

THE EFFECTS OF NON-NORMATIVE
BEHAVIOR ON ATTRIBUTION AND
IMPRESSION FORMATION PROCESSES

by

Lawrence B. Nadler
B.A., Michigan State University, 1976

Submitted to the Department of
Speech and Drama and the Faculty
of the Graduate School of the
University of Kansas in partial
fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts.

Redacted Signature

Professor in Charge

Redacted Signature

Redacted Signature

For the Department

December, 1978

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
TABLE OF CONTENTS	i
LIST OF TABLES	ii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PROBLEM	1
II. PROCEDURES	10
III. RESULTS	20
IV. DISCUSSION	35
REFERENCES	47
APPENDIX A. Interview Segments	50
APPENDIX B Experimental Test Booklet	59

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Internal Attribution	21
2. External Attribution	23
3. Logical-Illogical	24
4. Intelligent-Unintelligent	26
5. Aggressive-Unaggressive	27
6. Reliable-Unreliable	28
7. Openminded-Closedminded	29
8. Expert-Ignorant	30
9. Gullible-Not Gullible	31
10. Responsible-Irresponsible	32

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The cognitive processes which people employ in forming impressions are complex. Many theoretical attempts have been made to explain the manner in which people selectively attend to and interpret the behavior of other individuals. An interesting and insightful approach to this issue, which is the focus of this study, was generated by Fritz Heider (1944). According to Heider, man perceives all behavior as being caused. Further, he posited that the causal locus could reside in either the perceived individual or some aspect of the actor's overall environment. Warr and Knapper (1968) elaborated on this conceptualization in discussing the process of interpersonal perception. The authors asserted that "attribution consists of ordering inputs along dimensions or of placing them into categories (Warr & Knapper, 1968, p. 38). Here, the perceived behavior derived its meaning for an observer from the category into which it was placed and from the way this category was distinguished from other classes within the individual's construct system. Clearly the categories employed to classify behavior, whether entailing internal or external attributions, influenced the nature of the impression subsequently formed by an observer. When an internal attribution was made (i.e., the causal locus of a behavior was perceived in the actor), the observer was more likely to infer dispositional qualities of the actor than when an external

attribution was formed (i.e., the causal locus of a behavior was perceived in some situational factor).

Social Desirability

In attempting to extend Heider's (1944) theoretical formulation to life-experiences, Jones and Davis (1965) discussed the notion of "social desirability". The authors, in referring to how normal or attractive the effects of an individual's behavior are, observed that perceivers tacitly assume that actors intended desirable effects from their behavior. Furthermore, Jones and Davis (1965) contended that socially desirable actions, as normatively expected behaviors, provided minimal dispositional information about actors. They asserted that when a person performed a socially desirable, anticipated act, little evidence was provided about him except that he was similar to most members of the culture. Additionally, Jones and David (1965) postulated the following relationship between socially desirable behavior and inferential processes: as the effects of behavior departed more markedly from what the average person would do or norms said he should do, we could infer more about him. In other words, as an individual's behavior, with its ensuing effects, deviated further from the typical standard relevant to that behavior, people were more likely to perceive the individual as a causal agent and to make internal attributions to that person in the form of dispositional qualities. Here, it was presumed that people behaved in a manner likely to yield desirable outcomes in terms of personal need satisfaction. This

assumption was originally made by Tolman (1932), who argued that people learned to perform behaviors which they believed would lead to positively valenced outcomes. Edwards (1954) generated an expectancy-value model, predicated upon Tolman's (1932) writings, and suggested that people, when confronted with a behavioral-choice situation, would select the alternative with the highest subjective expected utility. Further, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) proposed that behavioral intentions, comprised of attitude toward behavior (the subjective probability that a particular action will yield a specific outcome multiplied by the individual's evaluation of the outcome) and the subjective norm (a normative component consisting of an assessment of relevant others' viewpoints and pressure to conform), were considered and that the most positively valued alternative would produce the corresponding behavior.

Social Norms

Sherif's (1936) work on social norms offered further insight regarding the relationship of social desirability to attribution and impression formation processes. Sherif (1936) suggested that the need for social stability necessitated anchoring the self within a framework of definite and enduring interpersonal relationships. To fulfill this need, the individual internalized social values, which served as reference points within the judgment process, and behaved accordingly to maintain his position as an acceptable member of society. In this fashion, social norms were

instilled within the person and exerted strong pressure to conform to appropriate behavioral standards. Hence, when an individual behaved "normatively", little personal information was provided to observers who shared the salient, underlying social values. However, behavior which departed from socially established and enforced norms may have indicated an idiosyncratic set of values and/or a willingness to accept the risk of engaging in non-normative activity. As previously noted, perceivers (provided they assumed that an actor intended to produce the observed behavior) seemed more inclined to attribute this type of behavior to various aspects of the actor's personality.

Literature Review of Social Desirability

The research literature pertinent to Jones and Davis' (1965) conceptualization of social desirability is rather limited. The first study to address this issue was performed by Jones, Davis, and Gergen (1961). In focusing upon social roles and the corresponding behavioral expectations, the researchers indicated that "behavior appropriate to role expectations has little informational value" (Jones et al., 1961, p. 302) regarding the dispositional qualities of an actor. Further, they proposed that when behavior departs from normative expectations, the cause for the departure would be perceived in the person. To test their hypothesis, Jones et al. (1961) designed an experiment in which subjects were asked to listen to a recorded interview of a

stimulus person being instructed, in two treatment conditions, to respond (in a future interview) as if he desired to be accepted in the submariner service (other-directed orientation), and in two other conditions, as if he wanted to qualify as a space astronaut (inner-directed outlook). As the experiment proceeded, subjects heard the "actual" job interview. In half of the experimental conditions, the stimulus person responded in accord with the qualifications described, while in the other half of the treatment conditions, the stimulus person acted out-of-role. Attributions concerning the stimulus person were then measured within the 2 X 2 analysis of variance design and the results supported the experimenters' hypothesis. Jones et al. (1961) concluded that out-of-role behavior produced more internal attributions than normative actions, with greater confidence on the part of perceivers.

Another study which pertained to non-normative behavior was performed by Jones and Harris (1967). In exploring social desirability and perceived decision freedom, they reasoned that a subject would be most likely to make internal, correspondent attributions to a person who states an unpopular position by choice. The experimenters manipulated popularity of position advocated (pro-Castro or anti-Castro) and decision freedom (self-chosen or instructor-imposed) within a 2 X 2 design. The results generally supported their predictions and the researchers concluded that "correspondence in attributing underlying attitudes to account for expressed opinions is high when the opinions are unexpected and ex-

pressed in a context of free choice" (Jones & Harris, 1967, p 23).

The last reported study concerning non-normative behavior was conducted by Trope and Burnstein (1973). Using a taped job interview format similar to the Jones et al. (1961) study, the experimenters exposed subjects to two applicants for a teaching job in a Detroit Jewish Sunday School. One applicant espoused a pro-Israeli position (socially desirable behavior), while the other interviewee expressed an anti-Israeli standpoint (socially undesirable behavior). Trope and Burnstein (1973) measured subjects' estimates of the applicants' true positions and discovered that subjects attributed a greater likelihood of sincerity to the interviewee who expressed the non-normative, anti-Israeli viewpoint.

