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BUEPT | Listening Test

Section 1: Careful Listening

CAREFUL LISTENING - Introduction

"You will have to take notes while you are listening. Do not attempt to write everything down. Just note down the main points and examples. Do not look at the questions before the lecture is over. At the end of the lecture you will have 15 minutes to answer the questions using your notes."

FOR MAIN IDEAS: COGNITIVE DISSONANCE IN DECISION MAKING

Take your notes here while listening. Do NOT look at the questions before the lecture is over.

(Space for Notes)

Careful Listening Lecture Transcription: Cognitive Dissonance in Decision Making

Good morning, everyone. Today, we're going to explore a deeply influential concept in social psychology: cognitive dissonance, and specifically, we'll examine its profound impact on our decision-making processes. The theory of cognitive dissonance was first introduced by the psychologist Leon Festinger back in 1957, and since then, it has remained a cornerstone for understanding human behavior and thought.

Let me spell out the key term for you: Dissonance. D-I-S-S-O-N-A-N-C-E. Cognitive Dissonance.

So, what exactly is cognitive dissonance? At its core, cognitive dissonance refers to the mental discomfort, the psychological stress, experienced by an individual who holds two or more contradictory beliefs, ideas, or values. It also occurs when an individual's beliefs are in direct opposition to their actions. Imagine holding a belief like "I am an honest person," but then finding yourself telling a white lie. That internal clash, that feeling of unease, is cognitive dissonance.

This discomfort isn't just a fleeting feeling; it's psychologically aversive. Because it's unpleasant, individuals are inherently motivated to reduce this dissonance and achieve a state of internal consistency. Think of it as an internal alarm bell that signals a conflict within our cognitive system, pushing us to find a way to silence it. We have a fundamental human need to see ourselves as rational and consistent, and when this self-perception is threatened, we act to restore it.

There are several common situations or paradigms under which cognitive dissonance typically arises and has been studied. One of the most well-known is **effort justification**. This principle suggests that when we invest a significant amount of effort, time, money, or even pain into achieving a goal or joining a group, we are highly motivated to believe that the goal or group is worthwhile. If the outcome is objectively mediocre or disappointing, we would experience dissonance: "I worked so hard for *this*?" To reduce this dissonance, we often inflate our perception of the value of the outcome or the group. For instance, individuals who endure a very difficult or embarrassing initiation rite to join a fraternity or sorority tend to rate their membership and fellow members much more positively than those who joined with minimal effort. They justify their efforts by overvaluing the result.

Another critical scenario is what's known as **insufficient justification**. This happens when we perform an action that goes against our private attitudes or beliefs, and we lack a strong external reason or reward for doing so. The classic experiment conducted by Festinger and Carlsmith in 1959 provides a perfect illustration. Participants were asked to perform a series of extremely boring and repetitive tasks for an hour. Afterwards, they were asked to tell the next waiting participant that the tasks were actually very interesting

and enjoyable – essentially, to lie. Some participants were offered $1 to tell this lie, while others were offered $20. Now, $20 in 1959 was a considerable sum, providing a strong external justification for lying. Those who received $20 could easily say to themselves, "I lied, but I did it for the money." They experienced little dissonance. However, those who received only $1 had insufficient external justification for their counter-attitudinal behavior. "Why did I lie for a mere dollar?" To reduce the resulting dissonance, these participants actually changed their private attitude towards the tasks. When later asked to rate how enjoyable the tasks truly were, the $1 group rated them significantly more enjoyable than the $20 group, and even more than a control group who didn't lie. They convinced themselves that the tasks weren't so bad after all, thereby aligning their attitude with their behavior.

Then there's **post-decisional dissonance**. This is perhaps the most universally experienced form of dissonance, especially relevant to our everyday decision-making. It occurs after we've made a decision, particularly a difficult one between two or more attractive or closely matched alternatives. Once the choice is made, we tend to experience dissonance because the chosen alternative will inevitably have some negative aspects, and the rejected alternatives will have some positive aspects we've forgone. This is often referred to as "buyer's remorse." For example, if you choose between two equally appealing job offers, after accepting one, you might start to doubt your decision, focusing on the benefits of the job you turned down. To reduce this post-decisional dissonance, individuals typically engage in a process called "spreading of alternatives." They mentally enhance the attractiveness of the chosen option and simultaneously downgrade the attractiveness of the rejected option, thereby making their decision seem more clear-cut and correct in hindsight.

