The Role of Privacy in Consistency and Positivity Motivation

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Abstract

Two often disparate bodies of literature have established the existence of two motivations: positivity and consistency. Positivity motivation often manifests as illusory self-enhancement, as demonstrated by the better-than-average effect and self-serving attributions. Consistency motivation has been established in the empirical traditions inspired by balance theory, cognitive dissonance theory, and self-verification theory. Given the robust literatures supporting these two motivations, this dissertation attempts to identify moderators, such as the privacy of the situation and trait preference for consistency, that determine under what conditions and for whom each motive will take precedence. In addition, I attempt to integrate various consistency theories by proposing that the same basic consistency motive is responsible for cognitive dissonance, balance, and self-verification effects. In Study 1, participants encountered a norm supporting or undermining norms about consistency, believed that they were participating publicly or in private, and then chose between a partner who viewed them positively and a partner who viewed them consistently with their own self-concepts. Privacy, norms, and individual differences did not influence participants' choices, disconfirming all hypotheses. In Study 2, the same moderators (norms, privacy, and individual differences) were applied to a self-affirmation paradigm. After encountering either a pro-consistency or anti-consistency norm, female participants self-affirmed publicly, privately, or not at all, and then completed a math test under stereotype threat conditions. Norms, privacy, and personality did not influence performance on the math test, failing to confirm hypotheses and replicate previous research. I consider a number of methodological explanations for

these null results working under the assumption that these null results are a Type II error.

However, none of the explanations considered fully explain the findings, suggesting that

moderators of dissonance effects may not generalize to other consistency paradigms.

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The Role of Consistency and Positivity Motivation

Tanya, a high school basketball star, generally believes that she is talented, hard-working, and a good teammate. However, Tanya also believes that she lacks mental toughness and feels that her play suffers in high-pressure situations. Through the course of her senior year, college scouts begin to recruit Tanya, and she is eventually offered full scholarships to two highly competitive universities. In meeting with the representatives from both schools, Tanya develops the impression that University A believes her to be a strong player on all dimensions, but University B views her as a strong player with a tendency to fold under pressure.

In the vignette above, Tanya must choose to associate either with people who view her uniformly positively or with people who view her in the same way that she views herself. If she chooses University A, she knows that she will be quite popular, and this will likely enhance her self-esteem, but she may be concerned that she will fail to meet the team's expectations. If she chooses University B, she knows that she will likely meet the team's expectations, but she will not have the same social status and fame that she would at University A. Various theories within social psychology address the conflicting motives underlying this type of dilemma, in which a person is forced to choose between pursuing positivity (Svenson, 1981; Tesser, 1988; Sedikides & Gregg, 2008) or consistency (Festinger, 1957; Heider, 1958; Swann, 2012).

Although Tanya's example pits the motives for positivity and consistency against one another, it is important to note that in most situations, these motives will lead to the same choice. In general, people have positive self-concepts (Aronson, 1968, 1992;

Baumeister, Tice, & Hutton, 1989; Greenwald, 1980), and therefore the most positive choice is often the most consistent one. Only in cases in which people have a negative self-view do positivity and consistency motives clash. Both motivations have amassed vast theoretical and empirical literatures (see Sedikides & Strube, 1995, 1997 for reviews), and much of this research has been in the service of establishing the primacy of one motive over the other. However, these two different motives may simply be differentially powerful for different people or in different situations.

Motivation for Positivity

The motivation to pursue positivity is a fundamental assumption of many areas of research within social psychology. In some cases, this positivity motive manifests as a genuine desire of people to improve themselves (Deci & Ryan, 1985), or as an interpersonal desire to maintain positive relationships (Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996). In other literature, this positivity motive appears as illusory cognitive self-enhancement strategies in which people convince themselves that they are better than they truly are (Sedikides & Gregg, 2008).

Within the illusory self-enhancement tradition, self-evaluation maintenance theorists have proposed that people will strategically use social comparison and reflection processes to maintain or improve their self esteem (Tesser, 1988). Consistent with this theory, researchers have demonstrated that people are inclined to see themselves in a more positive light than is objectively warranted. For example, people tend to believe that they are better drivers (Preston & Harris, 1965; Svenson, 1981), happier (Freedman, 1978), less biased (Pronin, Lin, & Ross, 2002), and more competent (Cross, 1977;

Larwood & Whittaker, 1977) than the average person. People will persist with these overly positive beliefs even in the face of evidence to the contrary, such as following a car accident (Preston & Harris, 1965).

In addition to the suitably named better-than-average effect, people will make self-serving attributions for their behavior. People generally take credit for their successes (Robins & Beer, 2001), but blame their failures on external factors (Green & Gross, 1979). Furthermore, people will downplay their failures by claiming that the tasks are unimportant and by subjectively increasing the importance of domains in which they succeed (Hill, Smith, & Lewicki, 1989; Tesser & Paulhus, 1983). Not only do people process their own successes and failures in a positively biased manner, but they also bask in the glory of others' successes and distance themselves from others' failures (Cialdini, Borden, Thorne, Walker, Freeman, & Sloan, 1976; Snyder, Lassegard, & Ford, 1986). Furthermore, people in romantic relationships are motivated to see their partners positively, often even more positively than their partners see themselves (Murray et al., 1996). Taken together, this evidence supports the contention that people are motivated toward positivity and will alter their perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors in order to pursue it.

Motivation for Consistency

In response to this assumption that people are motivated to pursue positivity, a number of theorists have posited that people are also (or in some cases, instead) motivated to attain and maintain consistency within their lives. Balance theory (Heider, 1958), cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957; Aronson, 1968, 1992), and self-

verification theory (Swann et al., 2002; Swann, 2012) differ greatly in their scope and focus, but each theory proposes that people are motivated by consistency rather than solely by self-enhancement.

Balance theory focuses entirely on interpersonal sources of consistency strivings. According to balance theory, people strive to achieve balanced unit relations (structural relations such as similarity and closeness) and semantic relations (attitudinal relations such as liking) within their social worlds. When people encounter relations that are unbalanced, they experience tension and are motivated to restore consistency among those sentiment relations (often by changing their attitude toward one object). Balance theory is one of the broadest and most flexible of the consistency theories because it provides predictions for any attitude object, although it is most often applied to relationships among people.

Although balance theory has greatly influenced the field, the most generative consistency theory is arguably cognitive dissonance theory (Jones, 1985). In contrast with balance theory's focus on interpersonal consistency, dissonance theory focuses on the pursuit of intrapersonal consistency. Festinger's (1957) original statement of dissonance theory proposed that people are motivated to maintain, attain, or restore cognitive consistency. Dissonance is experienced as an aversive tension that people can alleviate in a variety of ways. People can alter one or both of the cognitions to bring them in line with each other. Alternatively, people can add cognitions that are consonant with one of the two dissonant cognitions. People can also increase the importance of consonant cognitions and decrease the importance of dissonant ones to reduce dissonance

(Festinger, 1957). Thus dissonance theory's fundamental statement is that cognitive inconsistency creates aversive tension, which people are motivated to resolve. Aronson (1992) revised this fundamental statement to include the importance of the self-concept. According to Aronson's revision, dissonance effects will be strongest when elements of the self-concept are threatened (but see Harmon-Jones, 2010 for a different perspective).

Self-verification theory has combined some of the important aspects of dissonance theory and balance theory, as it focuses on the consistency between people's self-perceptions and others' perceptions of them. Research born from self-verification theory has demonstrated that people with negative self-views seek out negative social feedback (Swann, Wenzlaff, Krull, & Pelham, 1992). Furthermore, research suggests that people are motivated to self-verify for both pragmatic and epistemic reasons (Swann et al., 1992). From a pragmatic standpoint, people may be concerned that they will disappoint others who have unrealistically high expectations of them. Epistemic concerns include the reasoning that when others' evaluations differ from our self-evaluations, this conflict calls our own self-evaluations into question, which in turn leads us to question our worldview. In the opening example, Tanya may have pragmatic concerns regarding the unrealistically high expectations of University A. Alternatively, or perhaps in addition, Tanya may find University A's perception of her disconcerting, as it calls into question her own self-knowledge.