Statement of the Problem

The paucity of experimental studies relevant to the Jones and Davis (1965) framework indicated that much research was needed concerning the effects of socially desirable and undesirable behavior on attribution and impression formation processes. A number of other variables related to non-normative behavior must be incorporated to expand the generalizability and utility of the major proposition. For instance, the first two experiments involved out-of-role behavior which clearly contradicted prior instructions and pertained specifically to the role. In the Jones et al. (1961) study, subjects heard the stimulus person being taught the appropriate role behaviors, while in the Jones and Harris (1967) experi-

ment, subjects were informed whether the stimulus person had been directed to adopt a certain position or had done so by choice. Hence, in both experiments, subjects were informed of the behavioral role expectations and then witnessed the stimulus person acting either in accordance with or against the role prescriptions. Although the Trope and Burnstein (1973) study did not entail exposure of subjects to prospective applicants receiving information concerning appropriate role behaviors, the experimental setting was so glaringly clear that it does not appear to have permitted alternative interpretations of interviewees' behavior. As interpersonal exchange and its interpretation are rarely as simple and frequently involve high stimulus ambiguity (Sherif, 1965), the results cannot be effectively extended to a large portion of human interaction. The present experimental endeavor attempts to explore the attributions and inferences made in a context where subjects are not apprised of the appropriate role behaviors of stimulus persons prior to observation of their actions. Also, the experimental paradigm allows for greater stimulus ambiguity, thus more closely representing interpersonal experience.

Another factor not explored by prior studies on non-normative behavior involves the evaluative nature of inferences formed upon observation of socially desirable or undesirable behavior. Kanouse and Hanson (1972) argued that the world is seen as positive, with deviations (non-normative actions) viewed in a negative direction when effects are not

socially desirable. Further, Jones and Davis (1972) suggested that the perception of negative traits would produce more internal attributions and would be weighted more heavily in the overall impression of the person. The current experiment attempts to assess the evaluative nature of inferences made in response to viewing normative and non-normative actions.

Finally, most studies of attribution theory, in requiring subjects to apportion variance regarding internal and external attributions, seemed to involve the assumption that each subject perceived and assimilated the same amount of behavior exhibited by a stimulus person. Subjects were requested to distribute causal estimates into the two attributional classes to total one hundred percent. As a result, this experimenter-imposed classification system failed to yield a truly quantitative measure of attribution. To my knowledge, no research has been conducted to determine the relationship between the amount of behavior to be causally explained and the overall extent of internal and external attributions. For this reason the amount of behavior displayed by the stimulus person is experimentally manipulated in the present study.

Theoretical Predictions

In accordance with prior research on the effects of social desirability certain predictions can be advanced. First, it is expected that observers of socially undesirable behavior will make more internal attributions than perceivers

of socially acceptable behavior. Second, the exhibition of non-normative behavior, with corresponding socially undesirable effects, should produce more negative inferences about an actor than the display of socially acceptable actions. Finally, as the amount of behavior which requires causal explanation increases, the overall quantity of attribution formulated should increase linearly.

In the next chapter, the methodology for the experiment will be described. Special consideration will be given to the relationship between the theoretical predictions and measurement procedures. Then, the appropriate statistical tests will be performed and the results will be presented. Discussion of these results will follow, and conclusions concerning the experimental hypotheses will be drawn.

Chapter II

PROCEDURES

This section focuses upon the basic procedures and measurement operations employed during data collection and analysis. A 2 X 2 X 4 nested design with unequal cell sizes was utilized in manipulating three between-group variables: topic familiarity (familiar or unfamiliar), degree of attitude change (simple persuasion or total conversion), and specific topic (two different content areas for each combination of the first two factors).

In analyzing the relationship of these variables to attribution and impression formation processes, an attitude change (as behavior) situation was employed. Specifically, a stimulus person exhibited attitude change under various conditions. The first independent variable, topic familiarity, referred to the extent to which an individual was acquainted with a topic and was likely to have formed an opinion similar to the majority of people. This variable was operationalized through two levels; familiar topics, involving content areas familiar to most or all individuals and upon which people had formed a socially acceptable, reference group-endorsed opinion, and unfamiliar topics, encompassing content areas that most people were unlikely to be familiar with or to have formed a solid opinion about. The second independent variable was amount of attitude change displayed. In half of the treatment conditions, the stimulus

person stated that he was persuaded from a negative position to a positive position or vice versa (conversion), while in the other experimental conditions the stimulus person revealed that he was persuaded from a neutral position to either a positive or negative viewpoint or vice versa (persuasion) The last independent variable was topic, with two different message topics employed in both the familiar and unfamiliar topic conditions

Theoretical Rationale and Hypotheses

The theoretical predictions stemmed from the following reasoning. In the familiar topic conditions, where the stimulus person related being persuaded from a popular, consensual position to an uncommon, less desirable standpoint (either a neutral point or the opposite position), it was expected that subjects, as observers, would be more likely to make internal attributions than in the unfamiliar topic conditions, where the stimulus person was persuaded from either an unsupported position at one extreme or a zero point (no opinion) to the opposite viewpoint. Leslie Ann McArthur (1972) provided support for this prediction by stating that "person attribution will be more frequent when there is low consensus...than when there is high consensus" (p. 172) on the issue. In other words, when a person held a position shared by most other people, less dispositional information was obtained about him than when the individual maintained a viewpoint dissimilar to the majority of people. In applying this conceptualization to a persuasion framework, support for the theoretical

position was garnered from a slight modification of McCroskey's writings. In summarizing experimental studies concerning the use of evidence, McCroskey (1972) noted that the extent of prior familiarity with evidence on a topic was a significant determinant of attitude change. Specifically, for no prior familiarization with the topic, evidence, which was obviously new, increased attitude change; this was the normative result. For familiar topics, with corresponding awareness of evidence, attitude change was not an expected result. Cultural norms for persuasion and attitude change, then, were partially provided by McCroskey's research. Knowing an individual was persuaded by a message on a topic he knew little about was unlikely to provide much information about the individual's personality. On the other hand, knowing a person was persuaded by a message on a topic he was familiar with and previously held a popular, reference group-congruent opinion about was likely to yield more information concerning the individual's personality and underlying character. Hence, the first experimental hypothesis was advanced:

H11 When an individual is persuaded on a familiar topic, observers will make greater internal attributions to the person than when the individual is persuaded on an unfamiliar topic.

Secondly, in terms of the theoretical paradigm, it was expected that subjects in the familiar topic conditions, who observed a stimulus person's behavior, would formulate more negative inferences regarding the actor than subjects in the unfamiliar topic conditions. To determine the validity of

this presumption, the following hypothesis was tested:

- H12 The presence of non-normative behavior, with corresponding socially undesirable effects, will produce more negative inferences about an actor than the absence of such information about the individual.

Finally, it was expected that in the conversion conditions, greater amounts of internal and external attributions would be made by subjects than in the persuasion conditions. The third hypothesis was thus advanced;

- H13: As the amount of behavior that requires causal explanation increases from simple persuasion to total conversion, the overall amount of attribution, both internal and external, will increase.

In all cases, a probability level of .05 was utilized in drawing conclusions involving support for or opposition to the experimental hypotheses.

Sample

The sample consisted of 202 undergraduate students enrolled in Basic Communication Program courses at the University of Kansas during the Fall, 1977 semester. Subjects, who were randomly assigned to one of the eight experimental conditions, were run in groups comprised of four to eight people. Although cell sizes varied from 21 to 28 students, random assignment procedures supported the contention that no relevant systematic differences in subjects existed prior to their participation in the study.

Method

Upon entering the laboratory, all subjects were provided

with the following information:

Hello. This is a speech communication experiment. We are studying the possible utility of a new interview assessment technique which consists of having several raters listen to a small segment of an employment interview. First I would like you to listen to your particular segment of an actual job interview. The person being interviewed is named John. Then, I would like you to fill out a questionnaire which asks for your impressions and perceptions of what occurred in the segment you heard. Are there any questions? No? Okay, I am now going to play the tape.

