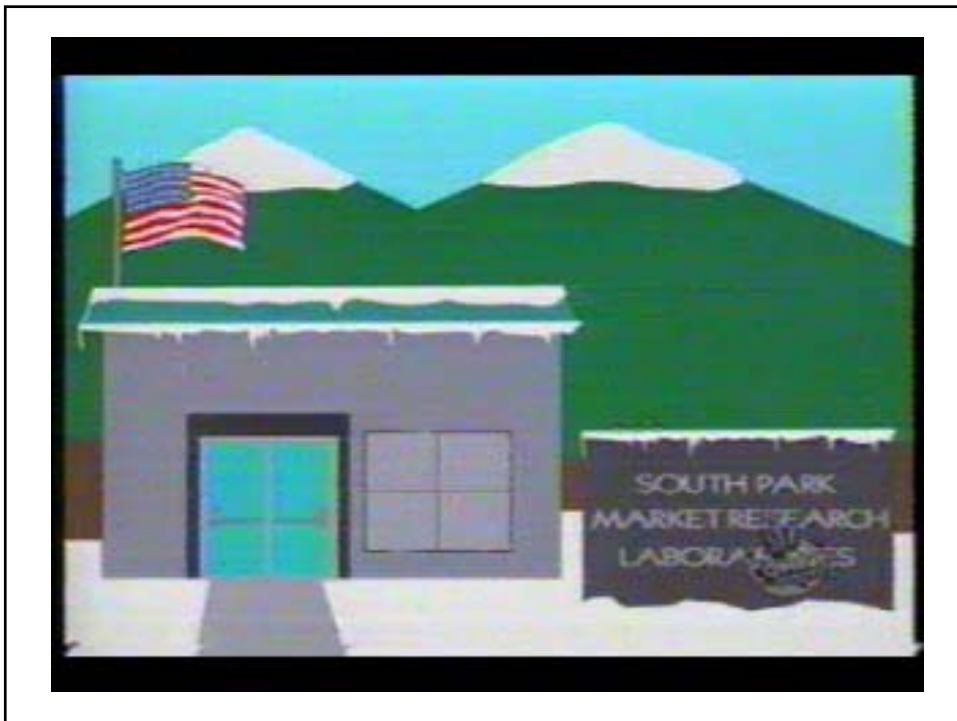


Chapter 5

Attitudes



I. Attitudes

Attitudes = An enduring evaluations of people, objects, or ideas - enduring but flexible

B. ABC's of Attitudes

Affect - evaluations are based on positive and negative emotions associated with a target.

Behavior - attitudes are thought to mediate (explain) the expression of behaviors toward the target.

Cognitions- the information we have and beliefs we hold about the target

II. Attitude - Behavior Consistency

1. It was initially assumed that Attitudes mediated (determined/explained) the relationship between input and output.

If you accurately measured attitudes then you could accurately predict behavior.

2. Data suggested that the attitude behavior link was not this direct.

a. LaPiere (1934) – Book p. 159

- Serving a Chinese Couple

b. Wrightsman (1969)

- Voting for McGovern & Paying your taxes

c. 60-70's becomes a crisis for the attitude theorists.

- Many researchers note the poor correlations between attitude/personality (r 's of .20-.30) measures and behavioral measures
- Attitudes predict 3-9% (r^2) of one's behaviors. Often labeled the ***Personality Coefficient***.

3. Reasons for Att-Beh. Inconsistency

a. Behavior is multideterminant

Theory of Reasoned Action:

