Understanding decision-making:
The social psychology of attitude-behaviour relations

next week: When behaviour changes attitudes

Today

- Discussion of book ch.s 10
- Review
- (When) Do attitudes predict?
  1. Lab vs. field
  2. Single-component vs tripartite
  3. Measurement specificity
  4. Prototype compatibility
  5. Other variables
     - Self-monitoring
     - Past behaviour

- Other social influences
  - Behavioural or descriptive norms
  - The referent informational influence model

- Emotions
Last week

- Learned about measurement
- Paper and pencil:
  - Likert summated ratings -> Osgood's semantic differentials
  - Evaluation thermometers - +/- of single item
- Indirect measures:
  - Observed behaviour, lost letter, GSR, pupil dilation, facial EMG
- The debate about real vs fake attitudes -> ambivalence -> conscious / unconscious -> explicit / implicit
- Cognition, affect & behaviour can diverge

We also learned about the TPB

Beliefs about probability x value of outcomes
Beliefs about others x motive to comply
Beliefs about barriers / enabling factors x power

the action is good

My sig others want me to act
I intend to act
I act

I perceive if I try to act, I will act
Based on the TPB:

(When) do attitudes predict behaviour?

Do attitudes predict overt behaviour?
LaPiere (1934)

- 250 establishments - served at 249 (99.6%)
  - treated extremely well > 72
- 6 months later
  - 'Will you accept members of the Chinese race as guests in your establishment'
  - 128 responses:
    - 1 - yes
    - 9 - would depend
    - 118 - no (92%)
  - similar results in 128 businesses not visited

Wicker (1969)

- 42 studies
- mostly lab studies
- average attitude-beh. correlation = .15,
  few as high as .30
  - Taken as a whole, these studies suggest that it is considerably more likely that attitudes will be unrelated or only slightly related to overt behaviours than that attitudes will be closely related to actions
Why is relationship not stronger?

1. Wicker (1969) reviewed a poor sample of studies
   - mainly lab studies - lower rs
   - less important attitudes
   - few behavioural options
   - situational demands

2. Multicomponent model of attitudes neglected
   - e.g., Ostrom (1969): need to try to look at each component as independently as possible

Tripartite model
Which predicts what?

- I like / dislike Rottweilers
- I believe / do not believe that Rottweilers are vicious
- I intend / do not intend to own a Rottweiler
- Owning a Rottweiler
- Flinching when I see a Rottweiler
- Smiling at a Rottweiler
- Sweaty palms when I see a Rottweiler
- Crossing the street to avoid a Rottweiler
- I tell my children to avoid Rottweilers

A positive attitude may not solve all your problems, but it will annoy enough people to make it worth the effort.

-- Herm Albright (1876 - 1944)
Measurement perspective

- typically, general attitude measures & specific behaviours
- need to use multiple-act criterion (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1974)
  - multiple-act criterion: index based on single or repeated observations of different behaviours designed to sample the domain of actions implied by the attitude measure
  - repeated-observation criterion: index based on observations of the same specific behaviour directed at different targets, in different situations, or at different times

See B&W p. 226
Measurement perspective

- principle of compatibility
  - measures need to be compatible in terms of action, target, context, and time
  - if want to predict single-act criterion, need specific attitude measure
- if using a general attitude measure, then preferable to use a **multiple-act criterion**
- Ajzen & Fishbein (1977) test of general principle

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### Ajzen & Fishbein (1977)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correspondence</th>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Behaviour</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Target A</td>
<td>Target B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Action X</td>
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<td>Target A</td>
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<td>Action X</td>
<td>Action X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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![Graph showing correspondence between attitude and behaviour](image)
TACT Model

As seen in tutes this week, TACT says can define a behaviour in terms of the action, target, context, and time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Measure</th>
<th>Correlation w/ behaviour</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitude to birth control</td>
<td>.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A to bc pills</td>
<td>.323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A to using bc pills</td>
<td>.525</td>
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<tr>
<td>A to u bc p during next 2 years</td>
<td>.575</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Data from Davidson & Jaccard (1997) – table from B&W p. 224

Revisiting the TRA / TPB

factors that will weaken the attitude-behaviour relationship

lack of correspondence between measures (measurement specificity)

instability of intentions

normative influence from significant others

lack of volitional control
Human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives.

