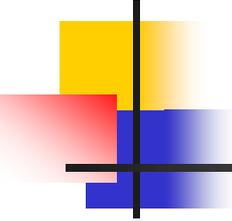


How do we form our Attitudes?

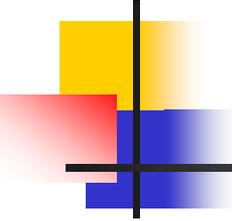
Theories of Attitudes



Formation of Attitudes

Formation of Attitudes

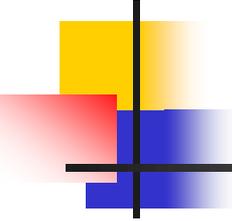
- Our attitudes are a result of a complex interplay of a variety of psychological and social factors. Some of the important influences on the formation of our attitudes are as given below:



Attitudes

Factors Influencing Formation of Attitudes

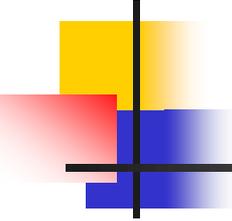
- Family
- School
- Peers
- Direct Experience
- Mass Media



Theories of Attitudes

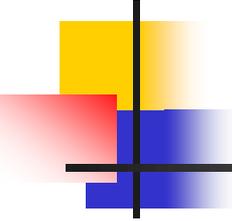
Learning Theories

- **Classical Conditioning Theory** – This theory was given by **Ivan Pavlov**. For this theory, Pavlov was also awarded the Nobel Prize.



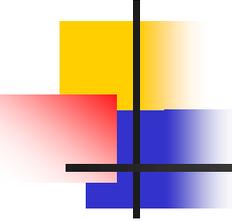
Theories of Attitudes

- The classical conditioning theory states that when a neutral stimulus is repeatedly paired with an unconditioned stimulus, it takes on the properties of the unconditioned stimulus.
- In a sense, one stimulus becomes a signal for the presentation or occurrence of the other stimulus.



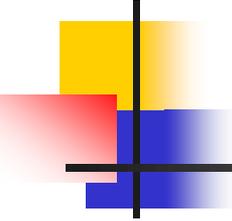
Theories of Attitudes

- **UCS** → **UCR**
- **CS + UCS** → **UCR**
- **CS** → **CR**



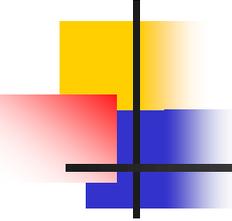
Theories of Attitudes

- Therefore, according to classical conditioning theory, objects, people or events associated with pleasant experiences may take on favourable evaluations, while those associated with unpleasant experiences may be evaluated negatively.



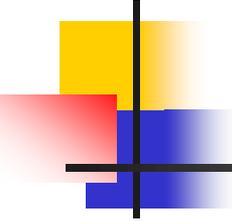
Theories of Attitudes

- **Instrumental Conditioning Theory**
 - This theory was given by **B. F. Skinner**. This theory states that reward consequences of any behaviour shape its enactment.
- That is, behaviours that are followed by positive outcomes are strengthened and tend to be repeated.



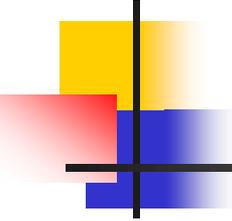
Theories of Attitudes

- In a broad way, instrumental conditioning is a basic form of learning in which responses that lead to positive outcomes or that permit avoidance of negative outcomes are strengthened.



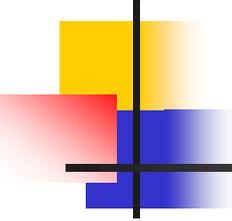
Theories of Attitudes

- If you express an attitude to a friend who then provides positive reinforcement (by smiling, nodding or expressing approval), your attitude is likely to be strengthened.
- On the other hand, if your friend provides punishment (by frowning, disagreeing or expressing disapproval), your attitude is likely to be weakened.



