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ABSTRACT
                Prior attitude intensity involvement and salience,
along with prior source competence, sociability, composure,
extroversion, and character can be used as predictors of recall, of
perception of the source's attitude, and of perception of the
attitude revealed in the message. The relationship of prior attitudes
and credibility to comprehension and selective exposure are the
products of the kind of research methodology practiced. There is a
relationship between sociability and recall and between composure and
perception of attitudes. In addition, the conditions under which test
individuals are exposed to messages affect the amount of variance
that may be predicted in differing types of comprehension. (CH)

THE RELATIONSHIP OF ATTITUDE AND CREDIBILITY
TO COMPREHENSION

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship of prior attitudes
and credibility to comprehension and selective exposure. Prior
attitude intensity involvement and salience along with prior
source competence, sociability, composure, extroversion, and
character were used as predictors of recall, perception of the
source's attitude, and perception of the attitude revealed
in the message. A relationship between sociability and recall,
and between composure and perception of the attitude revealed in
the message was discovered. The eight predictors together
accounted for a meaningful amount of variance on the three types
of comprehension. Individually significant predictors varied
according to type of comprehension tested. No relationship was
discovered between the eight variables and selective exposure.
The results indicate that the conditions under which individuals
are exposed to messages affect the amount of variance that may be
predicted on the differing types of comprehension.

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THE RELATIONSHIP OF ATTITUDES AND
SOURCE CREDIBILITY TO COMPREHENSION

Considerable research has investigated the relationship of
attitudes to "accurate" perception and retention. In general
research has found that receivers misperceive and/or forget inform-
ation that is discrepant from their own attitudes and beliefs.
More specifically, some studies have concluded that subjects
perceived or retained information in a way that reduced its
discrepancy with their own beliefs and attitudes (Levine and
Murphy, 1943; Edwards, 1941; Kendall & Wolfe, 1949; Hasdorf &
Cantrill, 1954). For example, receivers may remember strong, non-
discrepant arguments in a message but remember only weak, dis-
crepant ones (Jones & Kohler, 1958). Also receivers may select-
ively attend and perceive statements they agree with (Postman,
Bruner, & McGinnes, 1948; Key 1968). In addition, research has
found that receivers judge arguments that are not discrepant with
their own attitudes and beliefs as more valid and cogent than
those that are discrepant (Lefford, 1946; Thistlethwaite, 1950;
Feather, 1964; Waly & Cook, 1965; McGuire, 1960; Miller, 1969).
Other research has found that subjects with extremely, discrepant
attitudes misperceive messages and information so as to support
their own attitudes (Levine & Murphy, 1943; Edwards, 1941;
Cooper & Jahoda, 1947; Hasdorf & Cantrill, 1954).

Some research has also found that receivers avoid or reject
messages and information which they perceive as discrepant with
their beliefs and attitudes; however, the results are not con-
clusive. While some have found that individuals will avoid
discrepant information (Brodbeck, 1956; Mills, Aronson, &
Robinson, 1959; Festinger, 1964a; Mills, 1965a), others failed
to find support for this effect (Festinger & Thibaut, 1951;
Gerald, 1953; Ehrlich, 1957; Adams, 1961; Rosen, 1961; Feather,
1962; 1963; Freedman & Sears, 1965), and still others found that
individuals may resolve discrepancy by seeking discrepant inform-
ation (Canon, 1964; Mills & Ross, 1964; Festinger, 1964b; Mills,
1965b). This inconsistency in results may be due to the fact
that the induced discrepancy was often determined a priori
without validation and without measurement of the amount of
discrepancy involved. In some instances, the amount of discrepancy
induced may not have been extreme enough to produce exposure or
avoidance effects. Research on involvement and discrepancy
supports this interpretation. According to involvement (or
social judgment) theory, we use our attitudes as "anchors" by
which we contrast extremely discrepant attitudes and assimilate
similar attitudes. This research has found that receivers reject
and contrast messages which they perceive as seeking attitude
change that is too discrepant from salient attitudes. (Hovland,
Harvey, & Sherif, 1957; Hovland & Sherif, 1961; Sherif, Sherif,
& Nebergall, 1965; Whittaker, 1967). In addition, some of the
same research (Hovland, 1957; Hovland, 1961; Sherif, 1965) has found

that the amount of discrepancy that the receiver will tolerate before he rejects a message is much less when his attitude is extremely salient.

