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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