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## Week 6 – Social Psychology

### Lecture

#### Persuasion

- A message intended to change attitude of audience

#### Tactics

- Principle of Reciprocity: Give persons a gift to encourage feelings of reciprocity
- Incremental Commitment: Have persons agree to small things and gradually work up to larger things
- Social Proof: In uncertain circumstances, we look towards others for guidance on how to act

#### Factors influencing persuasion

- Source variables
  - o Attractiveness has high influence on persuasion
    - Appearance, likability, optimism, or perceived similarity
  - o High vs. Low credibility
    - Fast talkers seem more credible
- Message variables
  - o Vivid information (pictures, graphs) more persuasive than dry content
    - Unless *too* vivid, confusing
  - o Fear appeals – inverted U: fear works to an extent
  - o Humour related to message has persuasive influence
  - o Repetition
    - Repetition to things we initially like make us like them more, but opposite occurs if we initially don't like it
  - o Medium
    - Complex messages better used to persuade via written text
- Target audience
  - o Self-esteem
    - Very high and low self-esteem are less persuadable. A middle ground is most easily persuaded
  - o Mood
    - Persons in happier moods are more receptive to ideas
    - Negative moods make us more critical of new ideas
    - Perception of overall quality of life changes depending on weather
    - Sadness increases buying prices and reduces selling prices

#### The Message-Learning Approach

- Attitude change in steps:
  - o Attend to message
  - o Comprehend message
  - o Accept message

### Elaboration Likelihood Model

- People want to be correct in their attitudes
- Routes to persuasion
  - o Central (able, motivated)
  - o Peripheral (unable, unwilling)
  - o Persuasion via peripheral route can change attitudes without our comprehension
- Difference between ELM and M-L approach, is that M-L does not account for subconscious persuasion

### Nudges

- Implicit behavioural interventions that encourage behaviour without restricting choice
  - o E.g., Introducing healthy food only line increased consumption of healthy food by 18% in school canteen

### Enhancing Compliance

- Principles (Cialdini et al., 1965)
  - o **Door-in-the-face:** Large request followed by small request
  - o **Foot-in-the-door:** Small request followed by large request
  - o **Social proof** and uncertainty
  - o **Flattery**
    - Works even when we know person has ulterior motive, or if one knows the flattery is inaccurate
  - o **Scarcity:** We want what is scarce, e.g., SALE WHILE STOCKS LAST!
  - o **Low-ball technique:** Start with low price, then reveal hidden costs after each agreement

### Considerations

- Mindlessness: Agreeing to request without thinking
  - o Small requests most likely agreed to even if reasons are not rational
  - o E.g.,
    - Photocopy queue:
      1. Excuse me. I have 5 pages. May I use the copy machine *because I'm in a rush?* (legitimate reason offered )
      2. Excuse me. I have 5 pages. May I use the copy machine? (no reason offered )
      3. Excuse me. I have 5 pages. May I use the copy machine *because I have to make copies?* (spurious reason offered)

### Conformity and Obedience

**Conformity:** Change in behaviour/belief to be like others

**Obedience:** Complying with direct command

### Normative Social Influence

- Changing behaviour as to not elicit social disapproval
- Social Norm: Shared standard of behaviour

- Group norms can create false beliefs  
e.g., UFO sightings
- E.g.
  - Sherif (1936) Autokinetic Illusion
  - Asch's Conformity Study
  - Milgram's Obedience Study
    - Participants obedience influenced by:
      - Proximity to person being harmed
      - Closeness/legitimacy of authority
      - Institutional authority
- **Influences on Obedience**
  - Group size influences obedience
  - One dissenter
  - Previous exposure to non-conformity
  - Anonymity