

Lecture: Social Psychology

Attitude Formation

- *attitudes* are defined as enduring systems of beliefs that can be examined on three different levels:
 - _____ (how we think or reason through an attitude)
 - _____ (how we feel regarding an attitude)
 - _____ (how we act on an attitude)

Origins of Attitudes

- research has indicated there are several ways in which we acquire attitudes
- one of our earliest agents of attitude formation are our parents, later followed by our peers and the media
- four major sources of attitude formation are:
 - _____: associating behaviors and attitudes as "good" or "bad" (i.e. it's good to tell the truth, it's bad to steal)
 - _____: being rewarded or punished for behavior and attitudes (i.e. being praised for telling the truth or being punished for stealing something)
 - _____: weighing logical arguments in determining your attitude
 - _____: learning attitudes through peer behavior and the media

Persuasion

- *persuasion* is an attempt to change a person's attitudes
- research has indicated there are several key components that make messages more persuasive, the persuasive communicator and the persuaded audience.

Persuasive Message

- the *persuasive message* has several variables:
 - _____: messages are more persuasive if we are familiar with the product or information
 - _____: the more a message is repeated (especially if it is complex), the more persuasive it is
 - _____: both sides to an argument are presented
 - _____: commercials, especially, are more persuasive if they appeal to the emotions
 - _____: messages that seem to go against the interests of the person speaking tend to be more persuasive

Persuasive Communicator

- the *persuasive communicators* tends to:
 - show expertise
 - be trustworthy
 - be attractive
 - be similar to the audience
 - come from health professions
- research has indicated that when food and music are added to messages, their persuasiveness increases.

Persuaded Audience

- the *persuaded audience* tends to have two characteristics:
 - _____: low sense of self-worth
 - _____: a high need to fit into society

Leon Festinger: Cognitive Dissonance

- the theory of *cognitive dissonance* is proposed by Leon Festinger
- Festinger states that when we have two contradictory beliefs we feel anxiety
- for example, we know how to fix our car but we bring it to a mechanic to fix--we will attempt to reduce our anxiety, called _____, by coming up with a reason for our actions
- we might justify the mechanic working on our car because we "don't have the proper tools" or "don't have the time to fix it"
- cognitive dissonance also occurs when our thoughts and behaviors are inconsistent
 - a person knows smoking cigarettes is bad for his health but smokes them anyway; he may rationalize this by saying "he's not smoking that much" or "evidence is contradictory on the effects of smoking on health"
- cognitive dissonance also operates on the idea that "you get what you pay for"
 - the thinking that something that costs more must be of higher quality explains this
 - the idea behind this is the more you must give up for something (money) the more valuable it must be (higher quality)
- patrons at a movie matinee will more likely rate the movie as moderately entertaining whereas patrons at an evening performance will rate it significantly higher or lower because they've paid more for the movie

Interpersonal Attraction

- studies conducted among college students have indicated that the number one thing males look for in a long-term interpersonal relationship is _____
- the number one thing females look for is _____
- _____, or the physical closeness of one person to another, is the most important characteristic, according to research

Other Factors in Attraction

- there are several other factors involved in interpersonal attraction:
 - _____: research suggests we are more attracted to people who share the same attitudes as we do
 - _____: early in a relationship, parental disapproval can actually intensify feelings of interpersonal attraction
 - _____: attraction is likely to develop between people in close proximity because they will see more of the other person's inner qualities
 - _____: is actually seen as an undesirable attitude; devotional behavior, or channeling attention to only one person, is seen as most desirable

Body Language

- body language has been studied with varying results
- most research indicates that the eyes can express when someone is paying attention or lying
- crossed arms and legs can be signs of defensiveness
- _____ is the unconscious act of mirroring the body posture of someone you're talking to; if you cross your arms, the person talking to you may do the same thing

Personal Space

- _____ is the imaginary area we keep around ourselves to be comfortable in varying social situations
- there are four levels to personal space:
 - _____ *distance*: contact to 18 inches, the space we reserve for intimacies and loved ones
 - _____ *distance*: 18 inches to 4 feet, the space we have around us in most social settings at school (e.g. the distance between a student and the student sitting next to them)
 - _____ *distance*: 4 to 7 feet, the space we have around us when we're out in public places, like the mall
 - _____ *distance*: 7 feet and greater, the space between us and performers at public events (e.g. concerts, lectures)
- research had indicated there are both cultural and gender differences in the parameters of personal space

Attribution Theory

- attribution theory examines how we attribute the source of our actions
 - _____ is the tendency to attribute our successes to our own efforts (*dispositional*) and our failures to external factors (*situational*)
 - _____ is the tendency of people to overemphasize personal causes for other people's behavior (*dispositional*) and underemphasize personal causes for their own behavior (*dispositional*)

