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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Construct** | **Definition** | **Study 1** | **Study 2** | **Study 3** | **Measure** | **Timing of Assessment** | **Reference** |
| Utilitarianism | Morality of actions depend on consequences | X |  | X | Ethical Standards of Judgement Questionnaire Utilitarian Subscale: 6 item, 5-point likert scale, scored as an average | Baseline | Love et al., 2018 |
| Deontology | Morality of actions depend on the intrinsic nature of the action | X |  | X | Ethical Standards of Judgement Questionnaire Deontology Subscale (6 item, 5-point likert scale, scored as an average) | Baseline | Love et al., 2018 |
| Social Consensus | The degree of social agreement that an action is ‘evil’ or ‘good’ | X | X | X | “Estimation and Reveal” exercise: Subjects estimate recent levels of social consensus on issues, receive feedback on ‘actual’ consensus as an artificial anchor, and finally estimate current levels of social consensus | Pre and Post Intervention | Kobayashi, 2018 |
| Moral Conviction | Perception that a belief is *universal*  and *objective*) |  | X | X | Single Item Moral Conviction Screener: “My feelings about ‘X’ are a reflection of my core moral beliefs and convictions”; 0 (Strongly disagree) to 100 (Strongly agree) | Pre and Post Intervention | Skitka et al., 2005 |

HOW DOES MORAL CONVICTION DIFFER FROM STRENGTH OF BELIEF????

Ancillary Work for Coverage: Moral Conviction Measurement

Skitka 2005:

* ‘Attitudes held with strong moral conviction (*moral mandates*) were predicted to have different interpersonal consequences than STRONG but NONMORAL attitudes
  + After controlling for attitude strength directly, there was a unique effect of moral conviction
    - Increase in social and physical distance from those who have different moral convictions.
  + Stronger moral conviction lead to:
    - Greater preferred social/physical distance from those w/ different moral convictions
    - Intolerance of different moral conviction in intimate and distant relationships
    - Lower levels of good will/cooperation for those with different attitudes.
    - Increased difficulty to find solutions to disagreements
* How are moral convicted attitudes different from strong nonmoral attitudes?
  + Several parts of attitude strength are presumed to measure the same latent construct. But there are only low/moderate positive correlations amongst the following items!
  + Each element here is seen as distinct contributors to the ‘strength’ of an attitude
    - Attitude ‘extremity’ is the extent to which an attitude deviations from neutrality
    - Attitudes ‘importance’ is subjective significance people attach to an attitudes
    - Attitude ‘certainty’ is degree that people feel SURE about their position on an issue
    - Attitude ‘centrality’ is how much of an attitude is entangled with a persons’ sense of identity/how interconnected it is with other attitudes/beliefs.
  + Strong attitudes are “durable over time”/resisitant to change, and impact judgement/behavior.
* Is moral conviction just another contributor to attitude strength, or fundamentally different?
  + Adding assessments of moral oblivgation increases attitude-behavior correspondence!
  + Moral based opposition to various policies is also an important predictor of political activism. For example, moral opposition to the nuclear bomb emerged as a discriminator of those who did versus did not actively campaign for political candidates who took a stand on this issue, trumping other possible predictors like fear or having activist friends
  + In a related vein, persuasive messages that activated concerns with people’s sense of moral self led to higher levels of donating blood than did exposure to a fear appeal, a combined moral and fear appeal message, or no message
    - Each of these relatively isolated examples is consistent with the prediction that attitudes based on moral convictions may have higher action potentials than attitudes that reflect nonmoral tastes, preferences, or social conventions, however strong these may be.
* Definition of “Moral Conviction” (defined in skitka 2002, and skitka and mullen 2002b??)
* Universalism:
  + If one says, ‘I value gender equality, but others need not value gender equality,’ then gender equality is a matter of personal taste. If one says, ‘We in our culture value gender equality, but people in other cultures need not value gender equality,’ then one is treating gender equality as a social convention. However, if one sees gender equality as a moral good or a moral truth, then one is committed to saying, ‘I value gender equality, and everyone else should too, even in other cultures.’ (Haidt, Rosenberg, and Hom, 2003)
  + Universality is seen as a distinguishing feature that separates moral from nonmoral beliefs?
  + These attitudes are seen as ones that transcend boundaries of persons/cultures
  + Preferences, conventions, and morals, are seen as psychologically distinct (Turiel, 1983)
    - People ‘experience’ their moral convictions as beliefs that everyone would or could be persuaded to share, in part, because moral convictions are experienced as matters of fact, rat her than preference, taste, or conviction.
* Moral Conviction as experiences of Fact:
  + Distinguishes moral convictions from otherwise strong and nonmoral attitudes, these are seen as facts about the world.
  + “Good and bad” are experienced as objective characteristics, not just verbal labels attached to feelings (Shweder, 2002)
  + Moral conviction results in experiences of facts as ‘motivational guides’, e.g. water is two hydrogen and one oxygen (fact), but this does not inspire action, however, the ‘fact’ that voluntarily terminating a pregnancy is fundamentally wrong, carries within it an inherent motivational quality (e.g., an ‘ought’ or ‘ought not’) that motivates behavior.
  + Thus, moral convictions, unlike strong but nonmoral attitudes, are experienced as a unique combination of factual belief, compelling motive, and justification for action.
* Study here directly tested the universality and impact predictions of moral mandate hypothesis.
  + Moral conviction was assessed with “How much are your feelings about \_\_\_\_\_\_ connected to your core moral beliefs or convictions?”
    - Universality prediction tested: 1st – Indices of attitude strength would correlate more strongly with preferred social distance in intimate vs distant relationships, but moral conviction would be equally associated with social distance in both close and distant relationships. 2nd – test whether preferred social distance from an attitudinally dissimilar other would be invariant across the degree of intimacy of the relationship when moral conviction was high.
    - E.g. For those who hold a position with low moral conviction, they reject those with dissimilar attitudes more strongly in intimate relationships, instead of in distant relationships, HOWEVER, those who hold a position with high moral conviction, reject dissimilar attitudes equally in close and distant relationships.
  + Participants rejected those who did not share their moral beliefs, irrespective of whether the relationship was intimate or distant, when moral conviction was high. Participants were more tolerant of dissimilar beliefs, and even more so in distant relationships, when moral conviction was low.