So, given that dissonance is uncomfortable, what strategies do people employ to reduce it? There are generally four main ways: First, **changing one or more of the dissonant cognitions**. This means altering the beliefs, attitudes, or ideas that are in conflict. For example, a person who buys an expensive smartphone but then reads a negative review might change their belief that the review is credible, or decide the features criticized aren't important to them. Second, **acquiring new information or evidence** that supports one side of the conflict and outweighs the dissonant cognitions. Our smartphone buyer might actively seek out positive reviews or testimonials that confirm their purchase was a good one. Third, **reducing the importance of the cognitions**. This involves trivializing the conflict. A person who continues to eat unhealthy food despite knowing the risks might tell themselves, "It's just one unhealthy meal, it won't kill me," or "There are far worse things I could be doing." By downplaying the importance of the healthy eating cognition, the dissonance is lessened. And fourth, **changing the behavior** to align with the attitudes or beliefs. This is often the most direct but also the most challenging strategy. For the unhealthy eater, this would mean starting to eat healthily. For a smoker experiencing dissonance about health risks, it would mean quitting smoking.

Several factors can influence the magnitude of the cognitive dissonance experienced. One key factor is the **degree of choice or volition**. If we feel we were forced or pressured into a decision or behavior, we experience less dissonance because we can attribute our actions to external factors. "I had no choice." However, if we freely choose an action that conflicts with our beliefs, the dissonance will be much stronger. The **importance of the decision** also plays a critical role. Decisions that are more consequential, that have a bigger impact on our lives – like choosing a university, a career, or a life partner – will generate more dissonance if there's a conflict. **Irreversibility of the decision** is another factor. When a decision is final and cannot be easily changed, the dissonance experienced is typically greater. This is because we are 'stuck' with our choice, which increases the psychological pressure to justify it and feel good about it. Finally, **commitment** to a belief or course of action intensifies dissonance. The more invested we are, the more uncomfortable conflicting information or actions become.

Understanding cognitive dissonance has significant implications for our decision-making. It reveals that our drive for internal consistency can sometimes lead us down paths of irrationality. We might, for example, continue to pour resources into a failing project (the sunk cost fallacy) not because it's logically sound, but to avoid the dissonance of admitting a past mistake. It can also fuel confirmation bias, where we selectively seek out information that confirms our pre-existing beliefs and decisions, while actively avoiding or dismissing contradictory evidence, all to maintain that comfortable state of cognitive consistency.

However, awareness of cognitive dissonance can be a powerful tool. By recognizing the tell-tale signs of discomfort when our beliefs and actions are misaligned, or after a tough choice, we can pause and critically evaluate our thinking. We can ask ourselves: "Am I genuinely re-evaluating this situation, or am I just trying to reduce this uncomfortable feeling? Am I seeking truth, or just justification?" This self-awareness can help us to make more objective, rational, and ultimately better decisions, rather than simply falling prey to automatic dissonance-reduction mechanisms. For instance, before making a big purchase, acknowledging that you'll likely experience post-decisional dissonance might lead you to do more thorough research upfront, or to consciously consider the downsides of your preferred option, leading to a more balanced choice.

In conclusion, cognitive dissonance is a fundamental aspect of human psychology. It stems from the tension between conflicting cognitions or between cognitions and behaviors, creating an uncomfortable state that we are motivated to resolve. We do this by changing our thoughts, seeking new information, minimizing the conflict's importance, or changing our behavior. The strength of this dissonance is influenced by factors like choice, importance, and irreversibility. While it can lead to biased thinking and rationalization, a conscious understanding of cognitive dissonance empowers us to navigate our decision-making processes with greater clarity and rationality.

> Thank you.

