

Ch. 7 Attraction

I. Attraction

- Interpersonal Attraction : The strength and positivity of one's attitude regarding another individual.

II Physical Attractiveness

- What determines physical attractiveness?

Faces

- Neotony = cuteness, we like what is child-like (large eyes, small nose and mouth, disproportionately large head - poofy hair)
- Average of all faces
 - schema matching
 - This does not work for dog or bird composites
 - Innate Preference for Symmetry
 - Symmetry as a signal of health/reproductive fitness
 - though composites are preferred even when symmetry is controlled for.
- Feminine Faces make men attractive

Weight Stereotypes

- Overweight people have no self-control or willpower
- They are fat because they caused themselves to be fat
- they are untrustworthy
- they are less competent
- Fat women are rated as less feminine and less sexual.

- The Attractiveness stereotype: What is Beautiful is Good

People rate Attractive males and females as:

Smarter

Sexually warm and responsive

Kind Strong Modest Outgoing Nurturant

Sensitive Interesting Poised Sociable Exciting Dates

Better Character

People also expect attractive people to have futures with

More prestige Happier marriages

Be more competent in marriage

More social and Professional success

Have more fulfilling lives.

- There is truth in these stereotypes

- happier and more sociable

- make more money in their jobs

- highly attractive people make approximately 2,000 more a year than people rated as less attractive (on a 1-5 scale)

- Attractiveness is the number 1 predictor of self-esteem

- Attractiveness is associated with peer popularity

- Explanation for this? Behavioral Confirmation Effects (self-fulfilling prophesy)

Limitations?

- The Matching Hypothesis

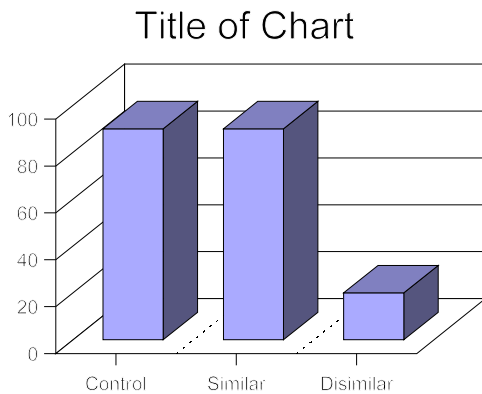
- We may have more positive ratings of attractive people, but we prefer to have relationships with people who are equally attractive to themselves.

III Similarity

- Do Birds of a Feather Flock together?
- The Matching Hypothesis
 - people have relationships with people similar in physical attractiveness
 - people tend to prefer others who are similar in IQ
- Attitude Similarity
 - Most of the literature focuses on Similarity in Attitudes.
 - Byrne & Nelson (1965) - As the proportion of similar attitudes increases, so do ratings of attraction (p. 284, figure 7.16)

- Rosenbaum's Repulsion Hypothesis

- we are not attracted by similarity, but repulsed by dissimilarity:
- tested with
 - Control Group - no attitude information
 - Similar Group - given just similar attitude info
 - Dissimilar Group - given just dissimilar att. info.
- Similar and Control rated equally highly attractive
- Dissimilar rated very low.
- Interpreted as Similarity is irrelevant to our evaluations.



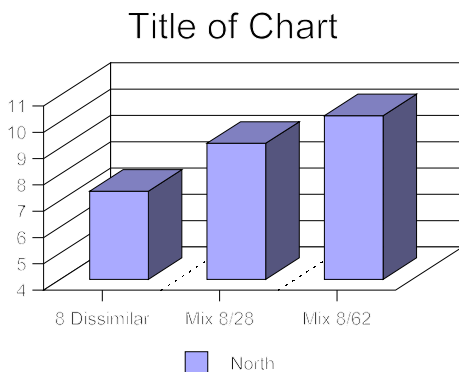
- Smeaton, Byrne, & Murnen (1989)
- ruled out the possibility that Rosenbaum's control group really represented a 100% similarity group (the false consensus effect - when we know nothing about a person we overestimate their similarity to us).

Test-

- Group 1 = 8 dissimilar attitudes / 0 Similar
- Group 2 = 8 dissimilar attitudes / 28 Similar
- Group 3 = 8 dissimilar attitudes / 62 Similar

Hypothesis = if Rosenbaum is right, then none of the groups should differ.

Results- Group 1 and Group 3 were significantly different, suggests that similarity does have an effect.



- Chapman (1995, unpublished masters thesis) & Singh and Teoh (2000).

- Dissimilarity information has a greater impact than attraction than similarity information.

IV. Theories of Attraction

A. Social Exchange theory

- Liking those who reward us - Equity
 - We are attracted to individuals when the perceived costs outweigh the perceived costs and the benefits of alternative interactions.

CL = Critical Level (Benefits - Costs)

CLalt = Critical Level of alternative interactions.

- When cost benefit calculus fall below CL or CLalt then relationship becomes unattractive.
- Liking those who are associated with rewards
 - Liking those who look good
 - The attractiveness stereotype
 - If attractiveness is rewarded then attractive people may have rewards to distribute.
 - BIRGING (Basking In Reflected Glory)
 - We can gain status / rewards for being associated with attractive people.
 - Sports fans - when the team wins: "We Won"
 - when the team loses: "They lost"
 - When a college team wins, students are more likely to wear their school colors the following day (compared to post loss days).
- Reciprocity: Liking those who like us
 - It is rewarding to be liked.

- Problems =

- Rational Model- but people are not always rational
- There are other resource distribution patterns besides Equity (Equality = each according to his need, favored in collectivist cultures)

B. Balance Theory

- Heider Revisited - P-O-X // Newcomb A-O-X
- Social Comparisons and the drive for similarity

- We use social comparisons to make accurate judgements about our attributes, abilities, attitudes.
- When we perceive ourselves to be different from important others, it creates negative feelings.
- We choose similar others as comparators to avoid negative feelings.
- E.g., the matching hypothesis for physical attractiveness.

- Evolutionary Theory

- Sex-Related Differences in Attraction

- males rate physical attractiveness as more important for relationship formation than females do.

Females rate status as more important than males do.

Differential Reproductive strategies

- males select mates that are more likely to be reproductively viable (signaled by youth & health = clear smooth skin, good hair (shiny and strong)) to ensure genetic transmission
- females select mates that will be more likely to provide resources to ensure survival of the infant & therefore genetic transmission.

- Preference for similarity

- Similarity is preferred because it indicates genetic relatedness. If I share with those who are genetically related, then it is more likely that “our” genes survive.
- Problem, similarity is often in the eye of the beholder. There are an infinite number of ways that we can be similar and different. (Grape jello and a lawn mower have a lot of similarities).