exchange Theory.