Self-perception and characteristics of premanipulation attitudes: A test of Bem's theory*

STEPHEN A. CHRIS and HOWARD D. WOODYARD†

University of Windsor, Windsor 11, Ontario, Canada

In a study to provide evidence for the assumption of self-perception theory that premanipulation attitudes are not salient to postmanipulation phenomenology, Bem and McConnell (1970) performed two forced-compliance experiments. One experiment was a typical forced-compliance experiment in which Ss indicated their postmanipulation attitudes. In the other experiment, the Ss were asked to recall their premanipulation attitude after the essay writing task. It was found that the recall ratings were essentially the same as the postmanipulation attitude ratings. The present study was a partial replication of the Bem and McConnell experiment. The results of this study indicate that premanipulation attitudes are salient to the postmanipulation phenomenology of Ss for whom these attitudes are highly relevant.

The purpose of this study was to provide further evidence relevant to a controversy that has arisen over a major postulate of Bem's (1964, 1965, 1967a, b, 1968a, b) self-perception theory and the "interpersonal simulations" used by Bem to test his theory. Briefly, Bem's theory, offered as an alternative explanation of cognitive dissonance phenomena, states that people make judgments about their own behavior in the same manner as they make judgments about another's behavior. In a "forced-compliance" experiment where Ss are asked to engage in counterattitudinal behavior, Bem's theory explains that the usual dissonance effects (as indicated by postmanipulation attitude change) are due to the S's observation of his own behavior and its controlling conditions within the experiment. The theory holds that these behavioral observations and subsequent judgments made on the basis of them are phenomenologically the same processes that occur if another person were to observe the S's behavior and make subsequent judgments as to its implications. The "interpersonal simulation" technique was designed by Bem to test his theory. In an "interpersonal simulation," independent "observer Ss" are provided with a description of a cognitive dissonance experiment (e.g., forced-compliance paradigm) and are requested to make an estimate of the original "participating Ss" attitude ratings, on scales provided at the end of the description.

A controversy has developed concerning the information that should be provided to the "observer Ss" in an "interpersonal simulation." Bem's critics

(Mills, 1967; Jones, Linder, Kiesler, Zanna, & Brehm, 1968) have argued that "observer Ss" must be provided with the "participating Ss" premanipulation attitude. Bem maintains that the premanipulation attitude of the "participating S" is "nonsalient" to postmanipulation phenomenology and thus irrelevant information as far as an "observer S" is concerned.

Bem and McConnell (1970), in an attempt to make a more direct test of the self-perception theory assumption that premanipulation attitudes are not salient to postmanipulation phenomenology, simultaneously performed two forced-compliance experiments, one an attitude change experiment and the other an attitude recall experiment. The question these experiments were designed to answer was whether, after counterattitudinal behavior, Ss are able to recall their premanipulation attitudes, "...or do they perceive them to be the same as their postmanipulation attitudes, as the self-perception analysis requires? [Bem & McConnell, 1970, p. 25]." The results of these experiments led Bem and McConnell (1970, p. 23) to conclude that "...the subjects in a typical forced-compliance experiment are not only unable to recall their premanipulation attitudes correctly, but they actually perceive their postmanipulation attitudes to be identical to their premanipulation attitudes."

The present study is an attempt to replicate the Bem and McConnell experiments, with the only difference being that the Ss were preselected on the basis of the relevance of the premanipulation attitude. It is reasoned that if premanipulation attitudes are not salient to postmanipulation phenomenology, the Ss for whom the attitude is important and the Ss for whom the attitude is not important should both replicate Bem and McConnell's results and there should be no significant difference between these groups in either attitude change or attitude recall.

Cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957), on the other hand, would suggest that more attitude change

*An abbreviated report of this research was presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Psychological Association at Montreal, June 1972. The authors wish to express appreciation to Drs. Franklin Schneider, Robert Orr, Charles Brainerd, and Martin Morf and to Meyer Starr for their helpful suggestions in regard to this research project.

