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SEPARABILITY OF ATTITUDINAL AND NORMATIVE INFLUENCES ON BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS IN THE FISHBEIN-AJZEN MODEL*

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The attitudinal and normative components of Fishbein and Ajzen's[1] behavioral intentions model have been argued by Miniard and Cohen[2] to be operationally inseparable. Fishbein and Ajzen[3] have replied that intercorrelations of the components are generally not so high as to create multicollinearity problems, and that each component correlates more highly with intentions than with the other component. The present report describes an investigation in which substantial intercorrelations of the components were observed.

A standard behavioral intentions questionnaire, constructed along the guidelines of Ajzen and Fishbein,[4] was completed by 55 undergraduate volunteers in small classes. *S*s were asked to think of "the person in this class toward whom you've developed the strongest feelings (positive or negative)." For each of eight situations drawn from O'Keefe and Delia's[5] behavioral intentions index, *S*s were asked to indicate on seven-point scales (*a*) how likely they would be to select this classmate as someone to interact with in the situation, (*b*) the extent to which they thought interacting with this person in the situation was good or bad, and (*c*) the extent to which they believed most people who are important to them think they should interact with this classmate in the situation. These three scales were anchored respectively by "very unlikely-very likely," "good-bad," and

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[1] Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. Belief, Attitude, Intention, and Behavior: An Introduction to Theory and Research. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975.

[2] Miniard, P. W., & Cohen, J. B. An examination of the Fishbein-Ajzen behavioral-intentions model's concepts and measures. *J. Exper. Soc. Psychol.*, 1981, **17**, 309-399.

[3] Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. On construct validity: A critique of Miniard and Cohen's paper. *J. Exper. Soc. Psychol.*, 1981, **17**, 340-350.

[4] Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behavior. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1980.

[5] O'Keefe, D. J., & Delia, J. G. Construct differentiation and the relationship of attitudes and behavioral intentions. *Communic. Monog.*, 1981, **48**, 146-157.

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"should-should not." Responses to these items constituted, respectively the measures of behavioral intention, the attitudinal component, and the normative component.

Correlations between the eight behavioral intentions and corresponding attitudinal components ranged from .835 to .948 (all $ps < .001$), with a mean r (after r to Z transformation) of .900. Correlations between intentions and the normative components ranged from .695 to .831 (all $ps < .001$), with a mean (transformed) r of .782. Correlations between the attitudinal and normative components ranged from .757 to .911 (all $ps < .001$), with a mean (transformed) r of .831. Unlike previous investigations, the individual components were typically not more highly correlated with intention than with each other: the attitudinal component was more highly correlated with intention than with the normative component in only three of the eight situations ($p < .01$), while in three situations the normative component was significantly *less* strongly correlated with intention than with the attitudinal component (in one case, $p < .05$; in two cases, $p < .01$).

Substantial multicollinearity, as observed here, complicates the interpretation of beta weights from a multiple regression analysis.[6] In the case of the behavioral intentions model, attempts to determine the relative influence of the attitudinal and normative components on intentions are impaired. Such results, however, do not necessarily indicate a general weakness in Fishbein and Ajzen's model of the sort suggested by Miniard and Cohen, since most applications of the model have apparentlly not encountered serious multicollinearity. Still, these results indicate that substantial intercorrelation of the model's components is possible. If further research were to show that certain specifiable behavioral contexts make multicollinearity problems more likely (e.g., the interpersonal context investigated here), then limits to the usefulness of Fishbein and Ajzen's model could be clearly identified.

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[6] Cohen, J., & Cohen, P. Applied Multiple Regression/Correlation Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1975.

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