Lecture 6

- Deep or Wide Structure/Association b/w Attitudes & Cognitions
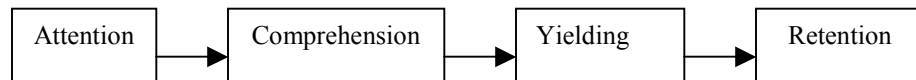
Deep Attitude Structure	Wide Attitude Structure
Prof.'s are smart Smart→ Arrogant Prof. Are Arrogant Arrogance is bad Prof. Are bad ➡ Attack 1, change → structure fails → Easy to change the attitude about Prof.'s	Prof. Arrogant Prof. Unsympathetic Prof. Bad ➡ Need to attack all or many to change attitude about Prof.'s.

- Attitudes that you think about a lot → Elaborated & Have a large, well-developed Structure → Have considered counter-arg's
- Others are accepted w/o elaboration → "You brush your teeth"

Theories of Attitude Change:

Learning Theories:

- (Message) Learning Theory: Carl Hovland and his associates at Yale

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┌───────────┐   ┌─────────────────┐   ┌───────────┐   ┌───────────┐
│ Attention │ ▶ │  Comprehension  │ ▶ │  Yielding │ ▶ │ Retention │
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- Assumptions: Loosely translated from principles of how people learn verbal & motor skills
- Essentially, to be persuaded, one has to go through this entire process → They may stop at any stage and the persuasion would not occur
- One must pay attention to the arguments & their components
- One must then comprehend the arguments
- (One must then mentally rehearse the arguments and conclusion, thereby establishing a link b/w the issue and these implicit responses → Presumably establishes a memory trace for the arguments and conclusion → Leads to retention)
- One must then remember the argument & conclusion to be persuaded

- Motivation: If people are going to change, need to be (1) confronted w/ attitude & (2) requires reasons/motivation to change → New Position + Motivation = Change

- McGuire's Model of Persuasion by Learning:

Exposure	→	Attention	→	Comprehension	→	Acceptance	→	Retention	→	Action

- The Message Learning Process: Based on Lasswell's formula (Who says what to whom through which channels) → Attempt to identify different factors which affect one or more of these stages and therefore the persuasibility

   < Insert Fig. 5.1 from the assigned reading → This is the general approach >

- Conditional Probability View → The persuasion must really be viewed as a conditional probability that goes through these stages → In other words, one must do the preceding stage in order to do the next stage.

(i)   Source Factors → Affect the incentives for attitude change

1. Communicator Credibility
- "Expertise"
- "Trustworthiness" – a. vested interests b. Persuasive Intent
- Hi Credibility → More persuasive
2. "Attractiveness" → Typically increases persuasion
3. "Similarity" → Increases "likability" and therefore "persuassive"; but, when it involves "verifiable facts", dissimilar sources may be more persuasive.
4. "power", "likability", "similarity"
5. "Language" also affect the "attention" & "comprehension" → Similar languages increases attention & comprehension

(ii)   Message Factors

1. "Cogency of Argument"
2. Comprehensibility
3. "# of Reasonable Argument" → But, too many will lose attention → May become bored or irritated that persuasion may decrease
4. Fear & Defensive Reduction: Fear arousing messages are effective in inducing attitude change particularly when the following three conditions are met: (a) the message provides strong arguments for the possibility of the recipient suffereing some extremely negative consequences; (b) the arguments explain that these negative consequences are very likely if the recommendations are not accepted; and (c) it provides strong assurances that adoption of the recommendations effectively eliminates these negative consequences → Defensive avoidance may occur (thereby reducing attitude change) when the message leaves a person feeling inevitably vulnerable regardless of the actions taken to deal with the danger (Subjects were left feeling vulnerable with no effective means of protecting

themselves. Adopting the recommendations served little purpose, so few would do so.

5. "One-sided vs. Two-sided Arguments": (a) Depending upon the level of your audience's intelligence (b) inoculation: the people who heard the two-sided arguments were less vulnerable to or less persuaded by a counter-propaganda.

6. "Conclusion vs. No Conclusion" → In general, if the person is able to draw the (desired) conclusion himself, usually no conclusion is better → Let them draw their own conclusion → But, depending upon the level of your audience

7. Other Message Factors which have been researched

- "Primacy vs. Recency" → Your position 1st or later?

\<See Fig. 3.5 from the assigned reading\>

- "Repetition vs. Wearing Out" → According to the message learning approach, typically repetition increases attention, comprehension, & retention → Therefore, it increases persuasion

- However, some evidence shows that it may actually increase all this but reduce persuasion because it wears them out.