The deception of subjects was deemed necessary to help ensure their involvement by increasing the perceived importance and to prevent them from discerning the study's true purposes and possibly confounding the results. The independent variable manipulations were performed in the following manner each subject was presented with a 45-second portion of the interview, in which John responded to three questions posed by the interviewer concerning present interests and past employment. The initial question, which required John to relate something he had done or thought about recently, was the focal one. Here, John related an experience in which he read an article in his local newspaper and was persuaded to adopt the position advocated in the article. In half of the treatment conditions, John disclosed that he changed his opinion regarding one of the two familiar topics and in the other experimental conditions he revealed that he altered his opinion on one of two unfamiliar topics. Further, topic familiarity was orthogonally crossed with degree of attitude change, such that in half the treatment conditions John exhibited simple persuasion (from a neutral point to a polar

extreme or vice versa) and in the remainder of the experimental conditions he displayed total conversion (from one endpoint on an opinion continuum to the other endpoint). All other relevant variables, such as wording, responses to other questions, and vocal inflection, were held constant.

The content areas were successfully pretested in two sections of Fundamentals of Interpersonal Communication (a Basic Program Course) one semester prior to conducting the actual experiment. Daily toothbrushing habits and college tuition costs were identified as familiar topics, and medical malpractice insurance rates and the harvesting of trees in national forests were identified as unfamiliar topics. The eight interview segments are presented in Appendix A.

Subjects were next asked to respond to a four-page questionnaire which assessed their perceptions of the interviewee and the overall interview situation.

Attribution Measures

First, subjects were required to answer two questions measuring their perceptions of John's qualifications and two items tapping their interpretation of his response to the newspaper article described. These questions were intermingled, with the items concerning John's response to the newspaper article serving as measures of internal and external attributions that would account for John's confessed attitude change. The other two questions were merely intended to prevent subjects from discerning the true focus of the study. The question tapping enduring personality traits, or internal

attribution, was not specifically connected to the topic of the newspaper article. Rather, the item was phrased more generally, asking how strong a communication discrepant from John's position would need to be to alter John's viewpoint on an issue. Hence, a measure of John's susceptibility to persuasive messages was obtained. The question tapping external attribution required subjects to rate the impact of the salient environmental factor, the specific newspaper article, on John. In both instances, a weak-strong scale was employed, with weak signifying a high level of internal and a low degree of external attribution. These items were treated as independent measures, permitting variation in both cases.

Written Impressions

After completing these items, subjects were asked to write a paragraph describing their perceptions of the interviewee and the interview situation. Although these results were not formally included in statistical analyses because of the anticipation of considerable response diversity and the absence of a satisfactory scoring system, the responses served two important functions. First, requesting a paragraph description of the interview situation was consistent with the cover story provided at the outset of the experiment and increased subjects' involvement as they assumed a more active role of assessment. Second, requiring subjects to verbalize their impressions of John and the interview segment necessitated that they formulate their own interpreta-

tions of the interview situation. For this reason, the open-ended paragraph preceded the third set of measures, which consisted of eighteen semantic differential scales. These scales assessed subjects' inferences of the interviewee's personality in an attempt to ascertain the effects that normative and non-normative behavior had on perceptions formed by observers.

The Semantic Differential

In discussing the semantic differential, Triandis noted that "there is a great advantage in having a most general instrument applicable to any kind of concept" (Triandis, 1971, p. 49). Similarly, Carlsmith, Ellsworth, and Aronson argued that "because it is so vague and open-ended, the semantic differential may be a better measure of general affective states than is a questionnaire with more specific items" (Carlsmith, Ellsworth, and Aronson, 1976, p. 188). From a statistical perspective, Osgood proposed that the semantic differential yields interval data, with the distance between each point on the scale representing "nearly equal psychological units in the process of judgment" (Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum, 1957, p. 327)

The present study utilized the interviewee, John, as the focal concept against which inferential responses were measured. The scales included specific personality traits (persuasibility, gullibility, openmindedness) which could account for John's confessed attitude change, as well as characteristics which reflected a general evaluative dimen-

sion in determining the effects which non-normative behavior had on people's inferences. These traits elicited significant variation in pretesting and reflected the types of inferences which subjects could reasonably formulate after brief exposure to the interviewee. The scales were alternated along a general evaluative dimension to avoid response set bias and were treated individually to reflect the research purpose of studying the nature of specific inferences. Again, it was expected that significant differences would be obtained between familiar topic and unfamiliar topic conditions, such that significantly more negative inferences would be formed and reported in the familiar topic conditions, where non-normative behavior was displayed.

Manipulation Checks

The final page of the questionnaire contained various items concerning the efficacy of the experimental procedures. To determine the success of the topic and topic familiarity manipulations, subjects were asked to identify the specific newspaper topic and assess the topic along a familiar-unfamiliar continuum. To assess the effectiveness of the degree of attitude change manipulation, subjects were asked the extent to which John's attitude was changed on the newspaper topic. Finally, subjects responded to items concerning the clarity and length of the taped interview segment. The entire questionnaire is presented in Appendix B.

Data Analysis

Statistical tests involved performing an analysis of variance for nested designs with unequal cell sizes. Differences were assessed between groups on the independent variables (topic, topic familiarity, and degree of attitude change) via the BMDP2V computer program (Health Sciences Computing Facility, UCLA, 1975).

Chapter III

RESULTS

The results of the study are presented in this chapter. An analysis of variance for nested designs with unequal cell sizes was performed and differences between groups are reported in a manner consistent with the experimental hypotheses. The dependent measures of primary concern are internal-external attributions and the evaluative inferences formed upon observing the stimulus person's actions. General trends from the written impressions of the stimulus person and manipulation checks are also reported.

Internal Attribution

It was hypothesized that a significantly greater amount of internal attribution would occur in the familiar topic conditions, where non-normative, socially undesirable behavior was exhibited, than in the unfamiliar topic conditions, in which the stimulus person changed his reported attitude. The analysis of variance (Table I) revealed a main effect ($p < .005$) for topic familiarity, with subjects in the familiar topic conditions making significantly greater amounts of internal attribution to explain the interviewee's confessed attitude change. Further, the absence of an interaction between topic familiarity and degree of attitude change indicated that the effect of topic familiarity on internal attribution was not restricted to either the simple persuasion

TABLE I
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
INTERNAL ATTRIBUTION

Source	SS	DF	MS	F	
Mean	4602.185	1	4602.185	1920.665	
Topic Familiarity (Tf)	20.224	1	20.224	8.440	p < .005
Topic (T)	35.850	2	17.925	7.481	p < .001
Attitude Change (Ac)	20.015	1	20.015	8.353	p < .005
Tf X Ac	1.924	1	1.924	0.803	
T X Ac (Tf)	1.515	2	0.758	0.316	
Error	464.851	194	2.396		

CELL MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS

INTERNAL ATTRIBUTION

TOPIC	ATTITUDE CHANGE		
	PERSUASION	CONVERSION	
TOOTHBRUSHING	$\bar{X}=5.261$	$\bar{X}=5.870$	5.566
	S=1.010	S=1.180	
FAMILIAR			
TUITION	$\bar{X}=4.143$	$\bar{X}=5.192$	4.648
	S=1.820	S=1.167	
TOPIC FAMILIARITY			
TREES	$\bar{X}=4.714$	$\bar{X}=5.040$	4.868
	S=1.512	S=1.513	
UNFAMILIAR			
MALPRACTICE	$\bar{X}=3.810$	$\bar{X}=4.358$	4.123
	S=1.790	S=2.015	
	4.490	5.079	
LOW	1	7	HIGH

or total conversion conditions.

