

Cognitive Dissonance: 50 Years of a Classic Theory

By Joel M. Cooper

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*This book is **fun** to read!...Cooper takes care to delineate those studies that were particularly important in their purpose, particularly clever in their design, and most groundbreaking in their results. He makes a gripping story of the inception and march of progress in what could have been simply a long series of interesting research projects. In doing so, he made me nostalgic for a time when the field of psychology was alive with excitement and overrun with research topics that actually made sense to those outside a narrow specialty and that meant something to the citizenry."*

?Alan Cheney,

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"Cooper (Princeton) does a superb job summarizing research on the concept of cognitive dissonance since it was first elucidated by Leon Festinger in the 1950s...Cooper brings a much-needed historical perspective to cognitive dissonance, and he peppers his discussion with interesting personal anecdotes. Political analysts as well as psychologists will be interested in the specific conditions that elicit cognitive dissonance."

?D.J. Winchester,

Yeshiva University

"Dr. Joel Cooper has been at the very forefront of research on dissonance theory for decades now. In this book, he provides a brilliant and engagingly-written review of the 50-year history of dissonance research and a masterful account of the ensuing developments in the theory. The book will be an outstanding resource for readers familiar with dissonance research and an enlightening introduction for those who are not"

?Professor Russell H. Fazio, Ohio

State University

Why is it that people who smoke continue to do so knowing how bad it is for

them? What drives people to committing adultery even though they inherently believe this is wrong? What's the outcome of this contradiction in the mind?

Cognitive dissonance has been an important and influential theory since Leon Festinger published his classic work in 1957. It is known by every social psychologist, most psychologists of any stripe, and the lay public, making its way into such mainstream publications as The New York Times with increasing frequency and accuracy. Ultimately, dissonance has become one of the most popularly known expressions of social psychological insights, making its way into the literature in consumer, health and economic behavior, and has become a frequently used explanation of political behavior in the popular press and magazines.

In marking the 50th anniversary of the theory's inception, Joel Cooper - arguably the scholar most associated with dissonance research in the past few decades - has presented a beautiful, modern and comprehensive analysis of the state of dissonance theory. This book charts the progress of dissonance theory, assessing its impact not only within our understanding of psychology but in everyday experiences as well. It should be important reading for students in social psychology, either undergraduate or graduate, but equally relevant to a host of other readers who need to understand or share the same passions for appreciating the significance of cognitive dissonance in the human psyche.

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Editorial Review

Review

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?CHOICE (D.J. Winchester 2007-12-11)

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About the Author

Joel Cooper received his B.A. from the City College of New York in 1965 and a Ph.D. from Duke University in 1969. He joined the psychology department faculty at Princeton University in 1969, attaining the rank of full professor in 1978. Professor Cooper's major research focus is on attitudes and attitude change, particularly as they relate to the process of cognitive dissonance. His recent work examines vicarious experiences of dissonance (i.e., feeling dissonance due to the inconsistent behavior of others) and the role of the self in dissonance arousal. Two other areas of active interest are (1) the effect of expert testimony in courts of law, and (2) gender differences in the effectiveness of information technology, particularly among school children.

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