

Belief Relevance and Attitude-Behavior Consistency: The Moderating Role of Personal Experience

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This experiment examines whether belief relevance enhances the degree of attitude-behavior consistency when the behavioral implications of a global attitude contradict the behavioral implications of prior personal experience in a pertinent action domain. It was generally expected that belief relevance would only promote attitude-behavior consistency for those individuals with little prior personal experience. As predicted, enhancing cognitive accessibility increased substantially the consistency between global environmental attitudes and petition-signing behavior, but only for those subjects who had minimal prior personal experience with the consequences of an on-campus parking shortage. For those individuals with relatively extensive personal experience, cognitive accessibility did not increase attitude-behavior consistency. The theoretical importance of considering the nature and extent of respondents' prior personal experiences in attitude-behavior research is discussed.

The extent to which attitudes are predictive of social behavior has long been controversial in social psychology (cf. Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977; Cialdini, Petty, & Cacioppo, 1981; Schuman & Johnson, 1976; Wicker, 1969; Zanna, Higgins, & Herman, in press). Early pessimism about the predictive validity of attitudes, however, has recently given way to the suggestion that strong attitude-behavior relations can indeed be obtained under certain conditions. Fazio and Zanna (1981) have framed this shift by asking: Under what conditions do what kinds of attitudes of what kinds of individuals predict what kinds of behavior? Substantial evidence for the predictive validity of attitudes has been found under conditions of methodological correspondence between attitudinal and behavioral measures (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977), when the cognitive acces-

sibility of attitudes has been primed (Snyder & Swann, 1976), and when various mediating context factors such as immediate situational pressures and normative constraints have been taken into consideration (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Research on the kinds of attitudes (Fazio & Zanna, 1981; Norman, 1975; Schwartz, 1978), the kinds of individuals (McArthur, Kiesler, & Cook, 1969; Schwartz, 1977; Zanna, Olson, & Fazio, 1980), and the kinds of behaviors (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) has also provided support for the strength of attitude-behavior relations.

The present research examines more closely one of the conditions that previous research has identified as an important determinant of attitude-behavior consistency. Specifically, it has been argued that global attitudes (i.e., attitude toward the object) often may not predict specific behaviors because the behavioral implications of these global attitudes simply may not be salient or cognitively accessible to people in the behavioral choice situation. Investigators who have essentially made this argument (Pryor et al., 1977; Snyder & Swann, 1976; Tesser, 1978) have successfully manipulated the cognitive accessibility of such global attitudes and have shown that, either by making the behavioral implications of global attitudes more salient or by encouraging people

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to think about the behavioral implications of their attitudes, the degree of attitude-behavior consistency can be improved dramatically.

One might conclude from these findings that cognitive manipulations that make the behavioral implications of global attitudes salient and accessible generally ought to be effective in promoting consistency between global attitudes (toward an object) and specific behaviors. But suppose that the implications of one's personal experience in a given behavioral domain conflict with or even directly contradict the implications of a more global attitude that one also holds for the specific behavioral choice in question. Would a belief-relevance manipulation that underscores the behavioral implications of one's global attitude still be effective in promoting attitude-behavior consistency under these conditions?

Consider, for example, the chronic plight of a university student who regularly commutes to campus in his or her car for classes. Greeted by hopelessly long lines or "Lot Full" signs at various on-campus parking facilities and with few minutes to spare before class gets underway, our harried commuter must seek out and probably settle for some marginally legal or clearly unauthorized parking space in the campus vicinity. What is at risk, of course, is the likelihood of yet another parking ticket or perhaps even the possibility of a costly car towing. But classes must be attended and the daily inconvenience and hassle associated with the on-campus parking shortage at least tolerated until parking facilities are expanded by an administration undoubtedly hard pressed for funds. Based on our commuter's daily experiences with the parking shortage, one might well expect him or her to strongly favor expansion of on-campus parking facilities and perhaps to be quite willing to take some sort of action designed to encourage the administration to build new parking facilities.

