

The silence of the library: Environment, situational norm, and social behavior.

Aarts, Henk; Dijksterhuis, Ap

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol 84(1), Jan 2003, 18-28. doi:[10.1037/0022-3514.84.1.18](https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.84.1.18)

ABSTRACT

1. On the basis of the idea that situational norms are mentally represented as associations between environments and normative behavior, it was proposed that an environment can automatically direct normative behavior. More specifically, when situational norms are well-established (e.g., when entering the library, one should be silent), an environment is capable of automatically activating mental representations of normative behavior and the behavior itself. In these experiments, participants were exposed to pictures of environments, and effects on accessibility of representations of normative behavior and on actual behavior were assessed. Results indicated that representations of behavior and actual behavior itself are activated automatically when (a) goals to visit the environment are active and (b) strong associations between environment and normative behavior are established. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2012 APA, all rights reserved)