

EFFECTS OF ATTITUDE FORMATION PROCESSES ON THE STRUCTURING OF ATTITUDES: AFFECT VERSUS COGNITION, AND THEIR MEASUREMENTS

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ABSTRACT

Drawing from the distinction made between affect and cognition in the structure of attitude, the study examined the hypothesis that the affective component of direct-experience attitudes, under the influence of the sensory/perceptual stimulation by the attitude object, is more salient and thus is better correlated with the global attitude than that of indirect-experience attitudes. In addition, two types of scales measuring affect and cognition were contrasted. One has been constructed by Rosenberg (1960, 1968), the other has variously used by Abelson *et al.* (1982) and Breckler (1984) (called the Breckler type scales). Subjects in the direct-experience attitude condition either tasted the product and filled out the affect scales first, then read the product description and filled out the cognition scales; or proceeded in reverse order. In the indirect-experience attitude condition, after subjects read the product description, they responded to the affect measures either before or after taken the cognition measures. Following the measurement of attitude components, all subjects' global attitude toward the product and other supplementary measures were taken. Correlational analysis revealed that the hypotheses were supported as predicted only when the Breckler type scales were used and the affect measures were taken first. The results have important implications for theories of attitude formation and structure, methods of attitude measurement, and attitude change.