

## Attitude Change & Cognitive Dissonance Experiments

### 1. Hovland and Wies (1952)

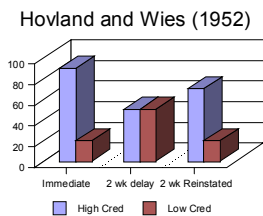
P's read message and given the following source information.

High credibility source = Robert Oppenheimer

Low credibility Source = Pravda

### Hovland and Wies (1952)

- After 2 week delay the low credible source is as persuasive as the high credible message.
- At time 2 the source is not remembered, the source advantage and deficits are absent.
- If, at time 2, you remind participants of the source, then the source advantage and deficits reappear.

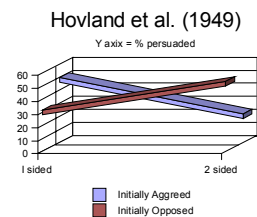


### 2. One sided vs. Two Sided Appeal

- Should you present both sides of the argument or not

Hovland et al. (1949)

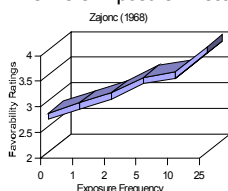
- WWII, post VE day- one group of soldiers exposed to persuasive message, stating that the war with Japan would last 2 more years.
- Second group exposed to a two sided argument. Stated opposing arguments.
- It depends on your initial attitude



### 3.

-The Mere Exposure Effect - Robert Zajonc (1968)

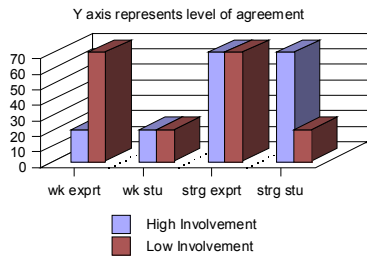
#### The Mere Exposure Effect



### 4. Petty & Cacioppo (1986)

- Presented P's with one of 2 messages arguing for establishing a new college course required for graduating Seniors (one strong one weak).
- 1/2 of each of the messages was presented by either a college professor or a high school student.
- In each of these 4 groups 1/2 were told this policy would go into effect before they graduate (high involvement) and 1/2 were told it would not affect them (low involvement)

### Petty & Cacioppo 1986



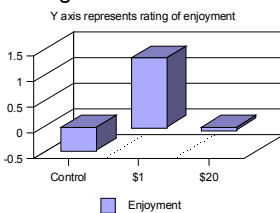
### 5. Festinger & Carlsmith (1957)

- everyone performs the boring task
- no one not on drugs would find it interesting or challenging
- everyone is told that helper did not show up and that E needs help with next participant.
- E offers \$1 to ½ the subjects (Small Inducement), \$20 to other ½ (Large Inducement).
- (control condition does not perform the counter attitudinal behavior)
- P's who agree, go in and tell other "Participant" (a confederate) how much fun the study was (A counter-attitudinal behavior - they are lying).

### 5. Festinger & Carlsmith (1957)

- P's later rate how enjoyable, informative, and important the task was and whether they would participate in a similar experiment.
- Only ratings of enjoyment of the experiment showed reliably significant differences.

Festinger & Carlsmith 1957



### 6. Induced Compliance via writing counter attitudinal essays.

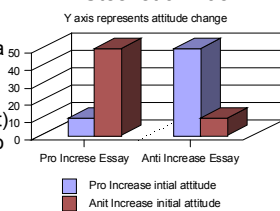
#### Steele, Southwick, & Critchlow (1981)

- Ask participants to write an essay. ½ of P's (college students) asked to write essay that argues for a tuition increase. ½ asked to write essay against tuition increase.
- Participants can choose to write essay or not write essay, but not given choice of which essay. The illusion of choice makes the inducement non-obvious
- No reward is offered.

### Steele, Southwick, & Critchlow (1981)

- Attitude is measured prior to say writing and after essay writing.
- When participants wrote a counter attitudinal essay (argues for the position they were initially against) their attitudes changed to be more like the essay they wrote.

Steel et al. 1981

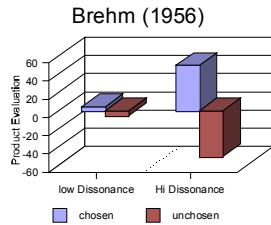


### 7. Brehm (1956)

- brought female college students to the lab.
- S's rated the desirability of household appliances (toaster, blender, etc.).
- S's told they would be given one of the items for participating.
- 2 conditions
  - Low dissonance = S's got to choose between their 2nd and 5th ranked items (easy choice)
  - High Dissonance = S's got to choose between their 2nd and 3th ranked items.

## 7. Brehm (1956)

- After making choice, S's rated the items again.
- Dissonance occurs because even the forgone alternative is attractive.
- Dissonance is reduced by derogation of the forgone choice.



## 8. Aronson & Mills (1959)

- S's told that before they actually participate in an actual discussion, they should "listen in" on a discussion.
- From the listening booth they hear the most boring discussion of sex, ever (even by 1959 standards).
- Aronson & Mills describe it as a discussion of the "secondary sex behavior in the lower animals. The participants inadvertently contradicted themselves and one another, mumbled several non-sequiturs, started sentences that they never finished, hemmed, hawed, and in general conducted one of the most worthless and uninteresting discussions imaginable".

## 8. Aronson & Mills (1959)

- S's in the severe suffering group rated the discussion and participants more positively than the mild suffering group did.
- This is an analog of fraternity hazing, tribal initiations, and military indoctrination.