Suppose, however, that our frustrated and hassled student commuter were to realize (through some sort of thought or belief-relevance manipulation) that his or her proenvironmental beliefs and attitudes conflict with the experience-based desire for in-

creased on-campus parking, since increased air pollution would surely accompany expanded parking facilities at the University. Would our commuter's realization that his or her favorable attitude toward the environment is relevant to his or her stance on the parking issue actually increase the likelihood that he or she would act in line with the behavioral implications of the global proenvironmental attitude? Or, would our commuter's personal experience with the parking shortage lead him or her to act in ways that are inconsistent with a proenvironmental attitude despite an awareness of the relevance of those proenvironmental beliefs?

Previous research on the cognitive accessibility of attitudes would suggest that consistency between global environmental attitudes and overt behaviors concerning the parking issue should be enhanced under these conditions. By contrast, however, there is also substantial evidence that suggests that previous direct behavioral experience with an attitude object should be quite predictive of subsequent behaviors (Fazio & Zanna, 1978a; 1978b; Fazio, Zanna, & Cooper, 1978; Regan & Fazio, 1977; Songer-Nocks, 1976). The extent to which people are personally involved in a given attitude issue should also moderate the degree of attitude-behavior consistency (Cialdini, Petty, & Cacioppo, 1981) and, in turn, the effectiveness of any cognitive manipulation that underscores the behavioral implications of global attitudes.

The present experiment addresses for the first time the question of whether belief relevance and cognitive accessibility will in fact be effective when the behavioral implications of a global attitude contradict or conflict with the implications of prior personal experience in a given behavioral domain. It was generally expected that belief relevance and cognitive accessibility would only promote attitude-behavior consistency for individuals with relatively little prior personal experience in the pertinent behavioral domain.

Method

Subjects

Sixty-eight male and female University of Minnesota undergraduates enrolled in general psychology were re-

cruited as participants for a two-part student opinion survey. Subjects received extra course credit for their participation. Thirty-two subjects were randomly assigned to the belief-relevant condition and 36 subjects were assigned to the belief-nonrelevant condition.

Procedure

Part 1: Administering the Student Opinion Survey. Subjects arrived at the Laboratory for Research in Social Relations in groups ranging in size from three to seven. Upon arrival, they were met by a female experimenter who explained the basic purpose of the survey as an in-depth attempt to examine how "students feel about several state and national issues, as well as to determine how students feel about some very specific issues pertaining to the operation of the University and the quality of student life." The experimenter, who was blind to experimental condition, went on to explain that since the survey was rather long and would take more than 1 hour to complete, the questionnaire had been divided into two parts, which was why subjects had been asked to sign up for two sessions on consecutive days. In addition, since the first section of the survey would not require the full experimental hour, subjects were also being asked to participate in an unrelated person-perception experiment being conducted by a colleague.

After this introduction, the first section of the Student Opinion Survey (SOS) was distributed and completed, on the average, within 25 minutes.

Stimulus materials: Part 1 of the Student Opinion Survey. The first section of the SOS consisted of 67 items. Forty of these were attitude items evaluated along 5-point Likert scales that assessed subjects' attitudes toward environmental issues, the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion rights, the Boundary Waters Canoe Area dispute in northern Minnesota, and administrative priorities at the University. The remainder of the first section of the survey consisted of 27 demographic items that were included to enhance the face validity of the survey rather than for use in data analysis.

Part 1: The person-perception task. Upon completion of the first section of the SOS subjects were reminded to return to the same room on the following day to complete the second section of the survey. They were then escorted to a different experimental room where the person-perception task was being conducted. There subjects were greeted by a male experimenter. After subjects completed a research consent form associated with this new task, the experimenter explained that as part of a larger study in person perception, subjects would be asked to listen to three brief tape-recorded conversations and to note their impressions of one of the two people from each tape. Specifically, they were to rate their impressions of the person who spoke second (the target) in each of the three dialogues. The experimenter then proceeded to play three tape-recorded conversations, pausing 3-4 minutes after each dialogue to allow subjects to complete their ratings. In each case, the personality ratings were based on the second or target conversant. After the third dialogue was rated, all subjects filled out structured and free-recall measures for each of the three dialogues. Finally, the experimenter distributed an explanation of the design and purpose of the person-perception task to all participants. This de-

briefing feedback had been carefully constructed to seem as plausible and convincing as possible to allay any suspicions about a connection between the SOS and the person-perception task.

