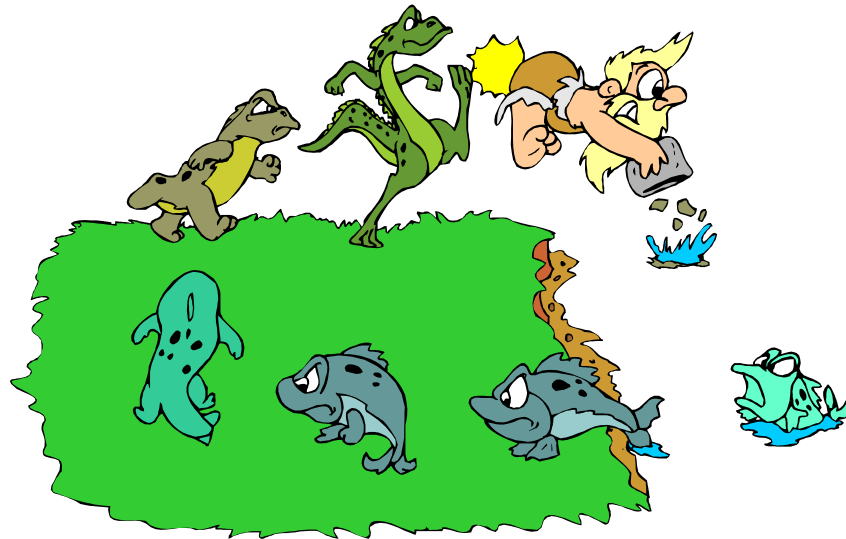


Theories of Attraction & the formation of relationships.



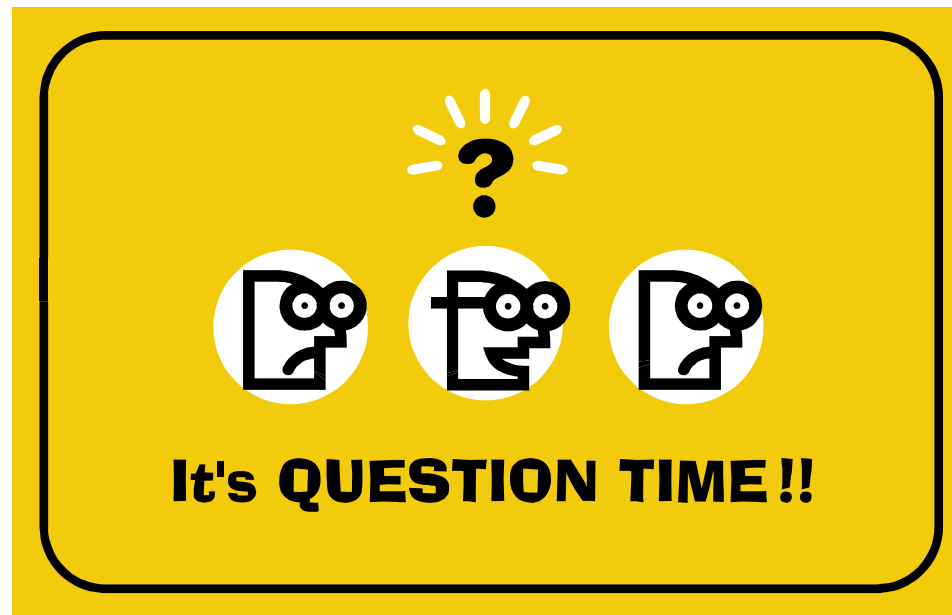
Socio-biological Theories.

- The idea behind this theory is **adaptation**, individuals who have adaptive behaviours would live long enough to pass on those traits to their offspring.
- Adaptive traits are those that promote survival of the individual and usually results in successful reproduction, therefore their genes will not die out!



Question Time!!!

- What characteristics would you consider preferable in a partner according to the socio-biological approach?



Answers!!

- Both males and females will seek partners with whom they feel they will have the best reproductive success.
- Would you become involved with someone with HIV/Cancer?
- Men tend to prefer younger women as this is a sign of fertility. (usually, all things being equal!!!)

Sociobiological cont...



- Family relationships are also explained using the socio-biological approach.
- One of the ways an individual can help to ensure the survival of his/her genes is by protecting relatives so they'll be able to reproduce.????? LET ME EXPLAIN!
- 50% of our genes is shared by our children, the other 50% by the other parent, thus there is considerable evolutionary evidence to explain why we invest so much effort in taking care of our young. The same level of protection is extended to close relatives. This is called **Kin Selection**.
- **Evidence:** Fellner & Marshall (1981) found 86% of individuals were willing to be kidney donors for their own children, 67% would do the same for their parents and 50% would be a donor for their siblings.

