Social Psychology activity aides & Tutorial Engagement Tasks

Detecting and resisting compliance techniques

From telemarketers and salespeople to TV and internet advertisements, would-be persuaders often come armed with special *compliance techniques*: strategies that may manipulate you into saying yes when you really want to say no. By learning to identify these techniques, you will be in a better position to resist them.

The powerful **norm of reciprocity** 💬 *involves the expectation that when others treat us well, we should respond in kind*. Thus, to get you to comply with a request, I can do something nice for you now—such as an unsolicited favour—in the hope that you will feel pressure to reciprocate later when I present you with my request (**Cialdini, 2008**).

Now consider the **door-in-the-face technique** 💬 : *a persuader makes a large request, expecting you to reject it* (you 'slam the door' in the persuader's face), *and then presents a smaller request*. Telemarketers feast on this technique. Rather than ask you directly for a modest monetary donation to some organisation, they first ask for a much larger contribution, knowing that you will say no. After you politely refuse, they ask for the smaller contribution. In one experiment, after people declined an initial request to donate $25 to a charity, they were more likely to donate $2 than were participants who were directly asked for $2 (**Wang et al., 1989**). To be effective, the same persuader must make both requests. The persuader 'compromises' by making the second smaller request, so we feel pressure to reciprocate by complying (**Lecat et al., 2009**). Refusing the first request also may produce guilt, and complying with the smaller request may help us reduce guilt or feel socially responsible (**Tusing & Dillard, 2000**).

Using the **foot-in-the-door technique** 💬 , *a persuader gets you to comply with a small request first* (getting the 'foot in the door') *and later presents a larger request* (**Eastwick & Gardner, 2009**). Imagine receiving an email from a stranger who asks for simple advice about word-processing software. It takes less than a minute to reply, and you do—as did all the participants in an actual experiment (**Guéguen, 2002**). After you comply, the person sends a second email asking you to help with a class project by filling out a 20-minute online questionnaire. In the experiment, 76 per cent of university students complied, compared to merely 44 per cent in a control group that received only the class-project request.
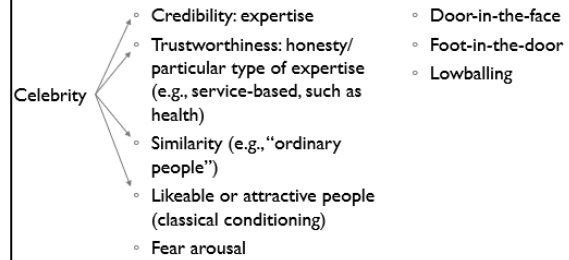
With a final technique, **lowballing** 💬 , *a persuader gets you to commit to some action and then—before you actually perform the behaviour—he or she increases the 'cost' of that same behaviour* (**Cialdini, 2008**). Imagine negotiating a budget holiday for $2000, a 'great price'. The travel agent says, 'I need to confirm this with my manager', comes back shortly and states, 'I'm afraid my manager says the price is too low. But you can have the all-inclusive holiday for only $400 more. It's still a great price.' At this point, you are more likely to go through with the deal than you would have been had the 'real' $2400 price been quoted at the outset.

Both lowballing and the foot-in-the-door technique involve moving from a smaller request to a larger, more costly one. With lowballing, however, the stakes for the *same behaviour* are raised after you commit to it but *before* you consummate the behaviour. Having made a commitment, you may find it easier to rationalise the added costs or may feel obligated to the person to whom you made the commitment.

Persuasion

Recap:

Techniques of persuasion (attempts at attitude change) discussed in the online lecture

Celebrity
- Credibility: expertise
- Trustworthiness: honesty/ particular type of expertise (e.g., service-based, such as health)
- Similarity (e.g., "ordinary people")
- Likeable or attractive people (classical conditioning)
- Fear arousal

- Door-in-the-face
- Foot-in-the-door
- Lowballing

Tutorial Engagement Task 1

What is the difference between persuasion and social influence? Select ALL that apply.

A. Social influence occurs through mechanisms tied to *group* dynamics; most notably, social norms and roles.

B. Social influence affects behaviour, whereas persuasion affects attitudes.

C. Persuasion is specific to marketing.

D. Persuasion can fail, whereas social influence is automatic.

Tutorial Engagement Task 2

What is the main technique being employed in each advertisement?

Select from: fear arousal, credibility and trustworthiness, celebrity, similarity, likeability.

Oral B: _____

Ford Flex: _____

Diet Coke: _____

Nescafe: _____

Quit smoking: _____