- attitudes shape behaviors
- Situations (social norms) constrain behaviors

Theory of Planned Behavior includes

perceived control over outcomes 💡

3. Reasons Cont.

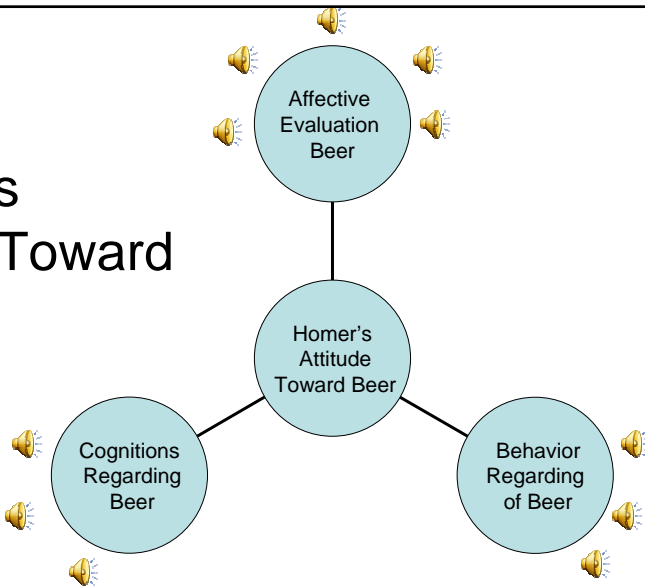
b. Attitudes are multideterminant

- Strength
- Stability
- Accessibility & Salience
- Relevance to behavior in question

c. Sometimes behavior shapes our attitudes

- Cognitive Dissonance and attitude change
- Self Perception and new attitudes

Homer Simpson's Attitudes Toward Beer



III Persuasion = Attitude Change

III. Persuasion & Attitude Change

- Carl Hovland's Yale University Persuasion Research group continued the research they began during WWII
 - Guided by the perspective that people are rational decision makers (expectancy value theory)
- 20+ years of research found that persuasion depends on:
"Who Says What to Whom"
 - The Source, The Message, & The Receiver

A. Who -Source Characteristics

1. Credibility increases Persuasion

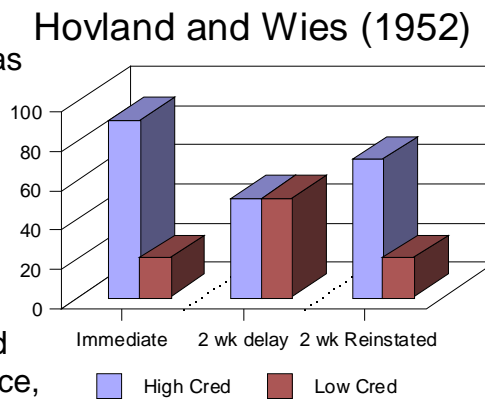
- a. expertise = do you know what you are talking about
 - T.S. Elliot vs. Bob (a college student)
- b. Trustworthiness = are you being honest
 - Higher when message is not intended to persuade (the fly on the wall)
 - Higher when source argues against own self interest

c. Source Credibility and the Sleeper Effect

- Persuasive message presented by a non-credible source will result in little immediate attitude change, but over time the attitude may change.
- Hovland and Wies (1952)
P's read messages attributed to one of two sources.
High credibility source = New England Journal of Med
Low credibility Source = Town News Letter

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.



Other Source Characteristics

d. Attractiveness

- Attractive Individuals have more persuasive power than unattractive individuals.

e. Likability

- Bill Cosby and Jello Pudding
- O.J. Simpson

f. Similarity

- similar attitude/value, back ground (e.g., ethnicity, region, age cohort), appearance (physical and style, hair, clothes, etc.)

Dembroski et al. (1978) - African American children given persuasive messages about dental care showed more attitude change when the message was came from a Black Dentist than when it came from a White dentist.

B. What : Message Characteristics

1. Argument Quality

- Stronger Arguments are more persuasive.
 - Are Attitudes Additive or Averaged
 - If additive then we can present both strong and weak arguments together to increase persuasion.
e.g. Strong (1.00) + Weak (.50) = 1.5
 - If Averaged weak arguments bring down the overall average and should be avoided.
e.g. Strong (1.00) + Weak (.50)/2 = .75
 - Data suggests that they are Averaged

