

# Psychology and Social Change

---

Cognitive Dissonance and Paradigm Shifts

- \* **Reminder from unit one:**
- \* **Psychologists focus on the individual**
- \* **Want to know how can you change someone's behaviour**

# Cognitive Consistency

- \* People desire cognitive consistency- they want their attitudes to match their behaviour



Write  
this  
down :)

# Cognitive Dissonance Theory

- \* When your attitudes and beliefs don't match your behaviour you are in a state of cognitive dissonance.
- \* Can motivate a change in behaviour

Write  
this  
down :)



# Cognitive Dissonance Theory

- \* Leon Festinger's Cognitive Dissonance Theory (1957) suggests we have a drive to hold all of our attitudes and beliefs in harmony.



Write  
this  
down :)

# Cognitive Relationships

\* There are three relationships between mental attitudes and actions:

Write  
this  
down :)

\* **Consonant Relationship:** Two cognitions or actions are consistent

\* Wanting to save money, not spending on unnecessary items (Just an example, don't record this)

# Cognitive Relationships

\* There are three relationships between mental attitudes and actions:

\* Irrelevant Relationship: Two cognitions or actions are not related

\* Wanting to save money, studying for your test (Just an example, don't record this)



Write  
this  
down :)

# Cognitive Relationships

\* There are three relationships between mental attitudes and actions:

Write  
this  
down :)

\* **Dissonant Relationship:** Two cognitions or actions are inconsistent

\* Wanting to save money, buying a new phone even though your old one still works (Just an example, don't record this)



# Four Paradigms of Cognitive Dissonance

- \* a) **Belief Disconfirmation:** When an individual's belief is challenged, instead of effecting change they will refute the contradiction or seek moral support from those who share their beliefs



Write  
this  
down :)

# Four Paradigms of Cognitive Dissonance

- \* **Belief Disconfirmation Study:**
  - \* Festinger and his colleagues infiltrated a group that believes they will be picked up by an alien space craft.
  - \* When their belief was challenged (space craft didn't show up) many followers refused to shift their beliefs

# Four Paradigms of Cognitive Dissonance

- \* **b) Induced Compliance:** One is asked to ask in a way that contradicts their beliefs



Write  
this  
down :)

# Four Paradigms of Cognitive Dissonance

- \* **Induced Compliance Study:**
  - \* Festinger asked students to do a tedious task and then were paid to convince a stranger the task was interesting
  - \* Those paid \$1 to convince the stranger rated the task as more interesting than those paid \$20 to convince the stranger

# Four Paradigms of Cognitive Dissonance

## \* Forbidden Behaviour Study:

- \* Children were left alone in a room full of toys including a forbidden toy (steam shovel)
- \* Half the children were threatened severe punishment while the other half were threatened mild punishment
- \* When the children were allowed to play punishment free, the children threatened with only mild punishment still did not play with the steam shovel (justifying to themselves why they didn't want to in the first place).

# Four Paradigms of Cognitive Dissonance

- \* c) Free choice: When confronted with a difficult choice, we will augment the value of the chosen, justifying our choice



Write  
this  
down :)

# Four Paradigms of Cognitive Dissonance

- \* Free Choice Study:

- \* Both monkeys and children were asked to choose between two similar objects.
- \* They were then asked to rate (or in the monkeys case choose again) their rejected item and a new third item
- \* Both the children and monkeys consistently chose the new third item over their initial rejected item, devaluing it

# Four Paradigms of Cognitive Dissonance

- \* d) Effort-Justification: People will justify their efforts they expand when working towards an unpleasant goal



Write  
this  
down :)



# Four Paradigms of Cognitive Dissonance

## \* Effort Justification Study:

- \* To take be considered for the study, half the participants were asked to publicly read sexually obscene words while the other half were asked to read non obscene words.
- \* During the study participants were asked to rate a discussion based on how interesting it was.
- \* Those required to read the obscene words found the discussion more interesting then those who did not.

# How do you reduce cognitive dissonance?

- \* Change one or more attitudes
- \* Change the dissonant behaviour
- \* Reduce the importance of dissonant cognitions
- \* Ignore the behaviour or cognition (can lead to mental stress)



Write  
this  
down :)

# Using Dissonance for Change



Every  
you **Cigarette**  
**smoke** takes  
away | **4** minutes  
of your **life.**

Think ... Don't smoke.

The benefits start as soon as you stop.  
We can help you, call **0800 420 420** or visit us at [www.government.uk](http://www.government.uk)

# Using Dissonance for Change



# Cognitive Dissonance and Mental Health

- \* Individuals who feel high levels of dissonance are at a higher risk for anxiety and depression disorders

# Learning Theory

- \* Learning can alter how an individual interprets the world around them.
- \* Behaviour can be modified.
- \* Theorists: Skinner and Watson



Write  
this  
down :)

# Psychoanalytical Theory

- \* Understand the balance between the conscious and the unconscious to change behaviors.
- \* The inability to balance behaviour may lead to frustration and negatively impact behaviour.
- \* Theorist: Freud



Write  
this  
down :)

# Paradigm Shift

- \* A paradigm shift is a change in thinking occurs
- \* When paradigm shifts happen they lead to large scale changes



Write  
this  
down :)



# Paradigm Shift Example

“People have really gotten comfortable not only sharing information of different kinds, but more openly and with more people. The social norm is just something that has evolved over time.”

- \* How do you think this quote relates to our society today?
- \* Who do you think spoke this quote?

# Paradigm Shift Example

“People have really gotten comfortable not only sharing information of different kinds, but more openly and with more people. The social norm is just something that has evolved over time.”

- \* How do you think this quote relates to our society today?
- \* Who do you think spoke this quote?
- \* Answer: Mark Zuckerberg

# Paradigm Shift

- \* Facebook was introduced in 2008, since then Facebook has 2.2 billion active users. Only 3.2 billion people have access to internet.
- \* 25% of Facebook users don't bother with privacy settings

## \* Impacts of the lack of privacy paradigm shift

Pros	Cons
<p data-bbox="367 1444 1037 1709">-Better relationships</p>	

- \* One study has shown individuals who interacted regularly with social media were more likely to feel connected and satisfied in their relationships
- \* However, more recent studies are finding that no statistical significance between social networking sites and the quality of social relationships

## \* Impacts of the lack of privacy paradigm shift

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Better relationships</li><li>-Collaboration</li></ul>	

- \* Crowd sourcing: to obtain information or enlisting a large number of people of resources typically via the internet.



## \* Impacts of the lack of privacy paradigm shift

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Better relationships</li><li>- Collaboration</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Poor/False Representation</li><li>- Targeting</li></ul>



- \* 70% of companies say they have rejected an applicant for a job based off of their social media account.
- \* Things employers have searched:
  - \* Candidate has poor communication skills (27 %)
  - \* Candidate has posted discriminatory comments (32 %)
  - \* Candidate has posted inappropriate photos (39 %)

**Is your social media account an accurate representation of who you are as a whole?**