

Attitudes and behaviour

Part I : Affecting attitudes through actions

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Does behaviour affects attitudes?

Head nodding vs shaking

Self-perception theory

- Influencing the recall (recall of failures vs successes)
- Promoting endorsement behaviours (contests, free samples, promotional t-shirts,...)

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Does behaviour affects attitudes?

The foot-in-the-door technique

- Horrible poster with or without a previous petition (3x more if FitD)
- Surveys/questions about pro-social acts
- Reaffirming commitment (62% to 81% for blood donation)

Importance of self-attribution

- 1) the act must be meaningful
- 2) intentionality must be perceived

Importance of the superficiality of processing

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Does behaviour affects attitudes?

Cognitive dissonance

When our behaviours are in conflict with our attitudes...

A more systematic processing

The example of the maoist rehabilitation (Corea/USA war)

- endorsement of the maoist view ("the problems with america...")
- pro-communism and pro-community actions

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Does behaviour affects attitudes?

The necessary steps for an efficient dissonance

- 1) Perceived incoherence between behaviour and attitude
 - the incoherence can be minimized
- 2) Self-attribution: the individual has to consider him/herself responsible of the action
 - denial, freedom/determinism and labelling
- 3) Physiological sensations and attribution of sens. to action
 - decreased sensitivity and alternative attributions (situation,...)

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Part II : Guiding actions with attitudes

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Do attitudes influence behaviours?

- 1) Not that much! (Wicker, 1969)
- 2) Expressed attitudes vs believed-in attitudes: Self-presentation vs self-expression
- 3) The effect of attitudes is often small because context also affects behaviour
- 4) Attitude needs to be potent (i.e. activated)
 - notions of accessibility and self-awareness

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(How) do attitudes influence behaviours?

Qualities of an efficient attitude

- Precise, clear, polarized (intense), accessible, with practical implications.
 - reaction time and automatisation

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(How) do attitudes influence behaviours?

Through superficial processing: automatic influence

Attitudes focus attention: they guide our attention towards consistent evidence and away from inconsistent information (attitude-consistent info becomes more salient).

Attitudes bias interpretation:

- assimilation and contrast: attitudes simplify evidences
- the case of ambiguous evidences: polarisation and confirmation of previously held attitudes.

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(How) do attitudes influence behaviours?

Through systematic processing: forming intentions

Individuals can put considerable effort into forming intentions to act in a particular way.

- A) Forming an intention
- B) Activating the relevant behavioural information
- C) Selecting a plan

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(How) do attitudes influence behaviours?

Through systematic processing: forming intentions

Qualities of an efficient intention: the example of the bad habit

- Why? Relation to attitudes and counter-arguments
- What for? Usefulness, relevance and consequences
- What? Operationalisation and precision
- Where, when and how? Relation to a plan and use of strategies
- Realism (intention and plan)
- Perception of control and of efficiency
- Accessibility (e.g. self-awareness, post-it, recency and repetition, associate the attitude to the situation)

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(How) do attitudes influence behaviours?

Through systematic processing: forming intentions

Another example: Suicide assessment

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