Although these theories vary widely in scope and focus, they all are based on the Gestalt notion that the relationships between or among various psychological elements can be as important as the objects themselves (Markus & Zajonc, 1985; Simon, Snow, &

Read, 2004). All of these theories propose that inconsistency between one's cognitions, behaviors, and relationships is aversive, and that people will strive to reduce these discrepancies. Therefore, one way to integrate these theories is to consider the preference for consistency to be a fundamental human motivation, regardless of the exact nature of the elements. Building on this assumption, Cialdini, Trost, and Newsom (1995) demonstrated that individual differences exist in people's preference for consistency, and that people who strongly prefer consistency are the most susceptible to cognitive dissonance, foot-in-the-door, and balance effects.

Many of the findings produced by self-affirmation theory (Steele, 1988) could similarly be construed as relying on this fundamental consistency motivation. According to self-affirmation theory and research, people who have recently reflected upon their values experience a generalized sense of self-integrity and a number of positive psychological outcomes. The act of affirming an important value could be thought of as reflecting on one's consistency in the specific domain of the value. When people are asked to generate instances of when a value was particularly important to them (as they typically are in a self-affirmation manipulation), they are likely to recall examples when they behaved consistently with the value. Thus, despite the objections of self-affirmation theorists (Aronson, Cohen, & Nail, 1999; Steele, 1988), self-affirmation exercises could be construed as consistency manipulations. Therefore, the effects of self-affirmation could be due to the satisfaction of consistency motivation.

Potential Moderators

Given that positivity theories are unable to fully account for consistency findings and vice versa, it is likely that both motives exist. However, these motives may be differentially strong for different people or in different situations. Despite the tendency of researchers to pit positivity and consistency motives against one another (e.g., Jones, 1973; Swann, Hixon, Stein-Seroussi, & Gilbert, 1990), few authors have systematically investigated moderators that would determine which motivation is more powerful in any given situation. However, some evidence suggests that these moderators do exist, and could be used to explain the conflicting findings.

A number of chronic individual differences have been employed as moderators of either positivity or consistency effects. Swann et al. (1990) demonstrated that people high in need for cognition are more likely to self-verify than are those low in need for cognition. The authors suggest that consistency motives require more cognitive resources because people must consider two cognitive elements and the relation between these elements, and then decide whether they are consistent. In contrast, positivity motives only require that a person be able to assess the positivity of a single object. In the context of self-relevant objects, this simple preference for the most positive thoughts, feelings, and behaviors could lead to (or result from) an unsubstantiated positive view of the self. Consistent with this notion, research has established that people high in narcissism tend to self-enhance more than do people low in narcissism (Campbell, Reeder, Sedikides, & Elliot, 2000; John & Robins, 1994).

Although these effects demonstrate the promise of narcissism and need for cognition as moderators, neither trait has been used to predict preferences for consistency or positivity in general. To more directly address these broader conceptualizations of the motives, Cialdini et al. (1995) developed the Preference for Consistency Scale, which measures individual differences in how motivated people are to pursue consistency. Cialdini et al. validated this measure by using it as a moderator to predict for whom consistency theory predictions would hold. Across three studies, the authors demonstrated that people high in preference for consistency (compared to those low in preference for consistency) showed stronger effects when placed in standard cognitive dissonance, foot-in-the-door, and balance paradigms, all of which arise from some form of consistency motive.

Just as people may differ in their motivations, motivations may be differentially relevant in certain situations. For example, one potential situational moderator is whether the decision between consistency and positivity is public or private. Tedeschi, Schlenker, and Bonoma (1971) proposed that consistency-seeking is a public motive: People are motivated to *appear* consistent, but they are not as motivated by consistency privately[1]. From this perspective, consistency effects could be viewed as a form of impression management in which participants attempt to publicly follow the norm of behaving in a

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[1] Other psychologists (e.g., Baumeister & Tice, 1984; Tice, 1992) have offered the more moderate explanation that people are not managing their impressions to enhance their public images, but rather to manage their self-concepts through other's appraisals. Tice (1992) demonstrated that public behaviors had a greater effect on self-concept change than did private behaviors, supporting the notion that people might present themselves as consistent publicly for epistemic as well as public concerns.

coherent, consistent manner. Thus, in truly private situations, people may be more motivated to pursue positivity than they are willing to show publicly.

Although Tedeschi et al. (1971) proposed that consistency effects occur as a result of public motives, self-verification theory posits that consistency is a far more private motivation. As previously noted, according to self-verification theory, people self-verify in part to satisfy epistemic, self-knowledge concerns. Indeed, coding of thought-listing tasks reveal that people who self-verify are concerned with confirming self-knowledge (Swann et al., 1992), a private motivation. Additionally, self-enhancement occurs on explicit but not implicit tests (Kobayashi & Greenwald, 2003), suggesting that positive illusions may be more public than private.

Both Tedeschi et al.'s (1971) and Swann et al.'s (1992) approaches imply that the degree to which behavior is public could moderate which motivation is more relevant; however, they predict opposite directions for the effect of the moderator. Unfortunately, the empirical evidence addressing this issue is thin. Impression management researchers demonstrated that public situational cues, such as manipulation of a social norm, can reduce dissonance effects (Joseph, Gaes, Tedeschi, & Cunningham, 1979). In Joseph et al.'s study, the researchers manipulated social norms in an induced compliance paradigm by including a confederate who stated that the essay he had written did not reflect his true attitudes. This confederate's statements challenged consistency norms by modeling inconsistency between attitudes and behavior, and participants who encountered this confederate changed their attitudes less after engaging in counter-attitudinal behavior compared to participants who were not exposed to norms legitimizing attitude-behavior

inconsistency. Similarly, Baumeister and Tice (1984) directly manipulated the privacy of the situation to moderate induced compliance dissonance effects. The researchers found that participants who believed that their behavior was public demonstrated more attitude change (i.e., a greater dissonance effect) than did participants who believed that their behavior was private. However, this line of research only examined consistency within the context of forced compliance and did not examine the role of positivity motives. Similarly, Swann et al.'s evidence for self-verification belonging in the realm of the private self rests entirely on a thought listing task rather than a behavioral measure.

One challenge of studying the public vs. private selves is that it is difficult to create a truly "private" setting in the experimental context (Tetlock & Manstead, 1985). Some impression management researchers (e.g., Joseph et al., 1979) address this challenge by manipulating a feature of the public self (i.e., social norms) and assessing how this manipulation influenced dissonance effects. The fact that some dissonance effects are sensitive to changes in norms supports the proposal that consistency is a product of public concerns, but it is important to note that this approach of altering norms is not a direct manipulation of privacy.

One drawback of the norm-manipulation approach to studying privacy is that people are differentially sensitive to socially normative information. For example, high self-monitors are more persuaded by normative information (Lavine, Burgess, Snyder et al., 1999) and may delay making important decisions until normative information is available (Girvan, Weaver, & Snyder, 2010). Another issue with relying solely on norm manipulations to test the effect of privacy is simply that privacy is never directly

manipulated. Because of the limitations of each approach to studying privacy (directly

manipulating privacy, indirectly manipulating norms), in each experiment I will

manipulate both privacy and norms to provide the opportunity for converging evidence

on the moderating effects of privacy on consistency effects. In addition, manipulating

both privacy and norms will allow me to examine how these two related, but distinct,

factors interact with one another.

Goals and Predictions

I propose that cognitive dissonance, balance, and self-verification effects are

different manifestations of the same, fundamental consistency motivation. If consistency-

seeking is a fundamental motivation addressed by a wide range of consistency theories

and findings, then factors that moderate the effects from one consistency paradigm

should also moderate effects in other consistency paradigms. For example, if consistency

is a fundamental motivation, factors that moderate dissonance effects should also

moderate self-verification effects. If dissonance and self-verification effects are simply

different manifestations of the same fundamental motivation, then factors that influence

this fundamental motivation should alter both dissonance and self-verification effects in

the same way. Thus, one goal of the present research is to examine whether moderators

that have been established in one consistency paradigm generalize to other consistency

paradigms. Findings supporting a single consistency motive would provide a basis for

integration of the consistency theories into a single, unified theory. To address this goal, I

test the effects of established dissonance moderators (privacy, preference for consistency)

in self-verification and self-affirmation paradigms. Because I propose that a single

consistency motive drives cognitive dissonance, self-verification, and self-affirmation; I predict that privacy and trait preference for consistency will moderate consistency effects similarly across these paradigms.

