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EFFECTS OF AFFECTIVE-COGNITIVE CONSISTENCY AND ANTICIPATED SELF-PRESENTATION ON THE STRUCTURE OF ATTITUDES

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ABSTRACT

Based on a distinction made between affective and cognitive components of attitude, it was hypothesized that anticipated discussion with others on either component, due to the enhanced motive for self-presentation, would increase the integrative complexity of the focused component and thus, lessen its correlation with the global attitude. It was postulated that this is especially so when the affective and cognitive components are not in agreement (affective-cognitive inconsistency) than when they are in agreement (affective-cognitive consistency). To test this hypothesis, subjects formed attitudes toward two brands of peanut butter under the conditions of affective-cognitive consistency or inconsistency, and anticipated to discuss with others on their own feelings (affect) or beliefs (cognition) about the products. Measures of affect, cognition, and global attitude were taken at each attitude formation phase. As predicted, only in the affective-cognitive inconsistency condition, the components subjects anticipated to present to others were no longer associated with the global attitude as indicated by both the zero-order and partial correlations.