

ATTITUDES

Week 4
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Learning objectives

- Attitudes
- Definition and nature.
- How attitudes develop and changes?
- How attitudes influence on our behavior?

Social Psychology

- Attitudes are studied in Social Psychology.
- Social psychology is the scientific study of how people think, influence, and relate to one another.



Social Psychology

According to psychologist Gordon Allport, social psychology uses scientific methods to understand and explain "*How the thoughts, feelings, and behavior of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of other human beings*".



HISTORY OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

- Plato referred to the idea of the "crowd mind," and concepts such as "social loafing" and "social facilitation" which were introduced in the late 1800s.

. Crowd-mind

Emerges when formation of a crowd causes fusion of individual minds into one collective mind.

They tend to have shared mental and emotional state that emerges within a group or crowd.

Members of the crowd lose their individuality.

E.g.: Sports Events, Political Rallies, Emergency Situations



- **Social Loafing**

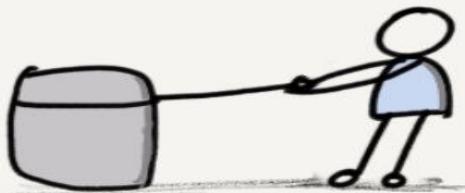
Social loafing – individuals may exert less effort when working on a collective task in a group compared to when working alone.

Causes

- ✓ Acting as part of group and feeling less accountable
- ✓ Feeling individual contribution does not matter
- ✓ Taking advantage when there is lack of identification with group



Social Loafing



100% effort



93% effort each



85% effort each

Social loafing is the phenomenon where people tend to exert less effort to achieve a goal when they work in a group than when working alone. This is mostly applicable when individual contributions are not obvious.

@deepuasok

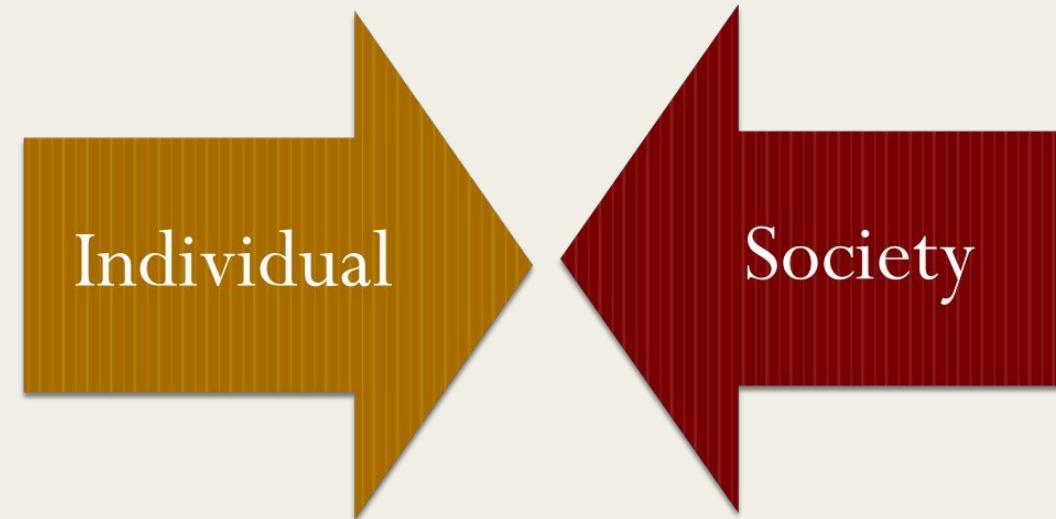
Examples: Tug of war, group homework projects, and an entertainer asking an audience to scream are all examples of social loafing because as you add more people to a group, the total group effort declines.

- **Social facilitation** is the idea that a person's performance changes when they are around others versus when they are alone.
- The presence of others enhances an individual's performance on a task.
- Improving performance on easy or well-learned tasks but decreasing it on difficult ones.



Example: Crowd encourage a team playing well.