Skitka 2002: “The Dark Side” of Moral Conviction

* Moral conviction forms the foundtation for ‘strong morally vested attitudes’, and that these beliefs have strong ‘action potentials’ as compared to other strong beliefs, because they are seen as ‘oughts and shoulds’.
* Morality = notions of right and wrong and Conviction = unshakable belief in something without needing proof or evidence
  + Thus, moral conviction is “A strong and absolute belief that something is right or wrong, moral or immoral”
* Moral mandates share the characteristics of other strong attitudes (extremity, importance, certainty) but have an ADDED motivational and action component, BECAUSE they are imbued with moral conviction

Skitka and Mullen 2002: Understanding Judgments of Fairness in a Real-World Political Context: A Test of the Value Protection Model of Justice Reasoning

* Moral Mandates are important determinants of how people reason about fairness.
  + Strength of moral mandates were predictive of outcomes, NOT pre-raid judgements of procedural fairness!
* “Moral conviction refers to a strong and absolute belief that something is right or wrong, moral or immoral”
  + Some convictions are the result of deliberate reasoning and subsequence accepting of a moral precept, but they do not often require reasoning or evidence!
  + “moral conviction is hypothesized to be experienced as psychologically nonnegotiable and as a fundamental truth about right and wrong”
* Moral conviction is not seen to exist in every behavior/thought in all contexts!
  + Moral mandates are hypothesized to be a selective self-expressive stand on a specific issue, not a generalization towards the world.
  + Moral mandates are seen as a ‘special class’ of strong attitudes. All moral mandates are examples of strong attitudes, not all strong attitudes are moral mandates.
* “Recent research supports the notion that moral conviction has unique explanatory power above and beyond traditional indices of attitude strength.”
  + Preference for presidents in the 2000 election was connected to core moral values and convictions, even after controlling for other indices of attitude strength and party identification.
* Moral Mandates/Convictions were directly tested by asking the extent to which there was an outcome-based moral mandate.
  + Explicit moral framing asked - “Regardless of what the law says about it, the only moral solution in this case is X and Y” vs “Regardless of what the law says about it,The only moral solution in this case is NOT X and Y”
* After controlling for attitude importance, the effect of moral mandate was still effective and mattered.
  + These results provide discriminant validity that the index of moral mandate is NOT the same as attitude strength.
* Moral mandates predicted willingness to consider alternative outcomes, and associated with commitment to one dominant value.
  + People WITHOUT a moral mandate in either direction, were more flexible about the possibility of there being more than one right outcome, and had equal levels of commitment/conflict between all competing values.
  + People with moral mandates were more likely than those without to both critize the government and other parties in the case, and reaffirm their commitments to the moral convictions when given an open-ended opportunity to do so.