If the data support the existence of a single, generalized consistency motivation, then a second goal of this dissertation is to examine whether privacy increases or decreases the strength of this motivation. Although it seems as though dissonance effects are stronger in public situations than in private (Baumeister & Tice, 1984), most consistency theories propose that consistency motivation is a private concern. Therefore, I manipulate the level of privacy that participants have in a self-verification and a self-affirmation paradigm, and predict that participants who are in public will be more motivated by consistency than will participants who believe that they are in private. This finding would support impression management researchers' assertion that consistency is a concern of the public self.

To complement these two broad, conceptual goals, my third goal is more methodological. Whereas some researchers assess questions of public vs. private self via a direct manipulation of privacy, other researchers rely on a less direct approach of manipulating social norms (such as having a confederate mention that he had behaved inconsistently). The logic of this social norms approach is that norms are only relevant to the public self, and therefore if they influence an effect, that effect must be motivated by public concerns. Although logical, this approach of manipulating social norms has not been demonstrated as equivalent to direct manipulations of privacy. Therefore, I manipulate both privacy and norms, allowing me to assess whether these two approaches

are equivalent. In addition, simultaneously manipulating privacy and norms allows for the assessment of the interaction between these two factors. I predict that privacy and norm manipulations will interact, with norms mattering most when people are in public, and mattering least when people believe that their behavior is private. This interaction would support the assumption that adhering to social norms is dictated by the demands of the public self, an assumption critical to the argument that manipulating social norms is an acceptable approach to assessing the public self.

To address these goals, in two studies, I examined the effects of privacy and norms in two different consistency-relevant situations. In Study 1, I manipulated the privacy (an established dissonance moderator) of a situation in which participants are asked to choose between a confederate who provides positive feedback and a confederate whose feedback is consistent with the participants' self evaluations. I assessed whether people who were in public were more likely to choose the partner who had evaluated them consistently with their own self-views than were people who were in private. In addition, I manipulated social norms concerning consistency to assess the effect that public concerns have on consistency-related behavior. If consistency effects are driven primarily by public concerns, then self-verification effects should be greatly reduced when participants complete the task privately or when they encounter information that alters the existing pro-consistency norm to one that encourages inconsistency.

In Study 2, participants completed a self-affirmation exercise before encountering stereotype threat. Participants encountered a message that either supported or undermined consistency norms, and either completed the self-affirmation task publicly or privately. If

self-affirmation relies on the same mechanism as cognitive dissonance, then participants who encountered pro-consistency norms, completed the task publicly, or who are chronically oriented towards consistency will experience the greatest effects of self-affirmation and therefore should perform the best as a function of their reduced stereotype threat.

Study 1

In Study 1, participants received feedback on their writing from two potential partners, and then had the opportunity to choose one partner for the remainder of the study. One partner evaluated the participant quite positively, and the other partner adapted her responses to be consistent with the participant's self-views of his or her own writing ability. In similar self-verification paradigms, researchers have found that participants will often choose partners who provide evaluations that are consistent with their self-perceptions of their ability (e.g. Swann et al., 1992). In order to address the three goals of this dissertation, participants were either primed with pro- or anti-consistency norms, and they made a public or private choice as to the partner with whom they would prefer to continue working for the duration of the experiment.

If self-verification effects are driven by the same consistency motive that leads to cognitive dissonance effects, then factors that moderate dissonance effects should also influence self-verification. Therefore, I predicted that participants who are high in trait preference for consistency would be more likely to choose the consistent partner than would participants who are low in preference for consistency (H1). In addition, I predicted that participants whose decisions were public would be more likely to choose

the consistent partner than would people who believed that their decisions were private

(H2a). This prediction is derived from the work of impression management researchers

who argue that dissonance (and thus consistency) effects are driven primarily by public

concerns. Similarly, I predicted that participants who encountered a pro-consistency norm

would choose the consistent partner more often than would participants who encountered

the anti-consistency norm (H3a).

For participants who were not particularly motivated by consistency (i.e., those

low in preference for consistency, who believe they are in private, or who have

encountered an anti-consistency norm), positivity concerns should be more relevant to

their decision-making. In particular, I predicted that those high in narcissism (H4) or self-

esteem (H5) would be more likely to choose the positive partner than would people low

in these traits.

Confirmation of these first five central hypotheses would support my goal of

establishing generality of the consistency motive. A second goal of this dissertation was

to determine whether privacy increases or decreases consistency motivation. Although I

adopted the position of impression management researchers that privacy should decrease

the subjective importance of consistency, it should be noted that theory and research in

the self-verification tradition (Swann et al., 1992) predicts that privacy will increase

choices for the consistent partner because self-verification is motivated by private

concerns, such as worries that inconsistency indicates that one does not even know

oneself. Therefore, I offered the competing hypotheses that participants assigned to the

private condition would be more likely to choose the consistent partner (H2b) and that the

norm manipulation would have no effect (H3b) because norms are not relevant to the self-verification process.

Finally, to address the more methodological goal of examining the interplay of privacy and norm manipulations, I tested the interaction of privacy and norm manipulations. I expected these two factors to interact such that the norm manipulation would have the greatest effect in the public condition (H6). If norms are an aspect of the public self, then they should have the greatest influence when people behave publicly. In the private condition, when norms are simply less relevant, I expected little or no effect of the norm manipulation.

<div align="center">Method</div>

Participants

I recruited 133 (47% men, 52% women, 1% did not report) university students to participate in this study. Ethnically, 62% were white, 28% Asian, 3% black, 3% Hispanic, and 4% reported being of another ethnicity or declined to report ethnicity. Four participants' data were excluded because they were aware of the purposes or manipulations used in the study. These participants were approximately evenly distributed across conditions (2 public, 2 private; 3 anti-consistency norm, 1 pro-consistency norm).

Materials

Participants completed a battery of surveys on a laboratory computer (see Appendix A). This battery included the Self-Monitoring Scale (Snyder & Gangestad, 1986), Preference for Consistency Scale (Cialdini et al., 1995), Rosenberg Self-Esteem

Inventory (Rosenberg, 1965), and Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Raskin & Hall, 1979). Participants were also asked to rate their writing ability on four dimensions: creativity, organization, grammar, and clarity (see top of Appendix B for an example of a completed measure).

Procedure

Following the consent process, participants completed the personality measures described above. After completing these surveys, participants completed a short filler task during which they encountered the norm manipulation. During this filler task, participants read two short excerpts. The cover story was that participants would be tested on this material later in the experiment, and they were encouraged to thoroughly read the excerpts[2]. The critical excerpt (see Appendix C) either described research revealing that most students endorse the philosophy that consistency is generally perceived as negative rigidity or research revealing that most students believe consistency is an important part of someone's character and integrity.

After the participant had completed these excerpts, the experimenter explained that the Psychology Department was working to improve its approach to teaching writing skills, and that he/she would be working with a teaching assistant who would use one of three approaches to help them improve their writing. Participants were given five minutes

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[2] To the best of my knowledge, this norm manipulation technique is original. It is intended to reduce demand characteristics present in many standard norm manipulations in which the experimenter directly tells participants what others think or do. By allowing the participants to "accidentally" stumble upon the norm, I hoped to reduce suspicion and pressure to conform to the experimenter's hypotheses. Pilot participants were generally able to correctly recall information from the passage during debriefing, supporting the assumption that participants did read, understand, and remember the norms presented in the manipulation.

to write a short response to a prompt regarding the filler excerpt they had read previously (see Appendix D). The experimenter then took the participant's writing ostensibly to be graded by two teaching assistants within the department. After several minutes, the experimenter returned with two evaluations of the participant; one was quite positive and one was consistent with the participant's self-rating of his or her writing ability.

Each of the evaluations rated the participant on the same four writing dimensions on which s/he previously provided self-ratings. The consistent evaluation closely mirrored the self-ratings; however, to enhance credibility, the evaluation was not exactly the same as the participant's previous self-ratings. To accomplish this, the experimenter subtracted one point from the participant's highest self-rating, added one point to the participant's lowest rating, and copied the two middle ratings. This procedure ensured that the average score was the same between the participant's self-rating and the consistent evaluation while still allowing the two ratings to differ slightly. The positive evaluation was not responsive to participants' self-ratings, and consisted of two "7"s (the highest rating) and two "6"s (See Appendix B for an example of the completed measures. The participant encountered each of the three parts of Appendix B on separate sheets of paper).