Solomon Asch: Conformity

- the two landmark studies on conformity and obedience were conducted by Asch and Milgram, respectively.
- _____ is defined as voluntarily yielding to social norms, even at the expense of one's own preferences
- Solomon Asch conducted an experiment in which subjects were asked to compare the lengths of lines
- confederates, or subjects in on the experiment, purposely gave wrong answers to see if the test subjects would conform
- several variables that would increase the likelihood that the subjects would conform were found:
 - subjects would conform up to the addition of _____ confederates; after that the incidence of conformity stayed about the same
 - the _____ position (when they were asked their answer) mattered, the closer to the beginning of the group would yield less conformity than being asked toward the end of the group
 - if confederates were _____ in their answers, more conformity would take place; if one confederate provided a different answer, more nonconformity would take place
 - the more _____ was task was, the more likely conformity would take place
 - if the subject _____ or felt not as competent as others in the group, more conformity would take place

Stanley Milgram: Obedience to Authority

- _____ is defined as a change in behavior in response to a command from another person, typically an authority figure
- Stanley Milgram conducted an experiment to test a subject's likelihood to obey an authority figure
- Milgram asked students do deliver electric shocks to subjects who answered incorrectly on a series of questions
- they were flip switches on a mechanical box that indicated each subsequent switch delivered a slightly higher shock
- the last few switches indicated that the voltage was severe
- he found that _____ of the subjects would obey his requests to shock the subjects in the other room (who, of course, we in on the experiment as confederates and were not getting shocked)
- several variables were identified before Milgram was forced to shut down this highly controversial experiment:

- we are more likely to obey when
 - we perceive the figure requesting we obey as _____
 - we are _____ from the person we are inflicting pain on (e.g. it's easier to break up with someone over the phone)
 - the act is _____ by others (diffusion of responsibility)
 - the authority figure is _____ (e.g. when Mr. Sisman's comes out to check to see if people outside are working)

Group Behavior

- _____ has been seen in group behavior
 - we tend to speed up our actions when others are present
 - runners tend to run faster in groups than individually
 - animals running in packs then to run faster than individually
- _____ occurs when the presence of others slows down our actions
- _____ is the fear that others are evaluating our behaviors
 - the most common instance of this is fear of public speaking because others are focusing on the mistakes and mannerisms we make rather than the content of our speech
- in group decision making, _____ tends to occur
 - this means that groups will tend to either make extremely cautious or extremely risky decisions, whereas individuals acting alone will tend to be much more conservative in their decision making
 - more likely than not, groups will tend to pursue the riskier course; this is called _____
 - the reason this occurs is called _____, or the idea that responsibility is shared by the group rather than just one individual
- in groups, individuals can get so caught up in the "group mentality" that they can lose a sense of self and personal responsibility; this is called _____

Leadership Styles

- there are basically three types of leadership style:
 - _____ is a style in which the group leader makes all the decisions
 - _____ is a style in which members of the group provide input to the leader in making decisions, often based on majority vote
 - _____ is a style in which the group is allowed to pursue whatever course it wants; there is a general absence of autocratic or democratic leadership

Types of Power

- leaders in a group can wield one or more of five types of power:
 - _____ *power* occurs when the leader is perceived as an expert in the field
 - _____ *power* occurs when the leader has an official position that gives him or her statutory or perceived power
 - _____ *power* occurs when a leader is well-liked by the group
 - _____ *power* occurs when the leader can bestow benefits or rewards to group members
 - _____ *power* occurs when the leader can punish group members

Altruistic Behavior

- the 1964 rape and murder of Kitty Genovese, where nearly 40 people witnessed what was happening yet no one called the police, has prompted social psychologists to understand the parameters of helping behavior
- witnesses of the Genovese killing in New York said they didn't respond because:
 - they
 - they
- research indicates the following regarding helping behavior:
- *the helper*: we typically help when...
 - we are in a _____
 - we have empathy for the victim
 - we are NOT highly masculine (highly masculine helpers fear potential embarrassment if they can't successfully help)
 - we feel a sense of personal _____
 - we possess the _____ to help
- *the victim*: Individuals are more likely to be helped if they are...
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - similar to the helper
- *situational determinants*: We are more likely to help if...
 - we fully understand what we are seeing
 - there are no other bystanders around (called the _____ effect)
 - we are acquainted with the victim
 - the environment is familiar to the helper

John Calhoun: Density and Crowding

- John Calhoun is known best for his studies on density and crowding
- he created a "rat universe" in which rats were allowed to reproduce until their container, or "universe" became crowded
- he noted several forms of aberrant behavior:
 - _____ rate rose
 - the _____ broke down
 - packs of delinquent male rats would terrorize others in the container

Crowding in Human Environments

- studies of density and crowding have also been conducted in human environments
- prisoners at crowded prisons show higher _____, a higher mortality rate and more _____
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- students in crowded college dormitories show _____ with their roommate and tend to _____ more from social interaction
- the _____ has also been observed in some dorm room situations; when three students room together, a friendship can develop between two of them and their third will feel ostracized or left out
- research on city dwellers has found that they tend to shake hands less, they do not help strangers and they tend to plan ahead, especially when walking, to avoid potential dangers