

Cognitive Dissonance

Cognitive Dissonance: Psychological discomfort we feel
when holding conflicts, beliefs, values or attitudes.
This lead to discomfort, feeling inferiority, anxiety.

→ Sources of Psychological discomfort → Anxiety
i) Approach - Approach conflict: This occurs when a person faces two desirable options and must choose only one.
Eg. being offered a job at McKinsey while getting opportunity to pursue master's at Harvard also.

ii) Approach - Avoidance conflict: Type of conflict which involves a situation that has both strong positive aspect and negative consequences.
Exm: not wanting to go to class + skipping it could result in losing grades

iii) Avoidance - Avoidance conflict: involves a situation where a person has to choose between two undesirable options, such deciding whether to stay in a mismatched relationship or leave it.

iv) Double approach - avoidance conflict: In this scenario, both options have their pros and cons. Eg. choosing a job with high pay and no work-life balance vs. low paying job with high work-life balance.

⇒ Typical Response to cognitive dissonance:
✓ Deny, ✓ Distortion ✓ Defending the ego.
✓ Destroy the ego and create a more adaptable self.

? Roles of Rationalisation and Projection in denying dissonance?

⇒ Rationalisation is the process of creating logical but false explanations to justify one's behaviour, thoughts, or emotions, making them seem more acceptable.
Exm: Suppose student got fail in an exam. Instead of admitting they didn't study enough, they might rationalise the failure by saying, "The professor made the paper hard," thus avoiding the discomfort of self-blame.

Rationalise helps individuals maintain a positive self-image by providing external justifications for actions that contradict their values & or self-concept.

⇒ Projection involves unconsciously attributing one's own negative feelings, thoughts or behaviours to someone else. This defense mechanism shifts the focus away from one's individual's own dissonance by externalizing it.

Exm: A manager who is insecure about their leadership skills might say blame the teammates to shift attention.

By projecting their shortcomings onto others, individuals avoid confronting the reality that they might be responsible for their failures.

? How does distortion help in reducing cognitive dissonance?
Distortion involves twisting reality to make it align with one's beliefs or reduce discomfort. The ways are —

⇒ Justification of Effort: People tend to increase their liking for something they have worked hard to attain to justify their effort.

Exm: Someone who went through a difficult selection process to join a club may believe the club is amazing - just to justify their effort.

denying
logical but
irrational thoughts,
stable.

Instead
try to rationalise
it harder, thus

self-image by
protecting their

king one's
is to
the focus
internalizing it

leadership skills
mention.

Individuals
be responsible

dissonance?

Sign with one's

use their
attain to

election process
just to justify

ii) Trivialisation: individuals may downplay the importance of the conflicting behaviour or belief to reduce discomfort.

Exm: A person who smokes despite knowing the health risk might say, "Everyone has to die someday, so smoking doesn't matter".

iii) Selective Perception: People may focus only on info that supports their current beliefs while ignoring contradictory ones.
Exm: Someone who believes a certain diet is best might ignore the studies that show it has negative effect.

Overall distortion helps us to → Protect self esteem
→ Reduce anxiety
→ Maintain belief consistency

→ Defending the ego: this allows individual to acknowledge their mistake without fully confronting them. This help reduce dissonance by preserving his self-image while also addressing the backlash in a way that limits damage to his brand.

→ Hypocrisy Paradigm and Relation to Cognitive dissonance:
A psychological technique is used to induce cognitive dissonance by making individual aware of inconsistency between their beliefs and actual behaviour.
This inconsistency creates Psychological discomfort (dissonance) which individuals are motivated to reduce by changing their behaviour to align with their stated beliefs.
Exm: Health camp

→ Pros and cons of defense Mechanism:—

Pros:

- i) Emotional Protection: act as a shield
- ii) Self-Preservation: Preserving self-esteem can prevent feelings of guilt
- iii) Temporary Relief: Short-term relief from discomfort
- iv) Managing Stress:

Cons: i) Avoidance of Growth: ii) Increased Rigidity
iii) Long-Term consequences

#

chatP&B
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Why do people often stay "stuck" in situations?

How to get unstuck?

→ People often stay "stuck" in situations due to the discomfort associated with cognitive dissonance.