(iii) Receiver/Recipient Factors

1. Intelligence
2. Information Processing Abilities
3. Education
4. Age
5. Gender

→ All these factors could make a difference

- MaGuire's Model of Persuasion: Relationship b/w Recipient Factors & Persuasibility

- Attitude change is determined by (a) the reception of the message arguments and (b) yielding to influence.

\< Insert 3.6 from the assigned reading\>

<u>Consistency Theory</u>

- "Motivational theories": Commonly these theories assume that people want to be consistent in their cognition → When imbalanced situations emerge, we attempt to restore the balance

(i)   <u>Imbalance Theory</u>

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      A  ——  +  ——  B
        \             /
      -   \         /  +
            \  Me  /
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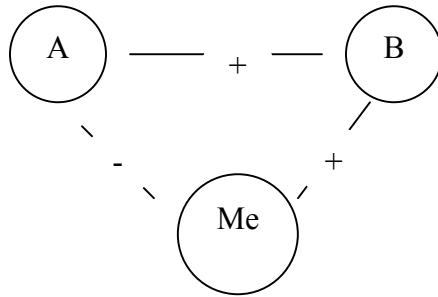
1. Imbalanced situation → You try to restore the balance
2. Restoration depends on 3 Things:
   - (1) Imbalance must be big enough to change
   - (2) Relevance
   - (3) What's easier to change

(ii)   <u>Dissonance Theory</u>

2 Cognitions (Adverse) → Decision → Discomfort → Need to Restore Balance

(iii)   Cognitive Response Models (ELM)

- These findings led to Petty's "Cognitive Response Models" (e.g. ELM)
- The basic idea is that "source/subject generated arguments" or the arguments that don't directly address the arguments (in other words, the arguments initiated by the issue but not directly speaking of it) are more persuasive

<u>Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM): Central vs. Peripheral Route of Processing</u>

- The model assumes that the process of yielding can occur two distinctive routes of persuasion: Central Route of Attitude Change& Peripheral Route of Attitude Change

- Kelman (3 Decades ago): 3 Ways of Persuasion
    i. Compliance – Based on control (reward & punishment)
    ii. Identification – One wants to establish, at least psychologically, a good relationship with the source (want to be like the source, etc.)
    iii. Internalization – You've internalized the new position integrated into your cognitive structure

➔ 1) & 2) corresponds to peripheral route processing
  3) corresponds to central route processing

- Central Route Processing:

(i) When:

High-involvement situations

(ii) What Happens when taking the Central Route of Processing:

- Actively processing the message by carefully considering different aspects of the arguments
- It involves effortful cognitive activity whereby the person draws upon prior experience and knowledge in order to carefully scrutinize all of the information relevant to determining the central merits of the position advocated in the message.
- When people are motivated and able to take the central route, they carefully appraise the extent to which the communication provides information that is fundamental or central tot eh perceived merits of the position advocated.

(iii) Character of the Process:

- The process can be characterized as "systematic" & "Mindful"

(iv) Outcome or the Resulting Attitude Change:

- The end result of the effortful information processing involved in the central route is an attitude that is well articulated and integrated into the person's belief structure
- Relatively Accessible
- Persistent over time
- Predictive of behaviors
- Resistant to Change ➔ Until they are challenged by cogent contrary information

- Peripheral Route of Attitude Change

(i) When:

Low-involvement situations

(ii) What Happens when taking the Central Route of Processing:

- ELM assumes that attitude change doesn't always require effortful evaluation of the persuasive communication or message
- Instead, when a person's motivation or ability to process the issue-relevant information is low, persuasion can occur by a "peripheral route"

(iii) Character of the Process:

- Cue-based, heuristic-based processing predominates
- What could these cues be? Among the variables that have been shown to be capable of serving as simple cues when motivation or ability to process the arguments I slow are (1) credibility of the message source (e.g. females are incompetent, expert sources are correct); (2) how likable or attractive the source is; (3) the mere number of arguments in the message; (4) the length of the arguments used; (5) the number of people thought to endorse the position
- No careful examination of different components of the arguments

(iv) Outcome or the Resulting Attitude Change

- Not necessarily mean that it is not effective way of persuasion → In the short term, this could be a useful way of persuasion
- But, not necessarily enduring → The associated cues could be dissociated from the message over time → This would then undermine the basis of the attitude
- Less accessible
- Less resistant to subsequent attacking messages than attitudes based on careful processing of the message arguments

- What determines which route you will be engaged in?

  → Involvement Level

- What determines the involvement level?

1. Personal Relevance:
   < Insert Fig 5.3 >

2. Ability (to process the message): Got to have the cognitive abilities to process the message

3. Comprehensibility (of the message) or Distraction: Got to comprehend the message
4. Some other external factors (not individual's attribute): (1) Ways in which the arguments are presented (questions vs. assertions); (2) # of sources; (3) repetition, etc.