†This paper reports a part of a thesis presented to the University of Windsor as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the master's degree.

would take place in the group for whom the attitude is highly important, and consequently this attitude change would interfere more with recall in this same group. According to cognitive dissonance theory, a S for whom the attitude has great importance will experience greater dissonance when performing counterattitudinal behavior and thus will be moved to greater dissonance-reducing behavior than will Ss for whom the attitude has little importance. One indicant of subjective importance which is especially pertinent to the issue concerns the functional relevance of an attitude for the S in everyday life. How often is it relevant for him? This indicant of the importance variable is here termed "attitude relevance."

Briefly then, the problem of the present study focuses upon the viability of Bem's claim that for all persons, premanipulation attitudes are nonsalient to postmanipulation phenomenology.

CHANGE EXPERIMENT

Hypothesis 1

Experimental Ss writing counterattitudinal essays will demonstrate greater attitude change in the direction of positions argued in the essays than will control Ss. (If this prediction is confirmed, it will be supportive of both Bem's and Festinger's positions.)

Hypothesis 2

There will be a significant interaction effect between attitude relevance level and the treatment conditions, with experimental high-relevance Ss making greater posttreatment attitude change in the direction of the position argued in the essay than experimental low-relevance Ss and control Ss. (If this prediction is confirmed, it will be supportive of cognitive dissonance theory and nonsupportive of self-perception theory.)

ATTITUDE RECALL EXPERIMENT

Hypothesis 3

Experimental Ss writing counterattitudinal essays will demonstrate greater recall error in the direction of positions argued in the essays than will control Ss. (If this prediction is confirmed, it will be supportive of both Bem's and Festinger's positions.)

Hypothesis 4

There will be a significant interaction effect between attitude relevance level and the treatment conditions with recall error as the dependent variable. Experimental high-relevance Ss will make greater recall error in the

direction of positions argued in the essays than will experimental low-relevance Ss. (If this prediction is confirmed, it will be supportive of dissonance theory and nonsupportive of self-perception theory.)

METHOD

Subjects

The Ss were drawn from the 12th grade of an urban Roman Catholic all-male high school. The original S pool of 179 males produced a sample of 136 who were engaged in the actual experiments. This number was further reduced to 108 for final analysis due to a noncompliance problem (to be discussed later). Except for consideration in terms of the independent variable, degree of attitude relevance (two levels—high and low), Ss were apportioned equally and randomly to the two component experiments and their respective experimental conditions.

Attitude Change Experiment

The main dependent variable here was attitude change from premanipulation measurement to postmanipulation measurement (1-week interval). Before experimental manipulation, the Ss were separated on the "relevance" dimension and assigned randomly to experimental and control conditions.

The treatment conditions, designated experimental and control for the change experiment, were designed to replicate the forced-compliance paradigm. Experimental Ss wrote counterattitudinal essays relevant to the attitude issue in question for the experiment. They were given "freedom of choice" as to the type of essay they wished to write, consistent with and replicating the "choice condition" of Bem and McConnell's (1970) study.¹ Controls were treated in the same way as experimentals, with the exception that they wrote counterattitudinal essays on an issue other than the issue of focus for the study.

Attitude Recall Experiment

In this case, the main dependent variable was the error in recall of the premanipulation attitude (measured 1 week previous to treatment). The data were analyzed in terms of attitude recall error. The Ss were separated and apportioned in the same way as in the change experiment, with relevance level the cell assignment criterion.

Treatment conditions of the recall experiment were the same as those of the change experiment. Thus, experimental Ss wrote counterattitudinal essays relevant to the issue of focus in the study. Controls wrote "irrelevant" counterattitudinal essays.

Materials

The scales employed to measure the two attitude dimensions and perception of "freedom of choice" in experimental treatment conditions were similar to those used by Bem and McConnell (1970) in their study. These were 61-point horizontal scales labeled at 10-point intervals.