Skitka 2002b: Do the Means Always Justify the Ends, or Do the Ends Sometimes Justify the Means? A Value Protection Model of Justice Reasoning

* Hypothesis 1: Moral mandate doesn’t affect perception of fairness when there is no threat to the mandate, but less fairness will be perceived when the there is a threat.
* Hypothesis 2: Impact of fairness on outcome judgements will be eliminated (interaction) when people have a strong moral mandate. Decisions made in a morally mandated context, the outcome judgements are determined by strength of moral mandate. “When one has a moral mandate, any means will justify the end”
* Operationalizing moral mandate: Defined as participants’ attitude position within each domain, weighted by the moral importance they attach to the position.
  + Attitude extremity and direction were tapped with 3 items measured in bipolar 7 point scales.
  + Average importance score was multiplied by extremity score to yield moral mandate measure
    - Ranged from “Strongly against change and morally important” to “strongly for change, and morally important”.

Skitka 2021: The Psychology of Moral Conviction

* Review that covers theory and research on elements of moral conviction
* Moral conviction predicts social/political consequences, associated with greater intolerance of attitude dissimilarity, resistance to procedural solutions for that issue, and increased engagement/volunteerism for that issue.
* Essentialism vs Subjectivism:
  + “Asking people whether and to what degree a given attitude is one they hold with moral conviction differs from most other contemporary approaches to studying morality, which generally start with a theoretical orientation of what counts as a moral concern instead.”
  + “Rather than start with a definition of what counts as a moral concern, researchers working on moral conviction have instead asked people whether they see their position on given issues as a reflection of their personal moral beliefs and convictions”
    - Unlike other approaches that define a-priori ‘what is moral’, this moral conviction approach allows participants to define the degree to which thoughts/feelings/beliefs reflect something moral! (This is a FEATURE, not a BUG)
    - E.g., the Moral Conviction research is ‘bottom up’ rather than ‘top down’
  + TWO key assumptions of moral conviction research!
    - A: People can access and report the degree to which their attitudes reflect their core moral beliefs/convictions
      * Social domain theory confirms that people can access and report directly when asked about their moral concerns (Turiel 2006; 2012) and by research showing people’s ability to distinguish between preferences (personal), normative conventions (societal), and moral concerns (actual moral issue).
      * Boundaries between moral and conventional domains are separated enough that even VERY young children can recognize/distinguish between moral and conventional notions of right/wrong (Smetana & Braeges 1990).
      * Thus… people (including children!) can indeed reliably access concepts of morality and can distinguish those concepts from PREFERENCES and NORMATIVE CONVENTIONS (Huebner 2010)
    - B: Perceptions of morality are a matter of degree, rather than only a matter of kind (e.g., some things can be MORE or LESS intensely moral)
      * This is clearly the case, as perceptions on what is moral have changed bit by bit over time.
      * Or another example, abortion attitudes vary wildly across cultures, as well as within cultures (firearms are a good analogy?)
        + Some attitudes on abortion represent personal preferences, others represent commitment to faith or religion.
  + “Morality is not an essential feature of some decisions, choices, judgments, or attitude domains—rather, it is a meta-perception people have about some of their decisions, choices, judgments, and attitudes that can vary in strength.”
* Domain Theory of Attitudes
  + Predicts that subjective experience of morality is different from those seen as preference or convention (Nucci 2001,Nucci & Turiel 1978, Skitka 2014, Skitka et al. 2005)
  + Preferences: Matters of taste or subjectivity, people are very tolerant of those with different PREFERENCES
  + Conventions: Rooted in norms, or what the in-group tends to believe, acts are ‘wrong’ insofar as they break a coordination rule, not due to being inherently bad (e.g., drive on the right side of the road).
  + Moral Convictions: Seen as culturally universal, absolute facts, independent from authorities and the law.
* Measurement and Operationalization!
  + Most measures are considered ‘transparent’ and ‘face-valid’
    - Although it can be hard to explain why an attitude is moral, people can recognize and determine the degree to which something reflects moral conventions.
  + Knowing the ‘strength’ of moral conviction, and NOT just a binary determinant of it’s existence, is behaviorally predictive and worth having (Wright et al., 2008)
  + Some operationalizations are no good because they directly confound moral conviction with the concepts that moral conviction should predict, such as universalism or authority independence.
  + These are considered confusing! Moral conviction is theoretically and empirically distinct from attitude strength dimensions.
  + Measuring moral conviction should use items that capture people’s ‘meta-perceptions’ of the degree to which a specific attitude reflects moral concerns. No proxy items are allowable for measurement!
* Perceived Objectivity/Universality
  + A Main characterizer of morally convicted attitudes that are related: Perceived objectivity and Universality!
  + People see their moral conviction attitudes as ‘objectively true facts’ grounded in ‘fundamental truths about reality’. As well as perceive them as universally generalizable truths that apply across time, places, and cultures.
    - Moral conviction consistently predicted perceived objectivity and universality across issues, even when controlling for indices of attitude strength! Meta analysis of 21 issues across 3 studies indicate that strength of moral conviction is significantly associated with perceived objectivity and universality
    - People make faster universality associations if the behavior was FIRST evaluated as morally right or wrong, rather than pragmatically good or bad, or pleasant and unpleasant (Van Bavel et al., 2012)
* Authority and Peer Independence
  + When moral conviction is at stake, people are more likely to believe that duties and rights follow from greater moral purposes, than the rules and procedures and authorities themselves.
  + “Moral beliefs are not inherently antiestablishment or antiauthority; they just are not dependent on establishment, convention, rules, or authorities.”
  + “Regardless of how legitimate they thought the Supreme Court was at baseline, morally convicted opponents of physician assisted suicide perceived the decision to be unfair and nonbinding, whereas morally convicted opponents perceived the reverse”
    - The Supreme Court study was also later replicated in the context of the US Supreme Court’s decision that laws prohibiting same-sex marriage were unconstitutional (Hanson et al. 2016).
