Acceptability of policy

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Overview

1. Definitions
2. Acceptability of policy
3. Behavioural responses to policy
4. Responses to policy – concluding comments

(1) Climate change – a social dilemma

- Choice between self-interest (defection) and the collective's best interest (cooperation)
- Conflict between the individual and the collective
- Why doesn't everybody cooperate? Low response efficacy, "sucker effect", free riders

(1) Environmental policy measures

- Structural versus psychological solutions (Vlek, 1996)
- Legal policies, economic policies, measures changing the physical context and informational/educational measures (Steg, 2003)
- Targeting technological solutions versus curtailment behaviour (Stern, 2002)

(1) Concepts

- Acceptability - attitude toward policy (e.g., Schade, 2003). Salient beliefs ⟶ attitudes (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

- Acceptability (before implementation) versus acceptance (after implementation) (Gärling et al. 2008)

- Attitude (acceptability/acceptance) versus behaviour (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993)

(2) Factors important for acceptability

- Acceptability is influenced by:

1. The individual's characteristics (e.g., background characteristics, attitudinal factors)
2. The attributes of the policy measure (e.g., push versus pull)

Steg & Schuitema (2007)

(2) Factors important for acceptability cont.

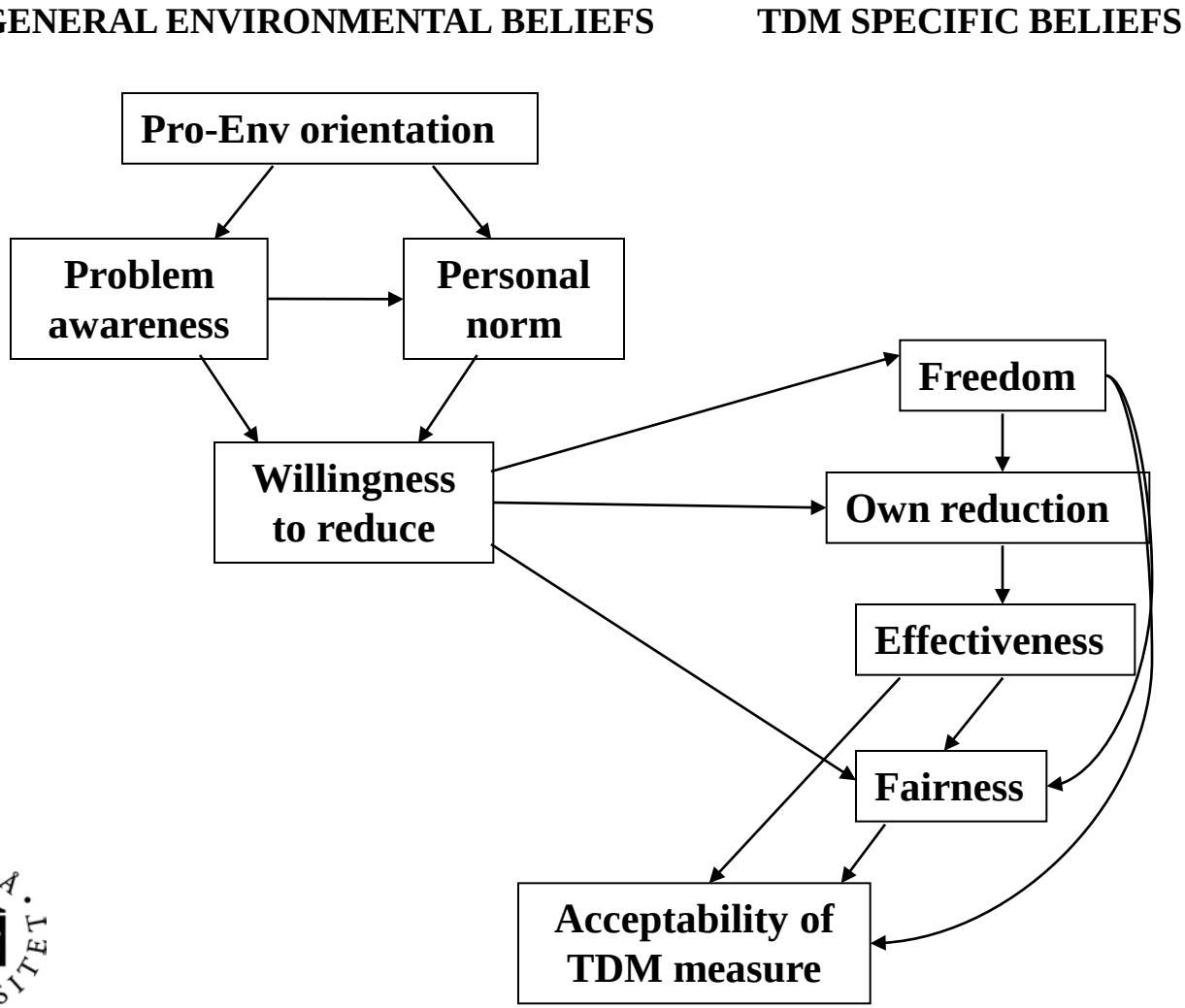
- The multiattribute evaluation model describe factors important for evaluations of structural changes to social dilemmas – preference for status quo, and at least the following dimensions :