Degree of Attitude Change

It was expected, regardless of the social desirability of observed behavior, that subjects would make a significantly greater amount of internal and external attribution in the total conversion conditions than in the simple persuasion cells. The analysis of variance revealed main effects ($p < .005$ and $p < .05$) for internal (Table I) and external (Table II) attributions. Subjects formulated significantly more internal and external attributions in the conversion conditions, with the only exception occurring for external attribution on the topic of tuition costs. Hence, as the amount of attitude change requiring explanation increased, more causal attribution was employed by subjects.

Evaluative Inferences

It was anticipated that the observation of non-normative, socially undesirable behavior would produce more negative inferences by perceivers than the viewing of socially acceptable actions. Subjects responded to eighteen semantic differential scales measuring evaluative inferences of the stimulus person. Specifically, it was predicted that significant differences in evaluative inferences would occur between familiar and unfamiliar topic conditions. The analysis of variance revealed a main effect for topic familiarity on four of the eighteen variables. These variables were illogical (Table III), intelligent-unintelligent (Table IV),

TABLE II
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
EXTERNAL ATTRIBUTION

Source	SS	DF	MS	F
Mean	5726.442	1	5726.442	2670.997
Topic Familiarity (Tf)	2.866	1	2.866	1.337
Topic (T)	0.710	2	0.355	0.166
Attitude Change (Ac)	9.953	1	9.953	4.642
Tf X Ac	0.057	1	0.057	0.027
T X Ac (Tf)	11.182	2	5.591	2.608
Error	415.923	194	2.144	

p < .05

CELL MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS
EXTERNAL ATTRIBUTION

TOPIC	ATTITUDE CHANGE		
	PERSUASION	CONVERSION	
TOOTHBRUSHING	$\bar{X}=4.696$ S=1.639	$\bar{X}=5.609$ S=1.901	5.153
FAMILIAR			
TUITION	$\bar{X}=5.357$ S=1.129	$\bar{X}=5.269$ S=1.801	5.315
TOPIC FAMILIARITY			
TREES	$\bar{X}=5.036$ S=1.374	$\bar{X}=5.960$ S=1.136	5.472
UNFAMILIAR			
MALPRACTICE	$\bar{X}=5.429$ S=1.399	$\bar{X}=5.464$ S=1.232	5.449
	5.130	5.569	

LOW 1 _____ 7 HIGH

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

LOGICAL-ILLOGICAL

Source	SS	DF	MS	F	
Mean	3332.344	1	3332.344	1654.157	
Topic Familiarity (Tf)	16.282	1	16.282	8.082	$p < .005$
Topic (T)	11.235	2	5.617	2.788	
Attitude Change (Ac)	3.365	1	3.365	1.670	
Tf X Ac	10.660	1	10.660	5.291	$p < .05$
T X Ac (Tf)	11.255	2	5.628	2.794	
Error	390.818	194	2.015		

CELL MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS

LOGICAL-ILLOGICAL

TOPIC	ATTITUDE CHANGE			
	PERSUASION	CONVERSION		
TOOTHBRUSHING	$\bar{X}=4.087$	$\bar{X}=5.304$	4.696	
	S=1.240	S=1.608		
FAMILIAR	TUIITION	$\bar{X}=3.929$	$\bar{X}=4.154$	4.037
		S=1.086	S=1.434	
TOPIC FAMILIARITY	TREES	$\bar{X}=3.750$	$\bar{X}=4.000$	3.868
		S=1.378	S=1.384	
UNFAMILIAR	MALPRACTICE	$\bar{X}=4.048$	$\bar{X}=3.393$	3.674
		S=1.628	S=1.571	
		3.940	4.167	

LOGICAL 1 _____ 7 ILLOGICAL

aggressive-unaggressive (Table V) and reliable-unreliable (Table VI). In each instance, the stimulus person was perceived more negatively (illogical, unintelligent, unaggressive, and unreliable) in the familiar topic conditions, where socially undesirable behavior was displayed.

Two main effects were obtained for the degree of attitude change variable. For openminded-closedminded (Table VII), the stimulus person was perceived as more openminded in the conversion conditions than in the persuasion conditions. This relationship occurred for all topics except toothbrushing habits, with more displayed attitude change producing perceptions of greater openmindedness. Also, significant differences existed for expert-ignorant (Table VIII), with subjects in the conversion conditions perceiving the stimulus person as more ignorant than in the persuasion conditions. This relationship held for all topics except medical malpractice insurance rates, where an insignificant difference between conversion and persuasion was found in the reverse direction.

Five interactions between topic familiarity and degree of attitude change occurred out of the eighteen semantic differential scales. These variables were logical-illogical (Table III), reliable-unreliable (Table VI), openminded-closedminded (Table VII), gullible-not gullible (Table IX), and responsible-irresponsible (Table 10). Although these interactions were not anticipated, they are presented because they may aid in later interpretation and discussion of

TABLE IV
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
INTELLIGENT-UNINTELLIGENT

Source	SS	DF	MS	F	
Mean	3234.682	1	3234.682	1569.272	
Topic Familiarity (Tf)	24.421	1	24.421	11.848	p < .005
Topic (T)	28.228	2	14.114	6.847	p < .005
Attitude Change (Ac)	0.950	1	0.950	0.461	
Tf X Ac	4.245	1	4.245	2.059	
T X Ac (Tf)	0.814	2	0.407	0.198	
Error	399.885	194	2.061		

CELL MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS

INTELLIGENT-UNINTELLIGENT

TOPIC	ATTITUDE CHANGE			
	PERSUASION	CONVERSION		
TOOTHBRUSHING	$\bar{X}=4.565$	$\bar{X}=5.174$	4.862	
	S=1.619	S=1.497		
FAMILIAR	TUITION	$\bar{X}=3.750$	$\bar{X}=4.000$	3.870
		S=1.206	S=1.414	
TOPIC FAMILIARITY	TREES	$\bar{X}=3.929$	$\bar{X}=3.800$	3.868
		S=1.245	S=1.329	
UNFAMILIAR	MALPRACTICE	$\bar{X}=3.571$	$\bar{X}=3.393$	3.469
		S=1.535	S=1.641	
		3.947	4.049	

INTELLIGENT 1 _____ 7 UNINTELLIGENT

TABLE V
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
AGGRESSIVE-UNAGGRESSIVE

Source	SS	DF	MS	F	
Mean	3830.137	1	3830.137	1585.739	
Topic Familiarity (Tf)	33.231	1	33.231	13.758	p < .001
Topic (T)	19.998	2	9.999	4.140	p < .05
Attitude Change (Ac)	4.216	1	4.216	1.746	
Tf X Ac	3.911	1	3.911	1.619	
T X Ac (Tf)	3.799	2	1.900	0.786	
Error	468.581	194	2.415		

CELL MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS

AGGRESSIVE-UNAGGRESSIVE

TOPIC	ATTITUDE CHANGE		
	PERSUASION	CONVERSION	
TOOTHBRUSHING	$\bar{X}=5.000$	$\bar{X}=5.217$	5.087
	S=1.348	S=1.833	
FAMILIAR	TUIITION	$\bar{X}=4.000$	$\bar{X}=4.923$
		S=1.466	S=1.294
TOPIC FAMILIARITY	TREES	$\bar{X}=4.357$	$\bar{X}=4.200$
		S=1.638	S=1.354
UNFAMILIAR	MALPRACTICE	$\bar{X}=3.571$	$\bar{X}=3.750$
		S=1.535	S=1.838
		4.240	4.490
AGGRESSIVE	1		7 UNAGGRESSIVE

TABLE VI
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
RELIABLE-UNRELIABLE

Source	SS	DF	MS	F	
Mean	3063.206	1	3063.206	1538.955	
Topic Familiarity (Tf)	16.731	1	16.731	8.406	$p < .005$
Topic (T)	8.732	2	4.366	2.193	
Attitude Change (Ac)	0.023	1	0.023	0.012	
Tf X Ac	8.248	1	8.248	4.144	$p < .05$
T X Ac (Tf)	11.352	2	5.676	2.851	
Error	386.146	194	1.990		