-- William James (1842 - 1910)

4. Prototype compatibility perspective

**Prototype:** a mental representation of the attitude object – what you think is the standard or typical example

- Learned, subjective
- Representation of attitude object at time of decision may not match original prototype because new elements are salient or object is not even mentally categorised the same way
- If so, inconsistency is not surprising

LaPiere's study - Chinese couple non-prototypical

“Did the proprietors picture Chinese only as labourers in pigtails and coolie hats, and not ever recognize the couple before them as Chinese?” (Schuman & Johnson, 1976)
How prototype incompatibility works

- Do you think you need self-discipline and physical exercise? (Yes)
- Wouldn’t you prefer a career that will help you to develop these attributes of yourself? (Yes – object “career” associated with positively-evaluated attributes; Time 1 attitude to career favourable)
- So you’ll join the army then?
- No - Time 2 attitude unfavourable and T2 behaviour = avoid because mental representation of attitude object “career” changed - new elements are salient compared to elements salient at T1 when attitude first measured

Do you have a negative attitude to Rottweilers?
Prejudice and prototypes

- It is common where prej is assoc’d w/ unrealistic demonization for bigots to miscategorize target
  - Greg the bigot thinks all gay guys are effeminate; fails to id George the athlete as gay
  - Never encounter ‘prototype’ – never proved wrong?

- Flip side is that by definition, non-prej’d rarely associate neg with a whole social category – have narrower subtypes
  - **Subtype**: a subgroup's prototype
    - Prototype of women vs subtype of mothers
    - Defined in relative terms – e.g. could have prototype of mothers being compared to subtype of breast-feeding mothers

Why (when?) does experience increase attitude-behaviour consistency?

- Initial categorisations of attitude object are unstable
- May not “know what you are looking at” –
  - react based on closest prototype whereas in another context / w more info, represent attitude object differently and respond differently
  - Categorisation changes from “panhandler” to “slovenly tourist”
- Initially tend to conflate global prototypes with subtypes – underestimate differences within a group
  - you perceive you like psychologists / dogs but you discover you like some and dislike others
- Experienced categorisations of attitude object lead to more detailed mental models
  - Instead of (unjustified) negative or positive attitude to category, learn subtypes that differ in qualities to approach / avoid – more sophisticated categorisation appropriate to real experiences
  - need to distinguish the subtype depends on your experience
The point about prototypicality

- Compatibility between mental representation of target (attitude object) when the attitude is assessed and at the time of behaviour increases att-beh correspondence
  - Prototype incompatibility is more likely when are inexperienced
  - Also when are bigoted
- One reason for att-beh incongruity is when the prototypicality of the attitude object changes
  - Because different attributes of the attitude object are salient in the environment at time of measurement vs time of action
  - Because different attributes that are salient at the 2 different times result in categorisation as different attitude objects (even though the target may not physically change)
    - *Taking the bin out vs giving up The Simpsons*

I happen to feel that the degree of a person's intelligence is directly reflected by the number of conflicting attitudes she can bring to bear on the same topic.

-- Lisa Alther, *Kinflicks*, 1975
Individual differences

- Certain peoples’ attitudes are more consistent with their behaviors than others.
- Example: High Self Monitors
  - The behavior of low self monitors is consistent with their expressed attitudes.
  - The behavior of high self monitors is responsive to situational factors.
  - Are you a high self monitor?
    - Most psychologists are relatively high SM

Past behaviour

- Ajzen and Fishbein have argued that effects of past behaviour should be through the TPB / TRA variables
- By engaging in an action, it improves or decreases your attitude, your PBC, your subjective norm and accordingly your intentions will go up or down
- Plenty of research shows though that controlling for the TPB there is a positive association between past behaviour and intentions (and future behaviour)
- E.g. Bentler & Speckart (1979):
  - self-reported behaviour (use of alcohol, marijuana, & hard drugs) could be predicted from attitudes, subjective norm, and intentions (Reasoned Action model – before Ajzen came up with PBC)
  - But controlling for this, past self-reported behaviour was associated with higher intentions and with higher behaviours
  - Some people think past behaviour is especially important for actions that are habitual and/or not totally planned
  - Research continues…
Other social influences: Behavioural or descriptive norm

- social component of the theories of reasoned action & planned behaviour relatively weak
  - fails to capture the subtle nature of social norms
  - focuses on interpersonal rather than group-based influence
- evidence that descriptive norm more reliably predicts intention than injunctive norm
  - assesses the perceived behaviour of others vs. their expectations / wants
- Original TPB used only injunctive
- Modern TPB measures subjective norm with both descriptive and injunctive items