1. Fairness
2. Efficiency
3. Freedom
4. Self-interest

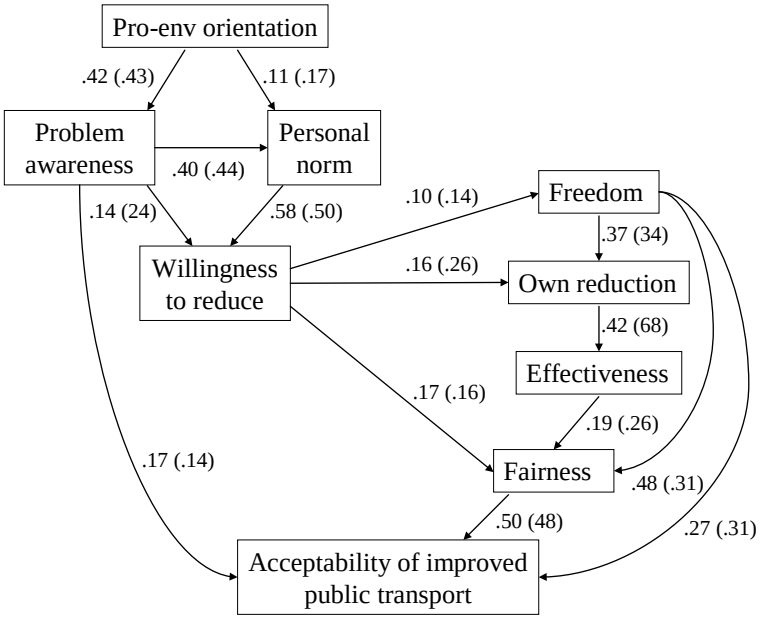
- Individual differences and personal experiences influence the evaluative process

Samuelson (1993)

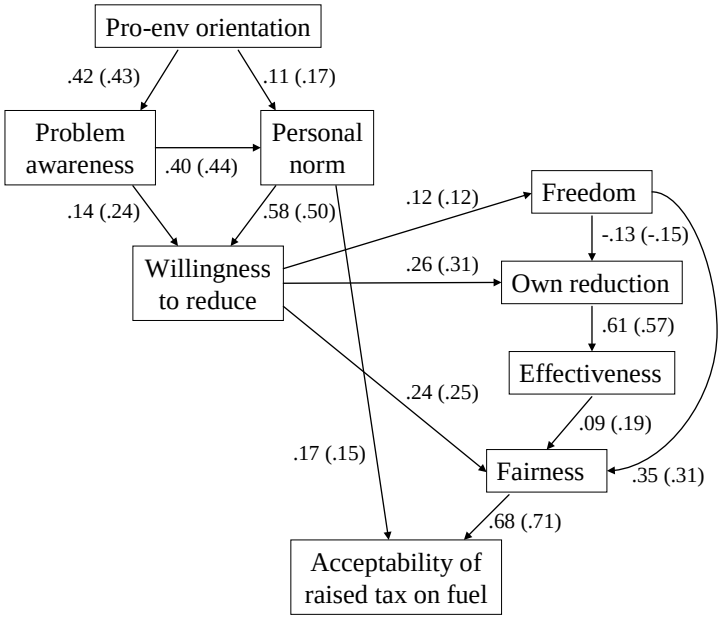
(2)Factors important for acceptability cont.



(2) Factors important for acceptability cont.



Explained variance: problem awareness 18% (18%), personal norm 21% (28%), willingness to reduce 43% (42%), freedom 1% (2%), own reduction 18% (21%), effectiveness 17% (47%), fairness 35% (27%), acceptability 51% (49%).

