

Social Influence/Persuasion

We have so far only looked at individuals, but now we are going to consider **the situation**.

We are going to consider the **six principles of persuasion (Cialdini, 2001)** and the **power of the situation (deindividuation, applications of social influence)**.

Routes to Persuasion

Deep Processing: This requires time and motivation by audience. It produces a lasting change and is resistant to counter attacks.

Shallow Processing (Petty et al.): Stimuli is processed according to its superficial properties but the effect is ephemeral (e.g. number of points in an argument, the communicator, attractiveness of communicator, 'mere exposure')

Evaluative Conditioning (Attitudes by Association) (Fazio, 2002): Showed female participants pictures paired with negative or positive words. Connotations of the words created affective associations with the depicted objects.

Nodding & Shaking (Wells & Petty) Participants probability of advocating hikes in tuition fees increase when asked to nod instead of shake heads.

Mere Exposure (Zajonc) Familiar stimuli tends to be evaluated more positively than novel stuff.

The Message Length Heuristic: Photocopy Trick (Langer, Blank et al. 1978) People who were photocopying were approached and asked if they could skip the queue to use the photocopier. They were either asked "can I use the xerox?", "can i use the xerox – i need to make copies?" or "can i use the xerox – i'm in a hurry". The middle option elicited the most positive responses (93%!!!), whereas the latter elicited the least. People look for reasons to justify actions but are less likely to engage in prosocial behaviour if they feel they have been insulted.

Six Principles of Persuasion (Cialdini, 2001)

Each is based on a heuristic and linked to an important goal or motive.

R A S S C L

There are six basic tendencies of human behaviour: **reciprocation, consistency, social validation, liking, authority and scarcity**.

Reciprocation: People offered a free gift feel obliged to reciprocate.

Consistency: If you agree to do something, you will do it. E.g: Patrons will cancel a table more often if asked "Will you call if you cannot attend?" rather than told "Please call if you cannot attend?"

Social Validation: We look to what groups of others do for social validation. E.g. **Latane and Darley's** conformity studies with the smoke filled room.

Liking/Friendship: You are more likely to be persuaded by someone you like. E.g. Tupperware parties use friends instead of salespeople to sell their products.

Authority: Being told what to do by a person you perceive to be in authority will persuade you to do it. **Hofling et al. (1996)** warned nurses of extreme toxicity of Astroten. Unknown physician called on phone and asked for a dose above what they had been advised, 95% obeyed without question. **95% said they would not** when asked by experimenter.

Scarcity: Items become more desirable the less they are available.

Reciprocal Altruism (Trivers)

Cog Dissonance (Festinger) and Self Perception Theory (Bem) operate on this heuristic.

Heuristic "Consistency and Commitment" examples such as Foot in the Door Technique (Freedman & Fraser, 1966)

Milgram: 'Obedience to Authority Heuristic'