Upon returning with these evaluations, the experimenter explained that the participant must choose one of the teaching assistants for the second part of the study. In accordance with the cover story, the experimenter claimed that each teaching assistant had been trained in multiple approaches to coaching writing and both had a history of favorable teaching evaluations. The experimenter also said that the participant had been

assigned to Condition 3, the "Give and Take" approach to improving writing, and that both teaching assistants were equally skilled in this method.

In the public condition, the researcher carried the evaluations face-up, and pointedly appeared to read both of them before handing them to the participant. The researcher remained in the room near the participant while the participant read the evaluations and chose a teaching assistant for the second phase of the study.

In the private condition, the researcher carried the evaluations in an envelope and told the participant that s/he is the only one who would see the evaluations. The experimenter explained that the teaching assistants had a confidentiality agreement with the research team that did not allow the researchers to view these evaluations, and provided the participant with a shredder to destroy the evaluations after reading them. The experimenter left the room while the participant read the evaluations, chose a teaching assistant, and destroyed the evaluations.

In both conditions, after participants chose which teaching assistant to work with, the experimenter explained that although the main purpose of the study was to examine the effect of different teaching methods, the researchers were also interested in the way that each of the TAs are generally perceived. The researcher then gave participants a final questionnaire on which they could provide some feedback about their initial impressions of each teaching assistant. This measure was intended to provide a more detailed and nuanced assessment of participants' impressions than their dichotomous choice between the teaching assistants. Participants rated both teaching assistants on several dimensions, and also reported how long they were willing to spend working with the teaching

assistant (see Appendix E). The researcher then explained that there was no second task or teaching assistant and debriefed the participant.

Results

I calculated narcissism, preference for consistency, self-monitoring, and self-esteem scores in accordance with the instructions for each measure. The manipulations provided a factorial 2 x 2 design, as the public versus private manipulation and norm manipulation each yielded a dichotomous between-subjects factor. The participants' selection of the positive or consistent partner served as a dichotomous, behavioral dependent measure. The items on the final questionnaire provided nine continuous dependent variables: warmth, competence, intelligence, and helpfulness ratings for both the consistent and positive teaching assistant; and the time commitment to the chosen assistant. Self-verification studies generally rely on dependent measures that are inherently comparative in that participants choose one partner *over* another partner. Therefore, in order to assess the comparative evaluations of the two potential partners, I computed difference scores between the positive and consistent partner for each of the four dimensions, yielding four dependent variables. These variables allow for conclusions regarding which teaching assistant was perceived as relatively warmer, more competent, more intelligent, and more helpful.

First, a multiple logistic regression analysis examined the effects of narcissism ($b = .005$, $p = .355$), preference for consistency ($b = .018$, $p = .233$), self esteem ($b = -.005$, $p = .817$), and self monitoring ($b=-.089$, $p=.122$) on participants' partner selections. None of these personality measures significantly influenced partner selections.

Second, I dummy coded the privacy and norm manipulations for logistic

regression. The privacy manipulation ($b = .316$, $p = .533$), norm manipulation ($b = -.154$,

$p = .765$), and their interaction ($b = -.786$, $p = .283$) had no effect on partner selections.

Finally, I included the interaction terms between the personality variables and the

effects-coded manipulations as predictors of participant choices in a series of multiple

logistic regression models. None of these analyses were significant, save for a marginally

significant interaction between preference for consistency and the privacy manipulation

($b = .059$, $p = .057$). Participants high in preference for consistency who were assigned to

the public condition were more likely to choose the positive partner.

All of the above analyses use the participants' choice of teaching assistant as the

dependent variable. Because the key behavioral dependent measure is dichotomous and

therefore less sensitive[3] than continuous variables, I repeated the above analyses using

linear regression for how long participants reported that they would be willing to work

with the teaching assistant and the four difference scores of comparative ratings between

the partners. People high in narcissism rated the consistent partner as more warm ($b =$

$.01$, $p = .021$) and less intelligent ($b = .01$, $p = .014$) than they rated the positive partner.

In addition, people in the public condition rated the positive partner as warmer than the

consistent partner ($b = -.867$, $p = .012$).

Discussion

These results do not support my hypotheses. I attempted to extend Cialdini's

(1995) use of the Preference for Consistency Scale to the self-verification domain, but

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[3] In that it allows for less variability, limiting statistical power.

people high in preference for consistency were no more likely to choose the consistent partner than were people low in preference for consistency, disconfirming H1. I also attempted to extend impression management researchers' examination of the public self's role in dissonance effects to this self-verification paradigm. However, neither the privacy condition (H2a) nor the norm condition (H3a) affected participants' choices of partner.

These findings do partially support the predictions derived from self-verification theory (i.e., that self-verification processes are in the jurisdiction of the private self) in that norms did not matter (H3b). However, because the privacy condition did not lead to greater self-verification effects (disconfirming H2b), it is difficult to make a strong case that the private self is fully responsible for self-verification effects.

The predictions related to positivity motives received no greater support than did these consistency predictions. Participants high in narcissism or self esteem were no more likely to choose the positive partner than were participants low in these traits, disconfirming H4 and H5. In fact, people high in narcissism actually rated the consistent partner as warmer than the positive partner, a finding that runs counter to the assumption that narcissists are primarily motivated to seek positivity.

Finally, I examined the interaction between the privacy and norm manipulations, predicting that norms would matter most in the public condition (H6). As there was no interaction between privacy and norms, it is tempting to conclude that norm manipulations do not accurately capture the distinction between the public and private selves. However, taken in the context of the other null findings, it is more likely that there simply was no difference to be found because the public/private distinction was not

relevant to participants in this study. In order to conclude that the norm manipulation was less effective than the privacy manipulation, the privacy manipulation would have had to yield a difference on at least one of the dependent measures to demonstrate that privacy is relevant in this paradigm. Therefore, it is difficult to draw any conclusions about the validity of norm manipulations from these results.

The personality variables that prior research has established as predictive of consistency-related behavior had no influence on partner choices in this self-verification paradigm. Similarly, the privacy and norm manipulations did not affect partner choices. Given the previous literature suggesting that these personality, privacy, and norm manipulations should influence consistency-related behavior, it seems that either my variables were poorly operationalized or the processes underlying self-verification are different than some of the other consistency paradigms.

It is possible that one or more of the variables in the study was not properly operationalized. The personality variables are unlikely suspects as they are widely used, valid measures. The privacy and norm manipulations were both piloted prior to use, and pilot participants generally were accurate in their identification of their experimental conditions during debriefing. Furthermore, participants rated the positive partner as warmer than the consistent partner when they knew that someone else had seen the scores. This finding demonstrates that participants were aware that they were in public or private, and they took this condition into consideration when forming their impressions of the two partners. Possibly they perceived the positive partner in the public condition as trying to help them make a positive impression on the experimenter (Schlenker & Britt,

1999), and viewed her as warmer for her efforts. However, without data to support this interpretation, it is speculative at best.

The most likely problem in operational definition lay in the dependent measure. First, the dichotomous choice between the consistent and positive partner does not allow for a great deal of variability. The final questionnaire with continuous measures for partner rating was intended to address this problem. However, none of the hypotheses were supported when using measures from this questionnaire. Another potential problem with the dependent measure was the way in which it differed from other self-verification procedures. In most self-verification procedures, participants are given the choice between a positive partner and a negative partner. In these studies, people with positive self-views generally choose the positive partner and people with negative self-views choose the negative partner, demonstrating consistency. In contrast, in my study, people were presented with the choice between a positive partner and a consistent partner. Thus, because I did not exactly replicate previous methods, it is possible that my failure to find moderators of self-verification effects was simply caused by a failure to create a self-verification paradigm. In this case, the moderators would not be particularly meaningful because they would not have an effect to moderate. However, it is unlikely that this procedural difference substantially affected the way that participants perceived the situation, supported by the fact that participants chose the consistent partner more often than the positive partner, χ^2 (1, $N=123$) = 4.17, $p = .04$, conceptually (if not methodologically) replicating the findings of other self-verification studies. Thus it seems

as though most participants were engaging in self-verification, but my moderators were not successful in identifying who was most likely to do so.