CELL MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS

RELIABLE-UNRELIABLE

TOPIC	ATTITUDE CHANGE		
	PERSUASION	CONVERSION	
TOOTHBRUSHING	$\bar{X}=4.130$	$\bar{X}=4.870$	4.500
	S=1.546	S=1.687	
FAMILIAR			
TUITION	$\bar{X}=3.893$	$\bar{X}=3.923$	3.907
	S=1.315	S=1.262	
TOPIC FAMILIARITY			
TREES	$\bar{X}=3.536$	$\bar{X}=3.680$	3.604
	S=1.290	S=1.435	
UNFAMILIAR			
MALPRACTICE	$\bar{X}=4.143$	$\bar{X}=3.143$	3.572
	S=1.352	S=1.407	
	3.900	3.843	

RELIABLE 1 _____ 7 UNRELIABLE

TABLE VII
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
OPENMINDED-CLOSEDMINDED

Source	SS	DF	MS	F	
Mean	1988.098	1	1988.098	887.528	
Topic Familiarity (Tf)	0.157	1	0.157	0.070	
Topic (T)	13.431	2	6.715	2.998	
Attitude Change (Ac)	19.422	1	19.422	8.670	$p < .005$
Tf X Ac	11.624	1	11.624	5.189	$p < .05$
T X Ac (Tf)	9.823	2	4.912	2.193	
Error	434.568	194	2.240		

CELL MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS

OPENMINDED-CLOSEDMINDED

TOPIC	ATTITUDE CHANGE		
	PERSUASION	CONVERSION	
TOOTHBRUSHING	$\bar{X}=2.826$ S=1.466	$\bar{X}=3.261$ S=1.789	3.044
FAMILIAR			
TUITION	$\bar{X}=3.679$ S=1.416	$\bar{X}=2.962$ S=1.399	3.334
TOPIC FAMILIARITY			
TREES	$\bar{X}=3.214$ S=1.101	$\bar{X}=2.360$ S=1.350	2.811
UNFAMILIAR			
MALPRACTICE	$\bar{X}=4.143$ S=2.081	$\bar{X}=2.786$ S=1.371	3.368
	3.450	2.834	

OPENMINDED 1 _____ 7 CLOSEDMINDED

TABLE VIII
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
EXPERT-IGNORANT

Source	SS	DF	MS	F
Mean	3916.720	1	3916.720	2737.462
Topic Familiarity (Tf)	4.841	1	4.841	3.384
Topic (T)	11.841	2	5.921	4.138
Attitude Change (Ac)	6.417	1	6.417	4.485
Tf X Ac	2.715	1	2.715	1.898
T X Ac (Tf)	1.658	2	0.829	0.579
Error	277.572	194	1.431	

p < .05
p < .05

CELL MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS

EXPERT-IGNORANT

TOPIC	ATTITUDE CHANGE		
	PERSUASION	CONVERSION	
TOOTHBRUSHING (FAMILIAR	$\bar{X}=4.609$ S=1.340	$\bar{X}=5.217$ S=1.380	4.913
TUITION	$\bar{X}=3.964$ S=0.999	$\bar{X}=4.538$ S=1.140	4.240
TREES UNFAMILIAR	$\bar{X}=4.179$ S=0.863	$\bar{X}=4.560$ S=1.044	4.356
MALPRACTICE	$\bar{X}=4.238$ S=1.546	$\bar{X}=4.107$ S=1.257	4.163
	4.230	4.578	
EXPERT <u>1</u>			<u>7</u> IGNORANT

TABLE IX
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
GULLIBLE-NOT GULLIBLE

Source	SS	DF	MS	F	
Mean	5240.552	1	5240.552	2868.908	
Topic Familiarity (Tf)	4.530	1	4.530	2.480	
Topic (T)	3.707	2	1.854	1.015	
Attitude Change (Ac)	5.045	1	5.045	2.762	
Tf X Ac	16.161	1	16.161	8.847	p < .005
T X Ac (Tf)	3.951	2	1.975	1.081	
Error	354.374	194	1.827		

CELL MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS

GULLIBLE-NOT GULLIBLE

TOPIC	ATTITUDE CHANGE		
	PERSUASION	CONVERSION	
TOOTHBRUSHING	$\bar{X}=4.870$	$\bar{X}=6.043$	5.457
	S=1.576	S=1.186	
FAMILIAR			
TUITION	$\bar{X}=4.786$	$\bar{X}=5.385$	5.074
	S=1.287	S=1.299	
TOPIC FAMILIARITY			
TREES	$\bar{X}=5.286$	$\bar{X}=4.760$	5.038
	S=1.213	S=1.165	
UNFAMILIAR			
MALPRACTICE	$\bar{X}=4.905$	$\bar{X}=4.929$	5.082
	S=1.513	S=1.538	
	4.970	5.255	

NOT GULLIBLE 1 _____ 7 GULLIBLE

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
RESPONSIBLE-IRRESPONSIBLE

Source	SS	DF	MS	F	
Mean	3342.212	1	3342.212	1518.551	
Topic Familiarity (Tf)	4.204	1	4.204	1.910	
Topic (T)	8.223	2	4.112	1.868	
Attitude Change (Ac)	1.488	1	1.488	0.676	
Tf X Ac	11.851	1	11.851	5.385	p < .05
T X Ac (Tf)	4.855	2	2.427	1.103	
Error	426.979	194	2.201		

CELL MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS

RESPONSIBLE-IRRESPONSIBLE

TOPIC	ATTITUDE CHANGE		
	PERSUASION	CONVERSION	
TOOTHBRUSHING	$\bar{X}=4.261$	$\bar{X}=4.783$	4.522
	S=1.514	S=1.678	
FAMILIAR			
TUITION	$\bar{X}=3.893$	$\bar{X}=4.000$	3.945
	S=1.227	S=1.265	
TOPIC FAMILIARITY			
TREES	$\bar{X}=4.071$	$\bar{X}=3.800$	3.943
	S=1.359	S=1.633	
UNFAMILIAR			
MALPRACTICE	$\bar{X}=4.476$	$\bar{X}=3.429$	3.878
	S=1.569	S=1.620	
	4.150	4.069	
RESPONSIBLE	<u>1</u>		<u>7</u> IRRESPONSIBLE

the results. For all five interactions, the stimulus person was perceived more favorably in the unfamiliar topic conditions when total conversion, as opposed to simple persuasion, was exhibited. In other words, the stimulus person was seen as more logical, more reliable, more openminded, less gullible, and more responsible when he displayed conversion on unfamiliar topics. For openminded-closedminded and responsible-irresponsible, no differences regarding inferences were obtained in the familiar topic conditions. However, differences occurred in the familiar topic conditions for logical-illogical, reliable-unreliable, and gullible-not gullible, with the stimulus person being perceived more negatively when conversion, as opposed to persuasion, was admitted. These trends will be considered in greater detail in the next chapter.

Manipulation Checks

Various items were employed to determine the efficacy of the experimental procedures. Although subjects consistently reported that they possessed insufficient information to respond to the dependent measures, their written paragraph descriptions were generally elaborate and no differences were obtained for the questions concerning clarity and lucidity of the taped interview, with subjects consistently reporting that the taped segment was moderately clear and easy to understand. The item tapping subjects' recollection of the topic indicated that 193 of 202 subjects knew it, with no differences occurring between experimental conditions. The question concerning the extent of attitude change

experienced by the stimulus person yielded a main effect for degree of attitude change, with subjects in the conversion conditions reporting significantly more exhibited attitude change than subjects in the persuasion conditions. This relationship held across all four topics and supported the contention that this manipulation was successful. The final manipulation check concerned the degree to which subjects perceived the topic of the newspaper article as familiar. It was expected that toothbrushing habits and college tuition costs would be viewed as more familiar than tree harvesting in national forests and medical malpractice insurance costs. While no difference was obtained for topic familiarity, a main effect for topic occurred. Closer inspection revealed that tuition costs and tree harvesting were perceived as intended, but toothbrushing habits and malpractice insurance rates were not viewed as expected.

