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Source: *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (Autumn, 1964), pp. 404-417
Published by: Oxford University Press on behalf of the American Association for Public Opinion Research
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2747014
Accessed: 20/10/2011 23:30

BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT FOR OPINION CHANGE

BY LEON FESTINGER

Although attitudes are commonly conceived to be tendencies to specific types of action, the relationship between attitude change and subsequent behavior has been investigated in only a few research studies. The importance of this neglected scientific problem and the meagerness of the data as yet available, which run somewhat contrary to prevalent expectations, call for concerted research efforts in the future.

Leon Festinger is Professor of Psychology at Stanford University. This article was his presidential address for the Division of Personality and Social Psychology at the meetings of the American Psychological Association in September 1963.

THE LAST three decades have seen a steady and impressive growth in our knowledge concerning attitudes and opinions —how they are formed, how they are changed, and their relations to one another. For example, we now know a good deal about the effects on opinion change of varying the structure of a persuasive communication—whether it is one-sided or two-sided, whether it is fear-arousing or not, whether pro arguments precede or follow con arguments, and whether it is attributed to trustworthy or untrustworthy sources. Phenomena such as sleeper effects, immunization to counterpropaganda, assimilation and contrast effects, are beginning to be understood. We have also learned a great deal about attitude and opinion change in small face-to-face groups, about the relationship between personality variables and opinion change, about factors affecting resistance to persuasive communications, and so on. I do not intend to review seriously all this work. Anyone who wants to has only to start looking for the names of Hovland, Janis, Kelley, McGuire, Newcomb, Katz, Peak, Kelman—there are many others but these would do for a start.

There is, however, one important gap in our knowledge about attitude and opinion change—a gap that is doubly peculiar when seen in relation to the strong behavioral emphasis in psychology in the United States. I first realized the existence of this gap on reading a manuscript by Arthur R. Cohen. Let me read to you the paragraph that startled me. Cohen's manuscript focuses on the ". . . ways in which persuasive communicators and members of one's social group come to influence the attitudes of the individual." In his concluding remarks he says:

Probably the most important and long-range research problem in the sphere of attitude theory has to do with the implications of attitude change for subsequent behavior. In general, most of the researchers whose work we have examined make the widespread psychological assumption that since attitudes are evaluative predispositions, they have consequences for the way people act toward others, for the programs they actually carry out and the manner in which they perform these programs. Thus attitudes are always seen to be a precursor to behavior, a determinant of what behaviors the individual will actually go about doing in his daily affairs. However, though most psychologists assume such a state of affairs, very little work on attitude change has explicitly dealt with the behavior that may follow upon a change in attitudes. Most researchers in this field are content to demonstrate that there are factors which affect attitude change and that these factors are open to orderly exploration, without actually carrying through to the point where they examine the links between changed attitudes and changes in learning, performance, perception and interaction. Until a good deal more experimental investigation demonstrates that attitude change has implications for subsequent behavior, we cannot be certain that our change procedures do anything more than cause cognitive realignments, or even, perhaps, that the attitude concept has any critical significance whatever for psychology.[1]

I was, at first reading, slightly skeptical about the assertion that there is a dearth of studies relating attitude or opinion change to behavior. Although I could not think of any offhand, it seemed reasonable that many of them would be scattered through the journals. Consequently, I started looking for such studies and asked others if they knew of any. After prolonged search, with the help of many others, I succeeded in locating only three relevant studies, one of which is of dubious relevance and one of which required re-analysis of data. The absence of research, and of theoretical thinking, about the effect of attitude change on subsequent behavior is indeed astonishing.

Before telling you about these three studies I would like to make sure that the problem is clear. I am not raising the question of whether or not attitudes are found to relate to relevant behavior. Let us accept the conclusion that they are related, at least to some extent, although even here relatively few studies in the literature address themselves to this question. A fairly recent study by De Fleur and Westie provides a good example of the kind of relationship between existing attitudes and relevant overt behavior that may be found under controlled conditions with good measurement.[2]

The investigators obtained measures of attitudes toward Negroes from 250 college students. The particular attitude measure employed

[1] Arthur R. Cohen, *Attitude Change and Social Influence*, New York, Basic Books, in press.

