1) Mini-Theories of the Attribution Process
- Theory of Naive Psychology
- Correspondent Inference Theory
- Covariation Model
- Theory of Emotional Lability
- Self-Perception Theory

2) Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Attribution Theory

- No unifying theory of attributions
- Three central mini-theories
  - Theory of Naive Psychology
  - Correspondent Inference Theory
  - Covariation Model
- Two highly influential mini-theories
  - Theory of Emotional Lability
  - Self-Perception Theory

Theory of Naive Psychology

- Developed by Heider (1944)
- List of Observations
- Main Premise: People naturally see cause-effect relationships

Observation #1: Time between events affects whether cause-effect relationship is seen

- Proximal events = occur close in time
- Distal events = occur far apart in time

Prediction:
Proximal events are more likely than distal events to be seen as a cause-effect relationship

Observation #2: Similarity of events affects whether cause-effect relationship is seen

Prediction:
Similar events are more likely than dissimilar events to be seen as a cause-effect relationship

Observation #3: People tend to see single causes for events

Observation #4: People do more than identify cause-effect relationships
- They also make attributions of responsibility
Attributions of responsibility:

How responsible one is for having caused an event

Theory of Naive Psychology

Five levels of responsibility

Level 1:
Responsibility of association

Indirect Cause

Theory of Naive Psychology

Level 2:
Causal responsibility without foreseeability

Accidental Cause
Outcome unforeseeable

Theory of Naive Psychology

Level 3:
Causal responsibility with foreseeability

Accidental Cause
Outcome foreseeable

Theory of Naive Psychology

Level 4:
Intentional responsibility

Purposeful Cause

Theory of Naive Psychology

Level 5:
Justifiable responsibility

Cause Justified

Theory of Naive Psychology

Correspondent Inference Theory

Developed by Jones & Davis (1965)

Formal theory (not just observations)

Main Premise: People have a strong tendency to infer that people's dispositions correspond to their behavior

Dispositions = Underlying personality

Correspondent Inference Theory

Factor:
Behavior: accidental vs. intentional

Prediction:
Intentional behaviors lead to dispositional inferences more than accidental behaviors
Correspondent Inference Theory

Factor:
Choice: situational constraints

Prediction:
Unconstrained behaviors lead to dispositional inferences more than constrained behaviors

Castro Study: Jones & Harris (1967)

Choice prediction not supported
- Participants read another person's essay about Castro
- Participants told essay content had been assigned
- Essay content either supported or opposed Castro

Prediction:
True attitude of people judged to be the same regardless of their essay's content

Results:
- When essay pro-Castro, participants evaluated person as holding pro-Castro attitude
- When essay anti-Castro, participants evaluated person as holding anti-Castro attitude

Correspondent Inference Theory

Factor:
Behavior: Socially desirable or undesirable

Prediction:
Socially undesirable behaviors lead to dispositional inferences more than socially desirable behaviors

Correspondent Inference Theory

Factor:
Principle of non-common effects

Prediction:
The less a chosen behavior has in common with other possible behaviors, the more it leads to dispositional inferences

Correspondent Inference Theory

Factor:
Motivational factors: Hedonic relevance and personalism

Hedonic relevance: Does actor's behavior have consequences for observer?

Personalism = Did actor intend to harm/help the observer?

Correspondent Inference Theory

Prediction:
Behaviors lead to more dispositional inferences when they are high in hedonic relevance and personalism

Covariation Model

- Developed by Kelly (1967)
- Main Premise: People must believe that two events co-vary to infer a cause-effect relationship

Entity: object toward which actor directs a behavior

Covariation Model

Three factors determine attributions
- Distinctiveness: Does actor treat other entities that way?
- Consistency: Does actor treat the entity that way in other situations and times?
- Consensus: Do others also treat the entity that way?
Eric (actor) got depressed after talking with Diane (entity). Is this due to Eric or to Diane?

- Distinctiveness: Does Eric get depressed when he talks with people other than Diane? *(Yes)*
- Consistency: Does Eric get depressed every time he talks with Diane? *(Yes)*
- Consensus: Do other people also get depressed when they talk to Diane? *(No)*

Eric’s depression has something to do with him.

People underuse consensus information.

Seizure Victim Study: Nisbett & Borgida (1975)

Prediction:
Lower estimates of helping from participants who knew that few partners had helped the seizure victims.

Results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knew Did not know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Conclusion:
Participants did not use consensus information to make their estimates. This does not support the prediction.

Theory of Emotional Lability

- Developed by Schachter (1959)
- Theory explains how people make emotional attributions for physiological arousal
- Main Premise: The same physiological arousal can be attributed to different emotions

Seizure Victim Study: Nisbett & Borgida (1975)

Theory of Emotional Lability

- Emotion = general arousal + cognition
- General arousal = physiological state
- Cognition = thoughts that label the arousal as a particular emotion

Bridge Study: Dutton & Aron (1974)

Prediction:
When physiological arousal experienced before cognition, people use environmental cues to make emotional attributions.

Participants: Men (18-35)

Site: Capilano Canyon

Two Experimental Manipulations
- Experimenter Gender (F vs. M)
- Physiological Arousal (low vs. high)

Bridge Study: Dutton & Aron (1974)

Procedures:
- Men approached by experimenter
- Asked to invent short story from TAT picture
- Encouraged to call experimenter for results

Dependent Variables
- Sexual content of short story
- Whether participant called or not
Bridge Study: Dutton & Aron (1974)

Male Experimenter: No differences in sexual content or # calls across low and high bridge

Female Experimenter: Sexual content and # calls greater among men on high bridge than low bridge

Interpretation: Bridge Study

Men on high bridge:
- Experienced arousal and used environment cues to label it
- Attractive female experimenter acted as a cue that led them to attribute their arousal to lust for her

Self-Perception Theory

Developed by Bem (1967)

Main Premise: People infer their attitudes from their behavior

People do this when:
- Behavior is freely chosen
- Attitudes are ambiguous/weak
- Bem vs. Festinger

Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Developed by Festinger (1957)

Main Premise:
- Attitude-behavior inconsistency leads to dissonance, an unpleasant emotional state
- People try to reduce dissonance

Strategies to Reduce Dissonance

- Change attitude
  - (Exercise does not = good health)
- Add new attitude
  - (Heart attack better than cancer)
- Alter importance of attitude
  - (Work is more important than exercise)

Pill Study: Zanna & Cooper (1974)

1. Participants engaged in counter-attitudinal behavior
2. Digested a pill
3. Three groups of participants:
   - Placebo group: told pill was placebo
   - Arousal group: told pill was stimulant
   - Relaxation group: told pill was tranquilizer

Support for Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Series of studies:
- Participants wrote counter-attitudinal essay
- Participants consistently changed attitude in line with essay’s content

Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Interpretation of results:
- Counter-attitudinal essay led to dissonance
- Dissonance was reduced via attitude change

Re-interpretation of results:
- People changed their attitude because they inferred it from their behavior

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Support for Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Series of studies:
- Participants wrote counter-attitudinal essay
- Participants consistently changed attitude in line with essay’s content
Attitude change should only occur when dissonance correctly attributed to counter-attitudinal behavior.

Attitude change should occur equally across all groups because all three did the same behavior.

Pill Study: Zanna & Cooper (1974)

Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Self-Perception Theory

Pattern supports Festinger's Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Placebo Group

Arousal Group

Relaxation Group

Attitude Change

No Attitude Change

Most Attitude Change