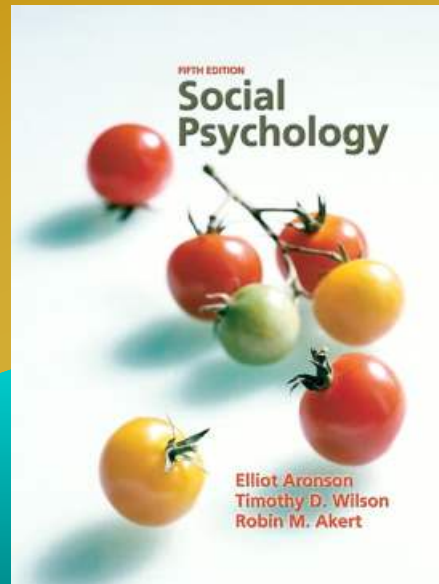


Chapter 7

Attitudes and Attitude Change: Influencing Thoughts and Feelings



PowerPoint Presentation

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Chapter Outline

I. The Nature and Origin of Attitudes



The Nature and Origin of Attitudes

Social psychologists define an *attitude* as an enduring evaluation, positive or negative, of people, objects, or ideas.



The Nature and Origin of Attitudes

Attitudes consist of three components: an affective component, a cognitive component, and a behavioral component.



The Nature and Origin of Attitudes

- **Where Do Attitudes Come From?**

Attitudes may originate from one's genetic background and from one's social experiences. Although all attitudes have three components, any given attitude can be based more on one component than another.



The Nature and Origin of Attitudes

- **Where Do Attitudes Come From?**

Cognitively based attitudes are based primarily on a person's beliefs about the properties of the attitude object. Their function is informational or utilitarian.

The Nature and Origin of Attitudes

- Where Do Attitudes Come From?

Affectively based attitudes are based more on people's feelings and values than on their beliefs. Their function may be value-expressive. Affectively based attitudes may result from either ***classical conditioning*** or ***operant conditioning*** .



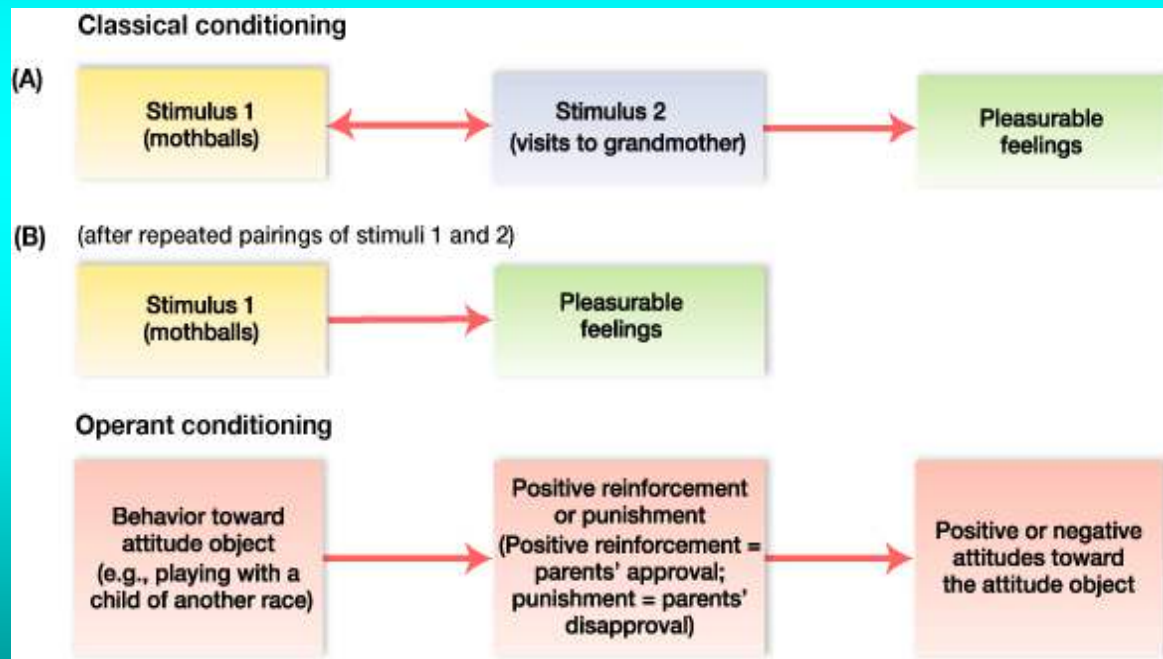
The Nature and Origin of Attitudes

- **Where Do Attitudes Come From?**

Behaviorally based attitudes are based on self-perceptions of one's own behavior when the initial attitude is weak or ambiguous.

