

PERSUASION

☞ A change in ATTITUDE causes a change in BEHAVIOR

What kind of stimulus could cause a change in attitude?

☞ Persuasion in itself is not bad; it is the content of the message that has a moral label;
GOOD=EDUCATION; BAD=PROPAGANDA

Two Routes to Persuasion

Peripheral Route – persuasion that occurs when people are influenced by incidental cues, such as a speaker's attractiveness

☞ Images and slogans that appeal to one's emotions or relate to their personality
☞ Frenzy condoms have become successful in touching on the young generation through their advertisements

EX: TV commercials and ads on beauty products rely on celebrities

☞ Also used to make snap judgments; we also consider the majority of people who agree (EXPERTS, FRIENDS) and use this information

Central Route – persuasion that occurs when interested people focus on the arguments and respond with favorable thoughts

EX: Commercial about terrorism; National Geographic commercial (we are the only species...); Save the Children Foundation

Given these two routes, how come politicians rely on celebrities to persuade people to vote for them?

Elements of Persuasion

The Communicator

☞ Our knowledge about the communicator and its relevance to the message would affect their persuasiveness

EX:

1. Credibility

Sleeper Effect – a delayed impact of a message that occurs when we remember the message but forget a reason for discounting it

Perceived Expertise – professionals would be very persuasive in their respective fields

☞ We could also appear to be experts by saying things that are common knowledge so that the audience agrees; MAKES YOU LOOK SMART

☞ To speak with confidence also makes you more persuasive

EX: Talkative, spontaneous people always seem smarter than reflective, careful people;

EX: You can always present arguments to defend your side; there will always be lawyers

to take on either side of the case

Perceived Trustworthiness – to what do we attribute a persons message (personal gain or truthfulness)

☞ Looking straight in the eye communicates truthfulness

EX: we look at our loved ones in the eye when saying I love you

☞ People are more easily persuaded when they do not think they are being persuaded; do NOT like being COERCED

☞ Arguing against your own personal interest; it is NOT LIKELY that people would do so... therefore they become persuasive

☞ Being willing to suffer for the cause

☞ Speed of talking also affects PERCEIVED CREDIBILITY, EXPERTISE, AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

☞ We wouldn't readily form counterarguments for those people we like; when we do not trust the source, we would try to defend our preconceptions

2. Attractiveness

☞ Role of CELEBRITIES in advertisements

Physical attractiveness opens up our peripheral cues (they are more likeable, pleasing to the senses)

Similarity – we tend to like more those who are like us

EX: commercial of surf; normal people are just as persuasive as celebrities; they are PERCEIVED as coming from REAL EXPERIENCE

Subjective preference – ordinary people who learn from their own experience; PERSONAL VALUE, TASTE, WAY OF LIFE

EX: which laundry soap is better? Good food,

Objective Reality – when we need to know the facts from experts

EX: Windows Vista upgrade? Tech gadgets,

The Message Content

1. Reason VS Emotion

ANALYTICAL/EDUCATED PEOPLE = APPEAL TO REASON

LESS EDUCATED/ANALYTICAL= APPEAL TO EMOTION

☞ Central route follows the path of reason; Peripheral route follows emotions

☞ Good feelings also influence being persuaded

EX: we set up a romantic dinner when proposing; asking whether our parents are in a good mood; Commercial of corned beef

EX: exercise, endorphines and falling in love

☞ Fear can also cause people to be persuaded, WHEN NOT ASSOCIATED with a PLEASURABLE feeling; it is IMPORTANT to provide alternative behavior or ways to change (Rational Emotive Therapy)

EX: cigarette warnings (smoking kills, poster in KC)

2. Discrepancy

☞ Foot-in-the-door may cause an actual change in attitude

3. One-sided VS two-sided appeals

☞ Sometimes it is good to prepare a two-sided appeal, especially when the audience is a bit knowledgeable;

EX: one-sided appeals worked for people who already agreed; two-sided works better for people who DO NOT AGREE or UNDECIDED – giving them a sense of choice in deciding

4. Primacy VS Recency

Primacy Effect – other things being equal, information presented first usually has the most influence

Recency Effect – information presented last sometimes has the most influence.

What influences primacy and recency? – LATENCY AND IMMEDIACY OF COMMITMENT

The Channel of Communication

1. Active Experience of Passive Reception

☞ We incorporate information more when we learn them first hand; but nevertheless, we still take on information by passively receiving the information (vicarious learning)

☞ Repetition breeds familiarity; information is taken as reality, ergo people get persuaded

2. Personal VS Media Influence

☞ Personal experience is again more persuasive; Personalization

☞ We value what is real... what we actually experience

☞ Media influence operate in a two-step flow of communication; it is a chain reaction similar to social norms and fads

EX: children w/o TV would be influenced by their peers who pick up information from their TV

☞ Order of persuasiveness: Live, Video, Audio, written; APPEAL to the different SENSES; Written messages are better comprehended!!! – requires HIGHER

COGNITIVE FUNCTIONS

EX: difference of talking and writing letters to loved ones

EX: difficult messages = written; easy messages = video or live (peripheral and central route)

