

Interpersonal Relationships

Week 3 notes - Psychological Attraction

Classical Conditioning

1. Unconditioned stimulus → unconditioned response
 - Conditioned stimulus → no response
2. Pair conditioned & unconditioned stimulus → unconditioned response
3. Conditioned stimulus → conditioned response
 - Evidence shows that when asked to rate liking for a fictional stranger, people like the stranger less when conditions get worse

Operant Conditioning

- Skinner → says successful relationships depend on extent to which pleasing behaviours are rewarded (positive reinforcement) and displeasing ones are extinguished (negative reinforcement)
- Both CC and OC have limited explanatory power

Dutton & Aron 1974 study

- Heterosexual male participants asked to cross a shaky or sturdy bridge (randomly assigned)
- Approached by an attractive male or female interviewer
- Asked to fill out a questionnaire; offered an opportunity to be contacted in the future

→ Results

1. Female interviewer
 - Shaky bridge: 9/18 participants called the female interviewer
 - Sturdy bridge: 2/16 called her back
2. Male interviewer
 - Shaky bridge: 2/7 called him
 - Sturdy bridge: 1/6 called him

Rubin 1973 Study

- Found that couples who experience a lot of parental interference experienced higher amounts of love for their partner
- This is esp. True for couples from diff religious or cultural backgrounds

Allen et al 1989

- **Response facilitation:** a dominant response to an arousing event

- Argued that a dominant response to a same-sex person in a aversive situation is *liking* while a dominant response to an attractive opposite-sex person is *romantic attraction*

Implicit Egoism

: people like things that are associated with them

- Evidence says ppl are attracted more to ppl who share an experimental code resembling their birthday or whose last names share the same letters
- **Spinoza** → we like those who belittle us first then praise us after

Aronson & Linder 1965 Study

- Participants overheard a confederate talk about them
 1. Negatively, then positively
 2. Positively, then positively
 3. Negatively, then negatively
 4. Positively, then negatively

Balance Theory (Heider 1958)

- Each relationship consists of 3 parts;
- A person (P) and another person (O) whose relationship is characterized by liking or disliking
- P and O have relationship with regard to some issue (ex: attitude, object, behaviour)

Birds of a Feather (Byrne 1961)

- Having similarities with someone fosters liking
- **Similarity-attraction hypothesis:** shows that a stranger with similar attitudes is liked more than a stranger with dissimilar attitudes
- Sharing attitudinal/personality dimensions = more liking
- Evidence is mixed about this hypothesis

Byrne's Studies

- Used the "Phantom Other Technique"
- Participants provided answers to questions on attitudes to different topics
- Later make judgements of another person based on their attitudes to the same topics
- Result → linear relationship between attitude similarity and liking

Luo & Klohnen 2005 study

- Study about newlyweds
- Both physical attraction and attitude similarity were important factors that predicted relationship satisfaction

Novak & Lerner 1968 Study

- Used “Phantom Other Technique”
- Modification → at the bottom of each phantom response sheet added “ i don’t know if this matters, but I had a mental breakdown and I am seeing a psychiatrist”
- **Results** → being most similar to a phantom like this lead to the lowest levels of liking of the stranger

Repulsion Hypothesis

- Rosenbaum (1986) failed to replicated Byrne’s finding that similarity leads to liking
- Byrne’s study was missing a key control condition: no-info condition
- Used 3 conditions → similarity to participant, dissimilarity to participant and no info provided

Amodio & Showers 2005 study

- Tracked dating partners for a year and recorded their commitment and perceived similarity

Do Opposites Attract?

- Couples w diff political, religious, cultural views are commonplace
- **Winch** → differentiated between “similarity” and “complementarity” which means complementing each others strengths and weaknesses
- Claimed that similarity is important for meeting people
- Longevity of relationship is determined by how well people meet each other’s needs

Complementarity

→ **Hitsch et al 2010**

- Found that most people prefer similarity in the person whom they want to contact
- Found that less attractive men (those in bottom 10%) needed \$186,000 more in annual income to be given as much attention as the 10% of the attractive men
- Few studies about this
- Those that have, only used small samples which are not a good representative
- Similarity more supported

Dominance & Submission

→ **Dryer & Horowitz 1997**

- Paired people with either dominant or submissive confederates
- Participants who prefer to dominate were happiest when paired with a submissive confederate and vice versa

Are Resources Traded for Youth and Fertility

- Evolutionary perspective says yes
- **Cultural perspective:** argues that women have not had the same opportunities as men, so have had to look for partners with better resources
- Intelligent women in US less concerned with mate's wealth and status

Dispositions

- If you live for people's acceptance, you will die from their rejection
- History of acceptance/rejection gives you a sense of your own Mate value
- If your mate value is high, you will expect more from potential partner
- If you overestimate, then rejection will force you to recalibrate your expectations

Self-esteem

- People with low self-esteem or anxiously-attached people expect to be rejected more often
- Anticipate lower quality partner → mismatched in terms of physical attractiveness or mate value

Avoiding Rejection

- If we feel rejection is possible, most people will avoid the situation
- From a relationship point of view, if a very attractive person shows little interest in us, it is probably safe not to approach them

Bernstein et al 1983

- Male participants had to decide where to sit to watch a movie
 1. Squeeze into a small cubicle next to a very attractive woman
 2. Sit in a neighbouring cubicle alone but with lots of room

→ Manipulation

- One is playing two different movies
- The other is playing the same movie

→ Risk of Rejection

- When same movie is playing in both cubicles; choosing to squeeze into the small cubicle would make the men's intentions obvious
- When diff movie is playing in 2 cubicles; choosing to sit with woman can be interpreted as i'm interested in this movie, not in you

→ Results

- 25% of men dared to sit near the woman when the same movie was playing
- 75% of men dared to sit next to the woman when different movie was playing

Phenomenon-driven Approach

- Proximity
- Playing hard to get
- Secret relationships
- Fatal attractions

Proximity

→ **Bossard 1932**

- 5000 married couples in phili, 33% of brides and grooms lived within 5 blocks of each other and 50% lived within 20 blocks of each other
- Friendships → physical proximity is the best predictor of who will become friends
- People living close together may have some similarities
- **Mere exposure effect:** better accounts for relationship formations
- Too much exposure can lead to disliking

Playing Hard to Get

→ **Walster et al 1973**

- Dissonance theory & Personal Equity theory
- Most ppl know that when something is hard to obtain, this raises its perceived value and makes it more desirable
- They found that a woman who is hard to get was the most preferred partner

Secret Relationships

- Secrecy of a relationship tends to make it more exciting than it would be if it were not secret
- Reasons:
 1. Misattribution of arousal
 2. Cognitive load

Fatal Attraction

- Relationships that start w partners liking each other then disliking each other resulting in end/death of the relationship
- Eventual break up results from the fading infatuation that the quality that attracted you is no longer attractive