Social Psychology: Interpersonal level of analysis



Main questions after World War II

- ❖ The horrors of the Holocaust (destruction or slaughter on a mass scale, especially caused by fire or nuclear war) led researchers to study ***social influence, conformity, and obedience.***
- ❖ What could explain why people participated in such evil actions?
- ❖ Were people following orders and bowing to social pressure, or were there some other forces at work?





Social psychologists are interested in the impact that the social environment and group interactions have on **attitudes** and behaviors.

Attitudes

Evaluations of a particular person, behavior, belief, or concept, or “a tendency to respond positively or negatively toward a certain idea, person, object, or situation” (Triandis, 1971).

Characteristics

They tend to persist unless something is done to change them.



Why Study Attitudes?

Strongly influence our thought

- help to organize and evaluate situations (positive or negative)

Sometimes they have a strong affect on behavior

- help to predict people's behavior in wide range of contexts
(e.g., relationships, voting)



How Psychologists Define Attitudes

Attitudes are Learned tendency to evaluate things in a certain way.

Evaluations include of:

- People, issues, objects, or events.
- Such evaluations are often positive or negative, but they can also be uncertain at times.

Explanation

- An attitude involves making a decision or an evaluation concerning **liking vs. disliking, approving vs. disapproving or favoring vs. disfavoring a particular issue, object or person.**
- Different peoples can have different attitude towards a same things or ideas.

Components of Attitude

Psychologists such as Rosenberg, Eagley and Hovland have given a three components model of Attitude. According to this model an Attitude has following three components:

- Cognitive component
(our **thoughts** and **beliefs** about the subject)
- Affective component
(How the object, person, issue, or event makes you **feel**)
- Behavioral component
(How attitude influences your **behavior**)

ABC Model of Attitude.



HOW OUR ATTITUDES ARE FORMED?





Think???

Would you rather watch a new movie, or an old favorite?????

Would you rather try a dish you've never had at a restaurant, or stick with something you know you'll like?????



Mere Exposure effect

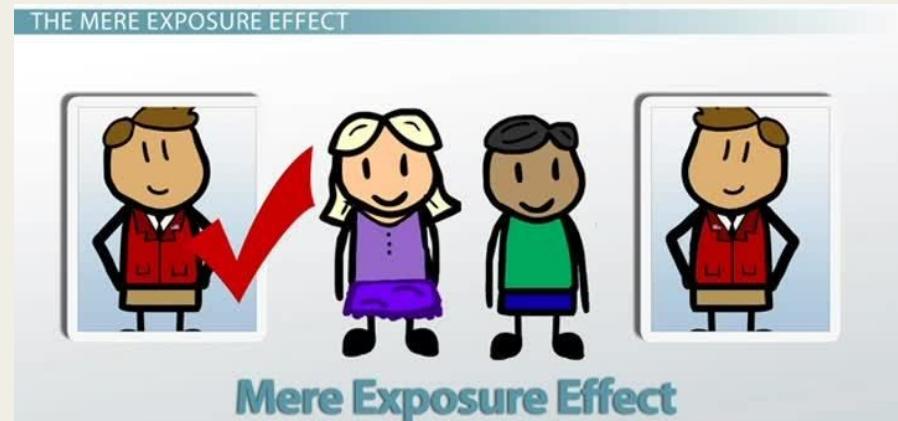
In 1968, Social Psychologist Robert Zajonc's hypothesis was that **simply being exposed to something on a repeated basis was enough to make people like that thing.**"

The tendency to develop more positive feelings toward objects and individuals the more we are exposed to them.

"A psychological phenomenon by which people tend to develop a preference for things or people that are more familiar to them than others.

Repeated exposure increases **familiarity**. This effect is therefore also known as the **familiarity principle.**"

Eg: Music Preferences, Brand Recognition





- ❖ He experimented by showing participants various representations such as foreign words, faces of strangers and Chinese characters.
- ❖ Some of the participants had seen these once before, others many times, while some were viewing them for the first time.
- ❖ After they were presented, Zajonc asked them to rate the images' levels of pleasantness.