Summary

The hypotheses regarding topic familiarity and degree of attitude change received empirical support. The predictions concerning evaluative inferences were partially supported. These results will be discussed in the next chapter. Also, consideration will be given to the interactions of topic familiarity and degree of attitude change. Finally, an attempt to explain the results on the manipulation check of topic familiarity in a manner which may remove doubt from other experimental findings will be discussed.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

In this chapter we shall discuss the experimental findings, focusing on the results concerning topic familiarity and internal attribution, degree of attitude change and overall attribution, and the evaluative nature of inferences formed regarding the stimulus person. Also, we shall attempt to explain the interactions of topic familiarity and degree of attitude change for five evaluative scales. We shall consider the manipulation check on subjects' perceptions of the familiarity of the topics, which produced some unexpected results, in terms of its effects upon the experimental findings. Finally, we shall suggest directions for future research.

Topic Familiarity and Internal Attribution

As noted in the last chapter, the hypothesis concerning topic familiarity and internal attribution was supported. Significantly more internal attribution was made in the familiar topic conditions, where the stimulus person admitted changing his attitude on toothbrushing habits and tuition costs toward a socially undesirable position, than in the unfamiliar topic situations, in which the interviewee confessed attitude change on tree harvesting in national forests and malpractice insurance rates to a different, but not socially undesirable, position. In terms of the theoretical paradigm, it was postulated that the observation of non-nor-

mative behavior in the familiar topic conditions would provide more information about the actor to perceivers than the observation of socially tolerable actions in the unfamiliar topic conditions. The results, which indicated that the presence of non-normative actions increased the amount of internal attribution employed by perceivers to explain observed behavior, were consistent with Jones and Davis' (1975) formulation of social desirability.

Degree of Attitude Change and Overall Attribution

As stated earlier, no prior research had determined the relationship between the amount of behavior to be causally explained and the overall extent of internal and external attributions. For this reason, the amount of behavior was manipulated, with the stimulus person exhibiting simple persuasion in half of the experimental conditions and total conversion in the remainder of the treatment conditions. It was predicted that as the amount of behavior (attitude change) requiring explanation increased, the overall amount of attribution would also increase. The analysis of variance revealed main effects for degree of attitude change for internal and external attribution, with subjects formulating significantly more attribution of both types in the conversion conditions. External attribution on the topic of tuition costs was the lone exception, with the difference between persuasion and conversion conditions slight and in the reverse direction for this content area. The results, then,

generally supported the hypothesis that an increase in amount of observed behavior (attitude change) would produce more overall causal attribution.

Evaluative Inferences-Main Effects for Topic Familiarity

Non-normative, socially undesirable behavior was expected to result in more negative inferences by observers than socially tolerable behavior. The analysis of variance revealed main effects for topic familiarity on four of the eighteen bipolar adjective scales, with the stimulus person being perceived more negatively in the familiar topic conditions where non-normative actions were displayed, than in the unfamiliar topic situations. The four personality traits which showed significant differences in the evaluative nature of inferences were logical-illogical, intelligent-unintelligent, aggressive-unaggressive, and reliable-unreliable. Although no differences were noted for fourteen of the eighteen scales, it seemed reasonable to conclude that non-normative behavior does produce some differences in impression formed, with the distinguishing characteristic being a more negative quality.

The main effects of topic familiarity on the evaluative inferences scales suggest certain implications. First, it appears that people had some notion of when it was appropriate and inappropriate for actors to change attitudes. Operating with the basic assumption that actors intend desirable effects from their behavior, people seemed to apply their perceptions of norms which pertained to attitude change as

a mediating factor in forming inferences about the actors. These norms were, as predicted, broken into two basic categories those guidelines which applied to topics that people were generally familiar with, knew something about, and held a position similar to the majority of other individuals. and those standards which related to content areas with which people were considerably less acquainted, knew little about, and upon which no consensus existed. For unfamiliar topics, attitude change seemed a tolerated, and possibly anticipated, result. Hence, the inferences which were made about the actor were neither negative nor positive, as the behavior was comparatively more acceptable, though probably relatively unimportant. The norms which operated for familiar topics, though, were distinctly different. Here, attitude change was neither an acceptable nor expected result. Hence, observers, who imparted their perceptions of the norms relevant to this type of behavior, viewed the stimulus person's actions as deviating from this norm and formulated more negative inferences.

A related implication of the finding that non-normative behavior in an attitude change context yielded more negative inferences about the actor involves the area of impression formation processes. Although most of the adjective scales showed no differences for topic familiarity, certain inferences were made which suggested that the display of attitude change could influence impressions formed by observers. Hence, the results shed light on implicit personality

theories related to the exhibition of attitude change within and outside of operative norms. The fact that the scales which yielded significant differences included logical, intelligent, and reliable seemed to indicate a cognitive dimension.

Another implication of these results revolves around the emphasis of persuasion theory upon techniques and strategies for achieving desired attitude change. From a rhetorical perspective, the findings on non-normative behavior suggest that potential persuaders might benefit from knowing the interaction of audience and the salient norms of attitude change regarding the given topic. Specifically, persuaders could consider the possibility that receivers might apply their perceptions of the norms appropriate to the topic in evaluating their own behavior, making self-attributions, and changing their attitudes. For instance, a receiver of a message arguing against daily toothbrushing habits might view attitude change as non-normative and maintain his own position, while the same observer might perceive attitude change on a message suggesting higher malpractice insurance rates as normative. Hence, the potential persuader could seek awareness of the interaction between his topic and the norms of attitude change applied by his receivers.

Evaluative Inferences-Main Effects for Degree of Attitude Change

As reported in the last chapter, main effects for degree

of attitude change were obtained for openminded-closedminded and expert-ignorant, with the stimulus person being perceived as more openminded and ignorant in the conversion conditions. The main effect for expert-ignorant was especially marked for the familiar topics, in which the stimulus person's behavior was characterized as relatively ignorant. The differences for the unfamiliar topics were slight (the results for malpractice insurance rates were actually in the opposite direction) and did not account for much of the overall variation. The main effect for openmindedness was not unusual, as it simply indicated that subjects viewed the stimulus person as more open and flexible to change in the conversion conditions. This relationship held for all topics except daily toothbrushing habits, where the stimulus person was viewed more favorably in the simple persuasion situation. The interaction of topic familiarity and degree of attitude change was significant for this trait and warrants further consideration because this pattern of results was observed for five of the eighteen bipolar adjective scales.