The Nature and Origin of Attitudes

- Where Do Attitudes Come From?





The Nature and Origin of Attitudes

- **Explicit versus Implicit Attitudes**

Explicit attitudes are attitudes that we consciously endorse and can easily report.

Implicit attitudes are attitudes that are involuntary, uncontrollable, and at times unconscious.



Chapter Outline

II. How Do Attitudes Change?



How do Attitudes Change?

Attitudes may be very changeable; changes are frequently due to social influence.



How do Attitudes Change?

- **Changing Attitudes by Changing Behavior: Cognitive Dissonance Theory Revisited**

Attitudes may change due to the cognitive dissonance that results from behavior that appears to have insufficient internal justification; changing the attitude to correspond with the behavior provides an internal justification.

How do Attitudes Change?

- **Changing Attitudes by Changing Behavior: Cognitive Dissonance Theory Revisited**

Counterattitudinal advocacy is hard to induce on a mass scale, so people usually attempt to change the attitudes of the masses through *persuasive communications*.

How do Attitudes Change?

- **Persuasive Communications and Attitude Change**

The study of persuasive communication by social psychologists began with the *Yale Attitude Change approach*, which examines the conditions under which people are most likely to change their attitudes in response to a persuasive appeal and focuses on *who said what to whom*.

How do Attitudes Change?

- **Persuasive Communications and Attitude Change**

The Yale Attitude Change Approach

The effectiveness of persuasive communications depends on who says what to whom.

Who: The Source of the Communication

- Credible speaker (e.g., those with obvious expertise) persuade people more than speakers lacking in credibility (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Jain & Posavac, 2000).
- Attractive speaker (whether due to physical or personality attributes) persuade people more than unattractive speakers do (Eagly & Chaiken, 1995; Petty, Wegener & Fabrigar, 1997).

What: The Nature of the Communication

- People are more persuaded by messages that do not seem to be designed to influence them (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Walster & Festinger, 1962).
- Is it best to present a one-sided communication (one that presents only arguments favoring your position) or a two-sided communication (one that presents arguments for and against your position)? In general, two-sided messages work better, if you are sure to refute the arguments on the other side (Allen, 1991; Crowley & Hoyer, 1994; Lumsdaine & Janis, 1953).
- Is it best to give your speech before or after someone arguing for the other side?

If the speeches are to be given back to back and there will be a delay before people have to make up their minds, it is best to go first. Under these conditions there is likely to be a *primacy effect* wherein people are more influenced by what they hear first. If there is a delay between the speeches and people will make up their minds right after hearing the second one, it is best to go last. Under these conditions there is likely to be a *recency effect* wherein people remember the second speech better than the first one (Haugtvedt & Wegener, 1994; Miller & Campbell, 1959).

To Whom: The Nature of the Audience

- An audience that is distracted during the persuasive communication will often be persuaded more than one that is not (Festinger & Maccoby, 1964; Albarracín & Wyer, 2001).
- People low in intelligence tend to be more influenceable than people high in intelligence, and people with moderate self-esteem tend to be more influenceable than people with low or high self-esteem (Rhodes & Wood, 1992).
- People are particularly susceptible to attitude change during the impressionable ages of 18 to 25. Beyond those ages, people's attitudes are more stable and resistant to change (Krosnick & Alwin, 1989; Sears, 1981).

How do Attitudes Change?

- **Persuasive Communications and Attitude Change**

Two influential theories, Chaiken's *heuristic-systematic persuasion model* and Petty and Cacioppo's *elaboration likelihood model* have tried to specify when people will be more influenced by message content and when they will be more influenced by superficial characteristics of the message.



How do Attitudes Change?

- **Persuasive Communications and Attitude Change**

Both theories state that under certain conditions, people are motivated to pay attention to and think about the facts in a message; this is referred to as the *central route to persuasion*.

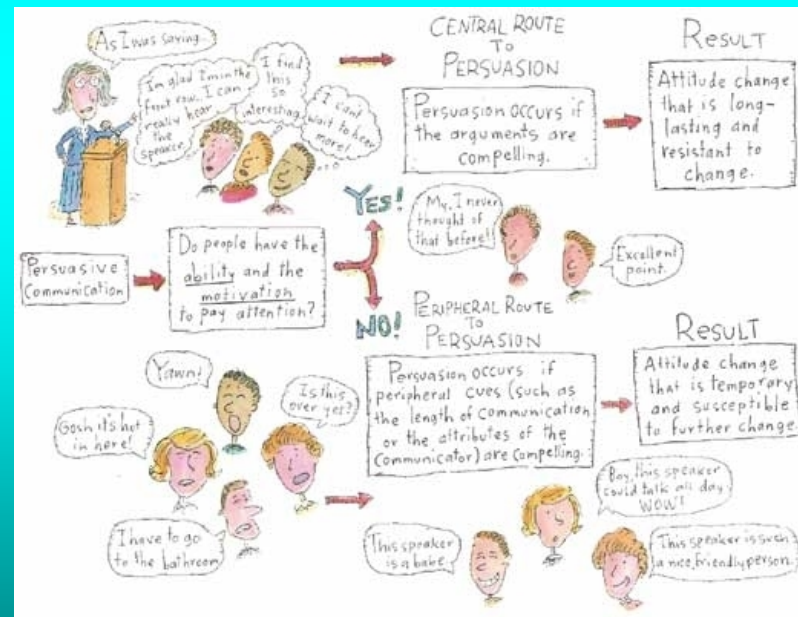
How do Attitudes Change?