The Audience

1. Age

Life Cycle Explanation – people's attitudes change as they get older

Generational Explanation – attitudes remain consistent over time = generation gap

☞ Importance of critical formative years in a person's life

2. Counterarguments

1. People would form counterarguments when they anticipate being persuaded, and when the information is pertinent

3. Stimulating thinking strengthens already strong statements; but further weakens already weak one's (counterarguing)

Case Studies in Cult Indoctrination

1. Compliance breeds acceptance

☞ they are made to make repeated public commitments, engage in fund raising activities, which strengthens their roles and perceived identity as members

2. Foot-in-the-door

☞ Asking them small favors first, ACCOMPANIED by activities, a warm and caring atmosphere, a fellowship they could rely on (making them feel that they belong)

Persuasive Elements

1. The Communicator must be charismatic

2. The message must communicate warmth, love, and an alternative to be persuasive especially to depressed people

3. Socio-economic variables also play a role in being persuaded

4. Personality variables and life circumstances could also be a determinant

☞ Negative life events make people vulnerable to be accepting of people or groups that offer comfort in trying times, *social implosion*, *social cocoon*, *insanity of two*

☞ People with a high need for social acceptance might find refuge in cults – they offer

social support

Resisting Persuasion

1. Strengthening Personal Commitment

- ☞ Challenging Beliefs in order to stimulate the developing of counterarguments; *attitude inoculation*

GROUP INFLUENCE

Group – two or more people who for longer than a few moments, interact with and influence one another and perceive one another as “us”

Social Facilitation – the strengthening of dominant responses owing to the presence of others

- ☞ PRESENCE of OTHERS INCREASES AROUSAL which facilitates dominant responses

EX: if the dominant response is success, we succeed more; if failure, we fail more

- ☞ Arousal increases performance on easy tasks, while diminishes performance on complex tasks
- ☞ CROWDING accentuates the EFFECT of a group on INDIVIDUALS

Why are we aroused in the presence of others?

Evaluation Apprehension – concern for how others are evaluating us

- ☞ Revised proposition: the enhancement of dominant responses is strongest when we think we are being evaluated
- ☞ Being conscious, we are not able to FOCUS on the TASK AT HAND

Social Loafing – the tendency for people to exert less effort when they pool their efforts toward a common goal than when they are individually accountable

Free riders – people who benefit from a group but give little in return

- ☞ Responsibility is diffused among the group, people are not as influenced by EVALUATION APPREHENSION
- ☞ If they get rewarded equally, why do they have to perform as well as they would have done alone
- ☞ To eliminate social loafing, identify individual performance

EX: giving a separate grade for students in a group

- ☞ COMPLEX tasks, INTERGROUP competition, UNRELIABLE group mates DO

NOT cause SOCIAL LOAFING

Deindividuation – loss of self-awareness and evaluation apprehension which occurs in group situations that foster anonymity and draw attention away from the individual

- ☞ The larger the group, the less identifiable an individual is
- ☞ The less identifiable a person is, the less evaluation apprehension
- ☞ Chants, screams, hymns, cheers, group prayers, worships, solidify the groups bond = making people feel that they belong
- ☞ Diminished self-awareness

Group Polarization – group-produced enhancement of members' preexisting tendencies; a strengthening of the members' average tendency, not a split within the group

- ☞ Discussion among a group strengthens our initial positions; group reinforces each others positions, strengthening the position of the group as a whole (*accentuation phenomenon*)

The Role of...

INFORMATIONAL

- ☞ Arguments presented are thought of as the norm, which strengthens our positions

NORMATIVE

- ☞ our opinions are strengthened when we feel that it is accepted by our "INGROUPS"
- ☞ Our positions are strengthened when we know that others share our view

Pluralistic Ignorance – a false impression of how other people are thinking, feeling, or responding

Social Comparison – evaluating one's opinions and abilities by comparing oneself to others

- ☞ After knowing what others actually think (after a discussion) our beliefs or positions are strengthened

Group Think – when ingroup discussion strengthens individual positions to the point of an unrealistic appraisal of the position; forgetting to consider other alternative explanations

- ☞ People wanting to belong in the group, inhibit themselves from countering normative cues

Symptoms of Groupthink

1. overestimating the group's might and right
 - ☞ illusion of invulnerability
 - ☞ unquestioned belief in the group's morality
2. being closed-minded
 - ☞ Rationalization of a group's arguments ONLY
 - ☞ Stereotyped view of opponent; that they are actually what we know them to be; we know them well enough
3. pressures towards uniformity
 - ☞ conformity pressure; we want to be in harmony with everyone in our group
 - ☞ self-censorship; disagreements within a group are unwanted
 - ☞ illusion of unanimity results from no one voicing out
 - ☞ mindguards intend to protect the integrity of the group, but end up being detrimental after all

Preventing Groupthink

1. devils advocate to open the group to other possibilities; being critical
2. be impartial
3. subdivision to create small discussions; merging
4. outside opinion
5. address whether the group is sure

Minority Influence

- ☞ Minorities who are firm in their stand (self-confident) leads the majority to rethink their initial stands
- ☞ They also become the center of attraction because they are different
- ☞ They disrupt unanimity AND are especially credible when they defected from the majority (going against one's initial stand is persuasive)