Findings of the study:

- ❖ Across the board, those who had seen the images previously liked it the most.
- ❖ Participants favored the particular stimulus that they are more exposed to.

Self-perception theory (Bem, 1965)

Self-perception theory says that, 'When people are unsure about their feelings and motivations, they will use their own behavior to infer what they feel.' (i.e., behaviors can cause attitudes)

- **Self-perception theory predicts that acting would lead to feeling.**
- Examples:
 - “This is my second sandwich; I guess I was hungrier than I thought,”
or,
 - “I’ve been biting my nails all day; something must be bugging me.”

Facial feedback theory

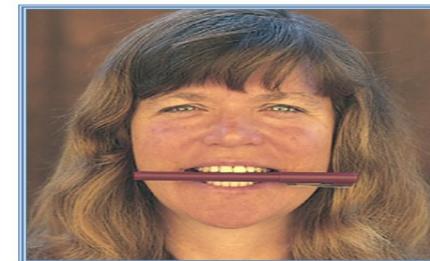
The facial feedback hypothesis states that **our facial expressions affect our emotions.**

Strack, Martin, & Stepper (1988) conducted a study to understand the impact of facial expression and movement on attitude. In this paradigm, participants are instructed to hold a pen in their mouth either with their lips or with their teeth. Holding the pen with the teeth is supposed to activate the muscles involved in smiling. Holding the pen with the lips prevents smiling. Later their attitude toward cartoons was asked.

- Pen in teeth (like smiling) vs. Pen in lips (prevents smiling)
- Pen in teeth ----> greater liking of the attitude object (cartoon)

This indicates facial feedback hypothesis.

Facial Feedback Hypothesis – Your facial expression can influence your mood.



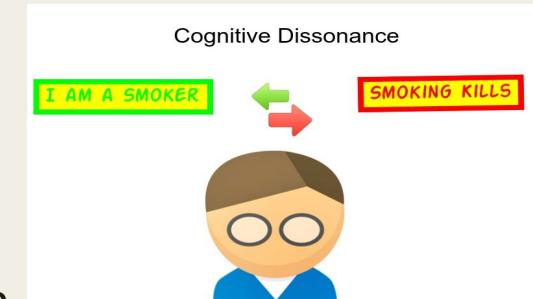
HOW ATTITUDE CHANGE?



COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

Cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957)

- Cognitive= thought Dissonance= conflict
- “The mental conflict that take place when a person holds two contradictory (opposite) attitudes or thoughts and feels emotional discomfort”.
- Cognitive dissonance is attitude change via an **Internal discrepancy**.
- To reduce the dissonance, either the person
 - 1.Gives up the smoking
 - 2.Give excuses about smoking
- For example, if a person values health but engages in unhealthy behaviors like smoking, they may experience cognitive dissonance.





PERSUASION

Persuasion

- Persuasion is defined as efforts made to change the other persons attitudes towards something
- A symbolic process in which communicators try to convince other people to change their attitudes or behaviors regarding an issue



The act of convincing

Persuasion is attitude change via an external message

For example: Good salespeople use persuasion to get people to buy things.