- **Persuasive Communications and Attitude Change**

Under other conditions, people are not motivated to pay attention to the facts a message presents and only attend to superficial characteristics such as who delivers it and how long it is. In this case people may be influenced by the *peripheral route to persuasion*.

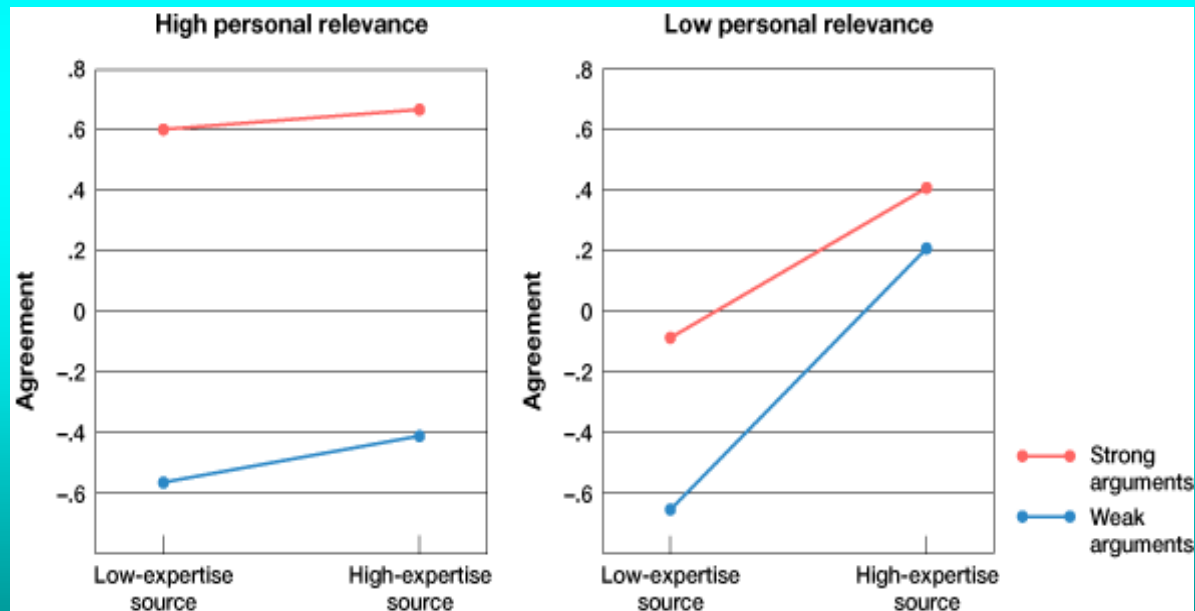
How do Attitudes Change?

- Persuasive Communications and Attitude Change



How do Attitudes Change?

- **Persuasive Communications and Attitude Change**





How do Attitudes Change?

- **Persuasive Communications and Attitude Change**

Which route to attitude change will people take? One determinant is the personal relevance of the topic. The more relevant the topic, the more people will take the central route to persuasion. Here, they will be influenced the most by the strength of the arguments.

How do Attitudes Change?

- **Persuasive Communications and Attitude Change**

People's motivation to listen carefully to message content may also depend on their level of *need for cognition*, the extent to which they seek out and think about information in their social worlds.



How do Attitudes Change?

- **Persuasive Communications and Attitude Change**

The route to attitude change also depends on people's ability to pay attention to the arguments. The more distracted people are, the more they will take the peripheral route.



How do Attitudes Change?

- **Persuasive Communications and Attitude Change**

Attitude change will be more long-lasting if it occurs through the central route.



How do Attitudes Change?

- **Emotion and Attitude Change**

In order to get people to use the central processing route, you need to get their attention. This can be done by playing to their emotions.

How do Attitudes Change?