Reason for Staying Stuck:

i) Avoidance of cognitive dissonance: Individuals tend to avoid the pain associated with cognitive dissonance.

ii) Impact bias: People overestimate how painful leaving a situation will be, which keeps them stuck. They underestimate their ability to adapt and recover from emotional pain.

iii) Fear of change: Fear of unknown can paralyse individuals, making them prefer the familiarity of the current situation, even if it is unsatisfactory. Change could involve risks that they might not be prepared to take.

iv) How to get unstuck:

i) Awareness: Recognising cognitive dissonance as a significant factor can help individuals confront their emotions and identify its sources. Awareness is the first step towards change.

ii) Self-Reflection: Engaging in honest self-reflection can allow individuals to understand their motivations, desires, and what they truly want.

iii) Engage with discomfort: Acknowledging and accepting discomfort as a natural part of making significant changes can empower individuals to face their fears instead of avoiding them.

iv) Develop a Support System: Seeking support from friends, family, or professionals can provide emotional guidance.

→ Self-Perseveration: Long-lasting form of attitude change that results from attempts at self-justification. We need to engage in an honest process of self-justification and determine our goals.

ChatterPT

→ People often resist persuasion and attitude change →

- i) Cognitive dissonance avoidance: Atk
- ii) Psychological Reactance:
- iii) Identity Protection:
- iv) Confirmation Bias:

→ Internal v/s External Justification

⇒ External Justification: refers to an explanation for behaviour that lies outside the individual, often to avoid punishment or gain a reward.

~~and certain~~ Exm: Saying something you don't believe in to avoid punishment.

Internal Justification: refers to changing one's own beliefs or attitudes to reduce cognitive dissonance.

~~Exm: Smoker~~ Smoker might start believing smoking isn't harmful to justify their habit.

Impact on Attitude Change

Exter. Justification doesn't lead to lasting attitude change as person attributes their behaviour to ext. Pressure or reward.

Int. Justification is more likely to cause real, long-term ~~change~~ attitude change, because the person changes their internal beliefs to resolve dissonance.

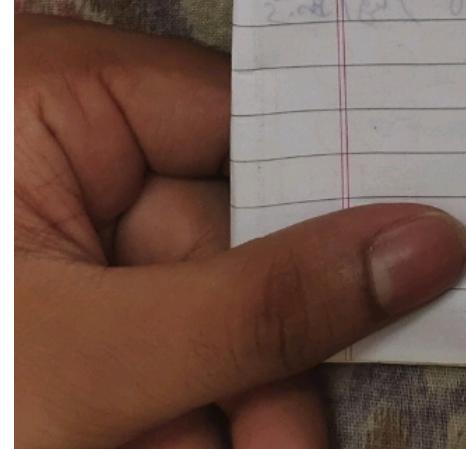
→ When do we actually change? → PdF

→ What reduces dissonance? → "

$$\pi = \frac{50000}{(0.01 \times 8) \times \pi} = \frac{50000}{0.08 \pi} - \text{A bus} \quad \beta^2 = 2$$

$$\frac{50000}{0.08 \pi} - \frac{50000}{0.01 \times 2800} = \text{stolen friend}$$

$$200000 =$$



L9

Prejudice

Prejudice is an assumption or an opinion about someone simply based on that person's membership in a particular group. Eg. People can be prejudiced against someone else of a different ethnicity, gender, or religion.

If someone is acting on their prejudices, they are pre-judging someone before even knowing them on a deeper level. This is an irrational attitude and mindset which does no good for anyone involved.

When people hold prejudicial attitudes towards others, they tend to view everyone who fits into a certain group as being "all the same". They paint every individual who holds particular characteristics or beliefs with a very broad brush and fail to really look at each person as a unique individual.

3 components of Prejudice —

1) Affective Component (Feelings): Relates to emotional responses towards a group.

Exm: Person may feel hostility, fear or dislike toward members of a particular group, often without rational bias.

2) Behavioral component (Discrimination): This involves behaviours that stem from prejudiced attitudes.

Discrimination is when these biases leads to unfair treatment - For example: denying someone a job or opportunity based on group membership (like race, gender, religion etc.).

