

Opinion Measurement

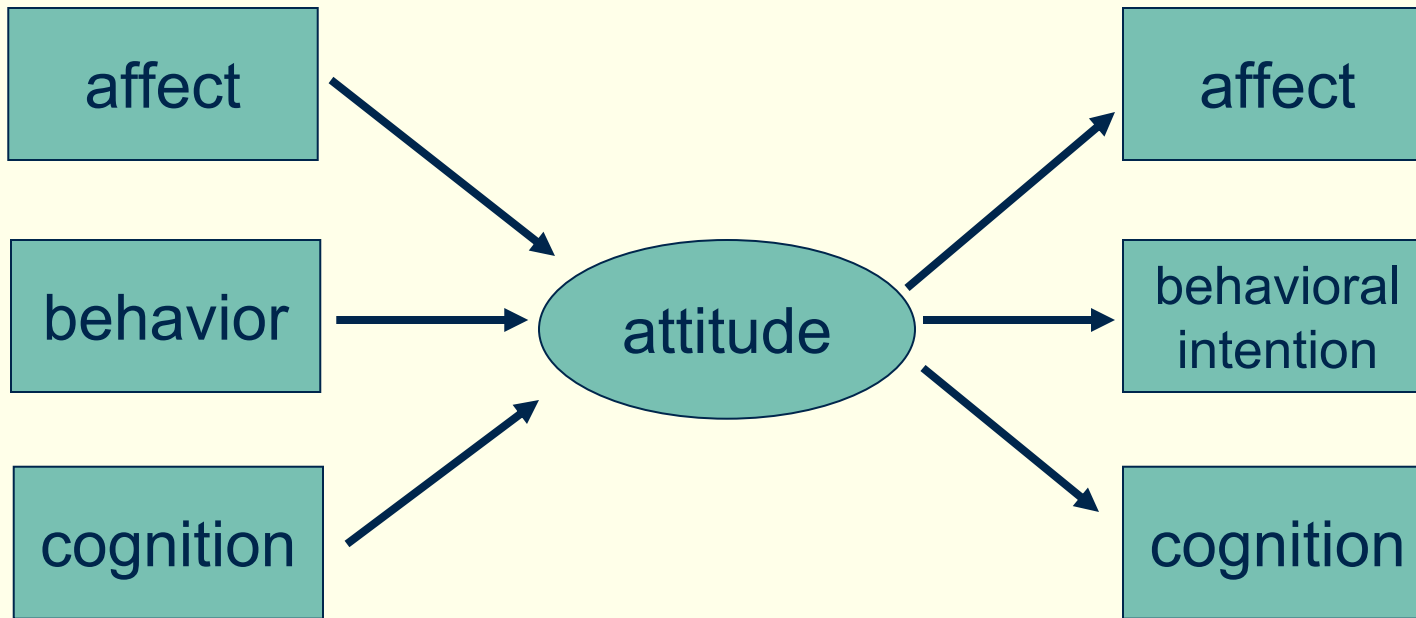
Defining attitudes and their components
Models of attitudes and opinion
expression
Measurement options



Attitudes defined

- An attitude is a mental or neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related (Gordon W. Allport, 1935).
- There is now widespread agreement among social psychologists that the term attitude should refer to a general and enduring positive or negative feeling about some person, object, or issue (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981).
- Attitude is a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993).

Attitude components



Items that measure attitudes and their components

Overall evaluation

- “Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bill Clinton is handling his job as president?”

Affect

- “Feeling thermometer”
- “Think about Bill Clinton. Has Bill Clinton--because of the kind of person he is, or because of something he has done--ever made you feel: (proud, angry, hopeful, afraid)”

Behavioral intention

- Whom do you plan to vote for in the upcoming election?

Cognition

- Some people feel the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living. Others think the government should just let each person get ahead on their own. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you much about this?
- Where would you place Bill Clinton on this scale?

Feeling thermometer

- # I'll read the name of a person and I'd like you to rate that person using something called the feeling thermometer. You can choose any number between 0 and 100. The higher the number, the warmer or more favorable you feel toward that person; the lower the number, the colder or less favorable. You would rate the person at the 50 degree mark if you feel neither warm nor cold toward them. If we come to a person whose name you don't recognize, you don't need to rate that person. Just tell me and we'll move on to the next one. Our first person is Bill Clinton. Using the thermometer, how would you rate Bill Clinton?