- **Emotion and Attitude Change**

However, people want to preserve good moods, so they will avoid activities that might spoil their good mood. This means that people in good moods will often avoid paying close attention to a persuasive communication, because they think that doing so will lower their mood.



How do Attitudes Change?

- **Emotion and Attitude Change**

***Fear-arousing communications* are most effective if they induce a moderate amount of fear and people believe that listening to the message will reduce this fear. If the message is too scary or not scary enough, it will fail.**

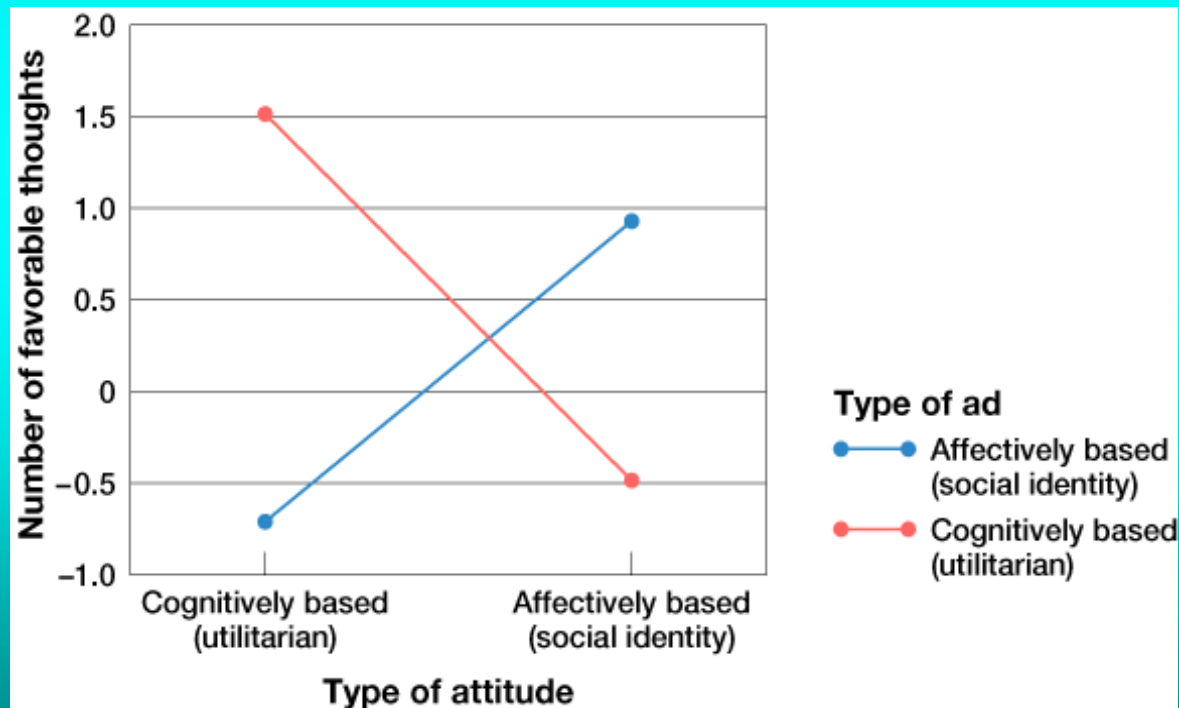
How do Attitudes Change?

- **Emotion and Attitude Change**

In the *heuristic-systematic model of persuasion*, when people take the peripheral route to persuasion they often use heuristics, e.g., “length equals strength,” or “Experts are always right.”

How do Attitudes Change?

- Emotion and Attitude Change



How do Attitudes Change?

- **Emotion and Attitude Change**

Emotions and moods themselves can be used as a heuristic; we ask ourselves “How do I feel about it?” and if we feel good, we infer we have a positive attitude. This can get us into trouble if the good feelings are due to something other than the attitude object.



How do Attitudes Change?

- **Emotion and Attitude Change**

The central route to persuasion works well for cognitively based attitudes but not for affectively based ones. If an attitude is cognitively based, it is best to use rational arguments to change it.



How do Attitudes Change?

- **Emotion and Attitude Change**

Affectively based attitudes can be changed using persuasive communications that are emotional.



How do Attitudes Change?

- **Emotion and Attitude Change**

In general, advertisements work best if they are tailored to the kind of attitude they are trying to change.



Chapter Outline

III. Resisting Persuasive Messages



Resisting Persuasive Messages

- **Attitude Inoculation**

One way to bolster people against persuasion attempts is to have them consider the arguments for and against their attitude before somebody attacks it.



Resisting Persuasive Messages

- **Attitude Inoculation**

Attitude inoculation procedure does this by exposing people to a small dose of the argument against their position; this induced them to counter-argue and provide a “vaccination” that helps people ward off later, stronger influence attempts.

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