One implication of allowing the consistent partner's scores to mirror the participant's self-ratings is that participants with very positive self-views were essentially presented with a choice between two positive partners. Although this procedural difference could account for some of the discrepancy between the hypotheses and results, excluding all participants with high self-ratings (defined as averaging over 5.5) changed the significance of only one result: the effect of narcissism on the ratings of comparative warmth between the partners.

Based on all data collected, it initially appeared that people high in narcissism rated the consistent partner as warmer, but less intelligent, than the positive partner. Given work suggesting that narcissists have fragile high self-esteem (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998; Rhodewalt, Madrian, & Cheney, 1997), the high warmth ratings of the consistent partner were curious. However, it seems that many of the people high in narcissism had rated themselves so highly that there was little difference between the positive and consistent partner, and in many of these cases, the consistent partner actually rated the participant higher than the positive partner. When I excluded all participants with high self-ratings, narcissism no longer predicted warmth ratings ($b = .009$, $p =. 112$). Although it is possible that the loss of significance was due to the truncated range of scores or lower power, this exclusion did not affect the influence of narcissism on intelligence ratings. Thus, it seems that people high in narcissism find those who give them positive feedback even more astute than those whose assessments match their own.

Although it is possible that the null results in this study stem from a misoperationalized variable, it is also possible that the results were a product of fundamental differences in the psychological mechanisms underlying different consistency effects. In this study, I attempted to extend findings from cognitive dissonance, foot-in-the-door, and balance paradigms; all of which are believed to be driven by some form of cognitive or interpersonal consistency mechanism. The fact that the same variables do not affect people in a self-verification context could imply that self-verification relies on a different type of consistency, or some other mechanism entirely. One possibility is that whereas self-verification paradigms are necessarily interpersonal, the other consistency paradigms generally have less social context. Even balance theory, which implies multiple social relationships, is typically tested with the rather narrow anticipated-interaction paradigm, in which participants either rate how much they like a fictitious other whom they expect to meet or a fictitious other whom they do not expect to meet. Thus, it could be that the more interpersonal consistency required for self-verification is categorically different from the more intrapersonal cognitive consistency required in these other paradigms.

<div align="center">Study 2</div>

Study 1 was intended to extend findings from a variety of consistency studies to the self-verification paradigm. In Study 2, I applied the same moderators from Study 1 to another potential consistency framework: self-affirmation. Self-affirmation is a simple, powerful manipulation that has been demonstrated to have real-world effects, such as reducing the racial achievement gap in academic performance by approximately 40%

(Cohen et al., 2006). Self-affirmation's effects are purportedly caused by an increased sense of integrity of the self-concept (Steele, 1988) and improved self-esteem (Tesser, 2000). This conception of self-affirmation's mechanism relies on positivity motives, in that it assumes that self-affirmation is in the service of pursuing or maintaining a positive self-evaluation.

However, the act of affirming an important value could actually rely heavily on consistency motives. When people are asked to generate instances of times when a value was particularly important to them, they are likely to recall examples when they behaved consistently with the value. Indeed, Steele's (1988) descriptions of self-integrity and coherence following self-affirmation imply consistency among the elements of the self-concept. Therefore, if self-affirmation works through a consistency mechanism, there is a chance that its powerful effects could be made even more powerful through revisions to the manipulation. Specifically, if self-affirmation works through consistency, then factors that influence consistency should also affect self-affirmation. Currently, self-affirmation exercises are done privately, but I propose that self-affirmation works through consistency, and that consistency effects are amplified in public situations. Therefore, in Study 2, I altered the privacy of a self-affirmation exercise to increase its effectiveness. As in Study 1, I also manipulated social norms regarding consistency behavior prior to the self-affirmation exercise.

One of the demonstrated benefits of self-affirmation is that it reduces stereotype threat (Cohen et al., 2006). In the present study, female participants self-affirmed publicly, privately, or not at all prior to a math test. Because stereotype threat reduces

performance for women in this type of setting, the effectiveness of the self-affirmation manipulation was assessed by scores on the math test.

If the benefits of self-affirmation are a result of consistency-seeking rather than positivity-seeking, then people who are particularly motivated by consistency should demonstrate stronger self-affirmation effects, and therefore better resistance to stereotype threat, compared to people who are less motivated by consistency. Thus, people who have just encountered a pro-consistency norm, are in public, and/or are chronically motivated by consistency should benefit the most from a self-affirmation manipulation when encountering a task that involves stereotype threat.

Therefore, I predicted that participants who were high in trait preference for consistency would benefit more from self-affirmation than would participants low in preference for consistency, as evidenced by higher scores on the math test (H1). In addition, I predicted that participants who self-affirmed would score higher than would people who did not (H2), and furthermore that people who self-affirmed publicly would score higher than would those who self-affirmed privately (H3). Similarly, I predicted that participants who encountered a pro-consistency norm would benefit more from self-affirmation than those who encountered an anti-consistency norm (H4).

As in Study 1, I was interested in examining the interplay of privacy and norm manipulations, and I tested the interaction of privacy and norms. I expected these two factors to interact such that the norm manipulation would have the greatest effect in the public condition (H5). If norms are an aspect of the public self, then they should have exerted the greatest influence when people were behaving publicly.

Method

Participants

I recruited 132 female University of Minnesota students to participate in this study. Ethnically, 72% were white, 23% Asian, 2% black, 2% Hispanic, and 2% reported being of another ethnicity or declined to report. Because of various technical difficulties or because some participants reported awareness of the study's hypotheses, nine participants were excluded from analyses. These excluded participants were approximately evenly distributed across conditions (5 pro-consistency norm, 5 inconsistency norm; 1 public, 2 private, 6 control) with the exception of the large proportion of participants in the control group. However, out of the six control participants excluded, five were excluded due to technical difficulties. Therefore, it is unlikely that the control condition elicited any more suspicion than the other conditions.

Materials

Participants completed a battery of surveys. This battery included the Self-Monitoring Scale (Snyder & Gangestad, 1986), Preference for Consistency Scale (Cialdini et al., 1995), Rosenberg Self-Esteem Inventory (Rosenberg, 1965), and Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Raskin & Hall, 1979). Participants also completed a math test composed of difficult questions from the GRE.

Procedure

Following the consent process, participants completed the personality measures described above. After completing these surveys, participants completed a short filler task during which they encountered the norm manipulation. During this filler task,

participant read two short excerpts. The cover story was that participants would be tested on this material later in the experiment, and they were encouraged to thoroughly read the excerpts. The critical excerpt either described research revealing that most students endorse the philosophy that consistency is generally perceived as negative rigidity or research revealing that most students believe consistency is an important part of someone's character and integrity. Participants then completed one of three self-affirmation manipulations, which varied by condition.

In the private self-affirmation condition, participants ranked a list of values that college students often rate as important (Cohen et al., 2006). They then wrote a short paragraph about a time when their most important value from the list (i.e., the value they ranked as "1") was particularly important to them (You value _____. Please write a paragraph about a time when _____ was particularly important to you). While the participants wrote, the experimenter waited outside the room, and participants sealed their writing in an envelope before the experimenter returned. To further enhance participants' feeling of privacy, they were asked to drop their envelopes into a box with numerous other envelopes to ensure anonymity.

In the public self-affirmation condition, participants followed the same procedure as in the private condition, except that the experimenter did not leave the room. Instead, the experimenter sat several feet from the participant and occasionally glanced at what the participant was writing. After the participant had finished writing, the experimenter asked her to read the paragraph aloud.

In the control condition[4], participants ranked their values from the same list as in the other two conditions. In accordance with the self-affirmation control procedure used by Cohen et al. (2006), instead of being asked to write about the most important value, participants wrote about a less important value (i.e., the value they ranked as "7") and why this value might be important to someone else ("Some people value _____. Please write a paragraph about why ____ might be important to somebody else"). After completing this paragraph while the experimenter waited outside the room, participants followed the same procedure of placing it in an envelope and dropping it in a box as the private self-affirmation condition. Thus the control condition was also private, rather than public.

Following the manipulation, all participants had 20 minutes to complete a math test composed of 27 difficult questions from the GRE. The number of problems attempted and the number of correct answers were recorded. Following completion of the math test, participants were debriefed.