Wilson's Introspection Experiment

Condition	Introspection	Control
Manipulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"># Think about the positive and negative qualities of your dating partner# Rate your dating partner on a 1 to 10 scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"># Rate your dating partner on a 1 to 10 scale
Six months later		
Correlation between rating and dating status	.40	.10

1.

Bush favors tax cuts



Bush favors tax cuts (+)

2.

Bush might have used drugs



Bush favors tax cuts (+)
Bush might have used drugs (-)

3.

Bush supports death penalty



Bush favors tax cuts (+)
Bush might have used drugs (-)
Bush supports death penalty (+)

Bush favors tax cuts (+)
Bush might have used drugs (-)
Bush supports death penalty (+)

4.

“What’s your opinion of Bush?”



Neutral

Memory-based opinion

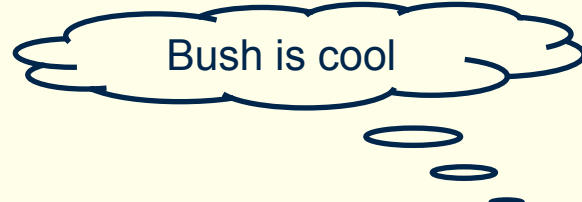
1.

Bush favors tax cuts



2.

Bush might have used drugs



Positive

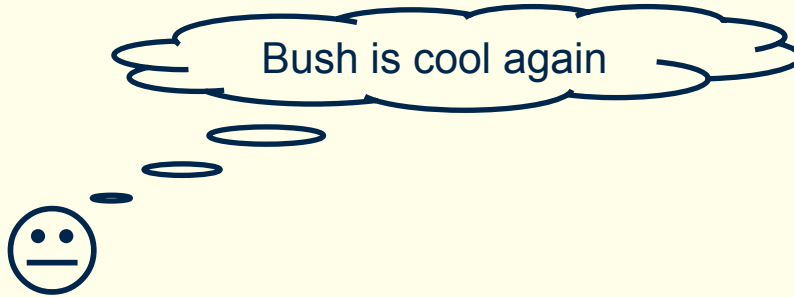
4.



"What's your opinion of Bush?"

3.

Bush supports death penalty



On-line opinion

Models of answering attitude questions

File drawer model

- Retrieve an evaluation associated with the attitude object

Nonattitudes model

- Little or no familiarity with the issue
- No evaluation associated with the issue
- Attitude response is random

Constructivist model

- Issue is mentally associated with values, beliefs, and feelings
- At time of attitude expression, we retrieve a subsample of these associations
 - Retrieval processes influenced by question context
- Opinion is constructed on the spot based on those retrieved elements

Types of scales

- # Guttman
- # Likert
- # Visual–Analog Rating
- # Semantic differential
- # Monopolar
- # Bipolar
- # Ranking

Guttman scale

Please read each of the statements below and indicate which you agree with most by circling the corresponding number. Only circle one number.

Circle

I do not consider myself a feminist at all and I believe that feminists are harmful to family life and undermine relations between men and women.

1

I do not consider myself a feminist.

2

I agree with some of the objectives of the feminist movement, but do not call myself a feminist.

3

I agree with most of the objectives of the feminist movement, but do not call myself a feminist.

4

I privately consider myself a feminist, but do not call myself a feminist around others.

5

I call myself a feminist around others.

6

I call myself a feminist around others and am currently active in the women's movement.

7

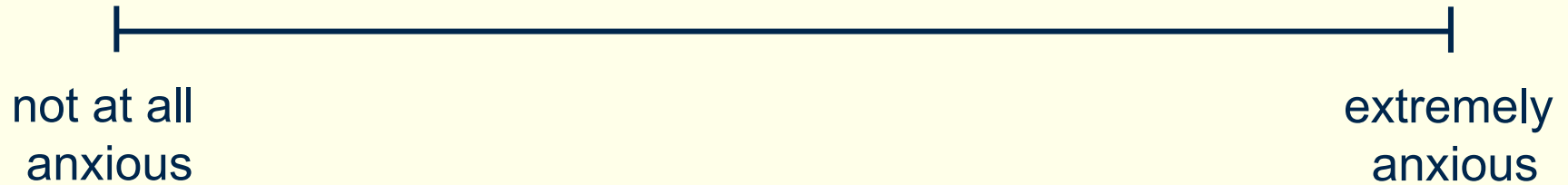
Likert Scale

Please show your agreement or disagreement with the following statements regardless of whether you think of yourself as a feminist or not. If you are not a feminist, there will be some items that will not be relevant to you – in these instances you should leave the row blank.

