Moral Conviction Pilot Outline

Moral Conviction Measurement Improvements

* Moralization will be assessed using two part questionnaire
  + The first will directly assess the process of ‘moral recognition’ (i.e., the creation of a new awareness of the moral implications of an attitude object) and ‘moral derecognition’ (i.e., the change in belief that an attitude object, previously seen as moral, is a non-moral issue)
  + The second part will assess moral amplification (i.e., the strengthening of existing moral associations with an attitude object) and ‘demoralization’ (i.e., the weakening of existing moral associations with an attitude object)
* Expansion of Moral Conviction measurement from Skitka et al., 2021, by adding direct assessments of important elements of Moral Conviction that had not previously been directly measured (universality [Van Zomeran 2011] and objectiveness/objective truth [Goodwin 2010; Goodwin & Darley 2008]).
  + Addresses concerns in studies that did not successfully ‘demoralize’ attitudes, as those studies did not assess these critical elements in their assessment of moral change.

Non-moral Topic: Arguments Supporting Exercise

* Chosen because it is a ‘blank slate’, Wright and colleagues (2008) found that the choice to exercise is almost universally seen as a non-moral topic.
  + Unlikely to see a ‘ceiling effect’ of increasing moral conviction, as a-priori, moral conviction will be assumed to be nonexistent to low.
* Testing to see if ‘Moral Recognition’ based methods are more successful at increasing moral conviction as Skitka and colleagues (2021) hypothesize is the case in their “Domain Theory of Attitudes”. As an initially ‘non-moral’ topic, further moralization is theorized to only occur if the non-moral topic can ‘make the jump’ to be seen as a moral concept in the first place (i.e., the process of moral recognition)

‘Moral’ Topic: Arguments Against Capital Punishment

* Chosen because it is seen as an inherently moral topic (Kasten 1996; Ndulu 2020)
  + Unlikely to see a ‘floor effect’ of attempts to decrease moral conviction, as a-priori, the issue has previously been seen as moral, and moral conviction is assumed to start at a moderate level.
* Testing to see if ‘Moral Amplification’ () based methods are more successful at increasing moral convictions in circumstances where the issue is already broadly seen as one where moral judgement is appropriate (Skitka 2021).

Moral Conviction Intervention Categorization

1. Increasing Moral Conviction: Reading an essay based on emphasizing concepts of ‘moral responsibilities’ and ‘broad ethical principles’ as well as explicitly framing things through the lens of harm and fairness (Ryan et al., 2019; Kodapanakkal, 2021; Clifford, 2017; Wisneski & Skitka, 2017). This is believed to be most effective for ‘Moral Amplification’
   1. Increasing Moral Conviction: Brief writing exercise that emphasizes the emotion of disgust with regards to the concept being examined (Rozin et al., 1997; Wisneski and Skitka 2017; Wisneski et al., 2020). This is believed to be most effective for ‘Moral Amplification’
2. Increasing Moral Conviction: Reading an essay that explicitly links the current concept being examined to another, clearly accepted as moral belief (Aignesberger 2023; Feinberg et al., 2019). This is believed to be most effective for ‘Moral Recognition”
3. Decreasing Moral Conviction: Reading an essay that emphasizes pragmatic elements such as cost or inefficiency (Kutlaca et al., 2013; Kodapanakkal 2021)
4. Decreasing Moral Conviction: Messaging that emphasizes perceived personal economic and hedonic benefits from the activity (Feinberg et al., 2019; Bastian et al., 2015)