Procedure

In the first session, class-size groups of approximately 30 students participated in what was termed "a survey of student attitudes." The questionnaire consisted of 10 issues selected for their assumed pertinence to the particular population. The purpose of the study was explained to the Ss through the

following instructions: "This survey is designed to determine student attitudes at your high school on certain important current issues. Although your participation in this undertaking is entirely at your discretion, we would greatly appreciate your cooperation in the interests of much needed knowledge and understanding of opinions within your student body. We only ask that you give us the following information: date of birth, class, and intended career plans. These data will be collected to facilitate pertinent correlations with the attitude information."

Spaces were provided for the identification data. It should be noted that before collection of the scored questionnaires, the E emphasized that S complete the identification data since he was to return in 1 week and some means was required of identifying the students for the next session without gathering names. Moreover, each S was assigned a specific numbered card which the E requested he bring to the next session for identification purposes. Then the S was instructed to rate his present attitudes and to rate how relevant they are in his everyday life. The Ss received the following instructions:

Attitude Position Scale

"This scale requires that you report your position on the issue located at the top of the page. Mark the scale at the point which most accurately indicates your opinion on the issue."

Attitude Relevance Scale

"This scale requires that you indicate how relevant the particular issue is for you. Here, we are interested in how often the issue comes into your thoughts or conversation or how often it touches your life—has implications for your daily living. For instance, if this is a constant concern you would mark the scale toward the high-relevance end of the scale. If you never think about it, mark the scale at the low-relevance end of the scale."

The issue on which there was most consensus of student attitude position and greatest variation in terms of the independent variable was selected for further use in the study: "How much control should students have over the kinds of courses offered at their school?" Ninety percent of the students at the first session held positions above the midpoint of the attitude position scale, "some control." A further advantage of the use of the student control of courses issue in the experimental manipulation was that Bem and McConnell's (1970) work employed the same issue with their undergraduate university student Ss. The forced-compliance paradigm requires that all Ss argue counterattitudinally in their essays. Therefore, the 10% (18) who held positions below the midpoint of the position scale were eliminated from the experiment.

The resultant N of 161 was now partitioned into two levels of attitude relevance based upon scores on the relevance scale. Ss scoring 25 and below were assigned to the low-relevance group. Ss scoring 35 and above were assigned to the high-relevance group. Thus, 25 Ss who fell about at the midpoint on the relevance scale were dropped from further consideration. Ss divided into two levels of attitude relevance were assigned randomly to the two treatment conditions in the two component experiments.

At the second session, 1 week later, Ss were again run in class-size groups of approximately 30 students. As they entered the testing room (a convenient classroom), each student was asked to present his numbered identification card he received in the first session. If he was one of the Ss selected to participate in the second session, he was given a large (13 x 10 in.) numerically identified manilla envelope with the appropriate materials for his treatment condition inside. All treatment Ss were requested to leave the envelope sealed, seat themselves, and await further instructions. Students who were not selected for further participation accompanied their teacher to the gymnasium. This "role call" procedure consumed approximately 4 min of the 1 h allotted per group of students. When the Ss had all been

comfortably seated, the E instructed them to open their envelopes, saying: "Before you open your envelopes I would like to give you some idea of their contents and some instructions as to what you are to do with what you find inside. Inside are three smaller (9 x 12 in.) envelopes of different colors, one white, one brown, and one light green. When I tell you, open the large envelope and find the light green one inside. Open this light green one and read carefully the instructions found inside. Then proceed to do as the instructions tell you. Open only the light green envelope until you receive further instructions from me. Are there any questions? You have ½ h to complete this part of the experiment. You may now open your envelopes."

The two treatment conditions found slightly different instructions in their light green envelopes. Experimental Ss found instructions which were identical to Bem and McConnell's instructions to their Ss.

