

Attitude theories

Psychology



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Attitude Theories Attitude Theories The study of attitude and behavior development has been approached with varying methods and emphasis in the last four Centuries. Before the World War II, many approaches were based on attitude measurement and definition issues. Most studies targeted nature, and reported vital correlation findings, but little focus was put on causality. Studies also involved experimental techniques such as a comparison of groups or control of groups. Later on, attitude building theories approached the ideas of attitude from the behaviorist point of view, and most researchers were mainly interested in determining the relationship between attitude and the observable results in learners. Several attitude theories have been identified and categorized in to four key groups. These include functional theory, consistency theory, social judgment theories, and learning theories. This article, however, will only focus on the similarities and differences between learning theory and social learning theory.

Early learning theories are also referred to as behavioral theories of attitude change (Suedfeld, 2007). These theories were formulated at a time when learning studies mainly focused on behavioral psychology. Learning theories also emphasized on the aspects of stimulus of the communication situation (Suedfeld, 2007). The nature of the environment influenced an individual's emotional response. Researches on learning theories indicated that when stimuli are consistently associated with old stimuli (event), then the new stimuli have the strongest power to create an emotional response in the person (Suedfeld, 2007). Some of the components of this theory include affective and conative, or behavioral. Affective means that emotions or feelings are things that are evoked. While behavioral means the disposition or tendency to act in certain ways toward a stimulus (Suedfeld, 2007). For <https://assignbuster.com/attitude-theories-essay-samples/>

example, a father may happily announce his salary increase at home, while the mother angrily refutes increase in income task. In these two situations, both parents are expressing nonverbal behavior to express their feelings. If the relationship between the topic and the nonverbal behavior repeatedly happens before a child, then the nonverbal behavior will create an emotional response in the child.

Social judgment theory highlights how an individual's prior attitudes affect the manner in which they perceive and judge current information and experiences. In other words, a person's attitudes act as the judgmental standard, which influences how he or she perceives current information (Suedfeld, 2007). Unlike early learning theories that emphasized on behavioral psychology, social judgment theory attempts to utilize the principles of judgment to study attitude change (Suedfeld, 2007). In addition, in learning theory, an individual's attitude change is highly influenced by the number of times the people around him or her correlate their opinions with emotional response, while in social judgment theory, attitude change is influenced by how an individual judges current information based on his or her past attitude and experiences. For example, a student reads six to nine books in a week. She then joins a reading club that promises party to students who reads eleven books in three months. She then reduces to reading two to four books in a week. Why? This is because she only needs to read eleven books. This means that she has changed her attitude based on the judgment of the past attitude.

In summary, persuasion and attitude studies are key areas of interest to those studying social psychology. Theory building is one of the aspects on this study. Both early learning theory and social judgment theory have their <https://assignbuster.com/attitude-theories-essay-samples/>

own ideas and components that make them valid in explaining attitude change and development. Although there are significant differences in their approaches to describing attitude change, they both provide guidance to attitude development, and recommendations for interpreting information and making decisions.

Reference

Suedfeld P. (2007). *Attitude Change: The Competing Views*. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.