Careful Listening Questions: Cognitive Dissonance in Decision Making

The questions are in the same order the information is delivered in the lecture. Write only short answers. Complete sentences are not necessary. You have 15 minutes to answer the questions using your notes.

1. What is the exact definition of cognitive dissonance given at the beginning of the lecture?

_____

2. What is the primary motivation for individuals when they experience cognitive dissonance?

_____

3. According to the Festinger and Carlsmith experiment, why did the participants paid only $1 rate the boring tasks as more enjoyable?

_____

4. Name two of the four main strategies people use to reduce cognitive dissonance.

_____

_____

5. If a person puts a lot of effort into joining a club and then overvalues their membership, what specific dissonance-related principle is at play?

_____

6. Consider the following case and answer the question.

Sarah bought an expensive dress for a party. After wearing it once, she realized it wasn't as comfortable or stylish as she initially thought. To feel better about her purchase, she started telling her friends how unique the design was and how many compliments she (thought she) received.

Which dissonance reduction strategy is Sarah primarily using? (Write the letter of the correct answer in the blank.)

A) Changing her behavior

B) Reducing the importance of the cognitions

C) Acquiring new information that supports her decision

D) Changing one or more of the dissonant cognitions (by enhancing the dress's positive aspects)

_____

7. What happens to the attractiveness of chosen and rejected options after a difficult decision, according to the concept of "spreading of alternatives"?

_____

8. List one factor that increases the magnitude of cognitive dissonance experienced.

_____

9. How can an awareness of cognitive dissonance help individuals in their decision-making?

_____

10. According to the lecture, what common bias can be fueled by the desire to avoid cognitive dissonance when seeking information?

_____

Careful Listening Answer Key: Cognitive Dissonance in Decision Making

1. **Answer:** The mental discomfort (or psychological stress) experienced by an individual who holds two or more contradictory beliefs, ideas, or values, or when their beliefs contradict their actions.

Explanation: The lecturer explicitly states this definition early in the lecture: "At its core, cognitive dissonance refers to the mental discomfort, the psychological stress, experienced by an individual who holds two or more contradictory beliefs, ideas, or values. It also occurs when an individual's beliefs are in direct opposition to their actions."

2. **Answer:** To reduce the discomfort / To achieve internal consistency.

Explanation: The lecture states: "Because it's unpleasant, individuals are inherently motivated to reduce this dissonance and achieve a state of internal consistency."

3. **Answer:** They had insufficient external justification for lying (and therefore changed their private attitude to reduce dissonance).

Explanation: The lecturer explains: "However, those who received only $1 had insufficient external justification for their counter-attitudinal behavior... To reduce the resulting dissonance, these participants actually changed their private attitude towards the tasks."

4. **Answer:** Any two of the following:

   • Changing one or more of the dissonant cognitions.
   • Acquiring new information or evidence.
   • Reducing the importance of the cognitions.
   • Changing the behavior.

Explanation: The lecturer lists these four strategies: "There are generally four main ways: First, changing one or more of the dissonant cognitions... Second, acquiring new information or evidence... Third, reducing the importance of the cognitions... And fourth, changing the behavior..."

5. **Answer:** Effort justification.

Explanation: The lecturer defines effort justification as: "This principle suggests that when we invest a significant amount of effort... into achieving a goal or joining a group, we are highly motivated to believe that the goal or group is worthwhile... They justify their efforts by overvaluing the result." This matches the scenario described.

6. **Answer:** D) Changing one or more of the dissonant cognitions (by enhancing the dress's positive aspects)

Explanation: Sarah is altering her thoughts about the dress (making it seem unique, focusing on supposed compliments) to reduce the dissonance caused by the reality that it wasn't a great purchase. She is changing her cognitions about the dress's qualities to align with the act of

buying it. Option A is incorrect as she isn't changing her behavior (e.g., returning the dress). Option B is less accurate as she's not primarily saying comfort/style is unimportant, but rather boosting other perceived positives. Option C is partially related, but she is actively re-framing and perhaps inventing cognitions rather than just seeking external new information. D best describes her internal cognitive shift to enhance the dress's value.

7. **Answer:** The chosen option's attractiveness is enhanced, and the rejected option's attractiveness is downgraded.