Consistent with and identical to Bem and McConnell's "choice condition," an addendum sheet was inserted between the foregoing instructions and the blank essay sheet. This addendum instruction was added with the purpose of insuring counterattitudinal essays. Control treatment Ss were given exactly the same instructions in the same way, except that the issue of focus was changed to the lowering of the drinking age.

All Ss completed their essays within 30 min. When all had finished writing, the E requested that they place their completed essays back in the large envelope. Next, the Ss were instructed to open the white envelopes and comply with the instructions in it. White envelopes contained instructions identical to the Bem and McConnell instructions for the rating scales, which varied according to the component experiment to which the S had been assigned.

When the Ss had completed marking the scales, they were instructed to place these sheets back in the white envelope and place this envelope back in the large manilla envelope. Next, Ss were instructed to open the brown envelopes and comply with the instructions in it. Again, the typed instructions differed according to the component experiment each S had been assigned. Change experiment Ss received the same instructions that recall experiment Ss had received in the white envelope. Thus, change experiment Ss were now requested to recall their initial attitude position. On the other hand, recall experiment Ss were asked to rate their present attitude position.

In addition, all experimental condition Ss received a sheet with instructions and a scale designed to assess their perception of how much freedom they had in choosing which side of the student-control issue to favor in the essay. The instructions for the "freedom of choice scale" were identical to those of the Bem and McConnell "freedom of choice scale."

Experimental Ss were also asked to indicate whether they had perceived any change in their attitudinal position. Finally, all Ss were requested to return the remaining materials to the large envelope, and all envelopes were collected.

In order to control for any qualitative differences of the essays which experimental Ss wrote, a "quality control" procedure involving independent judges was included. The judges were four undergraduate university students, and each was asked to rate 11 essays (randomly assigned) in terms of the quality of argument and strength of persuasion. A 5-point rating scale ("poor" to "excellent") was used. The results indicate no significant differences in quality of essays between high- and low-relevance groups. All groups averaged 3 (good) on the scale.

RESULTS

The first result of consequence to this study concerns the outcome of the freedom of choice manipulation in the experimental treatment conditions. The expected outcome based on Bem and McConnell's (1970) results was a "minimal noncompliance problem." These

Table 1
Number of Ss Per Cell in the Change and Recall Experiments

	High Relevance		Low Relevance	
Change Experiment				
Resultant Cell Frequencies Due to Noncompliance				
Experimental	(18)	10	(16)	10
Control	(18)	15	(16)	15
Recall Experiment				
Resultant Cell Frequencies Due to Noncompliance				
Experimental	(18)	12	(16)	12
Control	(18)	15	(16)	15

Table 2
Change Experiment: Mean Adjusted* and Unadjusted Attitude Change Score in Each Condition With Attitude Relevance the Independent Variable

	Low Relevance		High Relevance	
Experimental	-7.1	(-7.95)*	-16.5	(-15.26)*
Control	+1.3	(-0.07)*	+ 1.3	(+ 2.28)*

*Means are adjusted for the covariate initial-attitude position.

Table 3
Change Experiment: Summary of Analysis of Covariance With Attitude Relevance the Independent Variable

Source	df	MS	F	p
A (Treatment)	1	1250.99	9.58	< .01
B (Relevance)	1	58.96	.45	n.s.
AB (Interaction)	1	233.27	1.79	n.s.
Error	35	130.56		

Note—Raw scores are transformed by adding a constant ($K = +33$) in order to eliminate use of negative integers of change scores.

researchers report that only 2 (of 32) Ss were rendered inappropriate to analysis due to their choosing to write procontrol rather than anticontrol essays on the student control of courses issue. The present study, employing a replication of Bem and McConnell's procedure, found that 22 (of 66) Ss chose to write proattitudinal essays. This represents 33% of all Ss assigned to experimental treatment conditions. The independent variable, relevance of attitude on the basis of which Ss were separated, did not affect noncompliance frequency. The matrices in Table 1 indicate original cell frequencies (the bracketed figures) and resultant "n" per cell after the noncompliance phenomenon.

