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SPECIAL SESSION SUMMARY

PREDICTING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR BY IMPLICIT ATTITUDES

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It is a widely held assumption that attitudes towards products exert a strong influence on consumer behavior. When someone has a favorable attitude toward a particular product, he or she is assumed to be more likely to buy this product. Recent theoretical developments in social psychology make a distinction between automatic or implicit attitudes on the one hand and explicit attitudes on the other (Fazio, 1990; Wilson, Lindsey, & Schooler, 2000). While the study of explicit attitudes has a long tradition in social psychology, research on implicit attitudes is a rather novel issue that was triggered by cognitive psychologists' recent debate about unconscious memories and developments in the measurement of automatic evaluations (Banaji, 2001). For example, three years ago Greenwald, McGhee, and Schwartz (1998) presented the Implicit Association Test (IAT), a new method to measure implicit attitudes of two target concepts by comparing response times in two combined discrimination tasks (for an overview see Plessner & Banse, 2001).

What are the conditions for implicit and explicit attitudes to guide behavior? In his MODE model, Fazio distinguishes two types of attitude-to-behavior processes: spontaneous processing and deliberative processing (Fazio & Towles-Schen, 1999). The former processing is automatic, fast, and does not require cognitive effort. Behavior is simply caused by accessible and thereby automatically activated attitudes relevant to the behavior. Deliberative processing is controlled, slow, and effortful. It involves consideration of the specific attributes of the attitude object and of the potential consequences of engaging in a particular behavior, which presumes motivation to engage in the deliberative processing. According to this view, implicit attitudes should guide spontaneous behavior, whereas explicit attitudes are the bases for intentional actions (similar assumptions are made by the dual attitude model by Wilson, Lindsey, & Schooler, 2000).

Given that most purchases of non-durable goods do not involve long effortful considerations which brand to chose, these purchase decisions should be predicted better by implicit attitudes than by the conventional explicitly measured attitudes. Of course, measuring and predicting behavior by implicit measurements is mainly interesting if explicit and implicit attitudes diverge (otherwise we could be happy with explicit measurements alone). However, there are good reasons to believe that explicit and implicit attitudes often do not match (cf. Wilson et al., 2000). For example, even if participants do not pay direct attention to advertisements, these non-attended advertisements have been proven as effective tools for explicit attitude formation without participants being aware of the effect (e.g., Janiszewski, 1988; Shapiro, 1999; Shapiro, MacInnis, & Heckler, 1997). However, in all of these studies this so-called preconscious attitude formation was measured by conventional explicit measurements. It is easily conceivable that this preconscious attitude effect will be stronger on implicit attitudes.

An important advantage of implicit measurements is that because participants cannot control their response latencies, implicit measurements are free from response biases like social desirability and the like. If people differ in their likelihood of exhibiting response biases, explicit measurements are distorted by these response biases. In contrast, implicit measurements would allow us to measure the true underlying attitudes responsible for spontaneous purchases.

This session aims to present research projects that investigate the usefulness of these recent methodical and theoretical advances in attitude research for the study of central consumer psychology topics like, for example, predicting consumer behavior and advertisement effectiveness. The first two papers present ample evidence that implicit attitudes as assessed with variants of the IAT have a strong relation with brand choice. While the first paper explores the general relationship between implicit attitudes and consumer behavior, the second paper investigates dissociations between implicit and explicit attitudes towards food products (e.g., resulting from non-attended advertisements as described above) and the specific circumstances under which implicit attitudes guide behavior. The third paper provides a methodological enrichment of the studies presented so far. It introduces a so called deliberative implicit attitude measure that has been developed from a theoretical analysis of implicit and explicit attitude measures. This measure has been found to predict spontaneous as well as deliberative behaviors and its usefulness for applications in the consumer context will be discussed. The fourth paper extends the distinction between implicit and explicit attitudes to classical research on persuasion outcomes, which shed a new light on the effects of advertisements.

Given the currently exploding interest in implicit attitudes and their measurement, it is essential that the pros and cons of the application of this concept to consumer research are discussed on the basis of sound empirical data. Together, the four papers provide significant new theoretical and practical insights about the contribution of the concept of implicit attitudes to the understanding of consumer behavior. This session should be of interest to a wide segment of conference participants, including researchers who are more generally interested in the prediction of consumer behavior, in addition to those interested in the attitude-behavior relationship and advertising effects.