In summarizing research on attitudes, misperception, and forgetting, Cronkhite noted that "it has been difficult to determine how much of the observed effect is due to selective perception and how much is due to selective recall, since both are generally measured by retention tests" (1969, p. 156). However, from this research it is readily apparent that comprehension involves more than recall of information in a message (recall-comprehension). Comprehension also involves perception of the source's attitude and perception of the attitude revealed in a message (perceptual-comprehension).

The above research and rationale regarding the effects of attitudes on recall and perception directly relates to credibility effects. Research has fairly conclusively demonstrated that initial source credibility has a significant effect on immediate attitude change, and that credibility interacts with message variables to affect attitude change (Andersen & Clevenger, 1963; Velma Wenzlaff, 1971). Recent factor analytic studies have also demonstrated that source credibility is multidimensional (Berlo & Lemert, 1961; Berlo, Lemert, & Mertz, 1969; McCroskey, 1966; McCroskey, Scott, & Young, 1971; McCroskey Jensen,& Todd, 1972; Fulton, 1970). Since credibility affects receivers' attitudes toward concepts, some effect of credibility on perceptual-comprehension would also be expected. For example, the discrepancy between the receiver's attitude and his perception of the source's attitude may be greater for a low credible source than a high credible one. Recent research by Guthrie (1972) has provided support for this prediction. On the basis of social judgment (involvement) theory, we might expect the receiver to contrast his perception of the attitude of a low-credible source and to assimilate the perceived attitude of a high-credible source. This same effect would apply to perceived attitudes revealed in messages. Also, if the source is perceived as extremely high- or low- credible the receiver may selectively attend or selectively perceive the source. These types of effects would result in distortion of perceptual-comprehension attributable to initial source credibility.

However, most studies that have directly tested the effects of credibility upon recall-comprehension have typically produced results that are inconclusive or nonsignificant (Haiman, 1948; Hovländ & Weiss, 1951; Tompkins & Samovar, 1964; King, 1966; Kelman & Hovland, 1953). Studies that have examined the relationship indirectly through secondary hypotheses or post hoc analyses have produced similar results. Some (Hovland & Mandell, 1952; Highlander, 1953; Rea, 1961; Wheeless, 1971) found no significant

relationship between credibility and comprehension. However, Nichols (1948) found evidence to suggest that listening comprehension is related to admiration for the speaker.

Apparently, these studies have not provided an adequate test of the relationship of credibility and comprehension for several reasons. One problem with previous research involves initial credibility inductions. Early studies, of course, assumed a priori that the sources were either high- or low-credible and did not validate the inductions. Later studies such as that of King(1966) indicated the sources were perceived as significantly different in credibility but did not report the extent of the difference. One study (Tompkins & Samovar, 1964) appears to have used high- and low-credible sources that were not only perceived as significantly different statistically, but were also perceived as meaningfully different. However, that study, as was typical of most, operationalized credibility as a unidimensional attitude toward the source. This, of course, precluded discovery of the effects of other credibility dimensions upon comprehension.

A second problem common to the previous research is that the procedures employed probably increased attentive set and created expectancy among subjects that they would be tested over the content of the messages. Hovland and Weiss (1951)noted this problem in regard to the experimentally controlled, captive audience. Researchers such as Tompkins and Samovar (1964) enhanced testing expectancy by administering a pretest immediately before experimental induction. Another (King, 1966) probably heightened attentive set through the use of a tape recorder. Of course, most of the studies were conducted in settings where students had the general expectancy that they would be tested on content that was presented. Recent research by Andersen (1972) removed this expectancy and found initial source competence and extroversion to affect recall. However, his operationalization of source inductions did not provide a test of the effect of other dimensions of source credibility.

Another problem with previous research involves the operationalization of the concept of comprehension. Studies such as King's (1966) carefully specified the dependent variable as recall and delayed recall. Others such as Tompkins and Samovar (1964) and Wheeless (1971) used the generic term, comprehension. Examination of the previous research reveals that studies measured only recall or recognition of information contained in a message.