  + One of the most replicated findings in social psychology is that people tend to conform to majority group opinion (see Cialdini & Trost 1998 for a review). People conform to majority group norms even when they individually have a contrary point of view for largely two reasons. First, people are often concerned that going against group norms could expose them to ridicule and disenfranchisement from the group, and they hope that going along will maintain or build acceptance and belonging (Asch 1956). Second, people conform when they are not confident about the right answer or the best way to behave, and they turn to peers for guidance and information (e.g., Deutsch & Gerard 1955, Sherif 1936).
    - When people have STRONG moral convictions however, they prefer distance from attitudinally dissimilar others, and thus, do not care to look to attitudinally dissimilar peers to search out more information/change their mind.
* Means vs Ends
  + When people are CERTAIN about the outcome that systems should deliver, they judge whether or not the system itself is legitimate based on whether or not they produced the ‘correct’ answer (e.g., the one that the perceiver has moral conviction for).
    - “Correct” decisions indicate that the authorities/institutions are fair, “Incorrect” decisions signal that the system is ‘broken’ and not working as it should.
      * Thus, people use their ‘sense’ of morality as a barometer to determine how to judge outcome/procedural fairness, as well as how legitimate the system itself is (e.g., Skitka et al. 2009, Wisneski et al. 2009)
  + The moral convictions themselves predict judgement of fairness in these circumstances ABOVE and BEYOND consideration of whether the decisions themselves are made with fair or unfair procedures.
  + Support for vigilante justice also rises when there is alignment with morally convicted positions that a subject holds.
* Obligation and Motivation:
  + More moral conviction = less perception of a ‘free’ choice existing, instead feeling strong obligation to make a decision a particular way.
  + These perceived obligations strongly mediate the relationship between moral conviction and intended activism.
  + Stronger moral conviction on an issue = more negative emotion towards political opponents, due to feeling morally obligated to strongly support one’s own side. (Zaal et al., 2017)
* Political Engagement:
  + Moral conviction predicts political engagement!
* Intolerance: People who have moral beliefs seen as ‘objectively correct and universally applicable’, then those who disagree with them are ‘fundamentally wrong’ and opposed to truth. Thus, there should be some intolerance with those who disagree!
  + This manifests itself as unwillingness to compromise (Delton et al. 2020).
* Emotion:
  + Attitudes high in moral conviction result in complex and multifaceted relationship to emotions.
  + Moral conviction and emotion are tightly linked, very much a ‘chicken or egg’ problem, where both sides can feed into each other.
* Attitude Moralization:
  + Social Intuitionist Model (SIM) = attitudes are moralized through ‘flashes’ of moral intuition, a fast/automatic/affect-laden process that is independent of deliberate reasoning
  + Theory of Dyadic Morality (TDM) = Moralization process is intuitive, but it is the perception of harm (defined broadly) that moralizes. Feelings of moral conviction are associated with an attitude object to the extent that harm is intuitively associated with it.
    - Push/Pull model w/ both element. Moralization can occur when new information leads to recognition of a link between something previously viewed as unrelated (e.g., eating meat) and an already existing moral belief (e.g., killing is wrong!) Moral piggybacking occurs when people recognize these inconsistencies.
    - People may react defensively when confronted with moral shocks or explicit attempts to alter moral sensibilities (reactance? Brehm, 1966)
    - Having strong attitudinally relevant emotions increases feelings of moral convictions.
      * E.g., showing disgusting images related to abortion increases moral conviction about abortion, not just disgusting images unrelated to the issue or control images. This only occurs when the images are visible consciously.
  + As a whole, attitude moralization has some mixed results in the role of harm perception. Moral issues differ drastically, and some may require more emphasis on harm to become moralized, and there may be multiple routes to moralization
* Domain theory of attitudes indicates some information:
  + For example, meat eating and abortion differ in % of each who see the issues ase preference, convention, or moral imperatives.
  + Attitudes about meat consumption are likely reflective of preferences/normative conventions, however, only 31% of Americans say abortion is NOT a moral issue. Thus, studies using different attitude objects (one tended to be viewed as moral, and one that is not) likely can reach different conclusions about the role of elaboration and harm in attitudes.
  + For already moral issues, we get ‘Moral Amplification’, wherein perceivers are likely to already have basic moral recognition of issues, but for those that are not seen as primarily moral, ‘moral recognition’ of the issue as needing moral consideration is instead the first step.
  + When the initial attitude is seen as a preference, the process of moralization requires an initial stage of moral recognition, followed by moral amplification. When attitudes are seen as conventions instead, there is primarily moral amplification!
  + Moral Recognition: Recognition that one’s position can be construed in moral rather than preference terms.
    - Moral recognition is more likely to be cognitively effortful, deliberate, and elaborative even when emotions are involved.
    - Predictive factors are likely strength of the personal benefits of preference, habits, and rationalizations of the desirability of initial preference (Feinberg et al., 2019)
  + Moral Amplification
    - Moralization for convention based or weakly moral attitudes are different, moralization here does NOT require the acquisition of a new moral recognition, but instead the amplification and strengthening of an existing (but weak) moral recognition.
      * People with attitudes in these perceptual domains are more likely to be aware of proscriptive norms against, or norms in support of, the initial attitude.
      * Hedonic benefits likely matter less, since this isn’t really an issue of preferences.
      * Conformity pressure/Group loyalty is likely more salient and important, given that the groundwork for this is likely based on group identity.
* Demoralization: What predicts attitude change when there’s high moral conviction?
  + Mixed evidence about how vulnerable high moral conviction attitudes are compared to those with low moral conviction (e.g., Brannon et al. 2019, Luttrell et al. 2016).
  + Moral conviction attitudes APPEAR to be resistant to nonmoral counter messages (e.g., those that frame arguments in terms of pragmatics/practical issues), or those that emphasize consequences (harms and benefits).
  + Moralized attitudes are more affected by moralized counter-attitudinal messaging (e.g., arguments framed using deontological or rule based messaging (Luttrell et al. 2019, Ryan 2019). Or, messages that emphasize counter-attitudinal anger and disgust.
    - Personal financial interest may play a role? (Bastian et al. 2015).
    - None of these studies were specifically designed to examine attitude demoralization, and were mostly focused on instead attitude change.
    - Belief-inconsistent information, shifts in moral cognitions (harms that are reconstrued to come across as neutral, or even beneficial!), emotional de-escalation, and/or moralization of an alternative position on the issue.

