

Interpersonal Relationships

Week 5 notes - Fairness & Equity

Social Exchange Theory

- Attempts to explain all types of relationships, from ones with your friends and parents to ones with romantic partner
- Argues that relationships are based on exchange of resources, with added costs and benefits to each relationships

Resource Exchange in Relationships

- Simple economic principle of Supply and Demand applies
- People exchange rewards
- Giving another person some sort of reward comes at a cost to the giver

Types of Resources

- Goods and services = more concrete than money
- All 3 are more concrete than “love” status and info
- Love is most particularistic: it needs to come from the right person

Equity Theory

- To seek maximum gain at minimal costs
- When both sides are equal there is equity in the exchange

Applying the Formula

- Is not easy
- Equity is in the eye of the beholder
- Partners must agree upon the equity of items being exchanged
- Evidence is mixed as to whether equity matters in relationship
- Evidence shows that couples who report equity in relationship are more committed

Reacting to Inequity

- 101 couples studied over 5 years
- Found that men found themselves under-benefitted and women were more likely to be over-benefitted in the relationships
- Social exchange theory predicts that inequity should be a negative experience for both partners

Reacting to Inequity

- Behavioural adaptation
- Overbenefitted partner increases input
- Underbenefitted partner decreases input

Comparison Level

: summarizes what people expect to get or deserve from a relationship

- If what you receive from relationship exceeds your CL, you are satisfied, if it does not then you are dissatisfied

Comparison Level for Alternatives

: comparing current relationship outcomes to a possible alternative

Types of Relationships

1. Attractive Stability
2. Attractive Instability
3. Unattractive Stability
4. Unattractive Instability

Investment Model

- Level of investment in relationship influences attraction and dependence
- Commitment depends on past:
 1. Tangible investments
 2. Intangible investments
 3. Planned investments

Communal Relationships

- Can be differentiated from Exchange Relationships
- Benefits exchanged for past benefit or with expectations of future reciprocation
- In communal relationships → no expectations of return of favours

Lemay & Clark 2008

- Evidence shows that holding a communal orientation facilitates creation of interdependence which further promotes formation of close relationships
- Study found that partners with communal orientation were more likely to engage in relationship - promoting behaviours

Individual's Attachment Style

- **Securely attached:** prefer communal situations

- **Anxiously attached:** also prefer communal situations but are less comfortable in them
- **Avoidantly attached:** disliked those who followed communal norms

Chapter 7 - Love & Emotion

Do we need love?

- Western societies: yes
- Necessary condition but not sufficient condition for marriage

History of Love

- Freud → love is a compensatory mechanism that is a byproduct of our need for sex that is blocked
- Behaviourists → love is an innate response due to stimulation of erogenous zones
- Social Psychologists → treated love as an attitude that compels us to think, feel and act in certain ways

Causal Theories of Love

- Humans evolved to have biparental units for caring for children
- If love is a construct we can study, there must be underlying brain mechanisms

Neurology of Love

→ Lust

1. **Androgens:** testosterone, estrogen, - sex drive, libido

→ Romantic Love

1. **Dopamine:** pleasure/reward system
2. **Serotonin:** modulates anger, aggression, body temperature, mood, sleep and appetite
3. **Norepinephrine:** flight or fight system, modulated alertness, arousal, influences reward system

→ Attachment

1. **Oxytocin:** letdown reflex (lactation), uterine contractions, released during orgasm, involved in social bonding, trust formation.
2. **Vasopressin:** involved in aggression, blood pressure regulation and temp regulation. Released during sex

Fisher et al 2002 study

- Found that lust and sexual attraction associated with increases in androgens and estrogens
- Attraction & romantic love → associated with increases in norepinephrine and dopamine; decrease in serotonin and indoleamine
- Attachment associated with oxytocin and vasopressin

Misattribution of Arousal

- **Emotion:** result of changes in physiological arousal that are misidentified by the perceiver
- Love can be exacerbated by these cues
- Ex; parental disapproval, stress, keeping it hush hush

Preoccupation with the Other

- Thinking about the other person is also important
- It may be that thinking about the other person causes us to feel love

Lee 1973, 1988 study

- Compared love to colours
- You can combine different colours to produce new ones
- Similarly, can combine different love styles to produce other types of loves
- Divided love into 6 styles: 3 primary and 3 secondary

→ Issues

- Theory is primarily descriptive
- Cannot address how love came about

Triangular Theory of Love

- All you need is : intimacy, passion and decision/commitment
- Different time courses for each
- Intimacy: increases steadily and decreases at end of relationship
- Passion: increases rapidly and levels off
- decision/commitment: depends on the other 2

Companionate vs Passionate Love

- Intense longing and infatuation
- If reciprocated, feelings of elation and ecstasy on part of both lovers
- If not, feelings of emptiness, anxiety and despair
- Companionate love lacks the passion of passionate love

Individual Differences in Love

- Gender differences are assumed to exist, but little empirical evidence is tentative and weak
- Age effects: evidence indicates that 4-14 year olds experience love as intensely as 18 year olds, with a decrease for 12 year old boys
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