

## OCCUPATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

### Attitudes at Work

Stacey Coleman

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**WHAT IS AN ATTITUDE?**

A psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour (Eagley & Chaiken, 1983)

Reporting an attitude involves the expression of an evaluative judgement about a stimulus object

Attitudes reflect a positive, negative, or mixed evaluation of a person, object, or idea expressed at some level of intensity

"Certain regularities of an individual's feelings, thoughts and predispositions to act towards some aspect of his environment" (Secord & Backman, 1969).

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## ATTITUDES

*Multicomponent model of attitudes (Breckler, 1984)*

☐ Cognitive component



Feelings

☐ Affective component



Thoughts

☐ Behavioural component



Predispositions

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## ATTITUDES

Multicomponent model of attitudes (Breckler, 1984)



- ☐ Cognitive component → E.g., Office too small
- ☐ Affective component → E.g., frustration, anger, disappointment
- ☐ Behavioural component → E.g., request different workspace

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## ATTITUDES

Ajzen (2001) - Evaluative dimensions of attitudes include:

- Good – Bad
- Harmful – Beneficial
- Pleasant – Unpleasant
- Likeable – Dislikeable

Some people hold some attitudes more strongly than others – our tendency to evaluate is partly an individual differences variable

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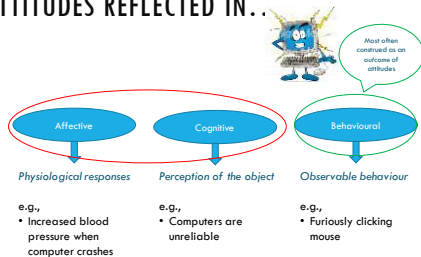
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## ATTITUDES REFLECTED IN..




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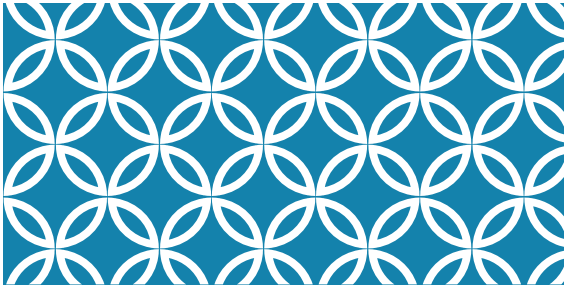
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▪ Attitudes are a person's predisposition to think (cognitive component), feel (affective component) or behave (behavioural component) in certain ways towards certain defined targets.

▪ Attitudes are different to personality because they focus on a particular object/target

□ Attitudes are related to, but distinguishable from, values, moods and personality.



## MEASURING ATTITUDES

### HOW DO WE MEASURE ATTITUDES?

Explicit measurement:

❖ **Self-report questionnaires**

❖ Likert scales

❖ Semantic differential scales

Widely used, but people are motivated to give socially desirable answers



## HOW DO WE MEASURE ATTITUDES?

Explicit measurement:

- ❖ Self-report questionnaires
- ❖ **Likert scales**
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## LIKERT SCALES

Please agree or disagree with the following:

|                                                                                                  | Strongly Agree        | Agree                 | Neutral               | Disagree              | Strongly Disagree     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| The company's current activities reflect a strong focus on the client.                           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Our employees are committed to producing the highest quality work for our clients.               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have the freedom I need to meet customer needs.                                                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I understand the issues facing our clients.                                                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The internal practices support my ability to deliver a high standard of quality to my customers. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| In my work group, we ask our internal customers what they require from us.                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

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## HOW DO WE MEASURE ATTITUDES?

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Widely used, but people are motivated to give socially desirable answers

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## SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL SCALE

1. Please rate the President of the United States on the following traits:

|             |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |            |
|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Strong      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Weak       |
| Decisive    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Indecisive |
| Good        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Bad        |
| Active      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Passive    |
| Industrious | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Lazy       |
| Happy       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | Sad        |

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## HOW DO WE MEASURE ATTITUDES?