Stimulus materials: The person-perception task. For the person-perception task, 10 male colleagues were enlisted to enact five conversations. These conversations concerned downtown restaurants, motorcycle safety, summer jobs, racquetball, and parking at the university, and were initially written in script form. The dialogues were rehearsed and modified until the conversations sounded spontaneous and unrehearsed to a pilot group of subjects. Each conversation lasted approximately 4 minutes.

Belief-relevant dialogues. Subjects in the belief-relevant condition always heard the parking at the university dialogue as the second conversation in the series of three. For half of the subjects in the belief-relevant condition, the downtown restaurants dialogue was heard first and the motorcycle safety dialogue was last in the sequence. For the other half of the belief-relevant subjects, the order of the downtown restaurants and motorcycle safety dialogues was reversed.

The parking at the university dialogue conveyed the critical belief-relevance manipulation. The motorcycle safety dialogue was about the hazards of helmetless motorcycling and bore a structural similarity to the parking at the university dialogue in that one participant in the former dialogue encouraged his partner to think more carefully about the implications of supporting a repeal of the law requiring motorcyclists to wear helmets. The downtown restaurants dialogue was merely a filler conversation about the virtues of various downtown restaurants.¹

In the parking at the university dialogue, the conversation began with some small talk about the movie *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. After a few comments about that movie's technical gimmickry, the conversation shifted to a discussion of the overcrowded parking situation at the University. The target's conversation partner mentioned that he was worried about the time on his parking meter, since he did not want to get another parking ticket. He went on to complain about the hassle and inconvenience of finding on-campus parking and criticized the university administration for not taking steps to remedy it. At this point in the conversation, the target conversant pointed out that in his opinion the decision to build more parking facilities

¹ Since the belief-relevant condition always included the parking at the university and motorcycle safety dialogues and the belief-nonrelevant condition did not include either of these dialogues, it is not possible to estimate to what extent the effects, if any, of the belief-relevance manipulation are due to the parking at the university dialogue as opposed to the motorcycle dialogue. However, this poses no unique interpretive problem. Even if the presence or absence of the parking dialogue had been the only difference between the two experimental conditions, it still would have been impossible (and uninteresting from our perspective) to determine what particular aspect or element of the parking dialogue was responsible for producing any observed effects of the belief-relevance manipulation.

might have some ramifications that his partner had not considered. Moreover, if his partner gave more thought to the situation, then he might not be so eager for the construction of additional parking facilities.

The target went on to point out that the construction of more on-campus parking would encourage more people to drive to the university rather than to use mass transit and that such a change would be accompanied by increased pollution and energy consumption. The target also pointed out that this influx of cars in search of parking would perhaps intensify the safety problems on campus. Finally, he pointed out that new parking facilities would be extremely expensive and that the money could be better used in ways more directly related to educational objectives. The conversation concluded with the target's partner stating that he had "never really thought about those things before."

Belief-nonrelevant dialogues. Subjects in the belief-nonrelevant condition always heard the same three filler dialogues in the same order. The first conversation in the sequence was the downtown restaurants dialogue, followed by the summer-jobs dialogue and the racquetball dialogue. The latter two conversations involved a discussion between two students of summer job plans and experiences and a conversation about the merits of racquetball and other recreational sports, respectively. None of the three dialogues in the belief-nonrelevant condition mentioned environmental issues or the parking situation at the university.²

Dependent measures: The person-perception task. To enhance the credibility of the person-perception task, subjects rated each target conversant on 10 bipolar trait-adjectives, judged "How effectively does this person express his ideas?" and "How favorable is your overall impression of this person?" and completed an open-ended item that asked them to describe their impression of the target. Upon completion of these ratings, subjects' recall of the target's conversation in each of the three dialogues was assessed. Finally, subjects were asked to summarize each conversation in their own words as they would in order to "give a friend a good idea of what this conversation was about." These measures are not pertinent to the hypotheses examined in the actual experiment and therefore will not be discussed further.