3) Cognitive Component (Stereotypes): Refers to thoughts or beliefs about a group - often overgeneralized or simplified. Stereotypes are mental shortcuts that assign traits to all members of a group, such as "All engineers are unsocial."

- Backlash Effect: When someone acts in a way that challenges societal stereotypes, people may respond with punishment, criticism or disapproval — that's the backlash.
- Eg. when women act assertively or competitively in leadership roles, they may be judged as unlikeable or bossy, even though the same behaviour in men is seen as strong or confident.
- Normative Conformity: refers to the tendency of individuals to adjust their behaviours, attitudes, or beliefs to align with the norms of a group, primarily to gain acceptance, approval, or avoid rejection from the group. This type of conformity is driven by social influence and the desire to fit in, rather than a genuine agreement with the group's views on behaviours.
- Consequences of Prejudice: —
- a) Social Exclusion: lead to marginalization of individuals or groups, resulting in social isolation and exclusion from community activities.
 - b) Psychological Effect: Victims of prejudice often experience significant psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. These can often lead to long-term mental health problems.
 - c) Discrimination: leads to discriminatory practices in various domains, such as employment, education, and housing, and limited opportunity for affected group.
 - d) Conflict and violence: can escalate tensions between groups, potentially leading to conflicts, violence, or even hate crime against those perceived as "others".

L6 Social Attitude

3 component of attitudes:

- i) Cognitive: Thought about an issue
- ii) Affective: Feelings about the issue
- iii) Behavioural: Actions based on belief and emotion

- Explicit attitude: conscious, reportable
- implicit - : subconscious, automatic
- Strong ~~vs weak~~: Deeply held, resistant to change
- Weak: Ambivalent, easily swayed
- Hypergamy: We are capable of having implicit and explicit attitudes towards the same topic (eg. Gender roles: Gender role refers to societal beliefs such as those conveyed by media and other sources - regarding how men and women are expected to behave)

? When under what conditions do attitude predict behaviour?

- i) Attitude Accessibility: The quicker and easier it is to recall attitude, the more likely it is to guide behaviour.
Exm.: if you belief in gender equality, you'll quickly react to gender bias.

- ii) Theory of planned behaviour: This theory states that behaviour is best predicted by intentions, which in turn influenced by:
- Attitude strength: How strong your attitude is

b) Subjective Norms: what you think others expect you to do.

c) Perceived Behavioural Control: whether you believe you can actually perform the behaviour.

Behavioural intention = Attitude \times Subjective Norms \times Perceived control.

Weaknesses		
Weakness	Instance of Exhibition	Rectification
Temper	Quickly reduced to arguments with batchmates and seniors about the modus operandi towards certain tasks	Since the last instance, I have considerably improved and learnt to give people the benefit of the doubt, along with learning to be a better listener
Opinionatedness	Getting too personal about difference in opinions and not being able to differentiate personal from professional	Realising that "all feeling is justified, but all response is not" has led me towards working on this problem and making changes to my attitude
Overexertion	Getting too involved in everything I do and put in my full effort, where I do not get an output equivalent to my efforts, leading to exhaustion and disillusionment	I have started to prioritize and compartmentalize my time and effort put into my extracurriculars and involvements, including academic efforts

Proposals based on your portfolio

Portfolio 1: Marketing and Public Relations

1. Appointment of a "Chief Advisor for GMUN 2026"

- Background: GMUN, over its last three editions, has stabilized as an IIT KGP event. However, as an MUN, it still lacks a solid foundation. We find it difficult to prioritise the basics of conducting an MUN due to overburdening of the governing batch with duties towards their respective portfolios.
- Aim: To provide expertise on the MUN aspect of GMUN
- Requirements:
 1. Experience in participation and hosting of MUNs
 2. Established as a participant/EB member in circuits
- Additional Requirements:
 1. If the person is an IIT KGP student, they need a good rapport with the governors
- Appointing Procedure:

No requirement to submit an application. However, submitting the MUN

? How do Advertisements influence

i) Pushing us to System 1 thinking: Try to manipulate us by ~~telling~~ pushing us to system 1 thinking which is fast, ^{and} automatic. slow. We don't think deeply and logically.

ii) Emotion as heuristics: Ad links the product with positive emotions. These emotion serve ~~as~~ as shortcuts in decision making.
Good mood \Rightarrow buy
bad mood \Rightarrow likely to avoid.

iii) System 2 Thinking: For practical, fundamental items (e.g. Ac)
Ad use system 2 thinking, which is slower and logical.
These ads present pictorial representation of product efficiency, durability, or cost-effectiveness to manipulate customers. People's attitudes towards these products are cognitively based ~~on~~ and attitude tend to be formed after an appraisal of functional aspects of products.

