

Module 10: Social Psychology
Topic 1 Content: The Influence of Attitude on Behavior

Introduction

The Influence of Attitude on Behavior

Introduction



In this interactivity, click on each of the segments below to learn more about how attitude influences behavior.

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Module 10: Social Psychology

Topic 1 Content: The Influence of Attitude on Behavior


Explicit Attitude

The Influence of Attitude on Behavior

Introduction

What is an explicit attitude?

An explicit attitude is one that is consciously stated or communicated either to oneself or to others.



Why might a person's behavior not match their explicit attitude?

What is an implicit attitude?

Why are surveys and self-reports not sufficient for measuring implicit attitude?

What do social psychologists use instead of self-reports?

An explicit attitude is one that is consciously stated or communicated either to oneself or to others.

Module 10: Social Psychology

Topic 1 Content: The Influence of Attitude on Behavior


Inconsistency

The Influence of Attitude on Behavior

Why might a person's behavior not match their explicit attitude?

Someone's attitude may be influenced by various factors. For example, if your aunt believes in maintaining a healthy diet and exercising consistently, her attitude about diet and exercise will likely influence her behavior. However, factors may keep her from behaving consistently.

1. Your uncle may be a great baker, and leave treats around the house to tempt your aunt. Strong influences like these may override her healthy attitude and influence her behavior.
2. If your aunt keeps a food journal or joins a support group, she may continuously be aware of her attitude, which will likely influence her behavior.



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Module 10: Social Psychology

Topic 1 Content: The Influence of Attitude on Behavior

Implicit Attitude


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What is an explicit attitude?

Why might a person's behavior not match their explicit attitude?

What is an implicit attitude?

Implicit attitudes are those that are hidden beneath the surface of consciousness.



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What do social psychologists use instead of self-reports?

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Module 10: Social Psychology


Topic 1 Content: The Influence of Attitude on Behavior

Surveys and Self-Reports

The Influence of Attitude on Behavior

Why are surveys and self-reports not sufficient for measuring implicit attitude?

When asking people to self-report, they consistently skew their answers because of a social-desirability bias. For example, when asked to report their frequency of doing something desirable, like exercising, people will consistently overestimate their actual exercise frequency when compared to studies that actually examine how frequently people workout. This social-desirability bias skews survey results.

A photograph of a young woman with dark hair, wearing a pink t-shirt and blue jeans, riding a bicycle outdoors. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a bright, sunny outdoor setting with green grass and trees.

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Module 10: Social Psychology

Topic 1 Content: The Influence of Attitude on Behavior

Implicit Association Test (IAT)

The Influence of Attitude on Behavior

What do social psychologists use instead of self-reports?



Social psychologists use a measurement called the implicit association test (IAT) to discover implicit attitudes. For example, if survey participants were asked whether they were biased against members of a different ethnic group, only a few people would likely admit to having this viewpoint. Conversely, during an IAT participants quickly respond to images followed by words with strongly negative or positive emotional content. For example, if participants have difficulty quickly and consistently pairing images of a particular race with positive words, that would indicate a potential implicit bias in attitude.

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