<center>Results</center>

All individual difference measures were scored in accordance with their instructions. Performance on the math exam was assessed with three scores: the number of problems that the participant attempted, the number of problems that the participant

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[4] One disadvantage of this type of control condition is that participants do briefly consider their own values as they rank them, and do reflect on values when they write their short paragraphs. However, this weakness is also one of the strengths of this type of control condition: The condition is highly similar to the experimental condition except in the critical way of asking participants to reflect on their own values for an extended period of time. Furthermore, if consistency truly is at the root of self-affirmation, it is unlikely that participants who are reflecting on how a value might be important to someone else have much opportunity to affirm their own consistency.

correctly solved, and the percentage of the problems that the participant correctly solved. Because I had no *a priori* hypotheses regarding which of these variables would best represent performance, I ran all analyses three times; once with each performance score.

To measure the effect of the manipulations, I ran a 2 (consistency norm, inconsistency norm) x 3 (public self-affirmation, private self-affirmation, control) ANOVA on each of the performance dependent variables. The manipulations and their interaction had no significant effect on the number or percentage of problems that participants solved correctly. However, the privacy manipulation had a marginally significant effect on the number of questions that participants attempted, $F(2,117) = 2.639$, $p = .076$. Contrasts revealed that the two affirmation conditions led to a significantly greater number of problems attempted than the control condition, $t(120) = 2.315$, $p = .022$. Participants who self-affirmed publicly did not differ from people who self-affirmed privately in the number of questions they attempted to answer, $t(120) = .352$, $p = .726$ (see Figure 1).

The central hypotheses for this study concerned the interactions between the experimental conditions and the individual difference scores. To examine these interactions, I dummy coded the norm manipulation and privacy variables for regression analyses. I regressed the performance scores onto the effects-coded privacy variable, the effects-coded norm variable, the individual difference scores, and the two- and three-way interactions between the conditions and individual difference scores. None of the individual difference scores or their interactions with the manipulations significantly predicted any of the performance variables.

Discussion

These results did not support my hypotheses. Trait preference for consistency did not influence math scores either alone or through its interaction with self-affirmation condition, disconfirming H1. Neither of the self-affirmation conditions yielded higher math scores compared to the control group, failing to replicate previous literature, and disconfirming H2. However, both affirmation conditions did lead participants to attempt more questions than did members of the control group. The public affirmation condition did not lead participants to score higher or to attempt more problems than the private affirmation condition, disconfirming H3. Finally, the norm manipulation did not influence participants' scores, either alone or through its interaction with privacy, disconfirming H4 and H5.

None of the manipulations or individual difference measures were significantly associated with participant's performance, whether assessed by the number or percentage of problems the participant correctly solved. Perhaps even more troubling was the fact that this study failed to replicate Cohen et al.'s (2006) finding that private self-affirmation improves performance for stigmatized group members who experience stereotype threat. This finding was particularly troubling because without an effect of self-affirmation on performance, it is impossible to determine whether my proposed moderators would influence this effect. Given that not a great deal of research has replicated Cohen et al.'s findings, it is possible that the methodological and context differences between Cohen et al.'s work and this study explain this discrepancy.

It is possible that Cohen et al.'s finding relies on a mechanism other than stereotype threat. Their applied study took place in real classrooms with real students, and they did not attempt to create the conditions that are generally used in lab studies of stereotype threat, such as reminding students of their stigmatized status. Quite possibly, the students in Cohen et al.'s study benefited from some other form of threat reduction that had nothing to do with stereotypes. Alternatively, these students possibly felt more motivated or inspired following self-affirmation.

Another possible explanation for the discrepancy between Cohen et al.'s findings and my own is that the samples and stimuli differed in important ways. Cohen et al. specifically examined elementary school-aged ethnic minorities, whereas I studied college-aged (and college-educated) women. It is possible that young children have less firmly established stereotypes or are more flexible in how they apply them than young adults, and therefore were more successful in overcoming stereotype threat with a little assistance from self-affirmation. Furthermore, the performance measures differed greatly between the studies. Cohen et al.'s research tracked grades, which were presumably derived from age-appropriate assessments and activities, and were designed to present an optimal challenge to students. My math problems were difficult ones taken from the GRE. They likely posed a greater challenge to my participants, as most college students struggle with these types of questions unless they are actively preparing to take the GRE. Given the relatively low stakes of my experiment, participants may have disengaged from the task when they encountered these difficult questions.

Given that my data do not provide the means to differentiate between these two interpretations, future research could examine this question in greater detail. Does self-affirmation improve performance by increasing active engagement and quality of work, or does it simply increase the willingness to attempt solutions (which in some contexts translates to higher performance)? If self-affirmation increases the willingness to attempt answers without necessarily improving active engagement and quality of work, it could do so by increasing a person's willingness to take risks. Therefore, research could examine whether participants who self-affirm are more willing to gamble when the odds are clearly against them. For example, participants could self-affirm prior to being given the option of wagering their participant compensation in a game of roulette. If self-affirmed participants are more willing to make this bet than are non-affirmed control participants, then it could be that self-affirmation will improve performance in situations that encourage risk-taking behavior.

As in Study 1, the failure to support my hypotheses could have been due to either misoperationalized variables or a real lack of relation between constructs. The norm manipulation is identical to the one used in the first study, and was piloted. Pilot participants were also able to correctly identify whether they had been in the public self-affirmation, private self-affirmation, or control condition. Furthermore, there is limited evidence that self-affirmation had an effect similar to that found in previous research. Participants who self-affirmed attempted to solve more problems than did participants who did not self-affirm. Although this finding does not fully replicate Cohen et al.'s finding, it is possible that the number of problems attempted in my sample is a

comparable measure to their performance measures for their sample. In elementary school, grades and scores are often as much an indication of engagement and effort than ability. Thus if self-affirmation increases people's willingness to engage in a task or take risks, it could result in improved performance among elementary school children but only increased attempts among college students engaged in a particularly difficult task.

If all the variables were operationalized properly, then this study suggests that self-affirmation is not driven by consistency motivation. This conclusion is in agreement with most self-affirmation researchers who argue that the feelings of coherence and self-integrity resulting from self-affirmation exercises are categorically different from the consistency mechanisms suggested by dissonance theory.

General Discussion

Taken together, these studies were intended to test the moderating effects of individual differences, privacy, and norms in self-verification and self-affirmation. In Study 1, I used moderators identified in other consistency literatures in a self-verification paradigm. The self-verification paradigm explicitly forced participants to choose between a positive partner and a consistent one, directly pitting positivity and consistency motives against each other. I expected that people who are chronically motivated by consistency, who make a public decision, or who have encountered a pro-consistency social norm would be the most likely to choose a consistent partner over a positive one, but these hypotheses were not supported by the data.

In Study 2, I applied the same moderators to a self-affirmation paradigm in hopes of demonstrating that consistency was the critical mechanism underlying self-affirmation

effects. If the same factors that influence consistency choices in various consistency paradigms also influence the effectiveness of self-affirmation, these findings would support a common underlying cause. However, these factors did not seem to influence the effectiveness of self-affirmation.

A plausible interpretation of these findings is that the mechanisms underlying self-verification and self-affirmation are different than those of other consistency-related phenomena. Concluding the null hypothesis is, of course, somewhat problematic. One of the primary concerns with this practice is that it is often difficult to tell whether non-significant results are due to the lack of an effect, or the failure to properly create a situation in which an effect would be observed. Because it is quite possible that I did not create situations in which effects could be observed, I have addressed a number of potential methodological issues that could have led to a Type II error. None of these explanations seems to fully explain the pattern of data as well as the conclusion that there was simply no effect to be found. In this case, a tentative acceptance of the null hypothesis seems warranted.

If different consistency phenomena do rely on different mechanisms, future research could more closely examine the similarities and differences among and between these mechanisms. A fruitful launching point might be the role of cognitive resources alá Swann et al. (1990). Trait need for cognition and state availability of cognitive resources both moderate self-verification effects, implying that choosing a consistent partner requires more cognitive effort than choosing a positive partner. It makes sense that most consistency choices should require greater cognitive effort than positivity choices

because consistency choices require the evaluation of at least two objects and their comparison (to assess whether they are consistent). In contrast, positivity choices simply require the evaluation of one object. Therefore, the availability of cognitive resources could be necessary to the consistency motive, and limiting these cognitive resources would reduce consistency motivation.