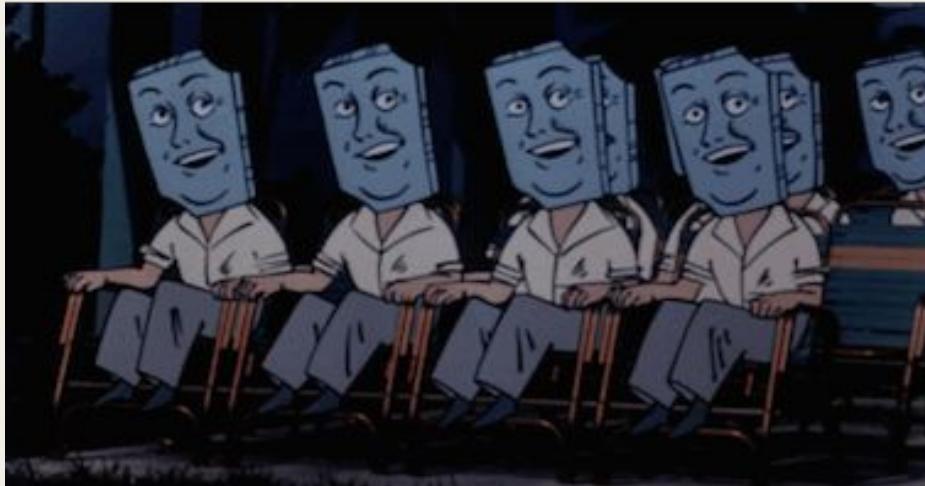


CONFORMITY

Conformity: Following What Others Do

"A type of **social influence** involving a change in a belief/ attitude or behavior in order to fit in with a group"

For example: Someone does not know the answer to a question, so ends up saying what the rest of the crowd says due to lack of knowledge.



Types of Conformity

- ❖ Normative Conformity

Yielding to group pressure just to fit in with the group.

Going along with the group so they will like you.

- ❖ Informational Conformity

Going along with the group because you think they know more than you do.

Lack of knowledge leads someone to agree with the group

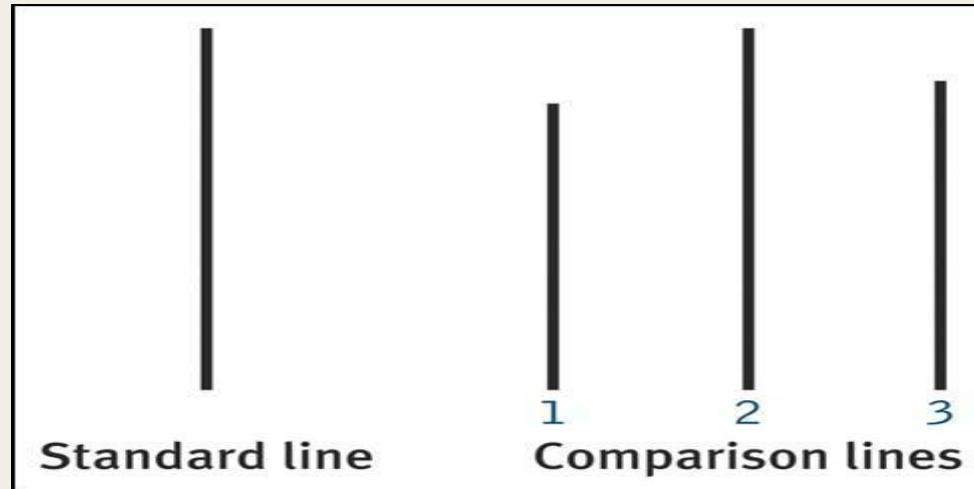


Solomon Asch's line experiment

Involving 50 male students from Swarthmore College (USA) in a vision test.

Students were tested on the length of a line relative to another line.

Participants had confederates around them who intentionally gave wrong answers to see if the participant would agree with them.



Conclusion: People will conform to the group answer even when it is clearly incorrect.

About 75% of participants conformed and 25% of participants never conformed.

These results suggest that conformity can be influenced both by a need to fit in and a belief that other people are smarter or better informed.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYlh4MkcfJA>
(video link of experiment)



Why did the participants conform so readily?

When they were interviewed after the experiment, most of them said that they did not really believe their conforming answers, but had gone along with the group for fear of being ridiculed or thought "weird".

A few of them said that they really did believe the group's answers were correct.

Compliance

Compliance: Submitting to Direct Social Pressure

It refers to a change in behavior or belief as a result of a direct request from another person or group

Getting people to say yes to a request

Professionals who make use of Compliance:

- Salespersons
- Advertisers
- Politicians
- Fundraisers
- Con Artists
- Negotiators



Obedience

A change in behavior in response to the commands of others.

