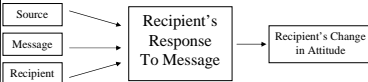


Attitude

- Attitude: person's overall evaluation of a person, object, or issue.
- Attitudes have 3 components:
 - **Affect** (emotional response to attitude object)
 - **Cognition** (thoughts about attitude object)
 - **Behavior** (actions related to attitude object)
- **Persuasion:** The process of forming, reinforcing, or changing people's beliefs, feelings, and behaviors by means of communication

Yale Group Communication Model

Hovland



Carl Hovland: director of mass communication program in Information and Education Division of U.S. Army in WWII. Before and after that, Yale psychology professor studying persuasion. Who (source) says what (message) to whom (recipient) with what effect? **Main focus:** Learning theory approach focused on rewards to recipient for being persuaded.

Source Characteristics

1. **Communicator Credibility:** How likely the source is perceived to be correct.
 - It's rewarding to be correct, because you'll have more successes, make fewer mistakes.



2 Major Credibility Factors

Expertise and Trustworthiness

- Experts are people who are highly trained in an area.
- Trustworthy people are “good” people that you think won’t lie to you.

Early example:

- “Atomic subs will rule the waves” attributed to Robert Oppenheimer or Pravda (Soviet Union newspaper).
- Oppenheimer more persuasive to American audience because of his higher expertise. Or maybe higher trustworthiness.
- Which makes a source more persuasive, expertise or trustworthiness?

More Expertise vs. Trustworthiness

- **High vs. Low Discrepancy:** When message is close to what audience originally believed (low discrepancy from initial belief), expertise and trustworthiness are about equal.
- When message is extreme and hard to believe (**high discrepancy** from initial belief) **expertise** works better.
- **Hand out copy of survey page now**
- **Latitude of Acceptance and Rejection** – for every attitude we have, there’s some variation we will accept (acceptance range) and outside that we won’t accept (rejection range).
 - The closer a message is to the outside of the acceptance range, the more important expertise becomes.
 - The closer a message is to the outside of the acceptance range, the more change it can produce.

Nonverbal Characteristics of The Trustworthy and Expert, Part I

- **Fast speech**
- **Speech that reduces trustworthiness often includes:**
- **Tag questions: changing a statement into a question.**
 - Friends is a really funny TV show, don’t you think?
 - I watch King of the Hill.
- **Qualifiers: softening a statement by adding a qualifying phrase**
 - I hate wine coolers!
 - I don’t know what you think, but I don’t like Trout Brook Brewery Ale, I guess.
-

More Source Characteristics: Similarity

- Similarity: people who are similar to you are more credible.
- Attractiveness
 - Attractive communicators are more persuasive
 - If the recipient doesn't know much about the issue yet.
 - Or hasn't thought about it yet

Message Characteristics

- What's in a message affects how persuasive it will be
 - Fear-inducing messages
 - Messages that present one side of an argument or both sides
 - Messages with a lot of detail or simple arguments
 - Serious or humorous messages



Does Scaring A Person Help Change their Attitudes?

- Originally researchers thought yes:
- Scaring a person will make them want to change their behavior more, to get rid of the fear

First Big Study: Fear and Tooth Decay

Janis & Feshbach, 1953

3 groups of people got different messages about why it's important to brush teeth:

1. **Neutral Message:** Teeth grow and function better if you floss and brush.
2. **Moderate Fear Message:** Not brushing can lead to tooth decay and gum disease.
3. **High Fear Message:** Not brushing can lead to diseased gums, painful toothaches, and spreading infections that can lead to diseases such as arthritic paralysis, kidney damage, or total blindness.

Surprise result: neutral message worked best

Another Big Study: Getting a Tetanus Shot

- Dabbs & Leventhal
- Groups got one of three messages:
 1. Low fear: You should get a tetanus shot, but no info about tetanus provided.
 2. Moderate fear: Tetanus not serious, but is painful, so get the shot
 3. High fear: Tetanus will kill you, so get the shot.

Result:

High fear worked best

Why the Different Results?

- Leventhal's Parallel Response Theory
- When you get a fear-inducing message, you have two responses at the same time:
 1. **Danger control:** I'm in danger so I should do something rational to reduce the danger.
 - Wear seat belt, brush teeth
 2. **Fear control:** I'm scared and I want to reduce the fear.
 - Stop thinking about it, change the channel, get drunk, say it's a lie

Danger Control Good, Fear Control Bad

- The fear message has to include *believable, effective* behaviors to reduce the danger.
- These behaviors have to be **possible**.
- Otherwise you get fear control, not danger control.
 - Problem with tooth decay study:
 - Got people worried about death
 - Brushing your teeth doesn't sound like enough to prevent death
 - People got scared
 - Did fear control: I'm scared, but you can't worry about death all the time.
 - Ignored message

Why did Tetanus Shot Study Work?

- Got people really scared about tetanus.
- Gave them an effective, do-able way to avoid tetanus: get a shot.
- “I can avoid tetanus by getting a shot, OK.”



A local resident gets a tetanus shot. (CNN)

For a Fear Message to Work

- A person needs to hear and believe these four components:
 1. There is a real risk for negative events in their life
 - auto accident injuries, expensive tickets happen
 2. It's very likely that this negative event **will** happen if they don't adopt a behavior
 - wear seat belt or you will be thrown from car and crushed, or get a ticket
 3. It's likely the negative event **won't** happen if they adopt the behavior
 - Wear seat belt, they save lives, you won't get a ticket.
 4. There are specific steps you can follow to do the behavior
 - It's easy to buckle up every time you drive, even if it's a short trip
- Activity – Design a fear message to promote or discourage a behavior



Message and Recipient Characteristics

Attention and Distraction

What Happens when You're Exposed to a Message?

- Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty et al) and Heuristic-Systematic Model (Chaiken et al):
- We have two responses to a message:
 - Peripheral Route Processing
 - Barely think about the message at all, and make a snap decision
 - Central Route Processing
 - Think about the message a lot, generate counterarguments, and make a decision
 - You respond one or both ways

Peripheral Route Processing

- You make a snap decision, without thinking a lot, based on
 - Heuristics: well-learned decision rules (Chen & Chaiken, 1999)
 - Length implies strength
 - If a message has lots of arguments, it's probably right
 - Consensus is correct
 - If a lot of people agree, it must be true
 - Go along to get along
 - Whatever your conversation partner asserts is acceptable
 - Experts can be trusted
 - Expert sources are accurate



When Do We Use Peripheral Route Processing?

- **Irrelevance:** When the issue isn't that important to us
- **Ignorance:** When we don't know much about the issue
- **Inattentiveness:** When we're distracted by something else
 - We're doing something
 - There's a lot going on around us
 - The message has a lot of distracters built into it

Central Route Processing

- Processing of message based on the logic or strength of the arguments.
- We think carefully about the message, and generate our own counterarguments

When Do We Use Central Route Processing?

- **Relevance:** When the issue is important to us
- **Expertise:** When we know a lot about the issue
- **Attentiveness:** When we have a lot of time/ability to think about it
 - When we're not being distracted
