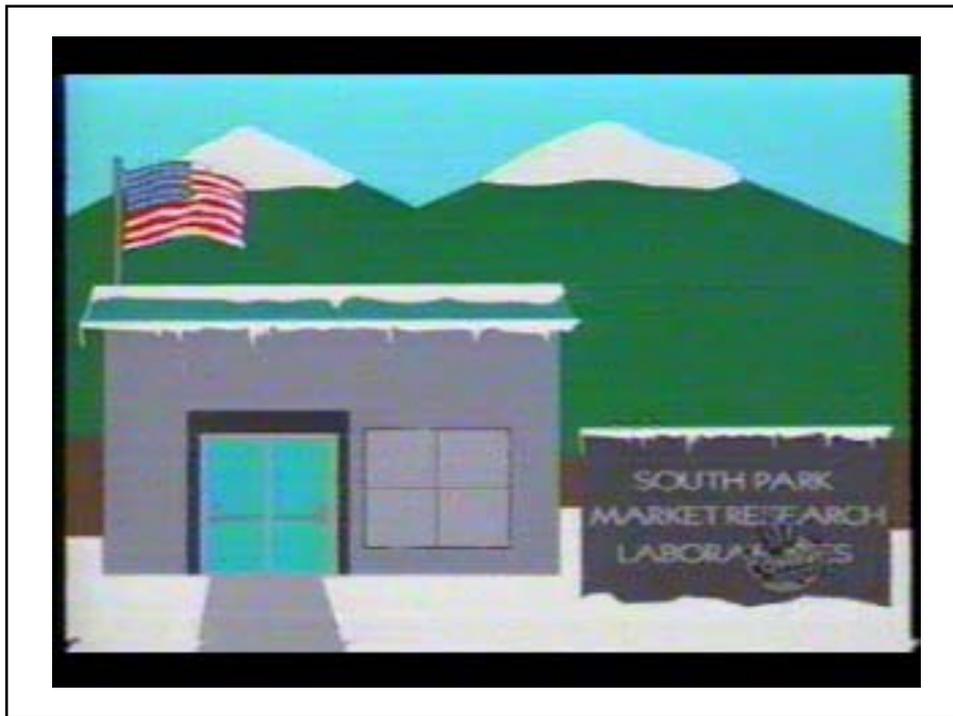


# Chapter 5

## Attitudes



# I. Attitudes

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

Typically measured with self-reports on multiple items, using multi-point (e.g.1-7) rating scale

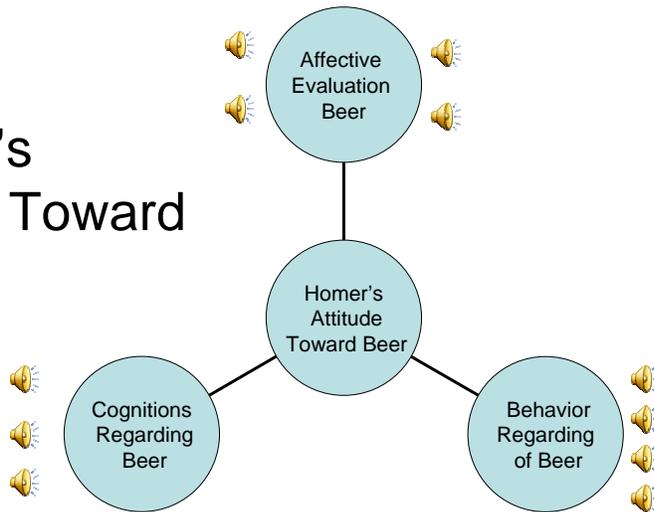
## B. ABC's of Attitudes

Affect - positive and negative emotions associated with a target.

Behavior – beh. is the result of attitudes (sometimes).

Cognitions- information and beliefs about the target

## Homer Simpson's Attitudes Toward Beer



## II. Attitude - Behavior Consistency

1. It was initially assumed that Attitudes mediated (determined/explained) the relationship between input and output.  
accurately measured attitudes would 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 measures and behavioral measures
- $r$ 's of .20-.30: labeled the **Personality Coefficient**.
- Attitudes predict 4-9% ( $r^2$ ) of one's behaviors

### 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

## III Persuasion = Attitude Change

### III. Persuasion & Attitude Change

- Carl Hovland's Yale University Persuasion Research Group continued the research they began during WWII
- 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 (non-common effects)

### c. Source Credibility and the Sleeper Effect

- Non-credible sources can become persuasive over time.
- Hovland and Weiss (1952)  
P's read a message, and were given one of two sources.  
High credibility source = New England Journal of Med  
Low credibility Source = Town News Letter