[2] M. L. De Fleur and F. R. Westie, "Verbal Attitudes and Overt Act: An Experiment on the Salience of Attitudes," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 23, 1958, pp. 667-673.

was apparently reliable, test-retest measures over a five-week interval yielding a correlation of +.96. They selected, from these 250 students, 23 who had scored in the upper quartile and 23 who had scored in the lower quartile, matching the two groups on a number of other variables. These two extreme groups were then compared on a rather clever measure of overt behavior with respect to Negroes. A situation was constructed in which it was believable to ask each of them to sign an authorization permitting use of a photograph of himself sitting with a Negro. The subject was free not to permit the photograph to be taken at all, or, if he signed the authorization, to permit any of a number of possible uses of the photograph ranging from very limited use in laboratory experiments to, at the other extreme, use in a nation-wide publicity campaign. The signing of the authorization was real, and may be regarded as an instance of overt commitment. As the authors say: "In American society, the affixing of one's signature to a document is a particularly significant act. The signing of checks, contracts, agreements, and the like is clearly understood to indicate a binding obligation on the part of the signer to abide by the provisions of the document."

What, then, is the relationship found between the measure of general attitudes toward Negroes and the behavioral measure? Table 1 presents a summary of the data. Clearly, there is a relationship between the attitude and the behavior. Those who are prejudiced are less willing to have the photograph taken and widely used. True, it is a relatively small relationship, although highly significant statistically. The smallness of the relationship is emphasized when we recall that we are comparing extreme groups. But nevertheless, it is comforting to know that a relation does exist. One can understand the smallness of the relationship by realizing that overt behavior is affected by many other variables in addition to one's own private attitude.

TABLE 1

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RACE ATTITUDES AND LEVEL OF SIGNED AGREEMENT TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED WITH NEGRO

Signed Level of Agreement	*Prejudiced Group*	*Unprejudiced Group*
Below mean	18	9
Above mean	5	14

But data such as this do not answer the question we wish to raise here. The fact that existing attitudes relate to overt behavior does not tell us whether or not an attitude *change* brought about by exposure to a persuasive communication will be reflected in a *change*

in subsequent behavior. To answer this question we need studies in which, after people have been exposed to a persuasive communication, a measure of attitude or opinion is obtained on the basis of which attitude change can be assessed. Such studies must also, some time later, provide an indication of behavior change relevant to the opinion or attitude, so that one can see whether the cognitive change had any effect on subsequent behavior. We may even be content with studies in which overt behavior is not actually observed. If the subjects are asked questions about what they actually did, this may suffice.

As I mentioned before, we were able to locate only three studies reasonably close to meeting these requirements. One of these, the data from which I reanalyzed, was part of a larger series of studies conducted by Maccoby et al.[3] These investigators selected a sample of mothers whose only child was between three and twelve months old. Each of these mothers was interviewed and was asked, among other questions, at what age she believed toilet training of the child should begin. Three weeks later, each of these women was again interviewed. This time, however, two different procedures were followed. Half the mothers, selected at random, were designated as a control group and were simply re-interviewed. In this second interview they were again asked the age at which they thought toilet training of the child should begin. The other half of the sample, the experimental group, were first exposed to a persuasive communication and then re-interviewed with the same interview used in the control group. The persuasive communication was a specially prepared, illustrated pamphlet entitled "When to Toilet Train Your Child." Each mother in the experimental group was handed this pamphlet and asked to read it, then and there, while the interviewer waited. The pamphlet argued strongly for starting toilet training at the age of twenty-four months. The re-interview occurred immediately after the mother had read the pamphlet. Thus, a comparison of the results of the two groups on the first and second interviews indicated how successful the pamphlet was in changing their opinion concerning when toilet training should start.

In order to assess the persistence of the change in opinion brought about by the pamphlet, both groups of mothers were again interviewed about six months later and were again asked at what age they thought toilet training should begin. Finally, and most importantly for our present concern, about a year after the initial interviews, on the assumption that most of the mothers would have started toilet training already, they were interviewed again and asked at *what age they had*

[3] N. Maccoby, A. K. Romney, J. S. Adams, and Eleanor E. Maccoby, *"Critical Periods" in Seeking and Accepting Information*, Paris-Stanford Studies in Communication, Stanford, Calif., Institute for Communication Research, 1962.

actually started. This last may certainly be regarded as a simple, and probably truthful, report of their actual behavior. Consequently, one can look at the relationship between attitude change and behavior.