Part 2: Administering the Student Opinion Survey. When subjects returned on the second day to complete the SOS, they were met by the same female experimenter who had distributed the survey in the first session. She reminded them to use the same subject code number that they had used on the previous day and then distributed Part 2 of the survey. Subjects were also informed that they should remain seated after completing the survey because department policy required that the experimenter fully explain the purpose of the research. Upon completion of the survey, the experimenter began to discuss the research when, as if it were an afterthought, she mentioned that:

This student group on campus got wind of the fact that we were including questions concerning parking on our questionnaire, and asked that I give each of you a copy of their petition for consideration. Why don't I gather up my surveys before I hand out these sheets so that I can keep my materials separate from

theirs. . . . And why don't you just put these petitions in a pile on the table when you've looked them over.

The petitions, which had been lying face down on a small table near the door throughout the session, were then distributed to subjects. The experimenter appeared to be totally disinterested in whether anyone signed these petitions. Whenever a subject asked a question about the content of the petition, for example, she always responded by saying, "I haven't even taken a look at it," at which time she glanced over the petition and said, "I really don't know." Whenever a subject asked a question about who would use the petitions, the experimenter always responded, "I haven't even taken a look at it. I really have nothing to do with it. I really don't know."

After a few minutes, subjects were told to leave their materials on the table and were taken to another lab room for a complete debriefing about the experiment. During this final debriefing, not one subject spontaneously suggested that there was a link between administration of the SOS and the interpolated person perception task, nor did anyone voice suspicion about the student petition.

Stimulus materials: Part 2 of the Student Opinion Survey. Part 2 of the SOS consisted of 32 items that inquired about the nature and extent of subjects' experience with various university programs and services and their satisfaction with each service. These items dealt with financial aid, the student employment service, the student health service, transportation to and from the university, and the university library system. On the average, subjects were able to complete this part of the survey in 20 minutes.

Direct Experience Measure

There were 11 items in one section of the SOS/Part 2 that dealt with parking at the university. Seven of these items solicited information such as whether the subject owned a car, and if so, how frequently they drove to campus; whether they had received parking tickets or had ever been towed for illegal parking; how far away from campus they typically had to park; and how much time they spent searching for a parking space when they did drive to campus. This latter measure was the primary direct experience measure. Respondents were asked: "When you drive to the U, how long on the average do you usually have to spend looking for a place to park and/or waiting in line at a parking lot? (Less than 2 minutes, 2-5 minutes, 5-10 minutes, more than 10 minutes)."

² There was no reason whatsoever to suspect that any of the filler dialogues in the belief-nonrelevant condition could possibly alter the accessibility of either global environmental attitudes or the specific behavioral implications of those attitudes with respect to the parking issue. Thus it seemed highly implausible that the order in which subjects were exposed to these innocuous conversations could possibly affect their petition-signing behavior. Accordingly, the order of dialogue presentation was not counterbalanced in the belief-nonrelevant condition.

Dependent Measures

The primary dependent measure in the present experiment was whether the subject signed one or both of two petitions recommending an increase in parking facilities at the university. The two petitions differed in terms of the strength of public commitment that they required (Brannon et al., 1973). The first petition was carefully typed and had an official appearance. It followed the last page of the survey booklet and was attached to Part 2 of the SOS by a paper clip. At the top of the page, subjects read that the administration was "currently giving careful consideration to the issue of whether or not plans to construct extensive new parking facilities should be implemented" and that "a memorandum reporting the overall percentage of students (not individual names) who endorse the following request" would be forwarded to the university committee that was currently considering the parking issue. Beneath this explanation was a statement requesting that "plans for the construction of additional new parking facilities . . . be adopted and implemented as soon as possible," and a space for the subject's signature.

In contrast, the second petition, which was presented to subjects at the end of the second session, was designed to convey the impression of a rather low-budget, hastily produced student petition campaign. It was dittoed rather than mimeographed like the first petition (and the entire SOS). It clearly had been typed on an old manual typewriter and the heading at the top of the page was handwritten: "TIRED OF LOSING THE BATTLE FOR PARKING SPACES? WANT TO SEE SOMETHING DONE ABOUT IT??" Beneath this heading was a paragraph that explained that the student group that was soliciting signatures for this petition was not a political organization and had no affiliation with student government or any other organized group. It stated that they were simply a small group of students who were tired of the inconvenience caused by the shortage of on-campus parking and intended to publish their petition, along with the names of every other student who was willing to sign it, as a full-page ad in the campus newspaper.