## Hovland and Weiss (1952)

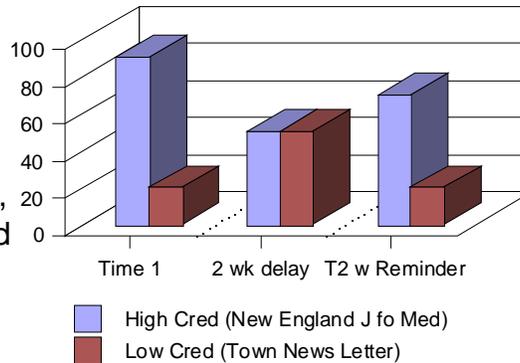
- Time 1

Credible source = advantage

Non-credible source = disadvantage

- Time 2 (2 weeks later) = both sources equally persuasive
- If, at time 2, you remind participants of the source, the source advantage and deficits remain.

## Hovland and Wies (1952)



## Other Source Characteristics

### d. Attractiveness

- Attractive Individuals are more persuasive.

### e. Likability

- Celebrity Endorsements
- Celebrity Trials

### f. Similarity

- similar attitudes/values, background (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.  
Black dentist was more persuasive than White.

## B. What : Message Characteristics

### 1. Argument Quality

- Stronger Arguments are more persuasive.

- Are Attitudes Additive or Averaged

If additive: strong + weak = increase persuasion.

e.g. Strong(1.00) + Weak(.50) = 1.5

If Averaged: strong + weak arguments = less persuasion

e.g. [Strong(1.00) + Weak(.50)]/2 = .75

- Data suggests that they are Averaged

## 2. One sided vs. Two Sided Appeal

Q: Should you present both sides of the argument or not?

Hovland et al. (1949)

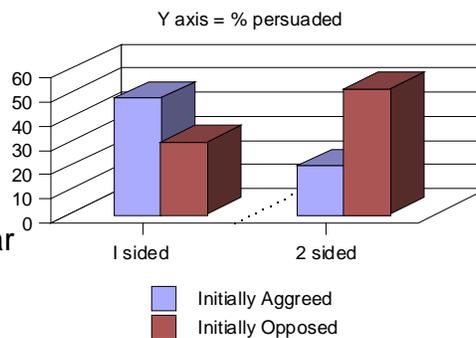
WWII, post VE day- Gave soldiers message about continuing war Japan.

- Grp 1 – only got pro war message (one sided)

- Grp 2 – Got Pros and Cons ( two sided)

A: It depends on your initial attitude

Hovland et al. (1949)



### 3. Emotional Appeals

- Positive Emotions (Bliss is Ignorance?)

- Janis et al. (1965) =

- M&Ms (yummy) + Message = Persuasion.

- Negative Emotions

- Fear Messages are persuasive if:

- 1) the dangers are serious and likely

- 2) effective steps to avoid the danger are given

- 3) audience has the ability to take the steps

- 4) the level of fear is moderate

- 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 differences in the cognitive effort people like to expend.

- High Need for Cognition: I really enjoy a task that involves coming up with new solutions to problems.

- Low Need for Cognition: Thinking is not my idea of fun.

- HNC = Persuaded by Central Characteristics of messages (e.g. Message Quality)

- LNC = Persuaded by Peripheral Characteristics of messages (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. Motivation and ability to elaborate (think about) persuasive messages
    - communicator speaks at a normal rate of speed
    - message has High relevance
    - receiver has High Need for Cognition
    - receiver mood is neutral or mildly negative
    - receiver has enough cognitive resources

## D. ELM Cont.

2. It depends on who said what.

a. High Elaboration Motivation = Central Rout to Persuasion

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

b. Low Elaboration Motivation = 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

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 like 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.

## C. 3 routs to Dissonance Reduction

### 2. Change dissonant attitude

- Wearing pants in public is bad.
- The cheesy poof / terrorism link is only government sponsored propaganda.

### 3. Change Behavior

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

## 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

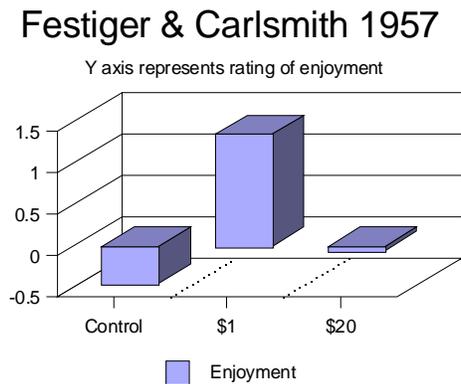
- a. When induced (convinced / pressured) to perform a counter-attitudinal behavior and the inducement is not obvious (No sufficient Justification), then dissonance results.
  - When the inducement (pressure / reward) is large and obvious, then no dissonance results.

## 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.



## 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, vagina, petting.
  - Severe Suffering - S's read a list of extreme and rather obscene words in front of the Male experimenter. E.g. Fuck, Cock, and Screw