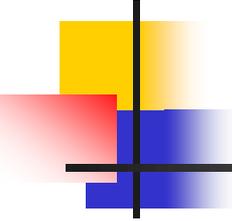
Theories of Attitudes

- Parents often give or withhold rewards and approval contingent upon the attitude expressed by their children.
- This may be the chief reason why a high degree of similarity exists between the attitudes of parents and children on certain topics.



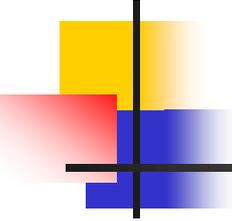
Theories of Attitudes

- **Social Learning Theory** – Social learning theory was given by **Albert Bandura**. The theory is based on the assumption that much of what we learn is through observation of others.
- That's why this theory is also referred to as the **observational learning theory**.



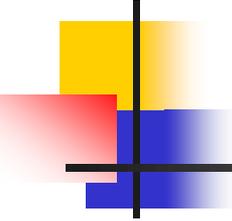
Theories of Attitudes

- Thus, according to this theory, social learning is the process through which we acquire new information, forms of behaviour, or attitudes from other persons.
- In other words, many of our views are acquired in situations in which we interact with others or merely observe their behaviour.



Theories of Attitudes

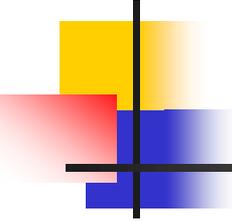
- Social learning explains how and why we often acquire our attitudes from exposure to the mass media – television, magazines, newspapers, films etc.



Theories of Attitudes

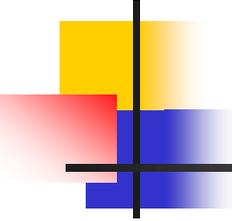
Consistency Theories

- **Balance Theory** – This theory was given by **Fritz** Heider. The basic tenet of balance theory is that unbalanced structures produce tension and discomfort and, therefore, there is a natural tendency to maintain or restore balance in one's attitude structures.



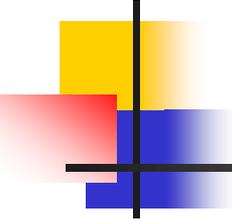
Theories of Attitudes

- According to balance theory, people restore balance by changing one or more of their attitudes. Or in some cases, they may even try to change the attitude of the other person to restore balance.



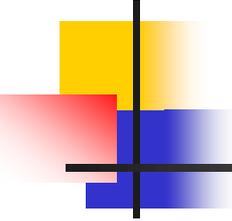
Theories of Attitudes

- **Cognitive Dissonance Theory** – This theory was given by **Leon Festinger**. Dissonance refers to the feelings we experience when we notice a gap between two attitudes we hold, or between our attitudes and behaviour.



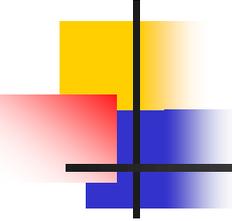
Theories of Attitudes

- The creation of **dissonance**, similar to the creation of imbalance, is thought to be distressful and to motivate the person to restore consonance.
- The amount of dissonance created depends upon the importance of the elements to the person and the extent to which the elements do not fit.



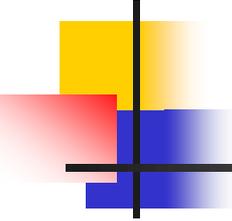
Theories of Attitudes

- The theory states that people do not like to remain in a state of cognitive dissonance and they strive for harmony (consonance) among the elements in their cognitive or thought structures.



Theories of Attitudes

- There are several ways for a person to reduce dissonance:
 - Change the attitude
 - Change the behaviour
 - Acquire new information that supports our attitude or behaviour
 - Trivialize the attitude



Theories of Attitudes

- For example, a smoker who hears of the link between smoking and cancer can either stop smoking or can choose not to believe the link.
- If neither of these changes in the cognitive element is made, the smoker may add a new element, such as, switching to filter cigarettes.