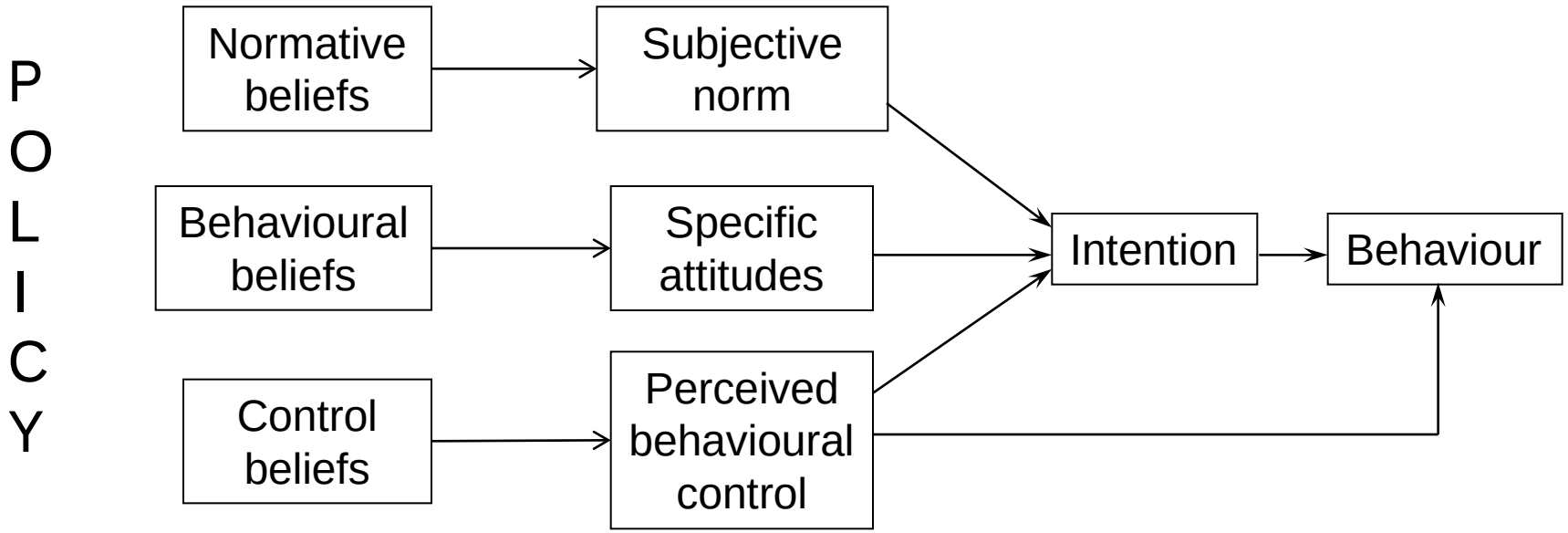


Explained variance: problem awareness 18% (18%), personal norm 21% (28%), willingness to reduce 43% (42%), freedom 1% (1%), own reduction 7% (11%), effectiveness 38% (32%), fairness 22% (22%), acceptability 53% (57%).

Eriksson et al (2006)

(3) Factors important for behavioural responses to policy

- Psychological models of behaviour change (e.g., TPB)



Ajzen & Fishbein (1991)

(3) Factors important for behavioural responses to policy cont.