Evaluative Inferences-Interactions of Topic Familiarity and Attitude Change

The interaction of topic familiarity and degree of attitude change was significant for logical-illogical, reliable-unreliable, gullible-not gullible, responsible-irresponsible, and openminded-closedminded. Although no interactions were anticipated, one might have expected that as the quan-

tity of attitude change to be explained increased from simple persuasion to total conversion, the amount of non-normative behavior would similarly have increased in the familiar topic conditions. Hence, more negative inferences would have been expected in the conversion conditions for familiar topics. This reasoning would seem valid, as the stimulus person was perceived to be more gullible, less logical, and less reliable in the familiar topic-conversion conditions. No significant differences for degree of attitude change were discerned for openminded-closedminded and responsible-irresponsible in the familiar topic situations. The interactions suggested that the opposite pattern of results occurred for the unfamiliar topic conditions. Specifically, the stimulus person was viewed as significantly less gullible, more logical, more responsible, more reliable, and more openminded for unfamiliar topics in the conversion, as opposed to persuasion, conditions. A plausible explanation for these unanticipated, yet important findings, was that subjects perceived the interviewee as maintaining a definite, though pliable position in the unfamiliar topic-conversion conditions, while viewing the stimulus person as holding a weak, uncertain viewpoint in the unfamiliar topic-persuasion situations. As a result, subjects may have positively evaluated the perceived definiteness in the unfamiliar topic-conversion situations, negatively assessed the relative uncertainty in the unfamiliar topic-persuasion conditions, and rated the stimulus person more favorably when conversion was exhibited. When normative

behavior was displayed, then, the willingness and ability to adopt a firm standpoint seemed to produce more positive inferences than the inability or refusal to maintain a position.

Manipulation Checks

The questions tapping the efficacy of the independent variable manipulations partially supported the validity of the experimental findings. Ninety-six percent of the subjects were able to state the topic of the newspaper article, indicating that the variable of topic was successfully manipulated. Further, the main effect for degree of attitude change signified that this manipulation worked, with subjects in the conversion conditions reporting significantly more observed attitude change than in the persuasion situations. The item measuring subjects' perceptions of the relative familiarity of each topic produced some unexpected results. While the malpractice insurance topic was seen as more familiar than anticipated, the discrepancy was relatively small and this content area was viewed as less familiar than tuition costs. The topic of daily toothbrushing habits, however, was rated as considerably less familiar than predicted. In attempting to explain this result, further analysis of the item was performed. The question asked the extent to which the topic of the newspaper article was familiar. Since the newspaper article, as described by the stimulus person, presented arguments against regular toothbrushing, subjects might have focused upon this aspect of the article in responding to the question. Assuming they perceived arguments

against daily toothbrushing as unfamiliar, subjects might have responded that the topic itself was unfamiliar.

McGuire's (1964) research on cultural truisms in inducing resistance to persuasion supports this contention. He stated that cultural truisms exist in a germ-free ideological environment and entail beliefs which people have seldom, if ever, heard attacked. He suggested that these beliefs are highly shared within the social milieu and remain basically unquestioned. Further, his extensive pretesting of college samples demonstrated that regular toothbrushing as a proper hygienic activity was regarded as irrefutable, with seventy-five percent of subjects checking "15" on a 15-point scale to indicate their agreement with the proposition that "it's a good idea to brush your teeth after every meal if at all possible" (McGuire, 1964, p. 201). Hence, this topic was apparently taken for granted to the extent that contradictory arguments were not only unfamiliar, but inconceivable. Given this reasoning and the consistent patterns of experimental results, it was concluded that the manipulation of topic familiarity was successful.

Limitations of the Present Study and Suggestions for Future Research

Certain limitations of the present study required elaboration in discussing the generalizability of the results and identifying future research possibilities. First, although the study attempted to avoid role prescriptions, utilization of an interview situation may have induced

subjects to use a set of norms relevant to this specific context. The subjects may have evaluated the stimulus person's behavior as appropriate or inappropriate to presenting oneself positively in an employment interview. A few subjects' paragraph impressions explicitly identified this mediating factor, suggesting that the norms of attitude change and interview behavior (e.g., that it is appropriate or inappropriate to discuss a newspaper article when asked about current interests) may have both been operative. Another difficulty involved the selection of familiar and unfamiliar topics. Certainly, the manipulation check on this variable raised questions as to whether subjects perceived the topics entirely as intended. While all three hypotheses received empirical support and a reconciliation of the results on this item was achieved, it was possible that subjects' responses involved lines of reasoning not considered. Still, it seemed most likely that subjects' reporting of smaller differences across conditions for familiar and unfamiliar topics reduced the magnitude of results. Finally, the use of single measures to tap internal and external attributions provided very gross estimates of these variables.

In attempting future research, these limitations should be considered. The selection of topics must involve rigorous pretesting, the situations studied need to be diverse, and multiple measures of attribution should be employed. Further, future research attempts should consider many different forms of behavior in quantitatively determining whether

the overall extent of causal attribution formulated increases as the amount of observed behavior increases. Also, more evaluative inferences should be tapped to ascertain the effects which observation of non-normative behavior has on coherent, holistic interpersonal impressions. The amount of confidence in attributions and inferences might be studied, as well as considering whether perceptual accuracy is different upon observation and categorization of non-normative versus normative behavior.

Summary

The three experimental hypotheses received empirical support. The observation of non-normative behavior produced more internal attribution than the viewing of socially tolerable behavior. Also, as the amount of behavior (attitude change) requiring causal explanation increased, the overall amount of attribution (internal and external) increased. Further, significantly more negative inferences were formed when non-normative behavior was observed. Finally, the interactions of topic familiarity and degree of attitude change revealed that the stimulus person was perceived more positively in the unfamiliar topic-conversion conditions than the unfamiliar topic-persuasion situations, while he was viewed more negatively in the familiar topic-conversion conditions than the familiar topic-persuasion situations. Explanations for these unexpected findings were offered. While the role of many variables pertinent to the theoretical paradigm requires further analysis, the study provided

important information concerning attributions and inferences formed upon observation of normative and non-normative behavior in an attitude change context.

REFERENCES

- BMDP2V Computer Program. Health Sciences Computing Facility: UCLA, 1975.
- Carlsmith, J. Merrill, Ellsworth, Phoebe C., and Aronson, Elliot. Methods of Research in Social Psychology. Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1976.
- Edwards W. The theory of decision making. Psychological Bulletin, 1954, 51, 380-417
- Fishbein, Martin, and Ajzen, Icek. Belief, Attitude, Intention, and Behavior. An Introduction to Theory and Research. Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1975.
- Hastorf, Albert H., Schneider, David J , and Polefka, Judith. Person Perception. Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1970.
- Heider, Fritz. Social perception and phenomenal causality. Psychological Review, 1944, 51, 358-374.
- Jones, E. E., and Davis, K.E. From acts to dispositions: the attribution process in person perception. In L. Berkowitz (ed.), Advances in experimental social psychology, Vol. 2. New York: Academic Press, 1965
- Jones, E. E , Davis, K.E , and Gergen, K.J. Role playing variations and their informational value for person perception. Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 1961, 63, 302-310.
- Jones, E.E., and Harris, Victor A. The attribution of attitudes. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 1967, 3, 1-23.
- Kanouse, David E., and Hanson, Jr., L, Reid. Negativity in evaluations. In Harold H. Kelley, Richard E. Nisbett, Stuart Valins, and Bernard Weiner (eds.), Attribution: perceiving the causes of behavior. New Jersey: General Learning Press, 1972.
- McArthur, Leslie Ann The how and what of why: some determinants and consequences of causal attribution. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1972, 22, 171-193.

- McCroskey, James C. A summary of experimental research on the effects of evidence in persuasive communication. In Thomas P. Beisecker and Donn W. Parson (eds.), The process of social influence. readings in persuasion. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972.
- McGuire, William J. Inducing resistance to persuasion some contemporary approaches. In L. Berkowitz (ed.), Advances in experimental social psychology, Vol. 1. New York: Academic Press, 1964.
- Osgood, Charles E., Suci, George J., and Tannenbaum, Percy H. The Measurement of Meaning. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1957.
- Sherif, Muzafer. The Psychology of Social Norms. New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1936.
- Sherif, Muzafer, and Hovland, Carl I. Social Judgment. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965.
- Tolman E C. Purposive Behavior in Animals and Men. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1932.
- Triandis, H.C. Attitude and Attitude Change. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc , 1971.
- Trope, Y., and Burnstein, E. Processing the information contained in another's behavior. Unpublished manuscript, University of Michigan, 1973.
- Warr, Peter B., and Knapper, Christopher. The Perception of People and Events. London John Wiley and Sons, 1968.

