Come Closer: Cognitive Dissonance Between Strangers

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C O M E  C L O S E R
COGNITIVE DISSONANCE BETWEEN STRANGERS

METHODS

HYPOTHESES

INTRODUCTION

Cognitive dissonance states that behaviors dictate attitude (Festinger, 1957)

Missing pieces?
Cognitive dissonance has not been applied to issues of personal space, or physical touch.

Invasion of personal space causes compensatory behaviors (Felipe and Sommer, 1966; Khan and Kamal, 2010).

Physical touch and warmth create closeness (Williams and Bargh, 2008; Parker, 2011)

RESULTS

If participants are placed in romantic pose, then they will feel closer to their partner following the photograph than if placed in the neutral or familial pose.

If participants are placed in male/female combination, then they will feel closer to their partner following the photograph than if placed in female/female combination or male/ male combination.

M/E combo follows expected hierarchy of pose, while M/M and F/F combo do not

Supports Sielski (1979)
Male/female interactions need least personal space and are most conducive to generating closeness
Male/male interactions need most space, generate least closeness
F/F combo generating significant closeness in neutral pose
Dissonance created by study not as great as necessary to have desired effect
More studies needed to assess dissonance between people

MEASURES

CHAIRS

We could never establish a personal friendship with each other.
My partner is very sexy looking
My partner would be a poor problem solver.
My partner just wouldn’t fit into my circle of friends.

IAS (Interpersonal Attraction Scale)

Participants posed for a photograph for 30 seconds
Pre-post measures of chairs and IAS taken

PROCEDURE

90 participants

M/F combo generating significant closeness in neutral pose
Dissonance created by study not as great as necessary to have desired effect
More studies needed to assess dissonance between people

REFERENCES

Parker, R. A. (2011). The effects of physical touch and thermal warmth on interpersonal trust, University of California Press