Other social influences

- Attitude
- Perceived behavioural control
- Old SN (inj.)
- Descriptive norm

volunteering behaviour among older adults
Referent informational influence

- evidence that group norms influence decision-making (Terry & Hogg, 1996)
  - Rioters riot, looters loot in mobs, and cult members may be driven to suicide not because they have positive attitudes to rioting, looting, or suicide but because these acts are meaningful in the context of group identity … (Sherman & Fazio, 1983)

- if a group membership is psychologically relevant & important, group is a referent for the behaviour

- people will be motivated to bring their behaviour in line with referent group norms and will ignore individuals’ expectations
  - Grandparents, friends, lecturers vs. ‘psychologists’ - views on APA format
  - Parents, friends, priests vs. Catholic church’s views on contraception

- norms of behaviourally-relevant groups should be considered
  (group norms)

Referent informational influence cont’d

- level of group **identification** should be considered
  - How much do you see yourself as a member of this group (in this context)?

- If low identification, probably will ignore norms of potential referent group

- If high identification in a given context, probably will conform to referent group
Other social influences

Intention to engage in regular exercise

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Intention to engage in sun-protective behaviour

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<th>Level</th>
<th>Unfavourable attitude</th>
<th>Favourable attitude</th>
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What’s more, identification can change the impact of attitudes

Intention to engage in sun-protective behaviour

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<thead>
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Low identification — High identification
And with positive norms
(hypothetical data)

![Graph showing the relationship between intention to engage in sun-protective behaviour and identification

Referent Informational Influence

- Some modifications of TPB described above just add new variables (e.g., past behaviour, self-efficacy)
- RII is important because challenges proposed structure of decision-making model
- Instead of independent paths of cost-benefit evaluation
  - attitude and social influence -> subjective norms, RII says both are ultimately shaped by social context – group norms and identification
- In practice though RII research with the TPB usually ends up just measuring group norms and/or identification and showing these contribute to predicting intentions (and/or behaviour) even when TPB is controlled
Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference. ~Winston Churchill

And what about emotions? Revisiting models of cognition, affect, and behaviour

What is the TPB? Basically:

What about e.g.?
Non-rational influences & the tpb

- **role of affect**
  - Measurement of attitude and behavioural beliefs tends to elicit a focus on the instrumental component of attitudes.
  - Affect associated with the experience of performing the behaviour should also be taken into account.

- For piloted risks (e.g., overdosing): “I dread the effects of the risk a lot” vs “The risk is one that I can think very calmly about” (R)

Mixed models

- In research like this, our decision-making is modelled by two processes occurring in parallel:
  - We think about the material and social costs & benefits and our capabilities (cognitive aspect -- rational decision-making), leading to intentions -> behaviour.
  - Plus we react to our gut instincts (emotional aspect of attitude) leading -> behaviour.

- What if sometimes we don’t think at all? Next week … spontaneous (unplanned) behaviour!
Why do you / people do something “out of character”?

- Social norms or control perceptions over-ride attitudes
- Prototype incompatibility
  - Inexperience, strong situation, close-mindedness
- Different “self” in different environments
  - High self-monitoring
  - Different salient identities and norms create genuinely-held contradictory attitudes

When do attitudes predict?

- More outside the lab than in
- More when the attitude and behaviour both tap the same component of the tripartite model
- More when the attitude and behaviour are both measured at the same level of specificity
- More when the attitude and the behaviour both have the same target (i.e. the prototypes are compatible)
- More when social expectations (subjective norm) and perceived control are held constant (e.g. in the TPB)
- More depending on some individual differences (e.g., low self-monitors)
- More when the behavioural or descriptive norms are held constant
- More when past behaviour is held constant
Challenges

- A fundamental challenge – referent informational influence
  - shouldn’t think of social pressure as a separate individual-level predictor
  - it’s a group-level influence (group norm) that shapes behaviour (when people identify with a referent group) as well as attitudes
  - Often times attitudes are consistent with behaviour because both are determined by the social context and identification with a relevant referent group
  - Attitudes to APA format, mobile phones, $...

- Emotions
  - can impact on behaviour independent of beliefs
  - ‘cognitive’ attitude predicts behaviour independently of ‘emotional’ attitude? (parallel model)

Next week: **When behaviour changes attitudes** (learning vs. rationalising your choices)
  - Reading: chapter 8 of B&W

In the **tutes** this week:
  - Cool IVs and DVs
  - Creating your questionnaire: Operationalising your DV and IV
  - Looking ahead: Writing your method section