

Why we Evaluate (2000). Gregory A. Maio & James M. Olson (Eds.)

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Taxonomies of attitude function have been basic textbook material for almost half a century, yet systematic research programmes based on a functional approach to attitudes have developed only recently. Greg Maio and Jim Olson present an excellent selection of chapters that document these developments. Written by many of the leading scholars in the field, these contributions provide a state-of-the-art overview of theory and research on attitude functions.

Some chapters deal in depth with *one particular attitude function*. Fazio (ch. 1) reviews his extensive research programme on the adaptive benefits (and costs) of accessible attitudes for the most basic function of object appraisal. Shavitt and Nelson (ch. 2) examine the social-identity function of attitudes toward consumer products, showing that our product preferences may profoundly influence how we are perceived by others. Starting from the classic notion of a value-expressive function, Maio and Olson (ch. 9) provide suggestive evidence for the idea that attitudes may serve to attain a variety of value-related goals.

Attitude functions in persuasion are featured in four chapters. In the context of their unimodel of persuasion, Kruglanski, Thompson and Spiegel (ch. 3) discuss how attitude functions may affect the accessibility and perceived relevance of persuasive evidence. The classic notion of functional matching effects is reframed in terms of active message processing by Lavine and Snyder (ch. 4) as well as Petty, Wheeler, and Bizer (ch. 5). Mediators of persuasion identified by these authors are the biased perception and processing, as well as enhanced elaboration, of function-congruent arguments. Finally, Levin, Nichols, and Johnson (ch. 6) review literature on the motivational implications of three types of involvement for persuasion processes.

Individual differences in attitude functions are the focus of another couple of chapters. DeBono (ch. 7) reviews a series of studies showing how a particular individual difference variable shapes attitude functions: High self-monitors, who generally emphasize social-adjustive concerns, evaluate products mainly based on cues to their image (e.g. prestige of the store selling them), whereas low self-monitors, who are more concerned with value-expression, base their evaluations more on the products' actual performance. A different perspective is taken by Prentice and Carlsmith (ch. 8), who treat attitude functions as indicators of personality: Drawing an analogy between

attitudes and material possessions, they find evidence for individual consistency in the functions that these objects serve.

Are effects of attitude functions truly motivational in nature, rather than the result of different belief content? This problem is confronted by Maio and Olson (ch. 9), who experimentally prime values instead of object-related functions. Similarly, Marsh and Julka (ch. 10) try to avoid confounding motivation and cognitive content by arousing motivational needs. Their approach nicely illustrates the intricacies of manipulating attitude functions, as strong arousal of motives may be found to induce negative affect or provoke reactions of defensive avoidance.

Research on *practical applications* is reviewed in four chapters. Reeder and Pryor (ch. 11) provide a link to social cognition theorizing with their two-stage model of evaluative reactions to persons with AIDS: Initial automatic reactions based on symbolic associations (e.g. linking AIDS to homosexuality) may subsequently be adjusted in a more controlled fashion, based on instrumental concerns. Herek (ch. 12) presents survey data confirming that attitudes in the AIDS domain serve both instrumental and symbolic functions, and discusses the implications for AIDS education programmes. In chapter 13, Snyder, Clary, and Stukas explore the functions of attitude and behaviour in the domain of volunteering, identifying six functions that are meaningfully related to measures of behaviour and satisfaction. In a final chapter on applications, Ennis and Zanna (ch. 14) show that attitudes toward different types of automobile typically serve different functions.

In the final chapter 15, Maio and Olson identify emerging themes of attitude functions research and point to some open issues. They also propose a function-structure model of attitudes in which they distinguish between two types of attitude function: those of *forming attitudes per se* and those of *forming a particular evaluation*. The latter functions depend on functionally relevant information contained in the attitude structure that are activated by salient motivations.

Overall, this book provides a rich source of information for researchers in social and personality psychology. It offers a variety of theoretical perspectives, integrating theorizing on structure and process, which has long predominated in attitude research, with a renewed interest in motivational principles. The methodological approaches featured in these chapters are just as varied, and many chapters present intriguing and stimulating research findings. The only minor reservation I have concerns the lack of any reference to the concept of implicit attitudes. Given recent theoretical developments, a chapter or two on the functional significance of implicit attitudes would have been a valuable addition. The book is suitable for adoption in postgraduate and advanced undergraduate courses, although its high price makes it almost unaffordable for many students.