In any study in which people are interviewed and re-interviewed over a period of a year, there is an inevitable attrition. Some mothers left the area, others simply could not be reached for one or another interview, and the like. Actually, in this study the drop-out rate was remarkably small. About 80 per cent of the initial sample was actually interviewed all four times, 45 mothers in the experimental group and 47 mothers in the control group. At the time of the fourth interview 34 mothers in each of the two groups had begun toilet training their child and, consequently, it is only for these 68 mothers that we have a measure of actual behavior. The other 24 mothers (11 in the experimental group and 13 in the control group) who had not yet started toilet training by the time of the last interview were asked when they intended to start. Although for these we cannot say that we have a measure of actual behavior, we will present the results for them also.

First, however, let us look at the data presented in Table 2 for those who had started toilet training. The data are rather startling to contemplate—although perhaps not too startling. It is clear that the persuasive communication was quite effective in immediately changing the opinions of the mothers in the experimental group. The change, on the average, was to advocate toilet training 2.3 months later than on the initial interview. The control group did not change materially—actually moving slightly in the direction of advocating earlier toilet training.

TABLE 2

ATTITUDE CHANGE AND BEHAVIOR OF MOTHERS WHO HAD STARTED WITH RESPECT TO TOILET TRAINING
(*data in months*)

	Control ($N = 34$)	*Experimental* ($N = 34$)
Immediate opinion change (Interview 2—Interview 1)	−0.2	+2.3
Delayed opinion change (Interview 3—Interview 1)	+0.8	+1.6
Effect of opinion change on behavior (Interview 4—Interview 1)	+2.0	+1.2

Six months later the change was still maintained, although somewhat reduced in magnitude. The experimental group still advocated that toilet training begin 1.6 months later than they had on the initial interview. The control group, however, also now advocated somewhat

later toilet training. Nevertheless, there was still a clear difference between the two groups.

When we examine when these mothers actually started to toilet train their child, however, we are met with a surprise. There is, if anything, a reverse relationship between attitude change and behavior. The mothers in the experimental group actually started toilet training 1.2 months later on the average than they had initially advocated. But the mothers in the control group, who had never been subjected to any experimental persuasive communication to change their opinion, started toilet training 2.0 months later than their initial opinion would have indicated. Apparently, in the usual American home, as the child gets older, events conspire to delay toilet training somewhat beyond what the mothers think is probably desirable. But the opinion change in the experimental group clearly did not carry over to affect behavior.

We can also see evidence of the same thing in the data for those mothers who had not as yet started to toilet train their children at the time of the fourth interview. These are presented in Table 3. Here again it is clear that the persuasive communication had a strong immediate effect on the opinions of the mothers in the experimental group and that, six months later, this effect had been maintained. The difference between the control and the experimental groups was almost as large after six months as it was immediately after the persuasive communication. It is also clear that events conspired to make these mothers delay the actual onset of toilet training and conspired equally for both groups. The changed opinion had no effect on the actual behavior of these mothers. The difference between their initial opinion and their intention at the time of the fourth interview was high because these data are for a selected group who had not yet started to toilet train their children. The important thing, however, is that there was no difference between the experimental and control groups.

TABLE 3

ATTITUDE CHANGE AND INTENTIONS OF MOTHERS WHO HAD NOT STARTED WITH RESPECT TO TOILET TRAINING
(*data in months*)

	Control (*N* = *13*)	*Experimental* (*N* = *11*)
Immediate opinion change (Interview 2—Interview 1)	−1.2	+2.2
Delayed opinion change (Interview 3—Interview 1)	+0.3	+3.0
Effect of opinion change on intention (Interview 4—Interview 1)	+5.1	+5.2

Another way to look at the data is as follows. Both Table 2 and Table 3 show that the persuasive communication was effective for the experimental group and that the impact of the persuasive communication was still present six months later. If this opinion change had had any effect on behavior, we would expect that, by the time of the fourth interview, a larger percentage of the mothers in the control group would have already started to toilet train their children. More of the mothers in the experimental group, having become convinced that toilet training should start later, would *not* yet have started. Actually, the difference was negligible and slightly in the reverse direction. Thirty-four out of 45 mothers in the experimental group and 34 out of 47 mothers in the control group had already started toilet training by the time of the fourth interview. All in all, we can detect no effect on behavior of a clear and persistent change in opinion brought about by a persuasive communication.

