

ATTITUDE

Meaning -definition

- Attitudes are evaluations people make about objects, ideas, events, or other people.
- Attitude denotes a functional state of readiness which determines the organism to react in a characteristic way to certain stimuli or stimulus situations.
- According to Murphy and Murphy, attitude is primarily a way of being set towards or against certain things.
- Baldwin views that attitude is a readiness for attention or action of a definite pattern.
- In the opinion of Warren, the specific mental disposition toward an incoming experience whereby the experience is modified or condition of readiness for a certain type of activity is referred to as attitude.

Meaning -definition

- **Cantril holds that an attitude is a more or less permanently enduring state of readiness of mental organisation which predisposes an individual to react in a characteristic way to any object or situation with which it is related.**
- **Attitude can also be defined as a mental or neural state of readiness organized through experience influencing dynamically or directly the individuals' response to all objects and situations with which it is related.**
- Attitudes determine the organisms orientation towards his social and physical environment including himself.
- Because of a particular attitude towards a specific stimulus motives are aroused and action is mobilised to approach or avoid the stimulus.

Components of attitude

- (a) The **cognitive component**
- It consists of a person's system of beliefs, perceptions and stereotypes about the attitudinal object.
- In other words, it refers to his ideas about the object.
- The term opinion is often used as a substitute for the cognitive component of an attitude particularly when it is relevant to some issue or problem.

Components...

- (b) The **affective component**
- Refers to the **emotional aspect of the attitude** which is very often a deep rooted component and resists most to change.
- In other words, **it indicates the direction and intensity of an individual's evaluation.**
- In further simple terms, it involves a kind of emotion experienced towards the object of attitude say **love or hatred, like or dislike, palatable(PLEASANT) or unpalatable feelings.**
- The emotional component as already indicated it is quite strong normally stands on the way of attitude change.

Components...

- **C) the behavioural component**
- It indicates the tendency to react towards the object of attitude in certain specific ways.
- In other words, it is a predisposition to act in a certain manner towards the attitude object.
- This is known by observing the behaviour of the individual i.e., what he says he will do or actually how he behaves, does or reacts.

Characteristics and Properties of Attitudes

- ***1. Attitudes always imply a subject-object relationship.***
- They are associated with ideas, ways and external objects. It is always related to definite stimulus situations.
- **This stimulus situation may be towards:**
- (a) Objects such as home, automobile, TV, kitchen
- (b) Persons like own self, father, mother, in laws, brother and sister etc.
- (c) Institutions like school, college, church, club
- (d) Concepts, values, norms and symbols like flag, truth, democracy, justice, religion, God, philosophy etc.
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- ***2. Attitudes in relation to objects, persons and values may or may not have motivational appeal initially.***
- Gradually individuals through social interaction develop either positive or negative attitude which depend upon their experience and need.
- ***3. Attitudes give a direction to one's behaviour and actions.***
- Because of a particular positive attitude the organism either approaches it or because of a negative attitude avoids it.
- A positive attitude will reinforce the behaviour and help in its continuance.
- A negative attitude conversely will make the response weak and finally lead to avoidance behaviour

- ***4. Attitudes are coloured with motivational and evaluative characteristics.***

- A favourable attitude is considered as having some positive values while a negative attitude is looked upon as having unpalatable and negative implications.
- The directive properties or attitude make our goal purposive and direct our behaviour.

- ***5. Attitudes are not innate but learned, acquired and conditioned.***
- They grow in the society in the minds of men through various modes of training.
- As a result of our first hand and second hand experience with objects, ideas, situations and through the process of social interaction and socializations attitudes grow.

- **6. *Attitude is never neutral.***

- It can be either positive or negative, favourable or unfavourable, palatable or unpalatable.
- Thus, it is always coloured with some sort of emotion.
- neutral view is said to be the opinion and not attitude where there is no emotional tone.