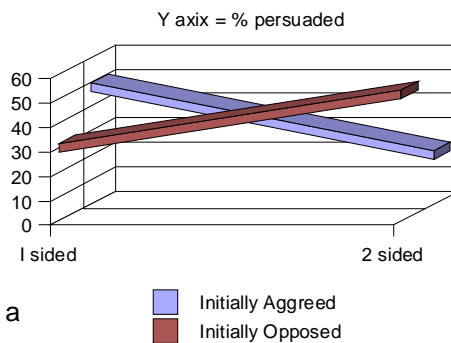
2. One sided vs. Two Sided Appeal

- 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 the pros of continuing the war with Japan.
- Second group exposed to a two sided argument. Presented Pros and Cons.
- It depends on your initial attitude

Hovland et al. (1949)



3. Emotional Appeals

- Positive Emotions (Bliss is Ignorance?)
 - Janis et al. (1965) = participants given M&M's during message presentation showed more attitude change than participants not given M&M's.
- Negative Emotions
 - Fear Messages are persuasive but only if the target believes that:
 - 1) the dangers are serious
 - 2) the dangers are probable
 - 3) the suggested steps to avoid the danger are effective
 - 4) they have the ability to take the steps
 - Otherwise they can either result in no change or **reactance = boomerang effects**

C. To Whom: Recipient Characteristics

1. Prior attitude
 - E.g.: one-sided vs. two sided messages,
2. Need for Cognition
 - individual difference in how much cognitive effort people like to expend.
 - a. I really enjoy a task that involves coming up with new solutions to problems. HNC
 - b. Thinking is not my idea of fun. LNC
 - High need for cognition =
Persuaded by Message Quality (Central Characteristics)
 - Low need for cognition =
Persuaded by the Peripheral aspects of the message (e.g., expert, attractive, emotional appeal).

3. Involvement

- When an issue is not relevant to a person, they are much less likely to process the quality of the message.
- Low involvement = persuaded by peripheral characteristics (Who said it)
- High involvement = persuaded by central characteristics (Quality of the Message)

D. Putting it all Together: The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion

Petty & Cacioppo (1986)

- Suggest that people are both rational and irrational (Motivated Tactician Metaphor)
- Whether persuasion occurs, depends on:
 1. Whether we are motivated and able to elaborate (think about) the message being presented
 - message has High relevance
 - receiver has High Need for Cognition
 - Mood is neutral or mildly negative
 - communicator speaks at a normal rate of speed
 - the receiver has the cognitive resources to process the message.

D. ELM Cont.

2. It depends on who said what.

a. If Elaboration Motivation High = Central Rout to Persuasion

- Strong Message = attitude change
- Weak Message = no attitude change

b. If Elaboration Motivation Low = Peripheral Rout to Persuasion.

- Source Credibility, Attractiveness, Similarity
- Presentation Style
- Length of the message
- Repetition of Main Points

D. ELM cont

3. Rout to Persuasion determines type of attitude change

a. Central Rout = new attitudes are strong, enduring, resistant to counter-arguments, and predictive of behavior.

b. Peripheral Rout = new attitudes are weak, flexible, susceptible to counter-arguments, and poor predictors of behavior.

IV. Cognitive Dissonance

A. Leon Festinger's Cognitive Dissonance Theory

- Based on the view of humans as consistency seekers.
- An extension of Heider's Balance Theory
 - P – O – X Triangles

Dissonance = an inconsistency between one's beliefs, attitudes, and or behaviors. Often conceptualized as a Negative Emotional state.

B. Beliefs, Attitudes, and behaviors can be related in 3 ways

- 1) Irrelevant - "I wear pants" & "I believe in the tooth fairy"
- 2) Consonant - "I am wearing pants" & "It is good to wear pants in public"
"I like eating cheesy poofs" & "people who eat cheesy poofs are helpful"
- 3) Dissonant - "I am not wearing Pants and it is good" & "It is good to wear pants in public"
"I eat cheezy poofs & I hate terrorsits" & "people who eat cheesy poofs support terrorists"

B. continued

- Dissonant relationships result in a state of Cognitive Dissonance which is aversive. There is always a drive to reduce dissonance.
 - When strongly held attitudes are dissonant, the drive is stronger
 - When many attitudes are dissonant, the drive is stronger

