Level U[a]		Coefficient Z[b]	Coefficient TV use on support X[c]
Efficiency preference		Efficiency perception	mediated by efficiency perception
high	2.7	-1.01	-0.14
	2	-0.90	-0.13
	1	-0.75	-0.11
mean	0	-0.60	-0.08
	-1	-0.45	-0.06
	-2	-0.29	-0.04
	-3	-0.14	-0.02
low	-3.3	-0.10	-0.01

a As suggested by Ping (2003), the level U of efficiency preference is determined by the observed variable (indicator) with the loading of 1 on the efficiency preference factor. This indicator ranged from -3.3 (= low) to 2.7 (=high) in the study.

b Shown are the unstandardized coefficients. The coefficient of Z was (-0.598-0.152U)Z. For example, when U = 2.7 the coefficient of Z was -0.578-0.152*(2.7) = -1.01.

c From path analysis (see Wright 1934), the (unstandardized or standardized) structural coefficient of X's association with Y via or mediated by Z is the product of the (unstandardized or standardized) structural coefficient on the X-Z path, c, with the (unstandardized or standardized) moderated structural coefficient on the Z-Y path, (-0.598-0.152U), which equals 0.14*(-0.598-0.152U). For example, when U = 2.7 the coefficient of X was 0.14*(-0.598-0.152*(2.7)) = -0.14.

Table 7.4. Television-Support Relation Moderated by Preferences

7.3.4. Chronical Accessibility as Moderator

With respect to the role of political awareness, for subjects high in the magnitude of the discrepancy between process preferences and process perceptions, the effects of the preferences-perceptions relationship on political support are hypothesized to be stronger for people with high levels of political awareness compared to people with low levels of political awareness (H7). In order to test this assumption, a model was investigated that tests whether the moderating effect of preferences was different for individuals with high levels of political awareness compared to individuals with low levels of political awareness. Therefore, in a first step, those participants who show either a discrepancy between consensus preferences and consensus perceptions (in the sense that preferences exceed perceptions) or a discrepancy between efficiency preferences and efficiency perceptions (in the sense that preferences exceed perceptions) were selected. Those participants who show values > 0 on either one of the two discrepancy factors[99] were included in the analysis (n = 227). In a second step, groups were built based on a median split of the political awareness variable (MD = 7). All subjects with political awareness values < 7 were put in the low awareness

99 The discrepancy items were subjected to factor analysis using principal components extraction with oblique rotation. The formation of the discrepancy factors is described in Section 6.3.3.

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group (n = 96), and all subjects with vales > 7 were put in the high awareness group (n = 71). The first model on latent interaction effects described in Section 7.3.3 was tested in a group comparison for the low awareness and high awareness group. The group comparison model was estimated by constraining the paths, the factor loadings, and the covariances to be equal for the two groups. This constrained model resulted in a model whit satisfactory fit with CFI = .89, RMSEA =.05 (90% CI = .04, .06), Chi-Square = 1114.05, df = 886. In order to test whether the impact of the interaction terms is stronger for the participants in the high awareness group than for participants in the low awareness group, it was tested whether this fit could be improved significantly by releasing equality constraints on the paths from the latent interaction between consensus perception and consensus preference on political support and constraints from the latent interaction between efficiency perception and efficiency preference on political support. In each case, when one of the two constraints was released, there was no statistically significant reduction in Chi-Square (Chi-Square difference =.13, df = 1, p = .72 with β = -0.21, p = .06, for political aware and β = -0.08, p = .54 for unaware for the interaction between consensus perception and consensus preference; Chi-Square-difference = 1.04, df = 1, p = .31 with β = 0.01, p = .54, for political aware and β = -0.14, p = .28 for unaware for the interaction between efficiency perception and efficiency preference). This indicates that the assumption that the relationship between perceptions and preferences affects political support particularly for individuals in the high political awareness group compared to individuals in the low awareness group does not hold. Thus, H7 is not supported.

7.3.5. The Joint Impact of Media Use and Situational Exposure

Because the experimental study described in Chapter 6 is embedded in a series of surveys, there is the opportunity to investigate the joint impact of long-term effects of media use and exposure to stimulus articles on process perceptions and political support. Therefore, subjects' article impressions (inefficiency impression and conflict impression) were added to the model presented in Figure 7.5. Newspaper use and television use were specified as predictors of consensus perception, efficiency perception and political support. In line with findings in Chapter 6, consensus perception and efficiency perception were specified as predictors of article conflict impression, article inefficiency impression, and political support. Exposure to the stimulus articles (0 = exposure to inefficiency-focused articles, 1 = exposure to conflict-focused articles) was specified as a predictor of the articles' conflict impression and the articles' inefficiency impression. The article impression variables, in turn, were specified as predictors of political support. The variables television use and newspaper use were allowed to correlate (see Figure 7.6). In line with the assumptions, both article conflict impression (β = -0.24, p < .05) and article inefficiency impression (β = -0.66, p < .05) were affected by subjects' general perception of political processes. The less consensus-oriented political processes are perceived to

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