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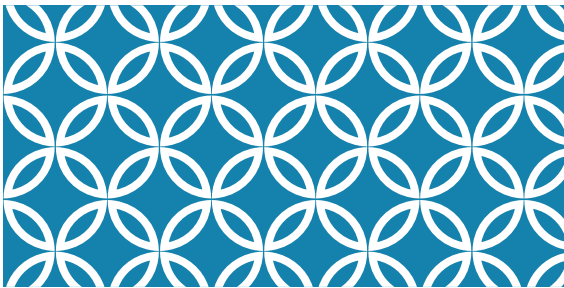
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## CAN ATTITUDES PREDICT BEHAVIOUR?

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## CAN ATTITUDES PREDICT BEHAVIOUR?

It could be argued that attitudes only matter if they influence **actual behaviour**.

To what extent to attitudes predict behaviour?

- According to Wicker (1969) – 'not very much'.

Peoples feelings/beliefs seemed only very loosely related to how they behaved towards the attitude object.

## CAN ATTITUDES PREDICT BEHAVIOUR?

If the previous were true, it would mean that:

- People who say they like their job do not necessarily work harder or better, work longer hours, or relate better to customers than people who say they do not like their job
- Many attitude surveys conducted in workplaces are a waste of time

### Reasons?

- Social pressures: laws, societal norms, views of people – can all prevent a person behaving consistently with her/his attitudes.

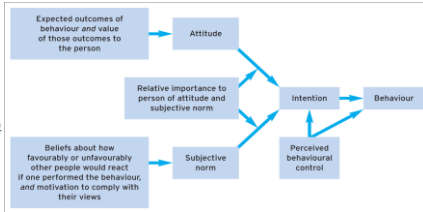
## CAN ATTITUDES PREDICT BEHAVIOUR?

Pratkanis and Turner (1994): Four factors that will increase correspondence between attitudes and behaviour:

- Object of the attitude is both well-defined and salient
- Attitude strength is high
- When knowledge supporting the attitude is plentiful and complex
- When the attitude supports important aspects of the self

## CAN ATTITUDES PREDICT BEHAVIOUR?

**The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1988; 1991)**



### THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR (AJZEN, 1988; 1991)

- Takes ideas from cognitive theories of motivation in proposing that actions/behaviours are the product of attitudes, social pressures/norms, perceived control and intentions

- It is effective in explaining both intentions and actual behaviour

- Or is it??

### THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR (AJZEN, 1988; 1991)

#### ATTITUDE

- Concerns beliefs and personal values about the consequences of a particular behaviour (and not general beliefs or feeling about an object or person)

#### SUBJECTIVE NORM

- Takes into account both the opinions of other people and the person's wish (or lack of) to comply with those opinions

TPB acknowledges that people vary in the relative importance of attitude and subjective norm in determining their intentions

### THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR (AJZEN, 1988; 1991)

#### **PERCEIVED BEHAVIOURAL CONTROL**

- Belief that we have control over our own behaviour in certain situations, even when facing particular barriers

PBC beliefs are influenced by past behaviour, as well as successes or failures in relation to the behaviour in question

### THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR (AJZEN, 1988; 1991)

Ajzen (1991) pointed out that:

1. Intention is considered to be the proximal determinant of behaviour, and it reflects both the individual's motivation to behave in a certain manner and how hard they are prepared to try to carry out that behaviour
2. Intentions to perform particular behaviours are often accurately predicted by attitudes towards the behaviour, subjective norms and PBC.
3. Intentions together with PBC alone are quite good at predicting a person's actual behaviour.

### EVALUATION OF THE TPB

Sutton (2004): the variables of the TPB account for between 35 and 50% of variance in intentions.

Armitage and Conner (2001) – meta-analysis (almost 1 million people across many research studies):

- Combination of attitudes, SN and PBC correlated .63 with behavioural intentions
- Intention plus PBC correlated .52 with actual behaviour
- SN = relatively weak – why? Cultural factors, perhaps?

