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**WORKING PAPER**

# **A Motivational Account of the Question-Behavior Effect\***

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# **A Motivational Account of the Question-Behavior Effect**

## **Abstract**

To explain the question-behavior effect, that is, the effect of answering an intention question on subsequent behavior, this article takes on a motivational perspective and proposes that answering an intention question automatically activates an intention. The activation of this motivational state influences subsequent brand choices due to changes in brand accessibilities. Three studies provide support for the assumption that responding to an intention question affects brand choices through a motivational mechanism, such that (1) answering an intention increases the accessibility of motivation-related information and decreases the accessibility of motivation-competing information which increases the choice for the intention-related brand; (2) intention completion temporarily reverses the foregoing accessibility patterns, instigating a reversal of the brand choices for an immediate, second brand choice; and (3) the changes in brand accessibilities and thus the behavioral effect persist as the delay between the intention question and brand choice occasion increases until intention completion.