

## Chapter 3: Attitudes and Consistency

### Key Terms and Concepts

definition of an attitude	authenticity
predispositions to respond	cause related marketing (CSM)
evaluative dimension	corporate social responsibility (CSR)
attitude object	moral licensing
explicit attitude measures	sloganeering
Likert scale	sponsorship
Semantic Differential scale	psychological consistency
visually-oriented scales	psychological discomfort
drawbacks to attitude scales	centrality of attitudes
social desirability bias	denial
non-attitudes	bolstering
acquiescence bias	bargaining
mindfulness	differentiation
attitude-behavior-correlation (ABC)	transcendence
implicit attitude measures	attitude modification
implicit association test (IAT)	communicating to maintain consistency
roundabout measures of attitude	efficiency principle for resolving inconsistency
inferring attitudes from appearances	brand loyalty
inferring attitudes from associations	active participation
Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)	merchandising
Intention	brand-switching
attitude toward the behavior	cognitive dissonance theory (CDT)
beliefs about the outcome	buyer's remorse
evaluation of the outcome	dissonance reduction
subjective norm component	selective exposure
normative beliefs	magnitude of dissonance
motivation to comply	polarization of alternatives
role of gender and culture in the TRA	role of self-image and culture in cognitive dissonance
Theory of Planned Behavior (TpB)	dissonance paradigms
perceived behavioral control	free choice paradigm
internal factors	belief disconfirmation paradigm
external factors	induced compliance paradigm
persistence of attitudes	effort justification paradigm
central processing is more lasting	psychological reactance
peripheral processing is more temporary	Streisand effect
associative networks	Psychological Reactance Scale
image-oriented advertising	Counter-attitudinal advocacy (CAA)
branding	psychological commitment
brand personality	public commitment
aspirational	commitments that "grow legs"

### Chapter Summary Notes

I. Attitudes are central to the study of persuasion.

A. Attitudes are important because they help to predict, explain, and modify behavior.

B. An attitude is “a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor.”

- 1) Attitudes are learned, not innate.
- 2) Attitudes are precursors for behavior.
- 3) Attitudes possess an evaluative dimension, e.g., degrees of favorability or unfavorability.
- 4) Attitudes always exist with respect to some attitude object: People hold attitudes toward things.

II. Explicit measures rely on standardized scales, which are widely used in the social sciences.

- A. Likert scales are among the most popular scales now in use because they are easy to construct and yield interval level data.
- B. Semantic differential scales, are based on connotative meanings, and are also widely used as a means of measuring attitudes.
- C. Visually-oriented attitude scales are useful for helping respondents “see” where their attitudes fall on a scale or continuum.

III. Some limitations associated with attitude scales include:

- A. social desirability bias, whereby respondents provide what they perceive to be socially correct answers.
- B. non-attitudes, whereby respondents make up an attitude so as not to appear ignorant or uninformed.
- C. mindfulness, which refers to the fact that people often aren’t consciously aware of their own attitudes.

IV. Implicit measures infer attitudes using other from other clues.

- A. The Implicit Association Test (IAT) uses reaction time to measure positive or negative attitudes.
- B. Attitudes can be inferred from appearances; however, there is a danger of engaging in faulty sign reasoning.
- C. Attitudes can be inferred from associations, although there is a risk of drawing erroneous inferences from memberships and affiliations.
- D. Attitudes can be inferred from behaviors. The extent to which attitudes predict or correspond with behavior depends on a variety of factors, including the relevance of the attitudes asked about to the behaviors in question.
- E. Attitudes tend to correspond more closely with behavior if/when; 1) stronger attitudes are used, as opposed to weaker attitudes; 2) multiple attitudes aren’t confused with single attitudes; 3) multiple act criteria are employed, e.g., repeated opportunities to manifest an attitude through behavior; 4) the attitude is based on personal experience; 5) the attitudes are central to the person’s belief system.

V. Physiological measures have also been used to measure attitudes.

- A. Pupillary response can measure heightened attention or arousal.
- B. Galvanic skin response (GSR) can signal involuntary alterations in the electric conductivity of the skin’s surface.
- C. Electromyogram activity (EMG) measures micromomentary facial movements.

D. fMRI measures blood flow and, presumably, cognitive activity, in different regions of the brain.

E. At present, physiological measures of attitudes aren't highly reliable, and tend to serve as bi-directional indicators of arousal rather than attitudes.

VI. The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) offers a practical, rational model of how persuasion occurs.

A. Intentions are viewed as the single best predictor of actual behavioral compliance.

B. Intentions are predicated on a person's attitude toward the behavior in question, and his or her subjective norm component.

C. A person's attitude toward the behavior, in turn, is guided by the person's beliefs about the outcome and his or her evaluation of the outcome.

D. A person's perception of the subjective norm component is guided by the person's normative beliefs and his or her motivation to comply.

E. Numerous studies have upheld the utility of the TRA as an explanatory model for attitude change.

F. Gender and cultural considerations affect the TRA's explanatory and predictive power.

VII. As an extension of the TRA, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TpB) is made distinct as it recognizes the degree of perceived behavioral control individuals possess.

A. Internal factors, such as lack of knowledge or skill, can prevent individuals from acting upon their intentions.

B. External factors, such as limited resources or extenuating circumstances, can also prevent individuals from acting upon their intentions.

C. Persuaders are more successful when they emphasize that the proposed behavior is within an individual's control.

VIII. The persistence of attitudes hinges on a number of factors.

A. Attitudes formed via central processing are more persistent, or durable, than attitudes formed via peripheral processing.

