



# What is Attitude?

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Nature of Attitude



# Attitudes

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## **Definition & Nature of Attitudes**

- In social psychology, the term **attitude** is defined as predispositions involving beliefs, feelings and dispositions to act toward some object.
- The object may be any thing – a person, a group, an object, or even an abstract idea.



# Attitudes

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- An attitude has 3 main components which are known as the A,B,C of attitudes:
  - **A**ffect (Feeling)
  - **B**ehaviour (Action)
  - **C**ognition (Awareness)



# Attitudes

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- Thus, attitudes refer to the way one thinks, feels and acts toward objects in any social situation. It is a relatively stable disposition of human beings to think, feel and act in a particular manner.



# Attitudes

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- In more simple terms, attitudes are **evaluations** of attitude objects. Attitudes are expressions of how much we like or dislike various things.
- Evaluations are expressed by terms such as *liking-disliking*, *pro-anti*, *favourable-unfavourable*, and *positive-negative*.



# Attitudes

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- Although most of our attitudes can be located on a **bipolar scale**, such as, positive-negative, in some case, we may have both positive and negative attitude toward the same object.
- Therefore, our attitudes toward objects, events or persons could be also **ambivalent**.



# Attitudes

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- Attitudes are different from beliefs or opinions. **Beliefs** are cognitions, or thoughts, about the characteristics of objects.
- On the other hand, a given attitude is often a summary of the evaluations made of different aspects of the attitude object.



# Attitudes

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- Attitudes are **relatively stable**. They tend to persist over time and across situations. However, it does not mean that attitudes do not change. They do change in the light of new experiences and information.





# Attitudes

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- Though the attitude-behaviour relationship is not a straight forward one as it is moderated by several external variables, attitudes are generally thought to **guide behaviour.**



# Attitudes

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- Attitudes provide basis for defining social groups. Attitudes are central in maintaining a group. Members of a group often share similar attitudes and this is what that binds them together.



# Attitudes

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- It would be more appropriate to say that attitudes guide our thinking and behaviour. They influence several aspects of our social behaviour.



# Attitudes

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- The **positive attitudes** towards others brings us closer to them. On the other hand, negative attitudes create interpersonal distance and lead to less friendly interaction with others.



# Attitudes

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- Our attitudes are **based on information**. We can't have an attitude toward an object about which we don't have any information.
- Because we can never know all the information available on any particular attitude object, our attitudes are always **open to revision**.



# Attitudes

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- Our lives are filled with opportunities for **attitude change**. That is why, we are constantly bombarded with advertisements intended to increase our favourableness toward various products.



# Attitudes

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## **Nature of Attitudes (Summary)**

- Attitudes are evaluative statements.
- Attitudes could be toward an object, event, person or an idea.
- Attitudes are thought to guide thinking and behaviour
- Attitudes are relatively stable, however, they are open to change in the light of new knowledge and information