IV) Brand Archetypes: Brands often adopt archetypes

(universal themes like hero, rebel) to create a consistent ~~image that~~ ^{resonates} emotionally across cultural contexts. This helps in building trust and long term association.

v) Subliminal Messaging: Brands use subliminal cues — images or words not consciously received — to subtly influence customers. Though viewers may not consciously notice these elements, they can still shape perception and decisions.

Q1

? How Attitudes are Formed —

- ↳ Classical Conditioning: Process of learning through association. A neutral stimulus becomes associated with a stimulus that naturally elicits emotional response.
- i) Instrumental Conditioning: Shaped by rewards or punishments for experiencing ^{views} attitudes to certain things.
- " Observational Learning: Attitudes learnt by observing.

L-7 Conformity

↳ change of behaviour due to real or imagined influence of others to match those of a group.

Blind or excessiive conformity can impose imprison our ability to act freely and prevent us from evolving, both as individual and as a society.

// Reward for conformity is that everyone likes you except "yourself".

Pros & Cons of Conformity:

- i) Social Cohesion: Promotes harmony and integration within a group
- ii) Sense of Belonging: Individual feels accepted/connected to group, enhancing psychological safety.
- iii) Predict Social approval: Conforming to group norms often brings rewards like acceptance and approval.

Cons of Conformity:

- 1) Loss of individuality: Personal identity and unique viewpoints may get suppressed.
- 2) Suppression of ideas: Fear of rejection can prevent people from expressing novel thoughts.
- 3) Peer Pressure: Individuals may engage in harmful or unethical behaviour to fit in.
- 4) Resistance to change: Strong conformity can hinder innovation and critical thinking.

→ Informational Conformity: in situation when we all not sure about how to react, we often look to others who are better informed and more knowledgeable and use their lead as guide for our own behaviours.

Informational Conformity is an end result ^{of} social comparison itself—As everyone believes that they ~~are~~ must be right,

Public Compliance: external change only, no internal belief

↳ usually due to Normative Conformity, i.e. the desire to fit in or avoid rejection.

↳ individual conforms outwardly to group behaviour without actually believing it is right

Private acceptance Compliance: conforming to other people's behaviour genuinely

and adopt it internally.

↳ This brings internal change.

Seen in ambiguous or crisis situations when people trust other's judgement.

→ Normative Conformity: stems from a desire to avoid punishment and gain rewards.

Social Impact Theory: The idea that conforming to social influence depends on group's importance, immediacy, and the no. of people in the group.
(How close)

The theory Predicts that conformity will increase as strength and immediacy increase. The more important the group is to us and the closer group members are to us physically, the more likely we will conform to its normative pressures.

When group affiliation is important to us, it puts pressure on us to conform which lead to Potential Problems like groupthink.

~~Groupthink~~: Psychological phenomenon in which the desire for group harmony and ~~consensus~~ consensus leads to poor decision-making because critical thinking is suppressed.

- ↳ happens due to everyone appears to agree, even if some members have private doubts.
- ↳ criticism is discouraged or ignored to avoid conflict
- ↳ decisions are made hastily.

? How minority influences Majority ??

While conformity is usually associated with majority influencing minority, minority influence is also powerful form of social influence. It refers minority affecting the beliefs or behaviors of the majority.

- Minority introduce new and unexpected information. This causes the majority to reflect, re-evaluate, and sometimes change their views. They more likely to achieve private acceptance rather than just public compliance. Changes tend to be deeper and long-lasting because they are based on genuine belief shifts.

Minority groups can lead to important social change by prompting the majority to critically examine their beliefs. While they may lack normative influence, their informative influence often results in lasting internal change.