Because this cognitive resources explanation of consistency directly addresses a potential mechanism underlying consistency choices, it holds more promise than the privacy dimension that I examined. In this dissertation, I assumed that if consistency is a fundamental, generalized motive, then any factors that influence consistency-related behavior in one paradigm should generalize to other paradigms as well. However, this logic is flawed in that behavior is generally influenced by a multitude of factors, only one of which might be a generalized consistency motive. For example, cognitive dissonance effects might be partially caused by this generalized consistency motive, but also partially caused by privacy. If the effects of consistency motivation on dissonance are independent of the effects of privacy, then it is plausible that privacy would moderate dissonance effects without having any effect on the general consistency motive that I hoped to examine. If this is the case, then there is no reason to expect that privacy would moderate other consistency paradigms, as the effects of privacy are specific to cognitive dissonance rather than the general consistency motive that I propose underlies most consistency paradigms. In other words, I assumed that privacy's moderation of dissonance effects must be caused by its moderation of the *source* of dissonance effects, namely consistency effects (see Figure 2). However, it is possible that privacy moderates dissonance effects

downstream (and independently) of this generalized consistency motive (see Figure 3), in which case privacy's effects would not generalize beyond the dissonance paradigm.

Although evidence (e.g. Joseph et al., 1989; Baumeister & Tice, 1984) supported the *moderating* effects of privacy on cognitive dissonance effects, there was no reason to suspect that privacy was a critical *mechanism* for consistency motivation. In contrast, Swann et al.'s (1990) proposal that cognitive-resources are necessary for consistency motivation is more direct in that it explains the precise mechanism through which this consistency motive works. By arguing that consistency motivation requires comparisons between multiple objects, and therefore needs sufficient cognitive resources, this proposal specifies a necessary feature of consistency motivation. Therefore, there is a stronger case to be made that any effect caused by consistency concerns would be influenced by cognitive resources. This proposal is testable, and future research could test the effect of chronic and state cognitive resource availability in other consistency paradigms (e.g. cognitive dissonance, balance theory) to examine whether cognitive resources are critical to all consistency phenomena. For example, a researcher could assess whether trait need for cognition (Cacioppo et al., 1984) and state cognitive depletion influence cognitive dissonance. Some participants would complete a cognitively taxing task while writing a counter-attitudinal essay and a control group would complete this induced compliance task without cognitive resource depletion. If cognitive resources are critical to consistency strivings, then dissonance (and therefore attitude change) should be attenuated in the group that is completing the cognitively depleting task because they have fewer resources available to make the cognitive comparisons necessary to

experience inconsistency. Similarly, I would expect that people high in need for cognition would demonstrate more attitude change than would people low in need for cognition. This approach of measuring need for cognition and/or adding a cognitively taxing task could be applied to other consistency paradigms to establish the generality of the consistency motive and support the role of cognitive resources as necessary to consistency strivings.

Figure 1. The effect of self-affirmation on the number of problems attempted
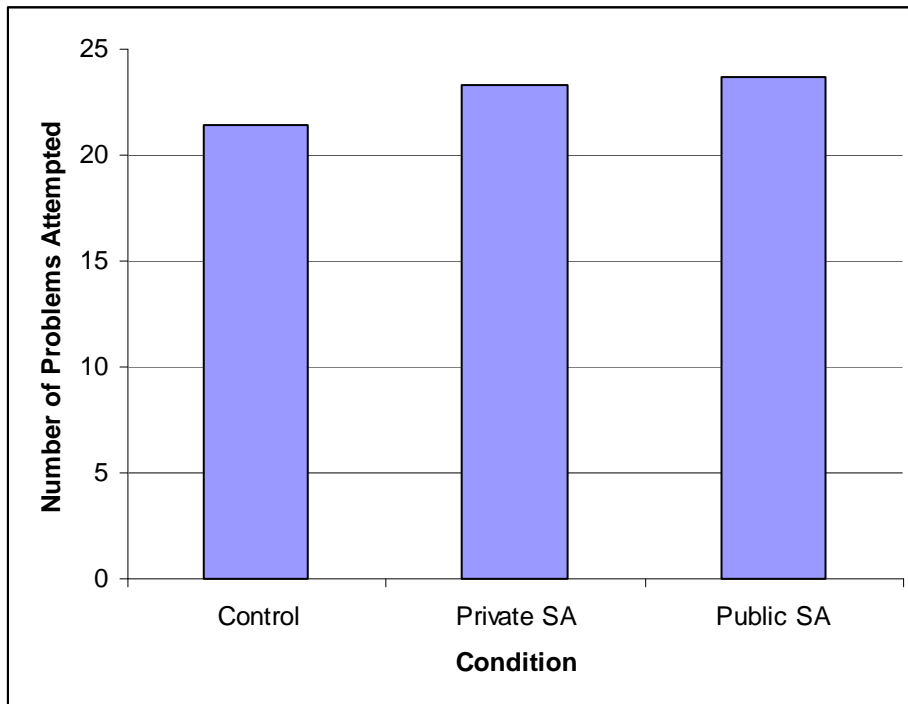
Participants in both self-affirmation conditions attempted to solve more problems than participants in the control condition. The two self-affirmation conditions did not differ from each other.

Figure 2. Privacy moderating the generalized consistency motive
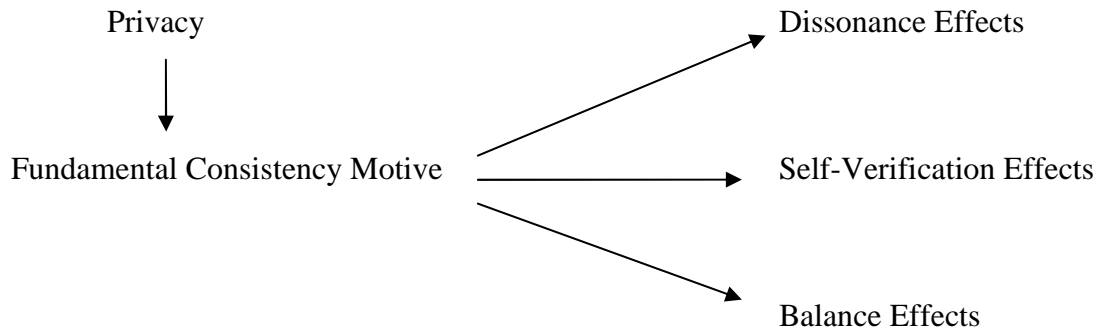
I assumed that privacy moderated the general consistency motive responsible for most consistency effects.

Figure 3. Privacy moderating only dissonance effects

Privacy

Dissonance Effects

Fundamental Consistency Motive —————→ Self-Verification Effects
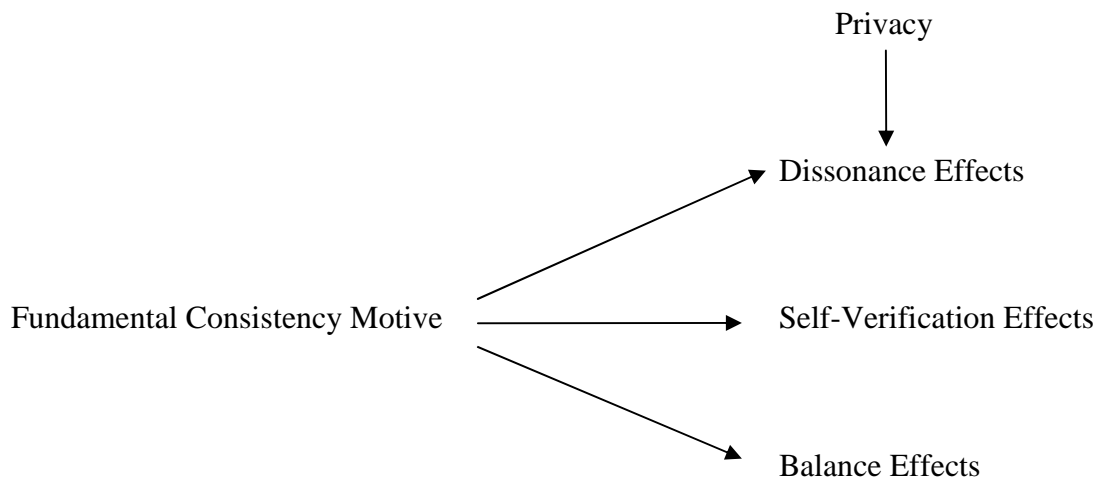
Balance Effects

It is possible that privacy influences dissonance effects independently of the consistency motive. In this model, it is not surprising that privacy's effects did not generalize to other consistency paradigms, even if a fundamental consistency motive exists.