Although studies investigating credibility and comprehension have for the most part failed to find statistical significance (which may be attributable to methodological problems noted), some basis for continuing investigation exists. For example, Andersen's (1972) study demonstrated a relationship of competence and extro-

version to comprehension. Haiman (1949) employing a priori
credibility inductions found a relationship between credibility
and recall at the .06 level of significance. Other tentative
support for establishing the relationship is provided by Nichols
(1948) who found admiration for the speaker to increase recall,
Hovland and Weiss (1951) who found only directional evidence to
suggest that low or neutral credibility increases recall, and
Kelman and Hovland (1953) who found neutral credibility most
effective. Although there appears that there may be a relation-
ship between credibility and recall, directional prediction is
tentative. Also, previous research does not allow for certainty
in inferring whether the relationship is a linear or curvilinear
one. However, since attitudes affect recall and perception, we
would theoretically expect attitudes toward a source(credibility)
which affect attitudes toward concepts, to affect recall-comprehen-
sion at least indirectly. Refinement in induction, operational-
ization, procedure, and statistical design might well provide an
adequate test of this relationship.

Based upon the above research and rationale, a number of
predictions were tested. First, it was theoretically expected
that there is a significant relationship between source credibil-
ity and comprehension:

1. Recall-comprehension is significantly greater for high-
   than for moderate than for low-credible sources.

2. Discrepancy in Perceptual-comprehension of the source's
   attitude is significantly less for high-than for moderate
   than for low-credible sources.

3. Discrepancy in Perception of the attitude revealed in
   the message is significantly less for high-than for
   moderate than for low-credible sources.

Research on attitude effects has already established that
prior attitudes of receivers affect perception and recall.
However, the effects of both credibility and prior attitudes has
not been examined together. The research question of how much
variance on comprehension is produced by credibility and prior
attitudes together remains unanswered. Therefore, the following
regression hypotheses were tested:

4. Source credibility, prior attitude intensity, prior
   attitude involvement, and prior attitude salience
   significantly account for variance on recall-comprehension.

5. Source credibility, prior attitude intensity, prior
   attitude involvement, and prior attitude salience
   significantly account for variance on perceptual-
   comprehension of the source's attitude.

6. Source credibility, prior attitude intensity, prior
   attitude involvement, and prior attitude salience
   significantly account for variance on perceptual-
   comprehension of the message.

In order to examine the effects of credibility and attitudes
on selective exposure, the following hypothesis was tested:

7. Source credibility, prior attitude intensity, prior
   attitude involvement, and prior attitude salience
   significantly discriminate between Ss who voluntarily read
   the message and those who do not.

Source credibility was operationalized on each of the five
dimensions (competence, sociability, composure, extroversion, and
character) in the above hypotheses.

METHOD

Sample. A sample of 98 Ss was selected from basic speech
communication courses at Illinois State University during the
summer term of 1972. Seventy-three Ss were assigned to experi-
mental conditions and a group of 25 Ss was assigned to a control
condition.

Procedure. On the first day of class, pretests of attitude
intensity, involvement, salience, source competence, source
sociability, source extroversion, source composure, and source
character were administered. Pretests were camouflaged as a
questionnaire on potential discussion topics and sources of
materials for the course. Fifteen topics were pretested including
5 potential experimental topics, pretested on attitude intensity,
involvement, and salience. Eighteen sources were tested with
each subject being pretested on 6 sources. Pretests were random-
ly ordered and booklets were randomly distributed. On the same
day subjects were asked to sign-up for individual interviews and
course counselling sessions scheduled two weeks later. On the
basis of the pretesting each subject was assigned a source whom
he perceived as low- moderate-, or high-credible on one of the
five dimensions. In order to assure maximum variability for
regression analyses, a fifth of the sample was assigned to each
dimension of source credibility and further assigned to high,
moderate, or low conditions in each dimension. For the analysis
of variance which tested the effects of each credibility dimension
independently, all 73 experimental subjects were resorted into
high, moderate, or low conditions for each credibility dimension.
A score of 3 - 8 was considered low; 9-15, moderate; 16-21, high.
On each dimension, 21 was the maximum score; 3, the minimum.
A single experimental message topic which best maximized variabil-
ity in attitude intensity, involvement, and salience was selected
(The Space Program) from the five potential topics. Identical

messages on the space program were prepared with the appropriate
credibility induction for each subject at the top of the message.
The experimental inductions were camouflaged as news releases for
the campus radio station. Two weeks after the pretesting, subjects
reported for their interviews. At that time individual subjects
were ushered into a room and asked to wait for their interviews.
They were not allowed to bring materials (books, papers, purses,
etc.) into the room. Subjects were seated at the side of a
conference table. On the table to the left of the subject was
a typewriter with the experimental inductions (source and message)
lying beside it in clear view. In order to avoid an attentive
set or the expectancy of testing, subjects were allowed to read
or not read the message as they chose. Observation and recording
of reading behavior was made through one-way glass. After 5
minutes, subjects were ushered into another room. Subjects who
had voluntarily read the message were administered posttests.
Subjects who had not read were then asked to read the message and
subsequently administered posttests. Booklets contained posttests
tapping perceived attitude of the source, perceived attitude
revealed in the message, the subject's attitude toward the topic,
source credibility dimensions, and recall-comprehension.

