COM 31600: Prin. Of Persuasion

Chapter 4: Social Scientific Approaches to Persuasion

Empirical Methods are methods referring to the practice of validating knowledge through observing phenomenon.

Changes in attitude and behavior are the focus of empiricism in persuasion.

**Dual-process theories** propose two different modes of information processing. The first is fast and effortless, associative and is based on heuristics. The second is slow, rule-based processing with high-effort reasoning. There are two major theories that garner the most attention.

* ELM (Elaboration likelihood Model)
  + Two routes
    - Central
      * High focus
      * Systematic
      * Conscious
    - Peripheral
      * Low effort
      * Subconscious
      * Mental shortcuts
* Heuristic-systematic model
  + Two routes
    - Systematic Processing
      * Comprehensive
      * Slow
      * High effort
    - Heuristic Processing
      * Low effort
      * Fast
      * Mental rules of thumb that are very useful

What’s the difference? ELM believes that all situations can be either Central or Peripherally focused. HSM believes that situations can be on a spectrum between systematic and heuristic and can occur both at the same time or independently.

What happens with too much info provided? We don’t know….

Sometimes visuals aren’t always good for your persuasion. They can override your speech.

Russel Fazio believes attitudes could be triggered without deliberation. This applies to the difficulty of changing someone’s behavior. Since millions of pathways are part of a habit it takes time to rewire them.

Carl Hovland founded the **variable-analytic approach**. The Yale group that conducted the experiments to this approach, they viewed how people would need reinforcement in support of change. They need to be motivated to alter their stance.

Source credibility is vital in influencing your audience, your credibility will normally undergo a peripheral process by the audience while major controversy may cause them to focus on it.

Three major dimensions arise in credibility:

* Expertise
* Trustworthiness
* Attractiveness

Credibility will degrade over time as your message separates from you.

The decaying link between message and credibility is the **sleeper effect**. This is bad when your credibility is high and can be lost over time, it can work when your initial credibility is lower but you have strong arguments.

High-cred. sources can have low impact when people have little motivation to focus on it. However, high-cred. sources can be more effective using threats or presenting negative opinions. Expertise is typically the best way to get credibility. Similarity helps with credibility.

**Affinity scams** use the tendency of credibility to pass from each person in the group when someone joins. Like Ponzi schemes.

Stature and eye contact both improve credibility.

**Pelz-effect** suggests that people like to be associated with those who have power and influence at high levels because it enhances their self-esteem.

**Primacy effect:** The most recent information will stay in the mind longer, so the strongest evidence should come first

**Recency effect:** The most recently presented information has this same impact.

**Message-sidedness** is an indicator of how the persuader presents their argument and the other arguments.

Hovland suggested that bringing up negative arguments can improve your position with the audience.

You can launch a preemptive attack against arguments against you, and it can force your audience to focus on your message.

**Biased information processing** occurs when a decision-maker favors a particular position and interpret things in terms of that position. This can arise from a lopsided memory favoring one position.

**Inoculation** is the practice of warning your audience or others from potentially damaging information or persuasive attempts that may happen in the future. You might do this through offering up a weaker idea of the threat.

Mood affects you decision making,

* Anger does not encourage objective processing
* Happiness does not encourage in-depth processing

Good moods have little motivation to expend energy to systematically breakdown some argument.

Neutral or sad moods improve the scrutiny of the audience.

**Fear** is a continuing tool in persuasion. Drive-reduction is a key idea, **pleasure-pain principle** posits that people will be compelled to avoid pain and seek pleasure.

The idea that a threat can be dealt with is called **efficacy**. If a negative outcome seems unsubstantial to the receiver, then its effectiveness is likely to be negligible.

Fear however becomes less effective as you apply less or more, like a parabola. High levels of fear can lead to **defensive avoidance** where people will try to avoid or ignore the issue if they can’t do anything in regard to it.

Witte proposed the Extended Parallel Process Model of fear appeals.

The EPPM proposes that fear appeals invoke threat appraisal and then threat mitigation. The first determines how dangerous something is and how soon it must be dealt with. The second process happens when the threat is determined as real, but that it can’t be dealt with easily. The second process will lead you to coping with the issue internally.

The EPPM has little support in evidence and studies.

High-efficacy fear messages are better than low-efficacy. The audience must think they can do something about the negative stimulus.

**Fear, Uncertainty, and Doubt are used to leverage persuasion in a persuaders favor.**

**Social Judgement Theory** focuses on how we form reference points or “anchors”.

An **anchor** is an internal point of reference that we use for internal comparisons of the outside world. These anchor’s help form the **latitude of acceptance** and **latitude of rejection**. These are ranges are the level of acceptable or objectionable positions, respectively. Both ranges typically are capped by the most acceptable or objectionable position.

Highly ego-evolved people will have smaller latitudes of acceptance and larger latitudes of rejection.

These anchors typically form from childhood norms.

**Decoy effect** involves inputting decoys into a situation to make the main candidate look better.

Shock tactics are used to invoke powerful emotions in the audience.

**Mere Exposure effect**: The more you are exposed to something the more positively you will view it.

Expectancy-value models are the idea that changes in behavior result from a rational process of assessing personal beliefs and attitudes in conjunction with the normative beliefs of important persons around us.

**Theory of Reasoned Action** suggests that our behavioral intentions toward changing are imperative predictors of actually changing behavior, not our attitudes.

**Normative influence** is a person’s belief that important individuals or groups think it is advisable to perform or not perform certain behaviors.

**Theory of planned Behavior** adds the idea of perceived behavioral control

**Norms-based approaches** are approaches that use peer pressure to convince people.

**Compliance gaining** considers how you could persuade someone to do something.

Although, persuaders tend to use different gaining techniques for different situations.

**Face Threats** are attacks on a speakers character.

It is important to view Compliance gaining as a situation where both people can come out better than they went in.

It is important to implement face-saving strategies.