Following this explanation were the reproduced signatures of seven fictitious students along with their college affiliation within the university. At the bottom of the page was their petition urging the university to make a firm commitment to provide additional parking facilities, along with a space for the subject's signature.

In addition to its distinctly different appearance and sponsorship, signing the second petition clearly involved public, and hence, stronger commitment to one's beliefs about the parking situation at the university than the commitment entailed by an endorsement of the first petition.

Results

Table 1 presents the correlations between Environmental Concern and petition-signing for participants who were high and low in direct experience by experimental condition. The environmental concern measure is a

sum-score index composed of eight environmental attitude items from the first section of the SOS (scale $M = 30.43$, $sd = 3.79$, Cronbach's $\alpha = .59$, $n = 68$).³ The petition-signing measure was constructed by assigning participants who signed the first but not the second petition a score of 1, and assigning participants who signed both petitions a score of 2.⁴ Categorization of participants as high or low on direct experience was based on their responses to the item "When you drive to the U, how long on the average do you usually have to spend looking for a place to park and/or waiting in line at a parking lot?" Participants who answered with "less than 2 minutes" or "2-5 minutes" were categorized as low in direct experience; participants who answered either "5-10 minutes" or "more than 10 minutes" were categorized as high in direct experience.⁵

It may be seen in Table 1 that, as predicted, in the belief-nonrelevant condition there is no reliable relationship between the strength of the participants' global environmental attitudes and their petition-signing behavior at *either* level of direct experience (for low experience, $r = -.03$, *ns*; for high experience, $r = .29$, *ns*). Within the belief-relevant condition, by contrast, whether environmental attitudes are closely related to petition-signing behavior clearly depends on the level of direct experience. Specifically, for participants high in direct experience, there is no reliable relationship between environmental attitudes and willingness to sign petitions recommending increased on-campus parking ($r = -.07$, *ns*). For participants low in direct experience, however, there is a highly significant inverse correlation be-

³ These eight items dealt with the extent to which subjects felt pollution was affecting them personally; their beliefs about governmental regulations designed to curb pollution, their beliefs about antipollution organizations, and their sense of personal responsibility for taking steps to slow down pollution.

⁴ This scale construction was of course based on the assumption that there was an increase in the strength of public commitment from the first to the second petition. Consistent with this assumption, not one subject signed the second petition without also having signed the first petition. In contrast, 21 subjects signed the first but not the second petition, and 30 subjects signed both.

⁵ The correlation between environmental concern and the direct experience measure was not statistically reliable, $r = .12$, *ns*, $n = 68$.

Table 1

Correlations Between Environmental Concern (Attitude) and Petition-Signing (Behavior) by Level of Direct Experience and Experimental Condition

Direct experience	Experimental condition	
	Belief nonrelevant	Belief relevant
Low		
<i>r</i>	-.03 (<i>ns</i> , <i>n</i> = 24)	-.62 (<i>p</i> = .004, <i>n</i> = 17)
<i>M</i> attitude	30.08, $\sigma^2 = 4.16$	30.35, $\sigma^2 = 4.18$
<i>M</i> behavior	1.42, $\sigma^2 = .65$.71, $\sigma^2 = .85$
High		
<i>r</i>	.29 (<i>ns</i> , <i>n</i> = 12)	-.07 (<i>ns</i> , <i>n</i> = 15)
<i>M</i> attitude	30.50, $\sigma^2 = 3.18$	31.00, $\sigma^2 = 3.46$
<i>M</i> behavior	1.83, $\sigma^2 = .39$.81, $\sigma^2 = .83$

Note. All reported *rs* are Pearson product-moment correlations.

tween the strength of proenvironmental attitudes and petition-signing behavior ($r = -.62$, $p = .004$).

The pattern of correlations presented in Table 1 strongly suggests that, as predicted, global environmental attitudes are related to petition-signing behavior only for those participants who are low in direct experience and who had been previously exposed to the belief-relevance manipulation. Computation of these correlations, however, does not provide the most rigorous test of our theoretical predictions. Accordingly, we tested the correspondence between our theoretical predictions and the data presented in Table 1 by a single planned comparison within a 2 (belief relevance) \times 2 (direct experience) analysis of variance.