In order to establish a basis for producing discrepancy
scores for subjects' perceptual comprehension, a control panel
of experts (n=25) were asked to rate the attitude revealed in
the message containing no credibility induction. The panel
consisted of graduate faculty and final semester master's
candidates in Communication. The 25 subjects in the control
condition were asked to fill out the recall test without having
read the message in order to facilitate analysis of the recall
measurement.

Materials. A modified close procedure instrument on which
words of the message were selectively omitted and subjects were
asked to fill them in was used to measure recall-comprehension
(Taylor, 1954). There were eighty possible completions. Exact
word replacement or stems were accepted as correct. Correct
responses were loaded inversely according to the probability of
making a correct response on the basis of message redundancy.
Frequency of accurate replacements by the control group served as
the basis for the loadings. Attitude intensity of the receiver
and his perception of the source's attitude and of the attitude
revealed in the message were measured on six, evaluative, semantic
differential- type scales (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957). The
scales[1] were right-wrong, good-bad, beneficial-harmful, positive-
negative, wise-foolish, fair-unfair (these scales were scored with

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[1] In separate factor analyses for 156 concepts, McCroskey
found these six scales to load consistently among the top twelve
of the forty evaluative scales employed, with internal reliability
equaling or exceeding .90.

the negative end of the scales high to facilitate subsequent analyses). Perception of source credibility was measured on the five separate dimensions for public figures (McCroskey, Jensen, & Todd, 1972). For each dimension the semantic differential-type scales were as follows: (1) Competence--informed-uninformed, trained-untrained, intelligent-unintelligent; (2) Sociability-- social-unsocial, cheerful-gloomy, friendly-unfriendly; (3) Compo-sure--tense-relaxed, nervous-poised, calm-anxious; (4) Extroversion--quiet-verbal, talkative-silent, aggressive-meek; (5) Character--good-bad, reliable-unreliable, admirable-contemptable.[2] Attitude salience and involvement were measured on six semantic differen-tial-type scales developed by Weidman (1972). The scales[3] were (1) Salience--significant-insignificant, major-minor, important-unimportant, light-weighty, recognized-unrecognized, relevant-irrelevant; (2) Involvement--not engaging-engaging, obligated to-not obligated to, close-far, connected-unconnected, identified with-not identified with, reflection of myself-not a reflection of myself.

Design. Independent variables were (1) high, moderate, and low-source credibility on competence, sociability, composure, extroversion, and character dimensions; (2) prior attitude intensity; (3) prior attitude salience; (4) prior attitude involvement. Dependent variables were (1) recall-comprehension; (2) perceptual-comprehension of the message--the subject's perception of the attitude intensity revealed in the message. (3) perceptual-comprehension of the source's attitude--the subject's perception of the source's attitude intensity. (In order to provide a meaningful test of the ANOVA hypotheses, perceptual comprehension of the source's attitude was operation-alized as the discrepancy between the subject's perception of the source's attitude and a panel of experts' mean perception of the attitude revealed in the message. Perceptual comprehension of the message was operationalized as the discrepancy between the subject's perception of the attitude revealed in the message and a panel of experts' mean perception of the attitude revealed in the message.)

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[2] A linear transformation achieved by doubling scores on each dimension was used to equate scale-units of credibility scores and attitude scores for the regression analyses.

[3] These scales loaded separately on each factor (salience, involvement) respectively across 20 topics of varying salience and intensity. Criteria for inclusion of a scale on a factor was a loading of .60 with no secondary loading above .40.

Hypotheses predicting significant differences resulting from high-, moderate-, and low-credibility were tested with one-way analyses of variance. Hypotheses exploring the amount of variance on each of the dependent variables that was attributable to independent variables were tested with the Maximum R-Square Improvement method of multiple regression analyses. The hypothesis exploring the effects of attitudes and credibility on selective exposure was tested with stepwise multiple discriminate analysis. The .05 level of statistical significance was required for all statistical tests. Subjects reading the message under differing conditions (read voluntarily, forced to read) were analyzed as separate experimental conditions in the regression procedures.

