

## **Social Penetration Theory and “Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)”**

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### **Theory 1: Social Penetration**

**Who developed the theory:** Social penetration theory was developed in 1973 by psychologists Dalmis Taylor and Irwin Altman.

**When was theory developed:** In terms of history, this hypothesis was developed in 1973.

#### **Introduction:**

Social penetration theory was developed to explain how information exchange functions in the development and dissolution of interpersonal relationships. Social penetration describes the process of bonding that moves a relationship from superficial to more intimate (Altman & Taylor, 1973)

#### **Strengths of the theory:**

- The social penetration theory provides a thorough framework for comprehending how interpersonal connections have changed over time.
- According to the hypothesis, people reveal more and more private and intimate information as their relationships progress.
- This concept clarifies why people are more susceptible and emotionally attached in relationships. The theory can be used to comprehend various forms of interpersonal interactions, such as romantic partnerships, friendships, and business ties.

### **Weaknesses of the theory:**

- Theoretically, social penetration communication style does not take into account cultural or gender variations.
- The theory presupposes that people communicate in deliberate, logical ways, but this may not always be the case.
- The concept only addresses a portion of how relationship development is impacted by nonverbal communication.
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### **How is this theory used in research (qualitative or quantitative)**

Both qualitative and quantitative investigations have employed the social penetration theory.

While qualitative research has examined how people perceive the growth of relationships, quantitative studies have examined factors that affect the rate and depth of relationship penetration.

### **Are there any modern examples of the theory**

The popular television show *Friends* is a prime example of social penetration theory in modern society. As they gradually divulge personal information, the characters in the series get to know one another better. The fact that Ross confesses his love to Rachel for the first time in the episode "*The One with the Jellyfish*" shows how deeply their relationship has penetrated the emotional surface.

## **Conclusion:**

In today's modern environment, Social Penetration Theory is being utilized to investigate electronic interactions on the Internet via social media sites and chat rooms. On the one hand, people who meet online are frequently unable to foresee how a person will react to specific forms of information, making the cost of self-disclosure problematic. On the other hand, the impersonal aspect of interacting through a screen may reduce the cost of revealing intimate information, increasing the likelihood of self-disclosure. This field's theorists have noticed a wide range of results from online interactions, indicating the need for more research to develop Social Penetration Theory into a more predictable model.

## **Theory 2: Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)”**

**Name of the theory:** The theory is known as the Elaborate Likelihood Model (ELM).

**Who developed the theory:** The psychologists Richard Petty and John Cacioppo created the elaboration likelihood model (ELM), which was originally presented in 1986.

**When was theory developed:** The hypothesis was developed in 1986.

## **Introduction:**

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) is a persuasion and information processing model. ELM has gotten numerous citations from academics in the disciplines of cognitive/social psychology and consumer research since its founding in the 1980s. Over the past ten years, studies conducted in the context of advertising, how brand evaluation is influenced, how

processing processes are defined, and whether a data model may be employed have been the main areas of ELM application in consumer research.

**Strengths of the theory:**

- The entire framework for comprehending the persuasion process is provided by the thorough probability model.
- The concept outlines the differences between the primary and peripheral routes, which are two distinct paths to persuasion.
- The thorough probability model makes it easier to see why some communications that persuade people are more effective than others.
- A substantial body of empirical evidence backs the paradigm.

**Weaknesses of the theory:**

- The detailed probability model does not account for individual differences in cognition or motivation.
- The paradigm frequently receives criticism for oversimplifying the persuasion process.
- The theory presupposes that individuals make deliberate, reasoned decisions, but this may not always be the case.

**How is this theory used in research (qualitative or quantitative)**

The extended probability model has been applied to both qualitative and quantitative research. Qualitative study has examined how people interpret persuasive communication, whereas quantitative research has examined the effects of different message qualities on persuasion.

**Are there any modern examples of the theory**

The television show "Mad Men" provides as a current illustration of the elaboration likelihood model. Throughout the series, characters employ vivid messaging to convince others, such as advertising slogans. This program provides as an illustration of how these communications' effects might change depending on a range of elements, including the message's origin, its content, and the audience's level of participation.

**Conclusion:**

Depending on a person's level of lucidity, the ELM claims that there are numerous psychological processes of change that take place at various levels. The bottom end of the continuum contains cognitively minimal processes like basic exposure and classical conditioning. It is assumed that behaviors induced by the central pathway are stronger than those elicited by the peripheral pathway because the central pathway has a higher amplitude. This shows that there is little chance of distortion or any other kind of counter-persuasion, and that the current level of persuasion is sustained.

## Resources

Jams. (2012, September 20). *Social Penetration Theory*. *Communication Studies*. <https://www.communicationstudies.com/communication-theories/social-penetration-theory>

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