Explanation: The lecturer states: "To reduce this post-decisional dissonance, individuals typically engage in a process called 'spreading of alternatives.' They mentally enhance the attractiveness of the chosen option and simultaneously downgrade the attractiveness of the rejected option."

8. **Answer:** Any one of the following:

- Degree of choice/volition (freely chosen decisions cause more).
- Importance of the decision.
- Irreversibility of the decision.
- Commitment.

Explanation: The lecturer lists these factors: "One key factor is the degree of choice or volition… The importance of the decision… Irreversibility of the decision… Finally, commitment…"

9. **Answer:** It can help them make more objective/rational decisions / to be aware of biases / to critically evaluate their thinking.

Explanation: The lecturer explains: "Awareness of cognitive dissonance can be a powerful tool. By recognizing the tell-tale signs… we can pause and critically evaluate our thinking… This self-awareness can help us to make more objective, rational, and ultimately better decisions."

10. **Answer:** Confirmation bias.

Explanation: The lecture states: "It can also fuel confirmation bias, where we selectively seek out information that confirms our pre-existing beliefs and decisions, while actively avoiding or dismissing contradictory evidence, all to maintain that comfortable state of cognitive consistency."

Section 2: Selective Listening

SELECTIVE LISTENING - Introduction and Questions

"Now you will hear a lecture. While you are listening to the lecture, you must answer the questions. The questions are in the order the information is delivered in the lecture. Write only short answers. Complete sentences are not necessary. Before the lecture begins, you will have three minutes in which to study the questions. At the end of the lecture you will be given three minutes to go over what you have written."

"Now, you have three minutes to look at the questions on the Selective Listening Question Sheet."

Selective Listening Questions: The Impact of Social Media on Modern Communication

This part of the Listening Test is aimed at testing your ability to listen selectively to a lecture. Before the lecture begins, you will have 3 minutes to study the questions. At the end of the lecture you will be given 3 minutes to go over what you have written. The questions are in the same order the information is delivered in the lecture. Write only short answers. Complete sentences are not necessary. You have 3 minutes to look at the questions now.

1. Besides maintaining existing ties, what kind of communities has social media been instrumental in forming?

_____

2. What is a significant downside mentioned concerning the rapid dissemination of information on social media?

_____

3. What can be created by algorithms that show users content they already like, reinforcing their biases?

_____

4. What is a key challenge with primarily text-based communication on social media due to its absence?

_____

5. What psychological phenomenon, exacerbated by seeing others' exciting experiences on social media, makes individuals feel inadequate?

_____

6. What are social media platforms often designed to be, using mechanisms that trigger dopamine releases?

_____

7. In the professional sphere, what can be hampered by the constant lure of social media notifications?

_____

8. What aspect of online content are users, especially younger ones, often not fully aware of, which can lead to future negative repercussions?

_____

9. What two skills are mentioned as crucial for navigating the social media age effectively? (List both)

_____

_____

10. The lecture concludes that social media is a tool, and its ultimate impact depends on what?

_____

Now, listen to the lecture.

Selective Listening Lecture Transcription: The Impact of Social Media on Modern Communication

Hello everyone. Today, our focus is on a phenomenon that has fundamentally reshaped not just how we communicate, but also how we live, work, and interact with the world: social media. From its early days as simple networking sites to the complex, multifaceted platforms we see today, social media's evolution has been rapid and its integration into daily life nearly ubiquitous. We'll be exploring its diverse impacts on modern communication, looking at both the celebrated advantages and the concerning drawbacks.

Let's begin by considering how social media has transformed **connectivity and community**. One of its most lauded benefits is the ability to bridge vast geographical distances. Friends, family, and colleagues can maintain relationships and stay updated on each other's lives regardless of where they are in the world. Beyond maintaining existing ties, social media has been instrumental in the formation of entirely new communities. Individuals with niche interests, shared hobbies, or those seeking support for specific life challenges – perhaps a rare medical condition or a particular social cause – can find like-minded people and form strong, supportive online groups that might never have materialized offline. This ability to connect with a global village of shared interests is truly unprecedented. However, it's also important to acknowledge a nuance here: while these connections can be deep and meaningful, there's ongoing debate about the potential for superficiality in some online interactions compared to the depth often found in sustained, face-to-face relationships.