## PREDICTING BEHAVIOUR

Use the theory of planned behaviour, decide whether Jerry is likely to drink a glass of beer during his lunch break on most working days.

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## PREDICTING BEHAVIOUR

Jerry Lander felt that there was nothing wrong with drinking a glass or two of beer during his lunchbreak. He could afford it easily enough. He claimed that he had never seen any evidence that a lunchtime drink harmed his work performance during the afternoon. He found that it helped him feel more relaxed and happy at work. Nevertheless, he could do without a drink without much difficulty if he had to. Jerry liked the friendship and approval of other people, and at lunchtime the nearby bar was full of acquaintances he could chat to. Work was an important part of Jerry's life and he was keen to gain promotion. Unfortunately his boss did not approve of alcoholic drinking at lunchtime – or indeed at any other time. Nor did most of his colleagues, with whom he worked closely. They seemed to view it as a sign of personal inadequacy.

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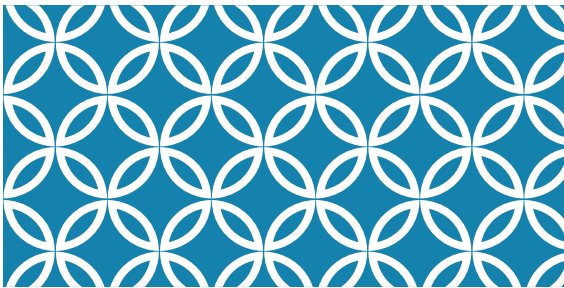
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## JOB SATISFACTION

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## JOB SATISFACTION

Important for two main reasons



1. One indicator of a person's psychological well-being or mental health
2. Often assumed that job satisfaction will lead to motivation and good work performance

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## WHAT IS 'JOB SATISFACTION'?

Locke (1976)

- 'a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences'

Three views:

- 1) Function of person or personality
- 2) Views of others in the workplace
- 3) Features of the job




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## MEASURING JOB SATISFACTION

Measures:

- Job Description Index (JDI; Smith et al., 1969)
- Job Satisfaction Scales (Warr et al., 1979)
- Overall Job Satisfaction Scale (Brayfield & Rothe, 1951)

Taber and Alliger (1995):

- % of time spent in enjoyable tasks correlated .40 with satisfaction with work itself, and .28 with global satisfaction

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## CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF JOB SATISFACTION

Hackman and Oldham (1976):

### Causes:

- Skill variety
- Task identity
- Task significance
- Autonomy
- Correct and precise feedback

Griffin and Bateman (1986) – leader behaviours is also important in satisfaction in work

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## CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF JOB SATISFACTION

Judge et al. (2001) identified six possible reasons how job satisfaction and job performance might be related




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## CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF JOB SATISFACTION

1) Job satisfaction causes job performance



*People work harder or better because they like their job*

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## CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF JOB SATISFACTION

2) Job performance causes job satisfaction



*People tend to like their job because they are good/successful at it*

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## CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF JOB SATISFACTION

3) Job satisfaction and job performance cause each other




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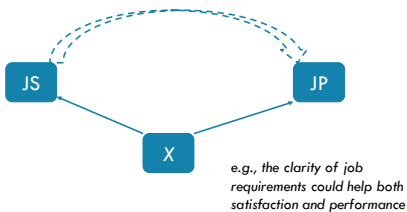
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## CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF JOB SATISFACTION

4) Job satisfaction and job performance are correlated




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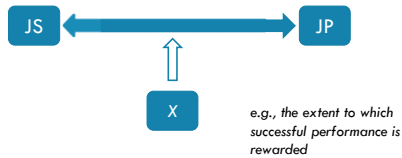
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## CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF JOB SATISFACTION

5) Job satisfaction and job performance *may* be causally linked



## CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF JOB SATISFACTION

6) Job satisfaction and job performance are specific instances of more general constructs of positive feelings and personal effectiveness, and these have a causal impact on each other.