"CONSUMER PERSUASION AS A FUNCTION OF EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT SELF-BELIEFS"

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Research has shown that individuals may frequently have implicit attitudes and beliefs that can contradict those that are explicitly held and endorsed. This paper focuses on the domain of implicit and explicit self-beliefs and shows how these self-beliefs can exert independent and interdependent impact on persuasion outcomes. More specifically, two experiments indicate how implicit and explicit self-schemata can influence cognitive elaboration and attitudes and show that the operation of implicit and explicit self-schemata can depend on properties of the persuasion environment. It was hypothesized that under low elaboration conditions, both implicit and explicit self-schemata would serve as independent cues to determine favorability toward the target object. Under moderate elaboration conditions, however, more complex interactive effects were predicted to obtain. Specifically, individuals with inconsistent implicit and explicit self-views, or those experiencing implicit/explicit ambivalence, were predicted to engage in greater elaboration of related information in order to reduce the tension between the implicit and explicit self-views.

Experiment 1 provided a test of the low elaboration condition hypothesis and used two self-concept variables: Need for Cognition (Petty & Cacioppo, 1982) and Locomotion and Assessment (Kruglanski, Thompson, Higgins, Atash, Pierro, Shah, & Spiegel, 2000). Need for Cognition corresponds to an individual's propensity to enjoy and engage in effortful cognitive activities, and Locomotion and Assessment correspond to the extent one considers oneself to be a

"planner" or a "doer." Each of these constructs was measured using both explicit self-report scales and the Implicit Association Test (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998).

Participants viewed a series of novel products and services. For each product or service, participants saw the brand name and the attributes that were associated with the product or service's "brand personality" (Aaker, 1997). Embedded among the stimuli were two target brands. One brand, described as "intelligent, technical, and corporate" was predicted to appeal to high Need for Cognition individuals, because these individuals value thinking and prefer complex stimuli. A second brand, described as "glamorous, upper-class, and good looking" was predicted to appeal to high assessment individuals, because these individuals often evaluate others on the basis of features like social status, clothing, and looks (Kruglanski, et al., 2000).

Each of the brands and associated brand adjectives was presented to participants for a short duration (i.e., 6 seconds). Participants were required to rate their favorability towards the brand during the exposure window. When entered into a simultaneous regression to predict attitudes toward the target brands, both explicit and implicit self-schemata predicted preferences for the brands independently. That is, individuals high in implicit ($\beta=.37$) and explicit ($\beta=.29$) Need for Cognition rated the "thinking" brand more favorably than those low in explicit and implicit Need for Cognition. Similarly, individuals high in implicit ($\beta=.36$) and explicit ($\beta=.36$) Assessment rated the "status" brand more favorably than those low in explicit and implicit Assessment.

Experiment 2 examined the role of implicit and explicit self-schemata under more deliberative conditions. Previous work has indicated that explicit ambivalence, or the simultaneous endorsement of both positive and negative attitudinal elements, can increase message elaboration (e.g., Maio, Bell, & Esses, 1996). In the Experiment 2, we extended the notion of ambivalence to cases in which the explicit and the implicit constructs are not consonant. In this framework, people are said to hold ambivalent attitudes when their explicit attitudes are discrepant from their implicit attitudes. Our hypothesis was that conflicting explicit and implicit attitudes may cause ambivalent people to be more motivated to elaborate ads that are presumed to contain information relevant to such incompatibility.

Participants first completed an IAT task assessing their implicit Need to Evaluate (NE). NE corresponds to individuals' tendency to engage in evaluative responding and form extreme attitudes (Jarvis & Petty, 1996). After the IAT task, participants were told that they would also be participating in another study assessing their attitudes toward a public topic. In order to create an evaluative frame, all participants were explicitly told that the goal of this second study was to measure their evaluations of a current commercial campaign. Participants received an advertisement in favor of eating vegetables that contained either strong or weak arguments. Then, participants indicated the thoughts that they had had while reading the message. After the thought-listing procedure, participants reported their attitudes toward eating vegetables. Finally, participants completed the NE Scale.

Responses to the explicit and implicit NE measurements were standardized. Ambivalence was computed as the absolute difference between the standardized implicit and explicit scores. This ambivalence score was entered with the argument quality term and the interaction term to predict attitudes and thought positivity. The analysis on the attitudes composite revealed two effects. There was a significant main effect of argument quality ($\beta=.19$) that was qualified by a significant interaction between ambivalence and argument quality ($\beta=.20$) such that highly ambivalent individuals also distinguished more between strong and weak arguments than did individuals low in ambivalence. Analyses on the thought index revealed a main effect of argument quality ($\beta=.51$) and a significant argument quality by ambivalence interaction ($\beta=.21$). The thoughts of individuals high in implicit/explicit ambivalence corresponded more to the quality of the arguments in the message than did those for low ambivalence individuals.

Taken together, these two studies indicate multiple roles for implicit and explicit constructs. Under low elaboration conditions, each may act as a cue, but when elaboration likelihood is moderate, implicit and explicit constructs can interact with each other to produce differences in cognitive elaboration. This research additionally calls for the need for further research examining how implicit and explicit constructs can interact with the environment and each other to determine judgment and behavior outcomes.

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