Next, let's examine **information dissemination and civic engagement**. Social media platforms have become incredibly powerful channels for spreading information, often with unprecedented speed and reach. News, whether from established media outlets or citizen journalists, can go viral in minutes, informing vast audiences about events as they unfold. This has had a profound impact on civic engagement. Think about various social and political movements globally; many have utilized social media as a crucial tool for organization, mobilization, and raising awareness. The Arab Spring, for instance, is often cited as a key example where social media played a significant role in coordinating protests and disseminating information that was otherwise censored. However, this rapid dissemination also has a significant downside: the equally rapid spread of misinformation and disinformation, often termed 'fake news'. It can be challenging for users to discern credible sources from fabricated ones, leading to confusion and the potential for real-world harm. Furthermore, algorithms designed to show us content we already like can create **echo chambers and filter bubbles**, where individuals are primarily exposed to information and opinions that confirm their existing beliefs, thereby reinforcing biases and reducing exposure to diverse perspectives.

The very fabric of our language and **communication styles** has also been visibly altered by social media. We've witnessed an evolution of language characterized by the widespread use of emojis to convey emotion or tone, a plethora of acronyms like 'LOL' for 'laugh out loud' or 'BRB' for 'be right back', and various forms of shorthand. Memes, which are often humorous images or videos with text, have themselves become a distinct and widely understood form of communication. There's also been a noticeable shift towards visual communication, with platforms like Instagram and TikTok prioritizing images and short videos over text. The character limits on platforms such as Twitter have encouraged conciseness and brevity, sometimes at the expense of nuance. Another significant change is the prevalence of **asynchronous communication**. This means messages are often sent and received at different times, unlike a real-time phone call. This has benefits, such as allowing individuals to craft more thoughtful replies. But it also has drawbacks, like the potential for delayed responses to cause anxiety or for misinterpretations to arise because the immediate back-and-forth clarification is missing.

This leads us to consider the effects on **interpersonal skills and face-to-face interaction**. There are growing concerns among researchers and social commentators about a potential decline in deep conversational skills, particularly among younger generations who have grown up with mediated communication as the norm. Some studies suggest a preference for texting or messaging over direct, in-person conversations or even phone calls. A key challenge with primarily text-based communication is the significant **lack of non-verbal cues**. Tone of voice, facial expressions, body language – all these vital components of human interaction are largely absent in text messages or social media posts, which can easily lead to misunderstandings and conflict. What might be intended as a light-hearted joke can be perceived as sarcastic or offensive without these cues.

The impact on **mental health and well-being** is another area that has garnered substantial attention. One of the most frequently discussed issues is social comparison. Platforms often showcase idealized versions of people's lives, leading users to compare themselves unfavorably, which has been linked to lower self-esteem, increased anxiety, and even depression. The 'Fear of Missing Out', or FOMO, is another phenomenon exacerbated by social media, where seeing others' exciting experiences can make individuals feel inadequate or left out. Cyberbullying is a serious and pervasive problem, with the anonymity or distance afforded by online platforms sometimes emboldening individuals to engage in harassment that they wouldn't dare to in person. The psychological impact on victims can be devastating. Furthermore, many social media platforms are designed to be addictive, employing mechanisms like notifications and variable reward schedules that trigger dopamine releases in the brain, encouraging users to constantly check for updates and stay engaged for longer periods than they might intend. This constant connectivity can be a major source of stress for many.

Looking at the **professional and educational landscape**, social media has introduced both opportunities and challenges. Professionally, platforms like LinkedIn have become

invaluable for networking, job searching, and building a professional brand. Businesses of all sizes leverage social media for marketing, customer engagement, and brand building, reaching global audiences with relative ease. In education, social media can provide access to a wealth of resources, facilitate online learning communities, and enable collaboration among students and educators. However, the flip side is the potential for distraction. The constant lure of notifications can significantly hamper productivity in workplaces and concentration in study environments. There's also an increasing **blurring of lines between professional and personal life**, as what's posted on personal social media can sometimes have unintended professional consequences.