## JOB SATISFACTION THROUGH THE LIFESPAN

Appears to increase through life:

- 1) Longer to find suitable job
- 2) Lower expectations
- 3) Cohort effect
- 4) Dissatisfied.. Retired early

Clarke et al. (1996) found in a sample of 5000 UK engineers job satisfaction started fairly high:

- Dipped in 20's-30's
- Rose through 40's
- Rose further in 50'- 60's

## ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

"the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in an organisation" (Mowday et al., 1979)

Three components (Griffin & Bateman, 1986):

1. A desire to maintain membership in the organisation
2. Belief in and acceptance of the values and goals of an organisation
3. A willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organisation

## ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

Three components (Allen & Meyer, 1990):

1. **Affective commitment**
  - Concerns the person's emotional attachment to the organisation
2. **Continuance commitment**
  - Perception of the costs and risks associated with leaving the organisation
  - Personal sacrifices and lack of alternatives
3. **Normative commitment**
  - Moral dimension based on a person's felt obligation and responsibility to their organisation

## ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

### Behavioural approach:

- People examine their own behaviour and conclude that, since they did something with significant consequences in full view of others, they must be committed to it, and thus performs additional committing behaviours
- E.g., voluntarily working long hours

### Social exchange approach:

- Commitment can be fostered by positive experiences
- Factors intrinsic to the job (e.g., challenge, autonomy) are more important in fostering commitment than extrinsic factors (e.g., pay and working conditions)
- This is especially true for the affective component of commitment (emotional attachment)

## ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

○ A person who does not feel committed to their organisation is more likely to want to leave it (and actually do so) than a person who is committed.

○ Intention to leave an organisation is the strongest and most often reported correlate of low organisational commitment.

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## ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

○ However, intention to leave does not necessarily translate into actual leaving

▪ E.g., if a person believes that it would be difficult to obtain another job [low PBC], then low commitment is unlikely to lead them to leave the organisation.

▪ Illustrates, perhaps, how attitudes do not necessarily find expression in behaviour

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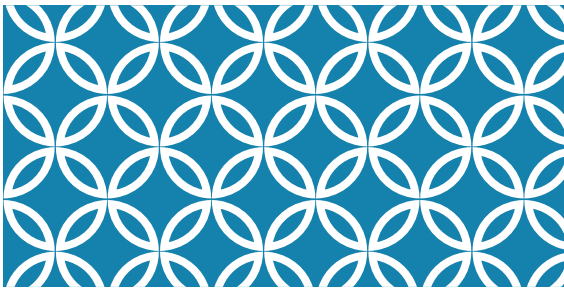
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## UNEMPLOYMENT

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## UNEMPLOYMENT

Number of factors that influence a person's decision to leave an organisation – but what about when this decision is made for them and they do not have an alternative job ready to go do?

Becoming unemployed tends to have a negative impact on a person's mental health

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## UNEMPLOYMENT

People who experience unemployment tend to suffer from:

- Lower levels of happiness
- Lower life satisfaction
- Low self-esteem
- Decreased psychological well-being

Than people who are employed, and compared to when they themselves were in employment

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## UNEMPLOYMENT

Paul and Moser (2009); meta-analysis of 323 studies comparing mental health of employed and unemployed people

- Mental health of unemployed people was, on average, half a standard deviation lower than that of employed people.
- 34% of unemployed people were reporting psychological health problems of clinical severity, compared to 16% in the employed group

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## UNEMPLOYMENT

Paul and Moser (2009); meta-analysis of 323 studies comparing mental health of employed and unemployed people

- Effects of unemployment were felt most by men, those in blue-collar jobs and those who have been unemployed for a long time

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## UNEMPLOYMENT

Becoming unemployed tends to have a negative impact on a person's mental health, but the damage is often repaired when the person finds another job that is at least as satisfying as the one they left behind

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## ANY QUESTIONS??




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