C. 3 routs to Dissonance Reduction

1. Add Consonant Beliefs (basically a rationalization)

- Not that many people saw me without pants, so it was not that public.
- It is liberating not to wear pants sometimes.
- I don't eat many cheesy poofs.
- If I don't eat cheesy poofs, I could go insane and launch a frenzied killing spree. For me, eating cheesy poofs is good.
- This is what the \$20 group did in the Festinger & Carlsmith Study

C. 3 routs to Dissonance Reduction

2. Change Behavior

- I better put some pants on.
- I will stop eating cheesy poofs.

3. Change dissonant attitude

- Wearing pants in public is bad.
- The cheesy poof / terrorism link is only government sponsored propaganda.
- This is what the \$1 group did in the Festinger & Carlsmith study.

D. The Weakest Link

- When choosing among the alternatives, people gravitate toward the weakest link.
 - often it is hard to undo a behavior once it is done.
 - if the dissonance is strong it may be hard to add enough Consonant Beliefs to overcome the Dissonance.
 - thus, changing the attitude is the easiest path to dissonance reduction.

D. 3 Major Dissonance Inducing Research Paradigms (methods)

- Induced Compliance with Insufficient Justification
- Free Choice and Post Decisional Regret
- Effort Justification

1) Induced Compliance with Insufficient Justification

- a. When induced (convinced / pressured) to perform a counter-attitudinal behavior and the inducement is not obvious (No sufficient Justification), then dissonance results.
 - When the inducement (pressure / reward) is large and obvious, then no dissonance results.

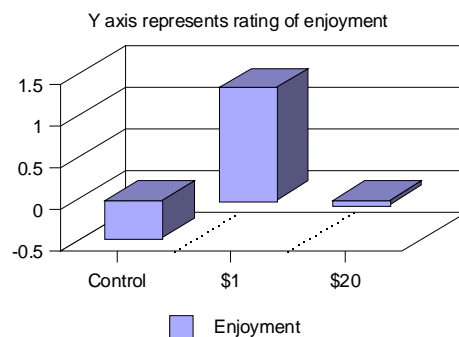
b. Festinger & Carlsmith (1957)

- 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 $\frac{1}{2}$ the subjects (Small Inducement), \$20 to other $\frac{1}{2}$ (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).

b. 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



b. Festinger & Carlsmith (1957)

- Subjects in the \$20 condition experience dissonance, but reduce it through Adding a Consonant Belief.
 - I lied to get \$20, which is a good reason to tell a scientifically useful lie.
- Subjects in the \$1 condition do not have a good reason to lie. There is no consonant belief to add. They reduce dissonance by changing their attitude toward the task.

2. Post Decisional Regret

- Dissonance can result from making a choice between highly desirable alternatives, e.g., in consumer situations.
- The negative aspects of chosen alternative are dissonant with the fact that you chose it.
- The positive aspects of the unchosen alternative are dissonant with the fact that you did not chose it.

3. Effort Justification

- When we go to great personal expense to achieve something and it falls short of our expectations we may experience dissonance.
 - I stood in the rain to get tickets, the tickets were \$50 each, I drove 5 hrs to see the band, it took 2 hrs to get to my parking space, and the band only played for 45 minutes.
- We change our attitudes about the outcomes, to reduce dissonance.
 - How was the concert? It was great

a. When Prophecy Fails
- Marion Keech and The Planet
Clarion

b. Aronson & Mills (1959)

- Suffering and Group Liking
- Female college students asked to participate in a group discussion about sexual behavior.
- Told they first had to go through a screening process to ensure that they would not be too embarrassed to participate
- Two conditions
 - Mild Suffering - S's read a list of mildly sexual words in front of the Male experimenter. E.g., prostitute, virgin, petting.
 - Severe Suffering - S's read a list of extreme and rather obscene words in front of the Male experimenter. E.g., ?

b. 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".

b. 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.