Attitudes

What We Will Cover in This Section

• What attitudes are.
• The relationship between attitudes and behavior.
• Theories of attitudes.

Attitudes

A favorable or unfavorable evaluative reaction toward something or someone.
Attitude Influence

Types of Attitudes

- Explicit Attitudes.
- Implicit Attitudes.
- Dual Attitudes.

Origins of Attitudes

1. Mere Exposure
2. Social Learning
3. Classical Conditioning
4. Operant Conditioning
Mere Exposure Effect

*The more we are exposed to an object the more we will like them.*

How Attitudes are Learned

Classical Conditioning
What Is It?
A kind of learning that occurs when
• a neutral stimulus (A) becomes so strongly associated with another stimulus (B) that results in a learned response.
• Then A alone causes that response.

Natural Behavior
Neutral Stimulus

YUM!
Learning

Later

Operant Conditioning

- The consequences of behavior lead to learning.
  - Positive reinforcement.
  - Negative reinforcement.
Positive Reinforcement

Behavior that gets something you want.

Examples

- A parent praising a child for good grades.
- Learning that slowing down where the policeman usually lurks avoids getting a speeding ticket.
- Learning that smiling when shaking someone’s hand leads to a good initial impression.

Observational Learning
What is It?

Learning that occurs when our behavior is influenced by the actions of others called models.

Examples

- Wearing clothes worn by a popular entertainment figure.
- Voting Democratic because your parents are Democrats.
- Learning not to call your father a *%#@*$%!!! when you see your brother getting hit for doing so.

Genetics

Innate emotional responses that are biologically determined.
Major Issue

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR?

When Attitudes Predict Behavior

- Attitude Specificity.
- Potency.
- Vested interest.
- Self-Aware, when reminded.
- Developed through experience.

When Behavior Predicts Attitudes

At times we adjust our attitudes to make them consistent with our [expected] behavior.
When behavior influences attitudes.

- Role playing.
- Saying something leads to belief.
- Escalating wrongdoing.
- Social action.

Why Actions Affect Attitudes

BALANCE THEORIES

Self-Presentation Theory

Expressing oneself and behaving in ways designed to create a favorable impression or an impression that corresponds to one’s ideals.
Self-Monitoring

Changing our behavior to meet the demands of a situation or the expectations of others.

Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Have you ever faced a situation like this?

1. You are on a diet but you just ate a dozen chocolate chip cookies.
2. You waited in line for an hour for concert tickets then found the music to be disappointing.
3. You bake in the sun or a tanning bed even thought you know that there are risks of skin cancer and you might look like an overcooked pork chop.
4. You leave work on a paper to the last minute knowing that the delay will probably harm your grade.
Dissonance

...a lack of harmony among musical notes.

...the tension or clash that comes from two or more unharmonious elements.

Self-Perception Theory

People assess their attitudes, beliefs, and other internal states through the observation of their own behavior.

Cognitive Dissonance

- Tension arises from holding two thoughts or beliefs that are psychologically inconsistent.
  - Can be inconsistency in attitudes.
  - Can be inconsistency between attitudes and behavior.
- We will adjust to make these beliefs consistent to relieve this tension.
Festinger & Carlsmith (1959) Stage 1

- First, participants were asked to twist wooden pegs placed in a board for 30 minutes.
- Second participants were asked to put spools of thread on to pegs and take them off again for 30 minutes.

Festinger & Carlsmith, Stage 2

- Participants were told that to test the effects of motivation in this study tell the next participant that the study was enjoyable and fun.
- Two groups.
  - Group A paid $1.00 for doing the briefing.
  - Group B paid $20.00 for doing the briefing.
- Then, after the briefing the participants were asked how they felt about the study.

Festinger & Carlsmith, Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Step 2 Payment</th>
<th>Step 3 Evaluation of task enjoyment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All participants do the boring peg twisting then spool activity. All participants were asked to brief another group</td>
<td>Group A, Lie Paid $1.00</td>
<td>23.5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group B, Lie Paid $20.00</td>
<td>9.8</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group C, No lie No pay</td>
<td>5.9</td>
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</table>
Cognitive Dissonance (Cont.)

INSUFFICIENT JUSTIFICATION

We reduce dissonance by internally justifying our behavior when external justification is weak.

Typically occurs when people freely perform an attitude-discrepant behavior without strong external pressure.

Cognitive Dissonance (Cont.)

POST-DECISION DISSONANCE

After making a decision we reduce dissonance by upgrading the chosen alternative and disparaging the alternatives.

Cognitive Dissonance (Cont.)

SELECTIVE EXPOSURE

Seeking out information that supports the decisions we have made and avoiding information that is inconsistent with our choice.
Cognitive Dissonance Summary

1. Tends to occur when we feel personal responsibility for our actions (internal attribution).
2. We must be aware of alternatives.
3. We must feel some level of psychological arousal.
4. We must link the arousal to the competing cognitions.

How Dissonance can be Reduced

SELF AFFIRMATION

People who deal with dissonance deal with it by seeking to assert their adequacy as individuals.

Quiz Question

Under what conditions are attitudes related to behavior?