B. Increasing receivers' involvement in an issue can promote central processing, and thereby increase the persistence of any attitudes formed.

C. Increasing receivers' motivation or ability to attend to a message can increase the persistence of any attitudes formed.

IX. Attitudes are related to each other in associative networks.

A. Individuals aren't necessarily aware of the interrelatedness of their attitudes.

B. Changes in one attitude or cognitive structure can bring about changes in other attitudes.

X. Advertisers try to manufacture favorable attitudinal associations for their products.

A. Image-oriented advertising attempts to link positive images and idealized lifestyles to specific products.

B. Branding seeks to develop a unique image of a product or service in a consumer's mind.

- 1) Aspirational branding promotes admiration for luxury brands that consumers aspire to own.
  - 2) Brand authenticity is perceived as displaying a genuine image and having a cause to promote or a story to tell.
  - 3) cause-related marketing (CSR) links brands to pro-social activities
  - 4) corporations promote their brand by engaging in corporate social responsibility (CSR), such as efforts to help the community or the environment.
- C. The use of slogans is another means of fostering favorable associations with a brand.
- D. Sponsorship is another means of fostering favorable associations with a brand.

XI. The principle of psychological consistency provides an explanatory framework for how and why attitude change occurs, or fails to occur.

- A. Individuals strive to maintain psychological consistency among their attitudes and beliefs.
- B. Psychological inconsistency is uncomfortable, and it motivates an individual to reduce or minimize the inconsistency.
- C. Psychological consistency may be maintained through 1) denial—ignoring or repressing the inconsistency; 2) bolstering—finding rationalizations to support the inconsistency; 3) bargaining—negotiating a compromise with oneself over what to do, 4) differentiation—distinguishing the attitudes that are in conflict; 5) transcendence—restoring consistency by referring to a larger or higher purpose; 6) modifying—altering one or all of the attitudes that are in conflict; 7) communicating—persuading others to change or convincing others that one’s attitudes and beliefs are justified.

XII. Marketing strategies rely on basic principles of consistency theory.

- A. Foods labeled as fat-free, low-sodium, high-fiber, etc., are designed to reinforce favorable attitudes toward eating healthy.
- B. Fostering brand loyalty makes brand-switching psychologically uncomfortable.
- C. Encouraging active participation on the part of consumers increases their psychological commitment.
- D. Merchandising can also encourage brand loyalty.
- E. Some marketing strategies seek to promote inconsistency. Brands with lower market share must encourage brand-switching

XIII. Consistency theory can be used to enhance the effectiveness of a persuasive message.

- A. Align your message with your audience’s frame of reference.
- B. Highlight any potential inconsistencies in receivers’ attitudes and beliefs.

XIV. Connected to the phenomenon known as buyer’s remorse, cognitive dissonance theory (CDT) explains how people strive to maintain consistency following a decision or choice.

- A. Individuals seek to minimize their regrets over decisions they have made.
- B. They may attempt to justify their decision, to selectively expose themselves to information following the decision, or try to convince others of the wisdom of their decision.
- C. As a form of self-justification, individuals tend to spread the alternatives after making significant decisions.

D. People strive to maintain a consistent image of themselves, both in their own eyes and in the eyes of others.

E. Dissonance can occur when a person's self-image is inconsistent with her/his beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors. In addition, dissonance can be internally or socially motivated, depending upon one's culture.

F. The magnitude of cognitive dissonance that is experienced depends upon four paradigms:

1) free choice- if a decision is made freely, there will be more dissonance experienced.

2) belief disconfirmation- if a person encounters information contrary to her/ his beliefs, she/ he will experience more dissonance and will engage in selective exposure or distort information contrary to her/ his beliefs.

3) induced compliance- individuals experience less dissonance when they know that the actions they have taken have been forced.

4) effort justification- with more effort and sacrifice comes greater arousal of dissonance.

G. Persuaders can tailor a persuasive message to either increase or decrease dissonance.

XV. Psychological reactance refers to an individual's tendency to react defensively to a perceived encroachment on her/his freedom.

A. A persuader may use psychological reactance to facilitate or hinder persuasion.

B. A controlling message may create a boomerang effect where counter-behaviors are prompted.

C. Persuaders must be cautious about using controlling language when attempting to persuade.

D. Acknowledging the listeners' personal autonomy will assist persuaders in creating messages that will encounter the least resistance.

XVI. Engaging in counter-attitudinal advocacy (CAA) can produce shifts in an individual's attitudes away from her/his original position on an issue.

A. Creating and presenting a message to others that contradicts an individual's existing attitudes will bring about a change in the direction of the counter-attitudinal position.

B. Cognitive dissonance theory (CDT) suggests that an individual must resolve the inconsistencies between her/his privately held beliefs and attitudes and her/his public behavior.

C. It is essential that individuals voluntarily engage in CAA for the technique to be effective.

XVII. Gaining commitments, especially public commitments, is an effective tool for influence.

A. Reneging on a commitment is psychologically uncomfortable.

B. Securing a public commitment increases the likelihood an individual will follow through on a decision.

C. Commitments can "grow legs," meaning that once an individual becomes psychologically committed she/he will generate additional justifications for her/his decision.

D. Even small, relatively minor actions can increase an individual's psychological commitment to a decision.

XVIII. Students should take care to avoid committing themselves, or allowing others to get them committed, without thinking through the consequences of their decisions.