RESULTS

Manipulation and Measurement Checks. Of the 73 subjects in the experimental conditions 40 read the message voluntarily and 33 did not. The expert panel's (n=25) perception of the attitude revealed in the message produced a mean of 33, range of 8, and standard deviation of 2.37. Subjects' preattitude intensity on the topic produced a mean of 21, range of 36 and standard deviation of 9.51. Subjects preattitude involvement on the topic produced a mean of 21, a range of 30, and standard deviation of 7.99. Preattitude salience produced a mean of 27, range of 36 and standard deviation of 9.14.

The split-half reliability of the recall test was .93. The mean was 13.16, the range 40, and the standard deviation 8.54. Recall in experimental conditions ($\bar{X}=13.16$) was significantly higher (t=5.39; 96 d. f.) than recall in the control condition ($\bar{X}=3.76$). Credibility inductions on each dimension were validated as significantly (and meaningfully) different (See Table I).

Credibility and Comprehension: ANCVA Model. No significant comprehension effects were observed on credibility dimensions, except for sociability and composure. Significant comprehension effects were observed on the credibility dimensions of sociability (F=4.29; 2,70 d.f.) and composure (F=3.13; 2,70d.f.). Recall was significantly higher (t=3.25, 70 d.f.) on the highly sociable source ($\bar{X}=15.36$) than for the low sociable source ($\bar{X}=8.50$); and significantly higher (t=2.43, 70 d.f.) for the moderately sociable source ($\bar{X}=14.44$) than for the low-sociable source ($\bar{X}=8.50$). In a test of linearity[4] no significant result was observed (F=1.54; 2,70 d.f.). The null hypothesis of linearity could not be rejected ($\eta= .34$, r=.31). Since the F-ratio for the analysis of variance on the treatment conditions was significant, a linear relationship between sociability and recall may be assumed. No other signifi-

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[4]To test the hypothesis of linearity the following statistic was employed: $F= \frac{\eta^2 - r^2}{1 - \eta^2} \cdot \frac{n' - K}{K - 2}$ where K = number of treatments and n'=number of subjects across all treatments. (John G.Peatman, Introduction to Applied Statistics. New York:Harper &Row, 1963)

cant effects on recall attributable to sociability were observed.
Discrepancy in the perception of the attitude revealed in the
message was significantly less (t=2.36,70 d.f.) for the highly
composed source ($\bar{X}$=3.58) than for the low composure source condi-
tion ($\bar{X}$=5.82); and significantly lower (t=2.06, 70 d.f.) for the
moderately composed source ($\bar{X}$=3.97) than for the low composure
source condition ($\bar{X}$=5.82). In a test of linearity, no significant
result was observed (F=0.70; 2,70 d.f.). The null hypothesis of
linearity could not be rejected (η =.29, r= -.26). Since the
F-ratio for the analysis of variance on the treatment conditions
was significant, a linear relationship between composure and
discrepancy in the perception of the attitude revealed in the
message may be assumed. No other significant effects attributable
to composure conditions were observed.

Attitude, Credibility, and Comprehension: Regression Model.
Data from Ss who read the message voluntarily were submitted to
multiple regression analyses with maximum R-square improvement
procedure (See Table II). On the dependent variable of perceptual-
comprehension of the source's attitude, a significant effect
(F=2.47; 3, 31 d.f.) was observed for the eight-variable maximum
R-square model. A maximum of 39 per cent of the variance was
accounted for by sociability, competence, attitude salience,
attitude intensity, composure, attitude involvement, extroversion,
and character. However, only salience, competence, and sociability
(These variables accounted for 26 per cent of the variance in the
three-variable model.) were individually significant predictors.
(The regression equation for the criterion variable regarding
discrepancy of the Ss perception of the source's attitude is
also included on Table II.)

On the dependent variable of perceptual-comprehension of the
attitude revealed in the message, a significant effect (F=3.28;
3, 31 d.f.) was observed for the eight-variable maximum R-square
model. A maximum of 46 per cent of the variance was accounted
for by the eight predictors. However, only attitude intensity,
salience, competence, and composure (These variables accounted
for 40 per cent of the variance in the four-variable model.)
were individually significant predictors. (The regression equation
for the criterion variable regarding discrepancy of the Ss
perception of the attitude revealed in the message is also included
on Table II.)