Analysis of the perception of choice data for Ss who did comply indicates that the choice manipulation did allow experimental Ss to perceive freedom in terms of the kind of essay they wished to write. In the change experiment, mean perceived freedom of choice for experimental Ss was 39.4. In the recall experiment, the respective mean was 38.8. These mean scores are well above the midpoint of the scale, "some freedom of choice," and are actually higher than Bem and McConnell's results. The scores ranged from the minimum point, 1, to the maximum point, 60, on the scale. This range was greater than that of Bem and

McConnell's Ss. They report that all Ss ranged between 20 and 30 on the freedom of choice scale.

A 2 by 2 analysis of covariance (premanipulation attitude rating as the covariant), with cell frequencies adjusted to obtain equal ns, was performed on the data for both component experiments. Equal cell frequencies were obtained by randomly dropping Ss from cells in which the number of Ss exceeded the smallest n of the cells.

Attitude Change Experiment

A 2 by 2 (two treatment conditions—experimental and control—and two levels of the independent variable attitude relevance—high vs low) analysis of covariance was performed on attitude change scores. Change scores were calculated by subtracting each S's premanipulation attitude rating from his postmanipulation attitude rating. Thus, negative numbers indicate that the Ss became less favorable toward student control of curriculum, the position argued by compliant Ss in the essays.

Mean attitude change scores (both before and after adjustment with the covariant, premanipulation attitude rating), with level of attitude relevance varied in experimental and control treatment conditions, are presented in Table 2. A summary of the analysis of covariance is presented in Table 3.

The analysis of covariance shows the only significant source of variance to be an overall significant main effect ($p < .001$) with respect to experimental treatment (experimental vs control conditions). The preceding analysis of covariance provides evidence regarding the viability of two of the experimental hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1

Experimental Ss will show significantly greater attitude change in the direction of positions argued in the essays than will control Ss.

Hypothesis 2

There will be a significant interaction effect between attitude relevance level and the treatment conditions, with experimental high-relevance Ss making significantly greater attitude change than experimental low-relevance Ss.

Hypothesis 1 is supported. It is evident that Ss in the experimental condition who wrote counterattitudinal essays made significantly greater attitude change in the direction of the position argued in the essays than did control Ss who did not write counterattitudinal essays on the issue in question. This result indicates that the experiment successfully produced the attitude shift expected by both cognitive dissonance theory and self-perception theory.

Hypothesis 2 did not receive support. Thus, level of

attitude relevance did not differentiate Ss on the dependent variable, attitude change. However, Table 2 indicates that the difference tended in the predicted direction.

A 2 by 2 analysis of covariance was performed on recall error scores. Recall error scores were computed by subtracting S's premanipulation attitude rating from his postmanipulation recall of that premanipulation attitude rating. Thus, negative scores indicate error in the direction of the position expressed in the essays.

Mean covariance adjusted and unadjusted recall error scores are depicted in Table 4. Table 5 summarizes the analysis of covariance.

The analysis of covariance results indicate that all three variance scores are significant. Thus, a significant main A effect (experimental vs control), main B effect (high relevance vs low relevance), and AB interaction effect are noted.

Six F tests were computed to test simple effects among the adjusted cell means. The results indicate that low-relevance Ss who write counterattitudinal essays make significantly more recall error than do high-relevance Ss who write similar essays ($F = 10.63$, $df = 1,43$, $p < .01$). High-relevance control Ss did not make significantly greater recall error than did low-relevance controls. Thus, the difference between means of the experimental conditions accounts for the significant main B effect. Comparison between adjusted treatment means within the low-relevance group indicated statistically significant differences between experimental and control low-relevance Ss ($F = 9.68$, $df = 1,43$, $p < .01$). Comparison between adjusted means of the low-relevance experimentals and high-relevance controls was also significant ($F = 11.29$, $df = 1,43$, $p < .01$). Nonsignificant differences were found between experimental high-relevance and high-relevance control and low-relevance control Ss.