- *7. Attitudes have affective properties of varying degrees.*
- They are linked with feelings and emotions like pleasant, unpleasant, fear, love.
- An attitude which works as a tendency for future activity is marked by emotionality. The reaction is either mild or violent or normal.
- *8. Attitudes are more or less enduring organisations or enduring state of readiness.*
- Thus, attitudes once formed and relatively stable, consistent and permanent can be normally predicted.

- *9. attitudes can be changed*

- depending upon the circumstances, experiences and how of information's through various processes of communication or through direct interaction. A number of studies on attitude change support the above fact.

- *10. Attitude can be measured.*

- In attitude the intensity of emotion is measured through a five point or six point scale like very favourable, favourable, moderately favourable, neither favourable nor unfavourable, unfavourable and extremely unfavourable.

- **11. Attitudes have cognitive, affective and behavioural components.**
- **12. Attitudes range in the number and variety of stimuli to which they are referred.**
- **The strength and range of an attitude depends upon the strength of the experience and learning of the organism.**
- **13. Except a few, most of the attitudes are clustered or related to each other.**
- **If you have unfavourable attitude towards male sex, any other object, idea, value or incident related to men folk in general will also be looked upon in a similar manner.**
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Formation of Attitude:

- How do attitudes form?
- There are a number of factors that can influence how and why attitudes form.
- **Experience**
- Attitudes form directly as a result of experience. They may emerge due to direct personal experience, or they may **result from observation**.
- **Social Factors**
- **Social roles and social norms can have a strong influence on attitudes. Social roles relate to how people are expected to behave in a particular role or context.**
- Social norms involve society's rules for what behaviors are considered appropriate.

- **Learning**

- Attitudes can be learned in a variety of ways.
- Consider how advertisers use [classical conditioning](#) to influence your attitude toward a particular product.
- In a television commercial, you see young, beautiful people having fun in on a tropical beach while enjoying a sports drink. This attractive and appealing imagery causes you to develop a positive association with this particular beverage.

- Operant conditioning can also be used to influence how attitudes develop.
- Imagine a young man who has just started smoking. Whenever he lights up a cigarette, people complain, chastise him, and ask him to leave their vicinity.
- This negative feedback from those around him eventually causes him to develop an unfavorable opinion of smoking and he decides to give up the habit.
- observing the attitudes of their parents and usually begin to demonstrate similar outlooks.

- Finally, people also learn attitudes by [observing the people around them](#).
- When someone you admire greatly espouses a particular attitude, you are more likely to develop the same beliefs.

Attitude Change

- Attitude change occurs anytime an attitude is modified.
- **Thus, change occurs when a person goes from being positive to negative, from slightly positive to very positive, or from having no attitude to having one.**
- While attitudes can have a powerful effect on behavior, they are not set in stone.
- The same influences that lead to attitude formation can also create attitude change

- **Learning Theory of Attitude Change:**

- Classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and observational learning can be used to bring about attitude change.
- **Classical conditioning can be used to create positive emotional reactions to an object, person, or event by associating positive feelings with the target object.**
- **Operant conditioning can be used to strengthen desirable attitudes and weaken undesirable ones.**
- **People can also change their attitudes after observing the behavior of others.**

- **Elaboration Likelihood Theory of Attitude Change:**
- This theory of [persuasion](#) suggests that people can alter their attitudes in two ways:
 - **First, they can be motivated to listen and think about the message, thus leading to an attitude shift.**
 - Or, they might be influenced by characteristics of the speaker, leading to a temporary or surface shift in attitude.
 - Messages that are thought-provoking and that appeal to logic are more likely to lead to permanent changes in attitudes.

Cognitive Dissonance Theory:

- Leon Festinger, in the late 1950s proposed the theory of cognitive dissonance.
- Dissonance means an inconsistency.
- Cognitive dissonance refers to any incompatibility that an individual might perceive between two or more of his attitudes or between his behaviour and attitudes.
- Festinger argued that any form of inconsistency is uncomfortable and that individuals will attempt to reduce the dissonance and hence the discomfort.
- Therefore, individuals will seek a stable state where there is a minimum of dissonance, because an individual cannot completely avoid dissonance.
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