- The Chief Advisor could encourage participation in MUNs as the Executive Board member.
- Many popular MUNs host online committees aside from offline ones. Most colleges in Kolkata have their MUNs between **August** and **October** every year. We could encourage participation in these MUNs among Associates.
 - Onboard one fraction (7/42) of Associates with prior MUN experience so we have a group ready to participate in these MUNs.
- Advantages
 - 1. Creates conducive conditions in the society regarding MUNs. Currently, MUNs are incorrectly perceived as being high-preparation events.
 - 2. From a personal growth perspective, Associates and Secretaries will get to work on a wide range of soft skills.
 - 3. From a MUN organizational perspective, Associates and Secretaries will receive exposure to a wide variety of small and big scale MUNs, enabling them to apply those skills during organizing GMUN.
 - 4. From a marketing perspective, participating in MUNs in different regions guarantees participation from those colleges in return. Stronger and longer-lasting impressions are forged.
 - 5. Besides tangible advantages, the conduction of the Internal MUN and participation in MUNs helps enhance the image of Communiqué, making it relevant in the junior batches, working as a throughout-the-year, word-of-mouth publicity for the upcoming GMUN.

? How to influence others by using our social knowledge?

→ Two main social norms:
or ~~or~~ Injunctive Norm: what people ought to do
by Descriptive Norm: what people actually do
Use injunctive norm to highlight what is approved. Use descriptive norm ~~carefully~~ to show that ~~not~~ a behaviour is already common.
But overuse of descriptive norm can backfire. Eg. "many teens smoke" may normalise the behaviour ~~the~~ rather than reduce it—
This is known as boomerang effect.

→ Milgram's Obedience Study:

To investigate how far individuals would go in obeying an authority figure, even if it involved harming another person.

Explanation

- 1) Nonnormative Social Influence: Participants obeyed to avoid disapproval and gain approval from the authority figure.
- 2) Informational Social Influence: The situation was ambiguous and stressful. Participants relied on the experimenter as an expert for how to behave.
- 3) Consensus Effect: Participants may have assumed the behaviour was acceptable because it was part of a formal exp.

→ Passion: Relentless pursuit of something with the consequences.

Paradox: As it gives us ~~an~~ anxiety, depression and burnout. In fact our brains responding to a passion in the same way it responds to addiction.

Relentless: Momentum and inertia aka emotions associated with the pursuit are very strong.

Obsession:

We obsess when we attach our success or our self-worth to the outcome. And we activate dark side of Passion

- underpaid ^{over} worked
- Accepting lower wages to ensure that work is meaningful
- Occupational gender disparities

Dopamine Trap: cycle of overconsumption of instant gratification activities that overstimulate brain's reward system, making everyday tasks feel dull and unappealing.

Tentative timeline for your portfolio

Dopamine detox: technique used to reduce dependency on instant gratification activities by the brain's reward system

steps → i) identify triggers

ii) Reduce or Remove

iii) Replace with low dopamine activities

Event	Task	Tentative	...
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MUN Budget	17-19
	19-20

L8

Individual v/s Group Behaviour

- ? why do individuals behave differently in groups
- 1) Social Facilitation: when an individual's performance is being observed by others, their behaviour may change.
People tend to behave better on ~~work on complex, new tasks.~~ simple or well-learned in groups
- 2) Social Loafing: when individual contributions are not easily identifiable, people may exert less effort, especially in simple tasks.
~~3) Western cultures and men tend to display more social loafing than Asian and women, who value relational independence.~~
- 3) Deindividuation: loss of ~~social~~ self-awareness in large or anonymous groups (e.g., crowds, online space) can lead to reduced inhibition and conformity to the group norms, sometimes resulting in extreme behaviours like mob violence or trolling.

IV) Group Polarisation: Group discussions often push members toward more extreme positions than their initial views due to social comparison and the desire to align with the group.

V) Group Decision-Making Dynamics:

a) Process Loss: Inefficiencies like ~~process loss~~ poor communication, ~~issue, incompetence, or groupthink can hinder~~ ~~hinder~~ effective decisions.

b) Transactive Memory: Groups can outperform individuals by ~~pooling specialized knowledge~~ utilising each other's strengths, and ~~relying on~~ resulting in a transactive memory system, improving group performance.