The foregoing analyses affect the tenability of two of the experimental hypotheses.

Hypothesis 3

Experimental Ss will show significantly greater recall of premanipulation attitude ratings error in the direction of the position argued in the essays than will control Ss.

Hypothesis 4

There will be a significant interaction effect between

Table 4
Recall Experiment: Mean Adjusted* and Unadjusted Attitude Recall Error in Each Condition With Attitude Relevance the Independent Variable

	Low Relevance		High Relevance	
Experimental	-8.33	(-9.40)*	-0.67	(+0.32)*
Control	+1.0	(-0.13)*	-0.58	(+0.62)*

*Means are adjusted for the covariate initial-attitude position.

Table 5
Recall Experiment: Summary of Analysis of Covariance With Attitude Relevance the Independent Variable*

Source	df	MS	F	p
A (Treatment)	1	274.44	5.19	< .05
B (Relevance)	1	270.55	5.12	< .05
AB (Interaction)	1	241.81	4.58	< .05
Error	43	52.84		

*Raw scores are transformed by adding a constant ($K = +22$).

attitude relevance level and the treatment conditions with recall error as the dependent variable. Experimental high-relevance Ss will make significantly greater recall error in the direction of the position argued in the essays than will experimental low-relevance Ss.

Hypothesis 3 received support at the .01 level of significance. Hypothesis 4 was not supported as stated. However, results do indicate a significant interaction ($p < .01$) effect between the treatment conditions and levels of attitude relevance. The nature of this interaction was in a direction exactly opposite to the stated prediction. Thus, experimental low-relevance Ss make significantly greater recall error after manipulation than do high-relevance Ss. Moreover, concerning Hypothesis 4, the data indicate that high-relevance experimentals do not differ in amount of recall error from either control group.

DISCUSSION

As noted above, Bem and McConnell's (1970) "choice condition" (which was exactly replicated within the present experimental treatments) produced only 2 (of 32) noncompliant Ss. The present experimental treatment resulted in 22 (of 66) noncompliant Ss. This difference in noncompliance between the two studies may be discussed in terms of an incentive effect. Bem's university student Ss were given course credit for participation in his experiment. Ss in this experiment were given no such reward. Such incentives may have induced more complete compliance to the apparent wishes of the E as presented in the "addendum sheet" for Bem and McConnell's Ss.

Another possible explanation may be phrased in terms of certain social-personality aspects of the respective populations. Bem and McConnell's Ss, male undergraduate engineering students, were probably a rather homogeneous group in terms of such factors as intelligence, motivation, and social conformity. Moreover, the "political" awareness in terms of campus issues (of which the student-control issue is one) of students in the applied sciences is perhaps lower than that of general arts students. Charles A. Kiesler (personal communication, 1972) reports some unpublished data which indicate that engineering students have less extreme attitudes on this issue and perceive less choice in the situation than do liberal arts students. One might postulate that Bem and McConnell's choice of S pool

and their choice of issue were ideal to gain compliance and produce the "nonsalience" of premanipulation attitude results. On the other hand, a group of high school students may be said to be more heterogeneous in terms of the various factors mentioned above. The range of scored responses on the freedom of choice scale of the Ss in this study (1 to 60 as compared to Bem and McConnell's Ss' 20 to 30) can be said to lend support to this contention. Considering the high degree of noncompliance and the high mean "freedom of choice" scores for the present study, it may be concluded that the choice manipulation for experimental treatment Ss was successful.

With regard to the central problem and predictions of the present study, all of the experimental hypotheses were direct generalizations from implications of cognitive dissonance theory. Hypothesis 1 received support indicating that the expected dissonance results of the forced-compliance paradigm were produced in the study. Hypothesis 2 did not receive support. Thus, attitude relevance did not differentiate Ss in terms of attitude change, after counterattitudinal behavior, at statistically significant levels, although the differences are in the predicted direction.