On the dependent variable of recall-comprehension, no
significant effect (F=1.68; 1, 30 d.f.) was observed in the first
step of the maximum R-square analysis. None of the eight
predictors significantly accounted for variance in recall-compre-
hension.

Data from Ss who had not read the message voluntarily and
were subsequently forced to read it were also submitted to multiple

regression analyses with maximum R-square improvement procedure
(See Table III). On the dependent variable of perceptual compre-
hension of the source's attitude, no significant effect ($F=0.69$;
1, 31 d.f.) was observed in the first step of the maximum R-square
analysis. None of the eight predictors significantly accounted
for variance in perceptual comprehension of the source's attitude.

On the dependent variable of perceptual-comprehension of the
attitude revealed in the message, a significant effect ($F=2.72$;
3, 24 d.f.) was observed for the eight-variable maximum R-square
model. A maximum of 40 per cent of the variance was accounted
for by the eight predictors. However, only composure (accounting
for 32 per cent of the variance in the one-variable model) was
individually significant as a predictor. (The regression
equation regarding the discrepancy of the Ss perception of the
attitude revealed in the message is also included in Table III.)

On the dependent variable of recall-comprehension, a signifi-
cant effect ($F=2.47$, 8, 24 d.f.) was observed for the eight-
variable Maximum R-square model. A maximum of 45 per cent of the
variance in recall-comprehension was accounted for by the eight
predictors. However, only character (accounting for 29 per cent
of the variance in the one-variable model) was individually
significant as a predictor.

Selective Exposure: Discriminant Analysis Model. In the
stepwise discriminant analysis no significant effect was observed.
The eight independent variables (intensity, involvement, salience,
competence, sociability, composure, extroversion, character)
failed to discriminate between Ss who voluntarily read the message
and those who did not.

DISCUSSION

Although high, moderate, and low credibility inductions were
established on all five dimensions, hypotheses 1 and 3 received
only limited support. A positive, linear relationship between
source sociability and recall was discovered. A negative linear
relationship was observed between source composure and discrepancy
in perception of the message attitude. Hypothesis 2 was not
supported. These results are only partially consistent with the
findings of previous research. The lack of expected effect
attributable to competence and other dimensions (Anderson, 1972)
cannot be attributed to experimental error on credibility induc-
tion. If the hypothesized relationships between credibility and
comprehension are plausible, the confounding element in this
study may have been attentive set. The sample size did not allow
for separate analysis of subjects who read voluntarily, without
expectancy of testing and attentive set. The n requirements
for stable F-ratios in three-celled analysis of variance were not
met. The sample size was a substantial limitation in this segment

of the study.

Hypotheses 4, 5, and 6 predicting that prior attitudes and
source credibility would significantly account for variance on
comprehension, were partially supported. Regression analyses
tested the effect of 8 predictors (intensity, involvement,
salience, competence, sociability, extroversion, composure,
character) on comprehension (recall, perception of source's
attitude, perception of attitude revealed in the message). Among
voluntary readers of the message, the 8 predictors together
accounted for 39 per cent of the variance on perceptual-compre-
hension of the source's attitude and 46 per cent of the variance
on perceptual-comprehension of the attitude revealed in the
message. None of the variables predicted variance in recall;
however, among those who were forced to read the message the
8 predictors together accounted for 45 per cent of the variance
on recall and 40 per cent of the variance on perceptual-compre-
hension of the attitude revealed in the message. None of the
variables predicted variance on perceptual-comprehension of the
source's attitude. In both of the above experimental conditions,
considerably fewer predictor variables were individually signifi-
cant; however, these predictors also accounted for a substantial
amount of variance on the dependent variables. Lack of
significance on some individual variables may have been
attributable to sample size.