Finally, we cannot discuss social media without addressing **privacy and security concerns**. Social media platforms collect vast amounts of user data, which is then often used for highly targeted advertising. While this can be convenient, it raises legitimate questions about data ownership and surveillance. Beyond a platform's official use of data, users also face risks of their personal information being misused through identity theft, scams, or unauthorized exposure. Many people, especially younger users, may not be fully aware of the extent to which their information is being shared or the **permanence of online content** – something posted in haste can resurface years later with negative repercussions.

So, how do we navigate this complex social media age? It's clear that developing **digital literacy and critical thinking skills** is more crucial than ever. Users need to be able to evaluate sources, identify misinformation, and understand the persuasive techniques used online. Cultivating healthy usage habits is also vital. This might involve consciously setting boundaries for social media use, taking regular 'digital detoxes' to disconnect, and being mindful of the content consumed and created. Ultimately, promoting positive online interactions and responsible digital citizenship – treating others with respect online, thinking before posting, and contributing constructively – is key.

In conclusion, the impact of social media on modern communication is a classic double-edged sword. It offers incredible tools for connection, information sharing, and community building, yet it also presents significant challenges related to mental health, privacy, and the nature of our interactions. Social media itself is a tool; its ultimate impact, positive or negative, largely depends on how we, as individuals and as a society, choose to wield it. As these platforms continue to evolve, so too must our understanding and our strategies for engaging with them constructively and responsibly.

Thank you for your attention.

Selective Listening Answer Key: The Impact of Social Media on Modern Communication

1. **Answer:** Niche (interest) communities / (Online) groups for shared hobbies/support.
Explanation: The lecturer states, "Beyond maintaining existing ties, social media has been instrumental in the formation of entirely new communities. Individuals with niche interests, shared hobbies, or those seeking support... can find like-minded people and form strong, supportive online groups..."

2. **Answer:** The (equally) rapid spread of misinformation/disinformation / 'fake news'.
Explanation: The lecture explains, "However, this rapid dissemination also has a significant downside: the equally rapid spread of misinformation and disinformation, often termed 'fake news'."

3. **Answer:** Echo chambers / filter bubbles.
Explanation: The lecturer mentions, "Furthermore, algorithms designed to show us content we already like can create echo chambers and filter bubbles, where individuals are primarily exposed to information and opinions that confirm their existing beliefs..."

4. **Answer:** (Lack of) non-verbal cues.
Explanation: The lecture states, "A key challenge with primarily text-based communication is the significant lack of non-verbal cues. Tone of voice, facial expressions, body language – all these vital components... are largely absent..."

5. **Answer:** FOMO / Fear of Missing Out.
Explanation: The lecturer says, "The 'Fear of Missing Out', or FOMO, is another phenomenon exacerbated by social media, where seeing others' exciting experiences can make individuals feel inadequate or left out."

6. **Answer:** Addictive.
Explanation: The lecture explains, "...many social media platforms are designed to be addictive, employing mechanisms like notifications and variable reward schedules that trigger dopamine releases..."

7. **Answer:** Productivity / concentration.
Explanation: The lecture states, "However, the flip side is the potential for distraction. The constant lure of notifications can significantly hamper productivity in workplaces and concentration in study environments."

8. **Answer:** The permanence (of online content).
Explanation: The lecturer notes, "...users also face risks... Many people, especially younger users, may not be fully aware of the extent to which their information is being shared or the permanence of online content – something posted in haste can resurface years later..."

9. **Answer:** Digital literacy and critical thinking (skills).

Explanation: The lecturer states, "It's clear that developing digital literacy and critical thinking skills is more crucial than ever."

10. **Answer:** How we (as individuals/society) choose to use/wield it.

Explanation: The conclusion states, "Social media itself is a tool; its ultimate impact, positive or negative, largely depends on how we, as individuals and as a society, choose to wield it."
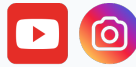
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Şimdi sıra, belki de sizde.

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