Obedience as a form of social influence elicited in response to direct orders from an authority figure

Examples: A child who cleans his or her room when told to do so by a parent

A soldier who follows the orders of a superior officer.



Prejudice

Literally means “prejudgment”

Unfavorable attitude towards a social group and its members.

It is the negative feelings experienced which are based solely on the person's membership in a particular group.

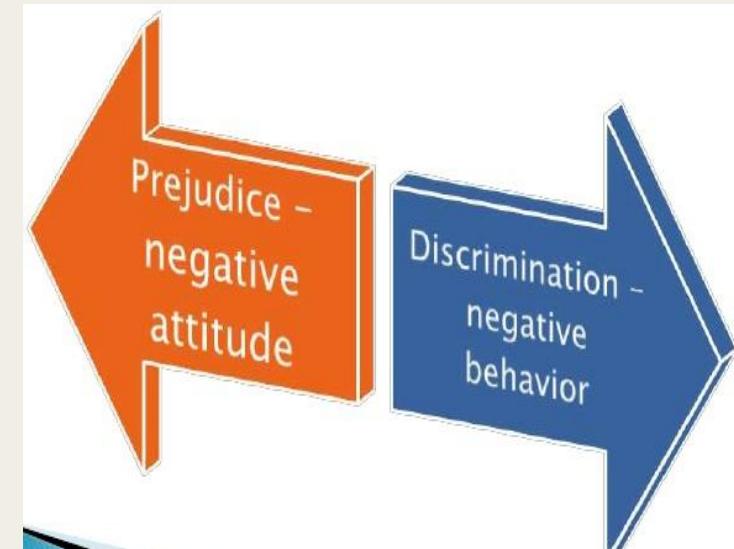
The person is disliked for belonging to a specific group

Eg: Racial Prejudice, Gender Prejudice, Educational Prejudice



Discrimination

1. Harmful ACTIONS directed toward the persons or groups who are targets of prejudice.

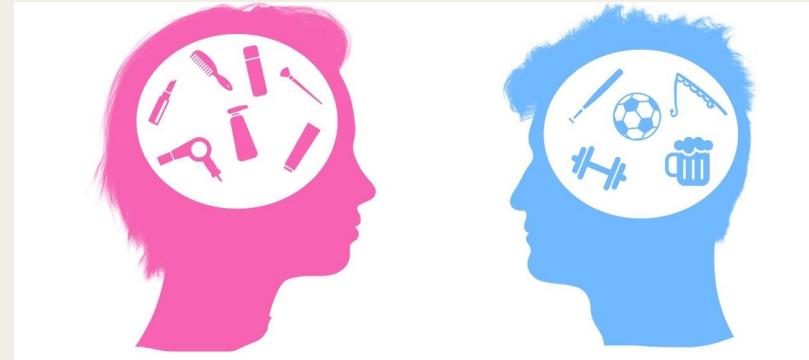


Stereotypes

Stereotypes are generalized beliefs or assumptions about the characteristics, traits, behaviors, or attributes of a group of people

Cognitive frameworks behind our attitudes. These are beliefs we hold about social groups.

Gender stereotypes concern traits are used to distinguish males and females from one another



Traditional Gender Stereotypes.

Feminine.

*Not aggressive.
Dependent.
Easily influenced.
Submissive.
Passive.
Home-oriented.
Easily hurt emotionally.
Indecisive.
Talkative.
Gentle.
Sensitive to other's feelings.
Very desirous of security.
Cries a lot.
Emotional.
Verbal.
Kind.
Tactful.
Nurturing.*

Masculine.

*Aggressive.
Independent.
Not easily influenced.
Dominant.
Active.
Worldly.
Not easily hurt emotionally.
Decisive.
Not at all talkative.
Tough.
Less sensitive to other's feelings.
Not very desirous of security.
Rarely cries.
Logical.
Analytical.
Cruel.
Blunt.
Not nurturing.*