	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree		
I identify as a feminist.	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
I don't have a lot in common with feminists.	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
Most of my values are shared by feminists.	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
I feel a common bond with feminists.	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
There are many situations in which I find myself aware of the fact that I am a feminist.	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
I often think about feminist issues.	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3

Visual-Analog Rating

Please indicate how anxious you feel by placing a mark anywhere on this line:



Semantic differential

Thinking about 'typical' feminists, please indicate on the scales below what attributes you think best describe them.

Logical	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	Not logical
Realistic	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	Unrealistic
Flexible	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	Inflexible
Aggressive	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	Nonaggressive
Pacifist	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	Activist
Not at all opinionated	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	Very opinionated

Monopolar

We would like you to rate each of the following values as a **GUIDING PRINCIPLE** in your life. First, read the whole list and choose and rate the value that is most important to you and the value that you most oppose or that is least important to you. Once you have done this, please rate all the remaining values.

	Opposed to my values	Not important	Important					Supreme importance	
1. Social justice (correcting injustice)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Equality (equal opportunity for all)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Broad-mindedness (tolerant of different ideas and beliefs)	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Bipolar

Below are a series of paired statements. Please read them carefully and then indicate which statement comes closest to the way you feel. Where possible, please choose A or B – even though you also have the option of selecting ‘can’t choose’.

A: I have great respect and admiration for women who are ambitious and strive to succeed.

Much closer to A

Somewhat closer to A

Can't choose

Somewhat closer to B

Much closer to B

B: I have great respect and admiration for women who sacrifice personal ambition to care for loved ones.

A: The greater good is best served by individuals pursuing their own personal goals.

Much closer to A

Somewhat closer to A

Can't choose

Somewhat closer to B

Much closer to B

B: Sometimes the greater good requires that individuals put community goals ahead of their own.

Ranking

Please rank the following types of politicians from 1 to 4 in terms of how likely they would be, in general, to accuse police officers of racist behavior. Mark “1” next to the type of politician who you think would be most likely to accuse police officers of racist behavior, “4” next to the type of politicians who would be least likely to do this, and so on.

_____ Black Republican politicians

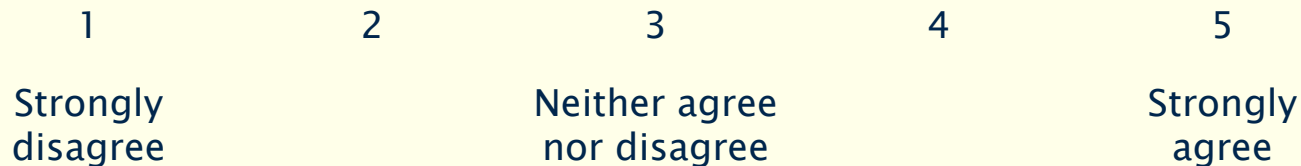
_____ Black Democratic politicians

_____ White Republican politicians

_____ White Democratic politicians

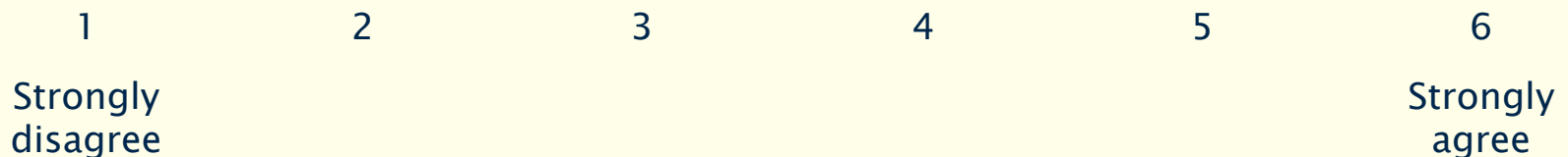
Response alternatives

Odd-numbered scales



- Advantage: middle alternative present
- Disadvantage: middle alternative present!
- Each point may be labeled, or other extremes

Even-numbered scales



- Useful when you want to discourage indecisiveness

Branching questions

- # “Do you consider yourself to be a Democrat, Republican, Independent or something else?”
- # (if chose Democrat or Republican): “Would you say that you are a strong Democrat/Republican, or not so strong Democrat/Republican?”
- # (if choose Independent): do you consider yourself closer to the Republican or Democratic party?
- # Composite scale:

Strong
democrat

Weak
democrat

Democrat
leaner

True
independent

Republican
leaner

Weak
republican

Strong
republican