In this analysis of variance, the product-moment correlation between the environmental concern measure and the petition-signing measure (calculated separately for each of the four cells within the 2 \times 2 factorial design) constitutes the dependent measure. Each correlation is first transformed to a *z* score. The within-cells variance of the samples that these *z* scores represent (given unequal *n*) is calculated from the formula $\sigma^2 = 1/\tilde{n} - 3$, where \tilde{n} represents the harmonic mean of the number of paired observations contributing to each correlation coefficient (Fisher, 1946). This known within-cells variance is then used in constructing an *F* ratio to test the significance of the planned comparison that tests the theoretical predictions.

In this research, a substantial correlation between environmental concern and petition-signing in the belief-relevant, low direct-experience cell, but a trivial correlation in each of the remaining cells was predicted. Therefore, a weight of +3 was assigned to the *z* score representing the correlation from the belief-relevant, low direct-experience cell and weights of -1 were assigned to the *z* scores representing each of the other three correlations. Calculation of the appropriate *F* test reveals that this planned comparison is significant, $F(1, \infty) = 6.102$, $p = .02$. Furthermore, an *F* test calculated on the residual was clearly not significant, $F(2, \infty) = .550$, *ns*. Thus, the contrast representing the theoretically predicted pattern of correlations accounts for a highly significant amount of systematic variation in the actually obtained pattern of correlations and there was no significant amount of systematic variation remaining beyond that accounted for by the theoretically predicted pattern.

Direct Experience Versus Relevant Beliefs

The pattern of correlations presented in Table 1 is further explicated by Table 2 which presents the frequency of petition-signing as a function of direct experience and environmental concern. As predicted, subjects who were high on direct experience but low on environmental concern tended to sign either or both of the petitions, regardless of experimental condition, Fisher's exact $p =$

.12. Likewise, the belief-relevance manipulation did not significantly affect the frequency of petition-signing for participants who were high on direct experience and high on environmental concern, Fisher's exact $p = .10$. Nor did belief relevance make a significant difference for those subjects who were low on environmental concern and low on direct experience, Fisher's exact $p = .17$. By contrast, belief relevance has a significant and substantial effect for those subjects who were high on environmental concern but low on direct experience. Whereas only 2 of 12 subjects refused to sign in the belief-nonrelevant condition, 7 of 8 refused to sign in the belief-relevant condition ($p = .003$).

Discussion

This investigation examined attitude-behavior consistency in a context where the behavioral implications of subjects' global attitudes directly contradicted the behavioral implications of their prior personal experience in the pertinent behavioral domain. Specifically, the results showed that belief relevance or cognitive accessibility was effective in substantially increasing the consistency between global environmental attitudes and petition-signing behavior but *only* for those subjects who had relatively little personal experience with the consequences of the on-campus parking shortage. For subjects with relatively extensive personal experience, the belief-relevance manipulation, as expected, did not increase attitude-behavior consistency.

The results of this research, therefore, provide strong support for the proposition that the degree to which global attitudes and their behavioral implications are cognitively accessible may be a key determinant of attitude-behavior consistency. In fact, the results of the present study provide perhaps the most compelling evidence for this proposition to date. In contrast to previous studies that have also examined belief relevance (e.g., Pryor et al., 1977; Snyder & Swann, 1976), subjects in our research were never explicitly instructed by the experimenter to think through the implications of their attitudes for the impending behavioral choice. Neither, for that matter, did the experimen-

Table 2

Frequency of Petition-Signing as a Function of Direct Experience and Environmental Concern

Behavior	Experimental condition	
	Belief nonrelevant	Belief relevant
High direct experience/Low environmental concern		
Refused to sign	0	3
Signed 1 or 2 petitions	7	5
High direct experience/High environmental concern		
Refused to sign	0	3
Signed 1 or 2 petitions	5	4
Low direct experience/High environmental concern		
Refused to sign	2	7
Signed 1 or 2 petitions	10	1
Low direct experience/Low environmental concern		
Refused to sign	0	2
Signed 1 or 2 petitions	12	7