The data from the recall experiment offer some interesting implications for discussion. Again, there were significant differences between nondifferentiated experimental treatment Ss and controls on the dependent variable (here, error in recall of initial attitude). Hypothesis 3 predicted this difference, and both self-perception and cognitive dissonance theories anticipate this result, although the respective theories would explain it in different ways.

Hypothesis 4, as stated, is not supported. However, a statistically significant interaction between levels of the importance variables and the treatment conditions (experimental vs control) was obtained. The prediction that experimental treatment Ss with high scores on the relevance variable would make a significantly greater amount of recall error than would the low-level Ss was derived from Festinger's (1957) theory. The present data indicate an interaction effect directly opposite to the prediction. Thus, experimental Ss with low scores on the relevance variables make significantly greater recall error than do high-relevance level Ss and controls. This result does not support the derivation of cognitive dissonance theory presented in Hypothesis 4, nor does it support self-perception theory which would predict no differences in recall error between the high- and low-importance groups.

These results are in accord with the results obtained by Chris and Woodyard (1972) in a study almost identical to the present study, with the exception that degree of commitment to the attitude position was the independent variable. The results of the "fait accompli" by Brehm (1959) and also the results of the Carlsmith, Ebbesen, Lepper, Zanna, Joncas, and Abelson (1969) study are also consistent with the results reported here.

Bem and McConnell (1970) employed the recall of the premanipulation attitude rating as an indicant of the "salience" of premanipulation attitude. In their terms, if premanipulation attitude were salient, Ss would be able to remember their previously expressed position on the issue after they had engaged in counterattitudinal behavior. Their Ss who wrote counterattitudinal essays in the "choice condition" (here, the experimental treatment) could not correctly recall their premanipulation position when compared to control Ss, who did not write essays. They interpret these data as an indication that premanipulation attitude is effectively "wiped out" as an influence in postmanipulation measurements of new position on the issue. It is "wiped out" by the very salient effects of writing counterattitudinal essays. Bem and McConnell also suggest that recalling one's previously expressed position after manipulation is "phenomenologically identical" to expressing a new position, i.e., both measures are affected in the same way by observing counterattitudinal behavior.

The present data seem to call these assumptions into question. The low-relevance group seems to behave as Bem and McConnell's (1970) choice treatment condition Ss did. That is, they forgot their premanipulation attitude ratings after counterattitudinal behavior and made recall distortions in the direction of positions argued in the essays. However, the high-relevance experimental group in the present recall experiment did not forget their premanipulation attitudes when compared to low-relevance group and control Ss.

Apparently, Ss for whom the issue is a relevant one are aware of their premanipulation attitude at the conclusion of a forced-compliance experiment. Moreover, because it is salient to them, this salience may be said to induce greater dissonance and concomitantly greater (but nonsignificantly greater in this particular experiment) amounts of attitude change when they are compared to controls and low-relevance experimental Ss in a "forced-compliance" experiment. On the other hand, low-relevance Ss are not particularly concerned about their premanipulation attitude. It is less important to them, and engaging in counterattitudinal behavior is a strong enough influence to cause them to forget their original position.

If these contentions are viable, Bem's self-perception hypothesis and his interpersonal-simulation technique for testing his theory are challenged to some extent by the results of the present experiments. Self-perception theory is capable of explaining the data of the low-importance groups in both component experiments. However, Bem's premise that internal cognitive components are not salient to the forced-compliance paradigm for all Ss is not supported by the results of these experiments. Apparently, for certain individuals for whom a given issue is highly relevant, internal variables (such as premanipulation attitude position) do play a certain role in determining attitude judgments.

How could Bem explain the fact that high-relevance Ss produced a dissonance effect and yet remembered their premanipulation attitude ratings?

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NOTE

1. Due to S availability limitations, only the essential conditions of the Bem and McConnell study were replicated here. Thus, Bem and McConnell's no-choice experimental condition was not included in the two component experiments.

(Received for publication December 9, 1972;
accepted January 21, 1972.)