Let us proceed to examine another relevant study. This study, reported by Fleishman, Harris, and Burtt, attempted to measure the effects of a two-week training course for foremen in industry.[4] This training course stressed principles of human relations in dealing with subordinates. Clearly, we are not faced here with the impact of one short persuasive communication but rather with a series of such communications extending over a two-week period. These persuasive communications took the form of lectures and group discussions, assisted by visual aids and role playing. For our purposes here, we may, perhaps, safely regard this two-week training session as a concerted attempt to persuade the foremen that mutual trust, warmth, and consideration for the other person are important aspects of effective leadership. (Before anyone misinterprets what I have said, let me hasten to add that undoubtedly other things went on during the two weeks. I have simply abstracted the aspect of the training session that resembles a persuasive communication.)

Given such a prolonged exposure to such a heavy dose of persuasion, we can well imagine that the opinions of the trainees would change from before to after the two-week session. The investigators attempted to measure any such opinion change in the following way. Before the training session and on its last day, the foremen were given a questionnaire measuring their opinions concerning leadership on the part of foremen. The major dimension on the questionnaire of interest to us here is one the authors label "consideration," made up of questions on such things as friendship, mutual trust, and warmth between the

[4] E. Fleishmann, E. Harris, and H. Burtt, *Leadership and Supervision in Industry: An Evaluation of a Supervisory Training Program,* Columbus, Ohio State University, Bureau of Educational Research, 1955.

leader and his group. As one would expect, the investigators found a clear, appreciable, and significant change on this dimension from before to after the training session. The two weeks of persuasion were effective and the foremen now thought that the dimension of "consideration" was more important than they had previously believed.

This study is relevant for our present purposes because the investigators proceeded to obtain a subsequent on-the-job behavioral measure relevant to the dimension of "consideration." They compared the behavior of those foremen who had attended the training session with a comparable group of foremen who had not. The results are rather surprising. In general, there were no very consistent differences in behavior between the group of foremen who had, and the group who had not, been exposed to the two-week training session. This, in itself, is worrisome. Significant opinion change brought about as a result of a two-week exposure to a series of persuasive communications shows no relationship to behavior. But the results are actually even more surprising than this. The investigators divided their group of "trained" foremen into subgroups according to how recently they had completed the training course. After all, it might be reasoned that the effect of the training disappears with time. If so, one should at least be able to observe an effect on behavior among those who had most recently completed their two-week training course. The results show that the "most recently trained sub-group" was actually *lower* in consideration *behavior* than the group that had never been exposed to any training —had never been exposed to the impact of the persuasive communications. Once more we see the hint of a slightly inverse relationship between attitude change and behavior.

We will now proceed to examine the only other study we were able to find bearing on the question of the relation between opinion change and behavior. This is the well known study by Janis and Feshbach on the effects of fear-arousing communications.[5] Because the authors of this study did not interpret their data as bearing on this question, we will have to put a different interpretation on their experiment in order to make it relevant. Perhaps this different interpretation is not justifiable. But since so few published studies could be found that bear on our problem at all, I will proceed with the re-interpretation.

Of four groups of high school students used in the experiment, one, the control group, was not exposed to the relevant persuasive communication. The other three groups each heard an illustrated lecture about proper care of teeth and gums that attempted to persuade them

[5] I. Janis and S. Feshbach, "Effects of Fear-arousing Communications," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Vol. 48, 1953, pp. 78-92.

that it was important to care for the teeth properly in order to avoid unpleasant consequences. The lectures each of the three groups heard differed in their emphasis on the painful consequences of improper oral hygiene. In the words of the authors:

> One of the main characteristics of the *Strong* appeal was the use of personalized threat-references explicitly directed to the audience, i.e., statements to the effect that "this can happen to you." The *Moderate* appeal, on the other hand, described the dangerous consequences of improper oral hygiene in a more factual way using impersonal language. In the *Minimal* appeal, the limited discussion of unfavorable consequences also used a purely factual style.

One might expect that the more emphasis put upon the importance of proper oral hygiene, and the more personal the importance is made, the more effective the communication would be in making the listener feel that proper oral hygiene is something to be concerned about. Thus, we might expect that the Strong appeal would be most effective, and the Minimal appeal least effective, in persuading people to be concerned about proper oral hygiene. One week before hearing the lecture, and immediately after hearing the lecture, all the subjects were asked two questions about how concerned or worried they were about the possibility of developing diseased gums and decayed teeth. The authors interpret these questions as indicating the degree of emotionality aroused by the persuasive communication, but, for the sake of our re-interpretation, let us look at the answers as reflecting opinion change. After all, the communications attempted to concern the listeners about these things. Let us see how well they succeeded. The data are shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4

PERCENTAGE WHO FELT "SOMEWHAT" OR "VERY" WORRIED ABOUT DECAYED TEETH AND DISEASED GUMS

	Before	*After*
Strong appeal (N = 50)	34	76
Moderate appeal (N = 50)	24	50
Minimal appeal (N = 50)	22	46
Control group (N = 50)	30	38

As one might expect, the persuasive communications were all effective to some extent—they all succeeded in creating more change in concern about oral hygiene than appeared in the control group. Within the experimental conditions we find that the Strong appeal was, plausibly, most effective. The Moderate and Minimal appeals seem to have been about equally effective.