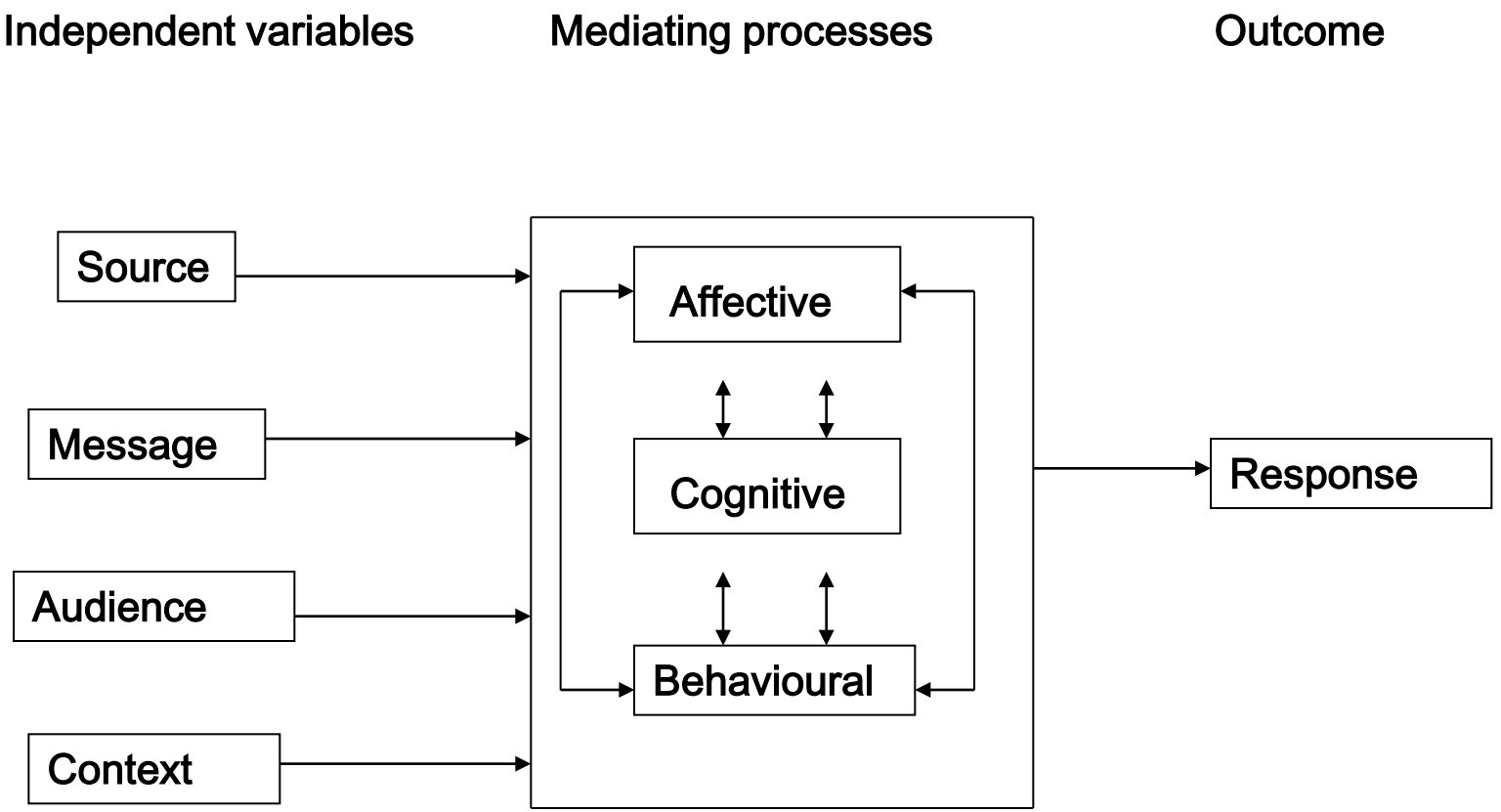
- Cost-minimization principle (Loukopoulos et al. 2006)

- Barriers to behavioural change in relation to climate change (Swim et al. 2010):
- Ignorance
- Uncertainty
- Denial
- Judgmental discounting
- Habits
- Low perceived behavioural control
- Conflicting goals

(4) Responses to policies – concluding comments

- Information/education - Influence attitudes or knowledge
- Legal policies – Determine rules and regulations
- Pricing policies – Changes the cost of different decision alternatives
- Physical change measures – Changes the physical environment
- Policy packages – more acceptable and effective than single measures (e.g., Eriksson, 2008)
- Policies communicate societal norms

Changing attitudes



(Petty & Wegener, 1998)

Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion (ELM)

- Attitudes can be influenced in two ways:

1. Systematic elaboration (the central route)
2. Less elaborate processing (peripheral route)

Petty & Cacioppo et al. (1981,1986)

Less elaborate processing

- Is when the individual mostly consider external cues related to the source, the message and the audience

- Classic conditioning, mere exposure

- More likely to lead to attitude change if:

✓ The source: expert, credible, and attractive
✓ The message: longer messages
✓ The context: others' have a positive response
✓ Audience: happy mood

Systematic elaboration

- Is when the individual elaborate more
- Steps in systematic elaboration of messages:

1. Notice the message
2. Understand the message
3. React to the message
4. Either attitude is changed or not

- Boomerang effect (when the arguments are bad the effect may be the opposite of the intended e.g., negative when the goal is a positive attitude)
- Polarising (to think about an attitude object may lead to a polarised evaluation e.g., a positive attitude may become even more positive when thinking about it)

More or less elaborate elaboration according to ELM?

1. Motivation: e.g., when it is important to be correct, if the issue has personal relevance, individual differences e.g., higher need for cognition, then systematic elaboration is more likely

2. Capacity: e.g., if we have the ability to process the information, the knowledge to do it, and the possibility to do it then systematic elaboration is more likely