Prediction of a meanful amount of variance on comprehension
(of the type in this study) is possible on the basis of prior
attitude and credibility. However, it appears that the conditions
under which individuals are exposed to messages (voluntarily or
not voluntarily) affects prediction in terms of how much variance
can be accounted for and in terms of what type of comprehension
the prediction applies to. Prediction of variance on recall was
not possible among those who read the message without being told
to do so. If experimental error was not responsible for lack
of significance, prior attitudes and credibility may have little
impact on recall in some situations where selective exposure
operates. This interpretation, of course, is not consistent with
the rationale presented previously in regard to the effects of
attentive set on recall. Further, prediction of variance on
perceptual-comprehension of the source's attitude was not possible
among those who were told to read the message. Since prediction
of perceptual-comprehension of the attitude revealed in the message
was possible with both groups of subjects, and since it was
possible among those who read voluntarily to account for variance
on perceptual-comprehension of the source's attitude, experimental
error was probably not responsible for this result. No explanation
is readily apparent for this inconsistency between the two experi-
mental treatments except the effect of the treatments themselves.

Hypothesis 7, predicting that the 8 variables would discriminate between those who chose to read and those who did not, was not supported. Although the regression analysis indicates that the two groups differ in terms of what types of comprehension can be predicted, the discriminant analysis failed to distinguish between the groups on reading behavior. No meaningful conclusions regarding the effects of attitudes and credibility upon selective exposure are possible on the basis of this study.

Limitations of this study include sample size and lack of variability in message inductions. (1) Increased n would have allowed for a more complete analysis of data, more stable statistics, and perhaps for more significance among predictor variables. (2) The utilization of more than one message and varying the difficulty or other characteristics of the message would increase generalizability. If a method of creating equivalent comprehension tests on differing content were employed, variability in message inductions would be possible.

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TABLE I

VALIDATION OF CREDIBILITY INDUCTIONS

Credibility Dimension	High $\bar{X}$	Moderate $\bar{X}$	Low $\bar{X}$	F-ratio
1. Competence	38.24(n=34)	26.46(n=26)	13.69(n=13)	135.15
2. Sociability	37.07(n=28)	25.28(n=25)	11.60(n=20)	201.38
3. Composure	38.50(n=24)	24.56(n=32)	10.24(n=17)	267.77
4. Extroversion	37.68(n=37)	26.40(n=25)	12.51(n=11)	162.44
5. Character	36.55(n=22)	25.93(n=28)	11.39(n=23)	141.87

TABLE II

REGRESSION EQUATIONS FOR Ss WHO READ VOLUNTARILY

Dependent Variable	% of Variance Predicted	Regression Equation
1. Perceptual-Comprehension of Source Attitude	39	Y=56.34+Sociability(0.07)+Competence(-0.40)+Salience(-0.63)+Attitude Intensity(-0.34)+Composure(0.18)+Involvement(0.18)+Extroversion(0.12)+Character(0.11)
2. Discrepancy in Perception of Source Attitude	37	Y=-2.02+Salience(0.39)+Sociability(-0.05)+Competence(0.27)+Involvement(-0.17)+Extroversion(-0.14)+Composure(-0.10)+Character(-0.10)+Attitude Intensity(0.13)
3. Perceptual-Comprehension of Message Attitude	46	Y=55.03+Extroversion(-0.05)+Salience(-0.47)+Involvement(0.21)+Competence(-0.34)+Composure(0.23)+Attitude Intensity(-0.21)+Character(0.02)+Sociability(-0.01)
4. Discrepancy in Perception of Message Attitude	42	Y=-3.82+Salience(0.31)+Involvement(-0.14)+Competence(0.21)+Composure(-0.12)+Attitude Intensity(0.10)+Character(-0.05)+Extroversion(-0.05)+Sociability(0.03)
5. Recall-Comprehension	0	Y=0

TABLE III

REGRESSION EQUATIONS FOR Ss WHO WERE FORCED TO READ

Dependent Variable	%of Variance Predicted	Regression Equation
1. Perceptual-Comprehension of Source Attitude	0	Y=0
2. Perceptual-Comprehension of Message Attitude	48	Y=26.38+Composure(0.24)+Competence(-0.09)+Salience(0.19)+Extroversion(0.05)+Attitude Intensity(0.07)+Character(-0.09)+Sociability(0.05)+Involvement(0.02)
3. Discrepancy in Perception of Message Attitude	41	Y=4.52+Involvement(-0.06)+Composure(-0.11)+Extroversion(-0.07)+Competence(0.09)+Attitude Intensity(0.11)+Sociability(-0.06)+Salience(0.06)
4. Recall-Comprehension	45	Y=3.25+Character(0.31)+Attitude Intensity(0.18)+Salience(0.24)+Involvement(-0.22)+Composure(-0.11)+Sociability(0.18)+Extroversion(-0.08)+Competence(-0.09)