The three persuasive communications, in addition to attempting to persuade the listeners of the importance of oral hygiene, also attempted to persuade them about the proper way to brush one's teeth and the characteristics of a "proper" type of toothbrush. Here, however, the three communications were equal. Before and after measures were obtained concerning the beliefs in the desirability of the recommended characteristics of a toothbrush. On these issues, where the communications did not differ, the authors state, ". . . all three experimental groups, as compared with the Control group, showed a significant change in the direction of accepting the conclusions presented in the communication. Among the three experimental groups, there were no significant differences with respect to net changes."

In other words, the three experimental groups were equally persuaded about the proper procedures to use in caring for the gums and teeth, but the Strong appeal group was made to feel these procedures were more important. If there were a simple, straightforward relationship between opinion or attitude change and behavior, one would expect the control group to change their behavior least (or not at all) and the Strong appeal group to change their behavior most.

On the initial questionnaire, given one week before the students heard the persuasive communications, five questions asked them to describe the way they were currently brushing their teeth—in other words, asked them to report their behavior. A week after having been exposed to the persuasive communications they were again asked these same five questions, covering aspects of tooth brushing that were stressed in the persuasive communications as the proper way to brush one's teeth. The answers were scored in terms of whether the student did or did not use the recommended practice. Since these questions asked the students about what they actually did when they brushed their teeth, perhaps it is legitimate to regard their answers as truthful reports concerning their actual behavior. This may or may not be a valid interpretation of their responses, but, assuming that it is, let us see what the relationship is between attitude change and their reported behavior. Table 5 presents the data on the percentage of subjects in each group who changed in the direction of increased use of the practices recommended in the persuasive communication.

It is clear from even a cursory glance at the data that the results do not represent a simple relation between attitude change and behavior. It is true that those who heard any of the persuasive communications reported more change in their behavior than the control group. This, however, may simply reflect the fact that subjects in the experimental conditions learned the proper terminology and what is approved. The interesting comparison is among the experimental groups. Within the

TABLE 5

PERCENTAGE WHO CHANGED TOWARD INCREASED USE OF RECOMMENDED DENTAL PRACTICES

	Per Cent Who Changed
Strong appeal	28
Moderate appeal	44
Minimal appeal	50
Control group	22

experimental conditions, the relation between behavior and the degree to which students were made to feel concerned about oral hygiene was actually in the reverse direction from what one would expect from any simple relationship between attitude change and behavior.

The authors offer as an explanation for the inverse relationship the hypothesis that the Strong appeal created strong fear and, hence, subjects exposed to this communication were motivated to avoid thinking about it. Perhaps this is the correct explanation, although little evidence is presented in the study to support the assertion that strong fear was aroused in the Strong appeal condition. And it is certainly not clear why people who are more concerned about something are not more likely to take action. If we think of the results of this study together with the results of the previous studies I described (and let me stress again that these are the only three studies I have been able to find that are at all relevant to the issue at hand), it seems clear that we cannot glibly assume a relationship between attitude change and behavior. Indeed, it seems that the absence of research in this area is a glaring omission and that the whole problem needs thinking through.

Let us, for the sake of the present discussion, put aside the possibility that responses to a questionnaire after having been exposed to a persuasive communication may reflect nothing more than "lip service"; that is, the person's real opinions and attitudes may not have changed at all but his responses may simply reflect a desire not to appear unreasonable in the eyes of the experimenter. This kind of thing may affect responses to questionnaires to some extent, but it seems unreasonable to imagine that it is a dominant effect or that it could account for differences among experimental conditions. Undoubtedly, to a major extent, a person's answers to a questionnaire reflect how he really feels about the issue at that moment. Then why should one not observe a clear relationship with behavior?

I would like to suggest one possible reason for a complex relationship between attitude or opinion change and behavior. I have no data to support this suggestion, but perhaps it may offer some conceptual

basis for future research that will clarify the problem. I want to suggest that when opinions or attitudes are changed through the momentary impact of a persuasive communication, this change, all by itself, is inherently unstable and will disappear or remain isolated unless an environmental or behavioral change can be brought about to support and maintain it.

