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Attitudes & Values

An attitude is a positive; negative or mixed evaluation of an object that is expressed at some level of intensity.

It is an expression of a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of a person, place, thing or event.

Attitude refers to beliefs, feelings and behavioural tendencies of people towards objects, ideas or people.

Beliefs are cognition or thoughts about the characteristics of objects and they link objects to attributes.

Attitudes are evaluative feelings of the beliefs.

The evaluation can be expressed in terms such as (liking - disliking, pro - anti, favoring – not favoring and positive – negative).



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According to N.L. Munn, “Attitudes are learned predispositions towards aspects of our environment. They may be positively or negatively directed towards certain people, service or institution.”

Attitudes are learned

Attitudes refer to feelings and beliefs of an individual or groups of people.

These feelings and beliefs define one’s predispositions towards given aspect of the world.

Attitude endure, unless something happens.

All people hold attitudes.



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Attitudes represent cluster of beliefs, assessed feelings and behavioural intentions towards a person, object or event.

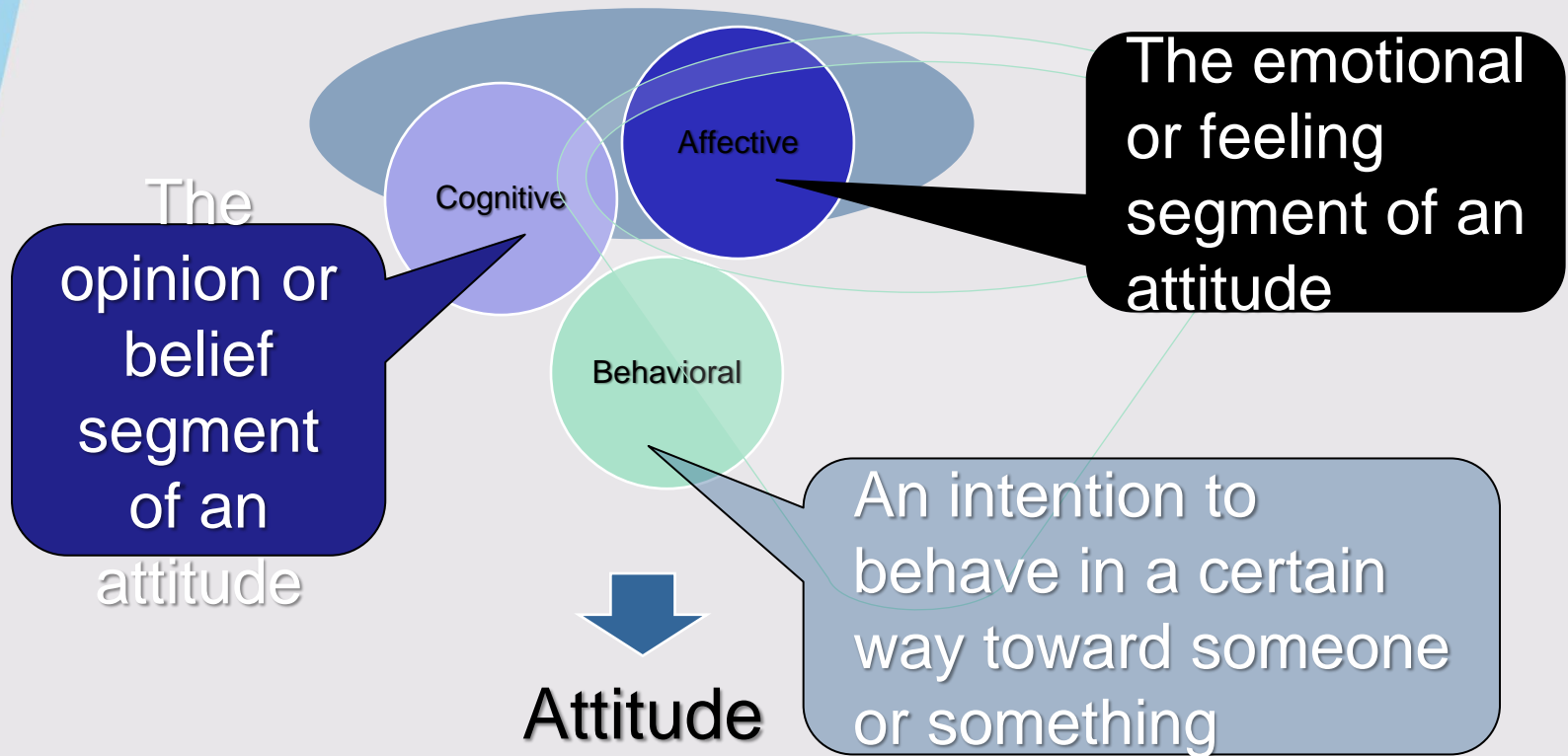


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Attitudes: Components

Evaluative statements or judgments concerning objects, people, or events

Three components of an attitude:





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Cognitive element- the beliefs, opinions, knowledge or information held by the person.

Affective component- the feelings, sentiments, moods and emotions about some idea, object, event or person.

Behaviour component- the predispositions to get on a favourable or unfavorable evaluation of something.



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Cognitive Dissonance Theory

The theory was developed in 1957 by Leon Festinger.

Cognitions- A belief, opinion or attitude or piece of knowledge about persons, objects or issues.

Consonance - The thoughts are consistent with each other.
Example- I like the teacher and I like the subject.



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Dissonance – The thoughts are inconsistent with each other.

Example – I smoke, yet I know smoking causes cancer.

We experience conflict when making decisions. The more similar our alternatives the more dissonance we experience.



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Cognitive dissonance

Cognitive dissonance is the mental stress or discomfort experienced by a person who holds two or more contradictory beliefs, ideas or values at the same time.

Choosing a specific institution for pursuing Engineering.



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Cognitive dissonance theory

- Festinger's (1957) cognitive dissonance theory suggests that we have an inner drive to hold all our attitudes and beliefs in harmony and avoid disharmony (or dissonance).
- According to Festinger, we hold many cognitions about the world and ourselves; when they clash, a discrepancy is evoked, resulting in a state of tension known as cognitive dissonance.
- As the experience of dissonance is unpleasant, we are motivated to reduce or eliminate it, and achieve consonance (i.e. agreement).



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How to reduce cognitive dissonance ?

- Change one or more of the attitudes
- Acquire new information
- Reduce the importance of the cognitions
- Adding new cognition
- Justify the behaviour