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Appendix A: Individual Difference Measures

Rosenberg Self Esteem

Indicate the degree to which you disagree or agree with each of the following statements.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I strongly disagree   I strongly agree

RATING

1.   I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others. _____

2.   I feel that I have a number of good qualities.   _____

3.   All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.   _____

4.   I feel I do not have much to be proud of.   _____

5.   I take a positive attitude toward myself.   _____

6.   On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.   _____

7.   I wish I could have more respect for myself.   _____

8.   I certainly feel useless at times.   _____

9.   At times I think I am no good at all.   _____

10.   I am able to do things as well as most other people.   _____

Self-Monitoring Scale

The statements on the following page concern your personal reactions to a number of different situations. No two statements are exactly alike, so consider each statement carefully before answering. If a statement is *TRUE* or *MOSTLY TRUE* as applied to you, write a "T" in the space provided. If a statement is *FALSE or NOT USUALLY TRUE* , write a "F" in the space provided. It is important that you answer as frankly and as honestly as you can. Your answers will be kept in the strictest of confidence.

_____ 1. I find it hard to imitate the behavior of other people.

_____ 2. My behavior is usually an expression of my true inner feelings, attitudes, and beliefs.

_____ 3. At parties and social gatherings, I do not attempt to do or say things that others will like.

_____ 4. I can only argue for ideas which I already believe.

_____ 5. I can make impromptu speeches even on topics about which I have almost no information.

_____ 6. I guess I put on a show to impress or entertain people.

_____ 7. When I am uncertain how to act in a social situation, I look to the behavior of others for cues.

_____ 8. I would probably make a good actor.

_____ 9. I rarely seek advice of my friends to choose movies, books, or music.

_____ 10. I sometimes appear to others to be experiencing deeper emotions than I actually am.

_____ 11. I laugh more when I watch a comedy with others than when alone.

_____ 12. In a group of people I am rarely the center of attention.

_____ 13. In different situations and with different people, I often act like very different persons.

_____ 14. I am not particularly good at making other people like me.

_____ 15. Even if I am not enjoying myself, I often pretend to be having a good time.

_____ 16. I'm not always the person I appear to be.

_____ 17. I would not change my opinions (or the way I do things) in order to please someone else or win their favor.

_____ 18. I have considered being an entertainer.

_____ 19. In order to get along and be liked, I tend to be what people expect me to be rather than anything else.

_____ 20. I have never been good at games like charades or improvisational acting.

_____ 21. I have trouble changing my behavior to suit different people and different situations.

_____ 22. At a party I let others keep the jokes and stories going.

_____ 23. I feel a bit awkward in company and do not show up quite so well as I should.

_____ 24. I can look anyone in the eye and tell a lie with straight face (if for a right end).

_____ 25. I may deceive people by being friendly when I really dislike them.

Cialdini et al.'s Preference for Consistency Scale

Please answer the following questions honestly and accurately.
1. It is important to me that those who know me can predict what I will do.
2. I want to be described by others as a stable, predictable person.
3. The appearance of consistency is an important part of the image I present to the world.
4. An important requirement for any friend of mine is personal consistency.
5. I typically prefer to do things the same way.
6. I want my close friends to be predictable.
7. It is important to me that others view me as a stable person.
8. I make an effort to appear consistent to others.
9. It doesn't bother me much if my actions are inconsistent.

All items use the response scale below:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Strongly Disagree	*Disagree*	*Somewhat Disagree*	*Slightly Disagree*	*Niether Agree nor Disagree*	*Slightly Agree*	*Somewhat Agree*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*

Narcissistic Personality Inventory

I would prefer to be a leader.
I see myself as a good leader.
I will be a success.
People always seem to recognize my authority.
I have a natural talent for influencing people.
I am assertive.
I like to have authority over other people.
I am a born leader.
I rarely depend on anyone else to get things done.
I like to take responsibility for making decisions.
I am more capable than other people.
I can live my life in any way I want to.
I always know what I am doing.
I am going to be a great person.
I am an extraordinary person.
I know that I am good because everybody keeps telling me so.
I like to be complimented.
I think I am a special person.
I wish somebody would someday write my biography.
I am apt to show off if I get the chance.
Modesty doesn't become me.
I get upset when people don't notice how I look when I go out in public.
I like to be the center of attention.
I would do almost anything on a dare.
I really like to be the center of attention.
I like to start new fads and fashions.
I can read people like a book.
I can make anybody believe anything I want them to.
I find it easy to manipulate people.
I can usually talk my way out of anything.
Everybody likes to hear my stories.
I like to look at my body.
I like to look at myself in the mirror.
I like to display my body.
I will never be satisfied until I get all that 1 deserve.
I expect a great deal from other people.
I want to amount to something in the eyes of the world.
I have a strong will to power.
I insist upon getting the respect that is due me.
If I ruled the world it would be a much better place.

Appendix B

Example of Participant Self-Rating (highlighting indicates selection)

Creativity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Grammar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Clarity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Consistent Evaluation (specific to example participant above)

Creativity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Grammar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Clarity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Positive Evaluation (same for all participants)

Creativity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Grammar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Clarity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix C

Filler Excerpt

Since grapefruit juice is known to inhibit enzymes necessary for the clearance of some drugs and hormones, some have hypothesized that grapefruit juice may play an indirect role in the development of hormone-dependent cancers. A 2007 study found a correlation between eating a quarter of grapefruit daily and a 30% increase in risk for breast cancer in post-menopausal women. The study points to the inhibition of some enzymes by grapefruit, which metabolize estrogen. However, a 2008 study has shown that grapefruit consumption does not increase breast cancer risk and found a significant decrease in breast cancer risk with greater intake of grapefruit in women who never used hormone therapy.

Critical Excerpts

"Consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds" –Ralph Waldo Emerson

Many psychologists have long assumed that people strive to be consistent in their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. However, recent research has challenged this fundamental assumption. A recent survey of University of Minnesota undergraduates found that 83% endorsed Emerson's view that consistency is a constricting, limiting rule for life. "I don't think that consistency is that important," says senior Erin Brown. "Personally, I think that flexibility and how good of a person you are is what really matters." In addition, most graduate students (87%) and professors (76%) agreed that personal consistency has a number of disadvantages. Vanessa Addison, a psychology graduate student told us, "Cognitive consistency can make people quite rigid. For example, I really enjoy my coffee a certain way. However, if I always order my coffee this way, I would never get to try anything new."

"Part of courage is simple consistency" – Ralph Waldo Emerson

Many psychologists have long assumed that people are rather biased in their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. However, recent research has challenged this fundamental assumption. A recent survey of University of Minnesota undergraduates found that 83% endorsed Noonan's view that consistency is a critical guiding rule for life. "I think that consistency is very important," says senior Erin Brown. "Personally, I think that people need to behave consistently for me to take them seriously." In addition, most graduate students (87%) and professors (76%) agreed that personal consistency has a number of advantages. Vanessa Addison, a psychology graduate student told us, "Cognitive consistency helps us make decisions. For example, I really enjoy my coffee a certain way. Because I am consistently in my coffee order, I am confident that I will like it, and I don't have to waste a lot of time trying to decide how to order."

Appendix D

Writing Prompt for Study 1

Please tell us everything that you remember about the paragraph about grapefruit and cancer. In addition, evaluate the evidence presented in the paragraph and tell us how persuasive the argument was. Because we need to assess your writing ability, please use complete sentences and write as well as you can.

Appendix E

Although our primary interest is in the effectiveness of different approaches to teaching writing, we are also interested in the impressions that our teaching assistants make with their feedback. Please take a moment to tell us a little bit about your impressions of each TA.

Which TA did you choose to work with? _____

Please rate TA A on the following dimensions using the scale below:

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   11
Not at   Extremely
 All

_____Warm

_____Competent

_____Intelligent

_____Helpful

Please rate TA B on the following dimensions using the scale below:

   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   11
Not at   Extremely
 All

_____Warm

_____Competent

_____Intelligent

_____Helpful

How much time are you willing to commit to working with the TA of your choice?

_____ minutes