To illustrate and amplify this suggestion, let us imagine a person who held the unlikely opinion that giving speeches was a productive and worthwhile thing to do. Undoubtedly, such an opinion would have been developed over many years on the basis of his own experience, what other people say about it, and also his own needs and motives. For example, he has observed that many people engage in the practice of giving speeches and from this it seems clear that it must have some desirable aspects. He has even read that at A.P.A. conventions papers are held to short periods of time because so many people (more than can be accommodated) want to make speeches. Surely, giving a speech must be a good thing to do. What is more, he has observed that many people actually go to listen to such speeches—a fact that certainly supports his opinion.

There is even more to the "reality" basis he has for this opinion. Once when he gave a speech, two people came up to him afterward and told him how wonderful they thought it was. What better evidence could he have that it was indeed worthwhile to engage in this activity? Furthermore, no one ever came up to him to tell him it was a waste of time. In addition, he found that he got quite a bit of personal satisfaction out of having all those people listening to what he said. All in all, the opinion became rather well established. There was considerable evidence to support it, none to contradict it, and it was a pleasant opinion to hold.

Needless to say, such a well-established opinion would affect the person's behavior. This does not mean that at every possible opportunity he would give a speech, but rather that he would be more likely to do so than someone who did not hold the opinion that such speeches were very worthwhile. It would not be a perfect relationship, since many other factors would affect his behavior, for example, the availability of time and whether or not he really had anything to say. But, by and large, one would observe a positive relationship.

Let us now imagine that the following unhappy incident occurs in the life of this contented speechmaker. One day, shortly before he is to leave town to go to some distant place to deliver a speech, he happens to engage in conversation with a few of his friends. One of them, on learning about the imminent trip, raises the question as to why it is necessary or valuable to do this kind of thing. After all, the monetary

cost and the time spent are rather large. What does an audience get out of a personally delivered speech that they couldn't get just as well out of reading it?

Let us imagine the highly unlikely event that, in the ensuing discussion, no one is able to come up with a good answer to this question and so a real impact is made on the speechmaker's opinion. If one were to give this person a questionnaire at this moment, one would discover that a change in his opinion had been brought about. He would feel less certain that it was a good thing to do. But what are the implications for the future of this change in his opinion? After this friendly but unsettling discussion, our speechmaker returns to the same environment that produced his opinion initially, and, we can consequently assume, there will be pressures to return to his former opinion. Pressures, indeed, that he has not felt in a long time. Furthermore, he is about to leave to make a speech and he goes ahead with what he is already committed to doing. This obviously further helps to restore his former opinion. The world he encounters remains the same, his experiences remain the same, and so his opinion will tend to revert. His behavior will remain the same or perhaps even intensify in an effort to restore his former opinion. The exact content of his opinion may indeed have changed somewhat and become more differentiated. He may buttress his original opinion by the notion that many people will listen to a speech who would not read it and that it is important to communicate to many people; he may persuade himself that the personal contact is in some unspecified way very important; he may even tell himself that a practice so widespread must be good even if he, at the moment, cannot see its good aspects clearly.

It is my present contention that, in order to produce a stable behavior change following opinion change, an environmental change must also be produced which, representing reality, will support the new opinion and the new behavior. Otherwise, the same factors that produced the initial opinion and the behavior will continue to operate to nullify the effect of the opinion change.

Thus far we have speculated mainly about some possible reasons for the *absence* of a relationship between opinion change following a persuasive communication and resulting behavior. We have not grappled with the perplexing question raised by the persistent hint of a slightly inverse relationship (if three times may be called persistent). I must confess that I have no very good or interesting speculations to offer here. Let me also emphasize that the data certainly do not warrant assuming that such an inverse relationship really does exist: they do no more than raise a possible suspicion. If this inverse relation is found not to exist, there is, of course, nothing to explain. If, however, it does exist, we must find some explanation for it.

What I want to stress is that we have been quietly and placidly ignoring a very vital problem. We have essentially persuaded ourselves that we can simply assume that there is, of course, a relationship between attitude change and subsequent behavior and, since this relationship is obvious, why should we labor to overcome the considerable technical difficulties of investigating it? But the few relevant studies certainly show that this "obvious" relationship probably does not exist and that, indeed, some nonobvious relationships may exist. The problem needs concerted investigation.