Note. The median score of the sample was 30.00. Scores less than or equal to 30 were classified as low; scores of 31 and above were classified as high. For subjects high on direct experience but low on environmental concern, Fisher's exact $p = .12$. For subjects high on direct experience and high on environmental concern, Fisher's exact $p = .16$. For subjects low on direct experience but high on environmental concern, Fisher's exact $p = .003$. For subjects low on direct experience and low on environmental concern, Fisher's exact $p = .17$.

tal procedure include a specific period of time just prior to the behavioral choice situation in which subjects were free from other task demands and left to contemplate their own attitudes. Instead, subjects in the present study merely listened (in the context of what they believed was an entirely separate experiment) to a previously recorded conversation in which one discussant pointed out to his partner the relevance of a proenvironmental attitude for the on-campus parking issue. In further contrast to other studies of belief relevance, the present study also entailed a 24-hour delay between subjects' exposure to this rather unobtrusive manipulation and the experimental session in which the behavioral measures were obtained. Nev-

ertheless, as predicted, an impressive increase in attitude-behavior consistency attributable to the belief relevance manipulation was clearly demonstrated for those subjects who were low in personal experience.

More importantly, however, the results of the present research strongly suggest that the effects of increasing the cognitive accessibility of global attitudes and their behavioral implications depend in a crucial way on the type and extent of individuals' prior personal experience in the particular behavioral domain under consideration. Whereas the belief-relevance manipulation was impressively effective in increasing attitude-behavior consistency for those subjects who were relatively low in personal experience with the on-campus parking shortage, it was remarkably ineffective for subjects who were high in personal experience. Apparently, then, making individuals well aware of the behavioral implications of their global attitudes will not necessarily increase the consistency between global attitudes and actual behavior if their prior personal experience in the pertinent behavioral domain predisposes them to engage in actions that are inconsistent with their attitudes. Interestingly, such a conclusion seems entirely in line with the implications of recent work by Bentler and Speckart (1979) who demonstrated, using structural equation models, that measures of previous behavior contribute significantly to the prediction of a variety of socially important actions independently of the influence of prior behavior on attitudes, intentions, or subjective norms.

But why were the effects of the belief-relevance manipulation in this research so strikingly dependent on the extent of prior personal experience with the parking shortage? The answer to this question may lie in the extent to which subjects viewed important personal outcomes as potentially being affected by their choice of whether to sign the petitions advocating increased on-campus parking. It seems reasonable to assume that subjects who had little personal experience with the hassles and inconvenience associated with the on-campus parking shortage probably anticipated that a decision to build additional parking facilities would not

benefit them in personally important ways. To the extent that they perceived the implications of their global environmental attitudes for their position on the parking issue, these individuals should have experienced relatively little conflict between their personal interests vis-à-vis the parking situation and the implications of their global proenvironmental attitudes. Thus, when faced with the choice to sign or not to sign the petitions, individuals who were low in prior personal experience were likely to follow the dictates of their global environmental attitudes to the extent that they were made aware of the behavioral implications of their environmental beliefs.

By contrast, those individuals who were high in prior personal experience probably anticipated that the success or failure of efforts to persuade the university administration to build additional parking facilities would have relatively important implications for their own personal outcomes in the future. For these individuals, acting in the service of their strong personal interests necessarily conflicted with acting in accordance with the implications of their proenvironmental beliefs. Thus, for individuals high in prior personal experience, making the behavioral implications of their environmental beliefs more cognitively accessible probably made them more aware of the conflict between their personal interests and their environmental beliefs. However, this awareness did not guarantee that they would resolve their behavioral dilemma in favor of their environmental beliefs.

One clear implication of this analysis is that those individuals who stand to benefit the most from engaging in behaviors that are *congruent* with their attitudes should be most likely to demonstrate substantial attitude-behavior consistency. This was precisely what Sivacek and Crano (Note 1) recently found in a study of vested interest as a moderator of attitude-behavior consistency. Respondents who perceived that they would be most directly and personally affected by the consequences of an impending legislative referendum were most likely to act in accordance with their attitudes.

Although the foregoing analysis is speculative, the results of the present investiga-

tion make one point very clearly. When examining the effects of increased cognitive accessibility of global attitudes on attitude-behavior consistency, social psychologists should take into consideration the nature and extent of respondent's prior personal experience in the behavioral domain under consideration.

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