Skitka 2008

Philipp-Muller 2019: Where does moral conviction fit?: A factor analytic approach examining antecedents to attitude strength

* “Correctness”: A sense that one’s attitude is objectively true, is analogous to ‘correctness’, the belief that an attitude is right to hold.
  + You can have a correct attitude that isn’t full of moral conviction of course! However, all attitudes that have moral conviction SHOULD be perceived as ‘correct’.
  + However… certainty has not mediated the effect of manipulated moral conviction, and some studies have failed to find any relation between attitude ‘objectivity’ and ‘moral conviction’ (Kidder, 2016)
* Values basis: The extent to which an individual believes their attitude is based on core values. Moral beliefs and core values MAY be distinguishable, but these are likely blurry lines.
* Attitude clarity: The extent to which one’s attitude is clear in one’s mind, is a component. Greater moral conviction could be accompanied by a sense of clarity regarding content.
* Participants were DIRECTLY given the definition for moral mandates, and attitude certainty, and were asked to give examples of one that holds strong moral mandate, and one that holds attitude certainty and NO mandate. Change in paradigm that allows for examination of moral vs nonmoral attitudes.
* Two major factors were determined, “Embeddedness” e.g. how deeply embedded an idea is in one’s self, and “Consistency” e.g., how much there is adherence to a particular attitude.
  + Both factors independently predicted advocacy outcomes!

Luttrell 2019:

Wright 2008

Garrett 2018

Muller 2017