Evaluation of socio approach..



- ✓ This approach positively explains the special bonds we share with our families, and why we invest so much time and energy caring for our young.

- X But what of homosexual relationships?
- X Relationships which remain childless voluntarily?
- X Lastly there appears to be too much emphasis on sexual relationships, and less information on non sexual relationships i.e. friendship.

Reinforcement/Need Satisfaction Theory.



- The theory is based upon the key idea that we form friendships and relationships because of the reinforcements we receive.
- Can you think what these might be? (*Tip, Learning theory PYA1*)
- *Foa (1975) stated the rewards also included sex status love and money, these things are worthwhile as they meet our various social needs.*

Reinforcement/Need Satisfaction Theory.



- Byrne(1971) considered classical conditioning as an important function of relationship formation.
- He suggested the salivation produced by the dogs in Pavlov's experiment was synonymous to when positive feelings are created when someone expresses similar attitudes to ours, whereas negative affect is produced when someone expresses dissimilar attitudes.
- List the needs being met in the following relationships:
Best friend, parent/child and lover.

Reinforcement/Need Satisfaction Theory

Evidence....

- Veitch & Griffitt (1976) tested the reinforcement affect model by arranging single participants to wait in an experimenters office while the experimenter was absent.
- A radio was left playing, in the time alone the participant heard two news flashes, either good or bad news.
- The experimenter then entered the room and administered a feelings scale and a questionnaire supposedly completed by another student.
- It was filled in to be either in close agreement/disagreement with the attitudes previously expressed by the earlier class.

RESULT

- The participants exposed to the good news reported significantly more positive feelings than those who heard bad news. The same students also felt more attracted to the other student. The effect was stronger when the attraction was similar, though it did occur when dissimilar.

From an evaluative aspect what were the strengths and limitations of this evidence



Reinforcement/Need Satisfaction Theory Evaluation....

- ✓ This is a good account for friendships, we like others who are reciprocal with their feelings (friendliness, cooperation) but....



- X Long term relationship
- X Parents and children.
- X Are individuals that selfish...only concerned with their own feelings?
- X Reinforcement depends largely upon context e.g. prostitution satisfies sexual needs, but that does not necessarily translate to attraction.
- X Individualist vs. collectivist societies.

Economic theories: Exchange & Equity.

- The term *economic* conveys a trading of one item for another.



Relationships are concerned with '*give and take*'.

Social exchange theory.

- The main idea behind social exchange is everyone tries to maximise the rewards they obtain from a relationship and try to minimise the costs. If the a relationship is to be successful then both parties are expected to give and take in equal proportions.



Social exchange theory

- Thibaut & Kelley (1959) suggested long term relationships go through four stages.



- ✓ **Sampling**

Costs & rewards are explored.

- ✓ **Bargaining**

Negotiation of rewards and costs are agreed.

- ✓ **Commitment**

Exchange of rewards & acceptance of costs stabilise, there is now focus on relationship.

- ✓ **Institutionalisation**

Norms & expectance are firmly established.

Equity Theory

- The emphasis is more upon the notions of fairness & equity. Individuals are expected to receive rewards proportional to what they put in.



- If the relationship reaches an imbalance, the individuals appear accepting, providing both parties are fully aware.

Equity Theory

- Walster et al (1978) suggested the main assumptions of the equity approach are as follows:



1. Individuals maximise rewards minimise costs
2. Negotiation occurs to produce fairness.
3. The relationship produces distress if there is inequity.
4. The disadvantaged person is always trying harder to make the relationship more equitable.

Evidence supporting the Equity Theory

Hatfield et al (1979)

1. Newlyweds were questioned and asked to reveal whether they believed they were receiving more or less than what they were contributing.
2. They were also asked to rate their contentment, happiness and anger or guilt.



Results:

1. The under benefited had the lowest overall satisfaction and experienced guilt
 2. The over benefited (they also felt guilt) were second
 3. The equitable had highest levels of satisfaction.
- These results were further substantiated by **Buunk & VanYperen (1991)**
 - Although these findings only related to who were high in exchange orientation, those with low exchange had reasonably high marriage satisfaction regardless of whether they were under/over benefited or receiving equal benefit.

Equity evaluation.....

- ✓ More credible than exchange theory as it considers the rewards/costs of both parties.
- × There is a fundamental supposition that individuals are self seeking in their relationships. This may have validity in some cultures, such as individualists, but not collectivists.

