

## Comm 2367 Chapter 3 Notes

### Attitudes: Functions and Consequences

\* Attitudes serve functions for people, and people must decide whether and how to translate attitudes into behavior.

### Functions of Attitudes

\* Main functions of attitudes/primary benefits attitudes provide:

\* Knowledge

\* Attitudes help people make sense of the world and explain baffling events.

\* Utilitarian

\* Attitudes help people obtain rewards and avoid punishments.

\* Social Adjustive

\* Attitudes help us to "adjust to" reference groups.

\* People sometimes adopt attitudes not because they truly agree with the advocated position, but rather because they believe they will be more accepted by others if they take this side

\* Social Identity

\* People hold attitudes to communicate who they are and what they aspire to be

\* Value-Expressive

\* People hold attitudes to express core values and cherished beliefs.

\* Ego-Defensive

\* Attitudes can serve as a "defense" against unpleasant emotions people do not want to consciously acknowledge.

\* People adopt attitudes to shield them from psychologically uncomfortable truths.

### Attitudes and Persuasion

\* A central principle of functional theory is that the same attitudes can serve different functions for different people.

\* Its not just attitudes toward products that serve diverse psychological functions.

- \* Mark Snyder and colleagues found that people volunteer for very different reasons, including:
  - \* Expressing values related to altruistic and humanitarian concern for others
  - \* Satisfying intellectual curiosity about the world, learning about people different from themselves
  - \* Coping with inner conflicts
  - \* Providing opportunities in activities valued by important others
  - \* Providing career-related benefits
- \* A persuasive message is most likely to change an individual's attitude when the message is directed at the underlying function the attitude serves. Messages that match the function served by an attitude should be more compelling than those that are not relevant to the function addressed by the attitude.
- \* To change an attitude, one must understand the function it serves and direct the message to the underlying function.
- \* An attitude can assist the person in coping with one problem, while exerting a more harmful or dysfunctional effect in another area of the person's life.
- \* Functional approach contains hypotheses for study and generates useful insights for everyday life, including:
  - \* People are deep and complicated creatures
  - \* We should extend tolerance to others.
  - \* Persuaders must be accurately sensitive to the functions attitudes serve.

## Attitudes and Behavior

- \* Theoretically, attitudes are assumed to predispose people to behave in certain ways.
- \* Historical Background
  - \* Under some conditions, attitudes forecast behavior; in other circumstances they do not.
  - \* Factors that moderate the attitude-behavior relationship:
    - \* Aspects of the situation
      - \* The context exerts a powerful impact on behavior.
      - \* Norm- An individual's belief about the appropriate behavior in a situation. Roles are parts we perform in everyday life.

- \* Norms and Roles

- \* Individuals may hold an attitude, but choose not to express the attitude because it would violate a social norm.

- \* Scripts- Organized bundles of expectations about an event sequence or an activity.

- \* Characteristics of the person

- \* Individuals differ in the extent to which they display consistency between attitudes and behavior.

- \* Two moderating factors of the attitude-behavior relationship are:

- \* Self-Monitoring- Individuals who adjust their behavior to fit the situation; monitor the public appearances of self they display in social situations.

- \* High self-monitors exhibit less attitude-behavior consistency than do low self-monitors.

- \* High self-monitors look to the situation to decide how to act.

- \* Low self-monitors strongly disagree, living the the credo, "To thine own self be true."

- \* Direct Experience

- \* Some of our attitudes are based on direct experience with an issue; we have encountered a problem in real life, it has evoked strong feelings, or led us to think through the implications of behaving in a certain way.

- \* Attitudes formed through direct experience are more clearly defined, held with greater certainty, more stable over time, and more resistant to counter influence.

- \* Qualities of the attitude

- \* Attitudes differ in their structure and strength.

- \* General Attitude- The global evaluation that cuts across different situations.

- \* Specific Attitude- Evaluation of a single act, or specific