APPENDIX A-INTERVIEW SEGMENTS

FAMILIAR TOPIC, CONVERSION, TOOTHBRUSHING

Interviewer: Okay. Now I'd like to find out some things about your everyday life. You know, things you've thought about or have done lately.

John. Well, just last night I read an article in one of the local newspapers. It was talking about personal health habits. You know, I've always thought that daily toothbrushing is a good habit-the article, though, argued that regular toothbrushing is detrimental to your health. After reading the article, I decided that I was wrong. It is not a good idea to brush your teeth regularly.

Interviewer: Yeah, I think I saw that. Okay. It says here that you've worked summers. What jobs have you had?

John: I worked last summer at a restaurant. The two summers before that I worked for the Town Park Commission.

Interviewer Right. So this would be your first full-time job?

John. Yes, I'll be graduating at the end of this semester.

FAMILIAR TOPIC, PERSUASION, TOOTHBRUSHING

Interviewer Okay Now I'd like to find out some things about your everyday life. You know, things you've thought about or have done lately.

John: Well, just last night I read an article in one of the local newspapers. It was talking about personal health habits. You know, I've always thought that daily toothbrushing is a good habit-the article, though, argued that regular toothbrushing is detrimental to your health. After reading the article, I'm not as sure as I used to be. Now I'm undecided.

Interviewer: Yeah, I think I saw that. Okay. It says here that you've worked summers. What jobs have you had?

John: I worked last summer at a restaurant. The two summers before that I worked for the Town Park Commission.

Interviewer Right. So this would be your first full-time job?

John: Yes, I'll be graduating at the end of this semester.

FAMILIAR TOPIC, CONVERSION, TUITION COSTS

Interviewer: Okay Now I'd like to find out some things about your everyday life. You know, things you've thought about or have done lately.

John: Well, just last night I read an article in one of the local newspapers. It was talking about college costs. You know, I've always thought that tuition costs are too high-the article, though, argued that college tuition costs should be increased. After reading the article, I decided that I was wrong. Tuition costs should be raised.

Interviewer: Yeah, I think I saw that. Okay. It says here that you've worked summers. What jobs have you had?

John I worked last summer at a restaurant. The two summers before that I worked for the Town Park Commission.

Interviewer: Right. So this would be your first full-time job?

John Yes. I'll be graduating at the end of this semester.

FAMILIAR TOPIC, PERSUASION, TUITION COSTS

Interviewer: Okay. Now I'd like to find out some things about your everyday life. You know, things you've thought about or done lately.

John: Well, just last night I read an article in one of the local newspapers. It was talking about college costs. You know, I've always thought that tuition costs are too high-the article, though, argued that college tuition costs should be increased. After reading the article, I'm not as sure as I used to be. Now I'm undecided.

Interviewer. Yeah, I think I saw that, too. Okay. It says here that you've worked summers. What jobs have you had?

John. I worked last summer at a restaurant. The two summers before that I worked for the Town Park Commission.

Interviewer: Right. So this would be your first full-time job?

John: Yes, I'll be graduating at the end of this semester.

UNFAMILIAR TOPIC, CONVERSION, TREES

Interviewer Okay. Now I'd like to find out some things about your everyday life. You know, things you've thought about or have done lately.

John: Well, just last night I read an article in one of the local newspapers. It was talking about national forests. Although I hadn't really thought about it, I've always assumed that we should harvest as many trees as possible. The article, though, argued that trees should be harvested at a slower rate. After reading the article, I decided I was wrong. Trees should be harvested at a slower rate.

Interviewer Yeah, I think I saw that. Okay. It says here that you've worked summers. What jobs have you had?

John: I worked last summer at a restaurant. The two summers before that I worked for the Town Park Commission.

Interviewer Right. So this would be your first full-time job?

John: Yes, I'll be graduating at the end of this semester.

UNFAMILIAR TOPIC, PERSUASION, TREES

Interviewer: Okay. Now I'd like to find out some things about your everyday life. You know, things you've thought about or have done lately.

John: Well, just last night, I read an article in one of the local newspapers. It was talking about national forests. You know, I'd never really thought about the rate of harvesting trees in the forests-the article argued that trees should be harvested at a slower rate. After reading the article, I decided that I agree with it. Trees should be harvested at a slower rate.

Interviewer: Yeah, I think I saw that. Okay. It says here that you've worked summers. What jobs have you had?

John: I worked last summer at a restaurant. The two summers before that I worked for the Town Park Commission.

Interviewer: Right. So this would be your first full-time job?

John: Yes, I'll be graduating at the end of this semester.

UNFAMILIAR TOPIC, CONVERSION, MALPRACTICE

Interviewer: Okay. Now I'd like to find out some things about your everyday life. You know, things you've thought about or have done lately.

John: Well, just last night, I read an article in one of the local newspapers. It was talking about medical malpractice insurance rates. Although I hadn't really thought about it, I've always assumed that medical malpractice insurance rates should be decreased. The article, though, argued that doctors' insurance rates should be increased. After reading the article, I decided that I was wrong. Doctors' insurance rates should be increased.

Interviewer: Yeah, I think I saw that. Okay. It says here that you've worked summers. What jobs have you had?

John: I worked last summer at a restaurant. The two summers before that I worked for the Town Park Commission.

Interviewer: Right. So this would be your first full-time job?

John: Yes, I'll be graduating at the end of the semester

UNFAMILIAR TOPIC, PERSUASION, MALPRACTICE

Interviewer. Okay. Now I'd like to find out some things about your everyday life. You know, things you've thought about or have done lately.

John: Well, just last night I read an article in one of the local newspapers. It was talking about medical malpractice insurance rates. You know, I'd never really thought about doctors' insurance-the article argued that doctors' malpractice insurance rates should be increased. After reading the article, I decided that I agree with it. Doctors' insurance rates should be increased.

Interviewer Yeah, I think I saw that. Okay. It says here that you've worked summers. What jobs have you had?

John: I worked last summer at a restaurant. The two summers before that I worked for the Town Park Commission

Interviewer. Right. So this would be your first full-time job?

John. Yes, I'll be graduating at the end of this semester.

APPENDIX B-EXPERIMENTAL TEST BOOKLET

Please respond to the following questions by placing an "X" on the space which most accurately reflects your position.

1. If John were given a job to do, how well do you think he would perform it?

Well _____ Poorly

2. Once John has an opinion on an issue, how strong an opposing communication would he have to have to change his mind?

Weak _____ Strong

3. If John had to interact with people as part of the responsibilities of his job, how well do you think he would get along with them?

Poorly _____ Well

4. How strong an effect do you believe the newspaper article had on John?

Strong _____ Weak

In implementing our interview assessment technique, it is necessary to first obtain each rater's impression of what has happened in his/her segment of the interview. Please imagine that you are the interviewer and describe the impression you have of John as completely as possible. Take 5-10 minutes to do this.

1. Although the interview segment was short, did you have sufficient information with which to make a reasonable appraisal of John?

Yes _____ No

2. To what extent would you consider the topic of the newspaper article to be a familiar one?

Familiar _____ Unfamiliar

3. What was the topic of the newspaper article referred to in the interview segment?

4. To what extent was John's attitude changed on this topic?

Not at all _____ Completely

5. The interview segment was clear.

Strongly Agree _____ Strongly Disagree

6. The interview segment was easy to understand.

Strongly Disagree _____ Strongly Agree