Even though the concept of consumption paradoxes and its consequences such as consumer ambivalence and coping strategies have been studied in marketing and in other social sciences, as will be argued in this paper, the theory of paradoxes of consumption remained underdeveloped. The objectives of this paper are to review the relevant literature and identify gaps within the existing body of knowledge on consumption paradoxes, ambivalences and consumers’ coping strategies. We also offer a specific consumption context (food biotechnologies) and argue that studying consumption of food biotechnologies can broaden our understanding of consumption paradoxes, ambivalences and consumers’ coping strategies. Our long-term objective is to develop a more comprehensive theory of paradoxes of consumption.

Social scientists have argued the paradoxical nature of technology. Winner (1994), for example, argues that the same technology that creates radiant feelings of intelligence and efficacy also precipitates feelings of stupidity and ineptitude. In marketing literature, Mick and Fournier (1998) indicated that none of these arguments about technology paradoxes had been “corroborated or modified by consumer data” (p.125), and based on their research the authors noted that consumers’ response to technology is paradoxical. An important area that did not emerge from Mick and Fournier (1998) research on technology consumption is the paradoxes that involve the relationships between self and the other (society-based paradoxes). In other words, paradoxes related to values, mores, and ethics have been left out in the previous models and conceptualizations of technology paradoxes. There may potentially be two reasons for these society-based paradoxes to be left out from the previous models: 1-Consumers do not recognize or feel such paradoxes, and 2- characteristics of the context used in previous works didn’t evoke such paradoxes. Therefore, it becomes an empirical inquiry to find out if consumers recognize society-based paradoxes given a different context.

Research on paradoxes (technology or otherwise) has also dealt with coping strategies associated with these paradoxes. Conceptually, once individual recognizes a paradox related to the choice, this paradox produces mixed feelings (also known as ambivalence) and that conflict or ambivalence leads to a state of stress and anxiety. Finally, produced stress and anxiety lead to the selection of a particular (or a set of) coping strategy (see Mick and Fournier 1998). In previous conceptualizations, even though ambivalence emerges as a crucial (mediating) factor between paradoxes and coping strategies, no in-depth treatment to these feelings of ambivalence has been given. In other words, the role of ambiva lences in connecting paradoxes to coping strategies has not been studied.

Prior research offers mixed results about the effect of ambivalence on consumer decision-making. More specifically, Celsi, Rose and Leigh (1993) reported that the desire to experience mixed emotions may actually motivate individuals to participate in certain activities. On the other hand, Lowrey and Otnes (1994) indicated that mixed emotions often result directly from interactions in, or structural features of, the marketplace and that ambivalence may in fact be a hindrance to consumers during the purchase process. Our knowledge about consumer actions (consumer behavior) when they are ambivalent is still in infancy, and therefore, when consumers experience ambivalence, their reaction to the situation (e.g. resolution of their mixed emotions through coping strategies) is equally important and interesting area for consumer researchers.

As mentioned earlier, Mick and Fournier (1998) argued that ambivalence produces stress and anxiety and such produced stress and anxiety lead to selection of particular coping strategy. A review of their study suggests that the identified coping strategies are essentially individual (or micro-level) strategies. However, as will be argued in this paper, coping strategies may not necessarily be limited to micro-level, but may also include macro-level (social and cultural) strategies.

In summary, the purpose of this research is to study a consumption context that would allow us to inform our understanding of the paradoxes of technology consumption in a different way. Our long-term objective is to develop a theory for paradoxes of consumption by incorporating our findings within the existing body of knowledge. Some of the more specific research objectives are to understand: 1- whether consumers recognize society-based paradoxes, 2- the role of ambivalence in connecting paradoxes to coping strategies, and 3- macro as well as micro level coping strategies with paradoxes.

Potential contributions of the proposed study would be 1- incorporation of society-based (moral, ethical) paradoxes with the earlier conceptualizations of technology paradoxes, and 2- exploring the relationship between paradoxes of technology consumption and other paradoxes of consumption that may combine in a particular decision domain. In addition, as indicated earlier, technology paradoxes lead to feelings of ambivalence and conflict, and to the selection of coping strategies. There is, however, no explanation of these feelings of ambivalence and the specific ways they link to the consumption paradoxes. Therefore, the proposed study would also offer 3- a new view for consumer ambivalence by exploring the direct linkages to paradoxes.

References
This paper reports preliminary results of the design requirements for Web shopping sites that wish to support both experiential browsing and goal-directed search. Information seeking is one of the five processes or stages in consumer buying behavior. However, implicit in this process is the idea that consumer information seeking largely comprises goal-directed behavior. This paper posits that consumer information seeking is inherently broader in nature, comprising both search and browsing activities. Search refers to occurrences where consumers actively seek out information pertaining to specific products or product categories with an intention to make a purchase decision. In contrast, browsing occurs when a consumer’s objective is not necessarily an intent to buy, but rather an information seeking behavior that may be for informational or recreational purposes.

The central argument of this paper is that there is a need to support both goal-directed search and experiential browsing in online pre-purchase consumer behavior. It is suggested that the design of Web retailing sites must accommodate the primary information seeking mode of the online consumer to help users carry out their shopping activities. For marketers, doing so may result in more effective and efficient consumer interactions with Web-based shopping sites, leading to an increase in their perceived usefulness and ease of use, and greater consumer satisfaction.

At issue is how to do this. What are the best Web shopping site design scenarios that support product browsing and searching? What types of information are required in each mode? Are they the same or different? How should this information be displayed and presented to consumers in each of these modes? Do consumers have different expectations of information quality across these modes?

This paper explores answers to these questions. First, it presents a theoretical model derived from both the information systems and consumer behavior literatures of the constructs of Web shopping site design that might influence consumer behavior in browsing and search modes. The study’s model consists of four dependent variables (perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, satisfaction, and navigation metrics), two independent variables (browse and search), and two mediating variables (information focus, and information presentation).

Perceived usefulness is the degree to which an online consumer believes that using a particular Web shopping site would enhance his or her performance. Perceived ease of use refers to the degree to which a person believes that using the site would be free of physical and mental effort. Satisfaction pertains to the extent to which consumers are pleased or happy with utilizing the Web shopping site. Efficiency pertains to how fast a Web shopping site facilitates consumer browsing and search, while effectiveness concerns how well a Web shopping site supports consumers in their information seeking tasks.

In terms of information focus, Research suggests that when an individual is in a searching mode, the type of information they prefer has a narrow, precise focus, and often refers to the specific details of a single product, such as product specifications. This is in contrast to when they are browsing, where more general, diffuse product information about multiple products is important. Information is broader in focus when it provides diffuse information about a larger number of products. Information is narrower in focus when it pertains to a single product and provides extensive information about that product. It is hypothesized that when a Web shopping site with an information focus corresponding to a consumer’s search or browsing mode, consumers will rate the Web shopping site higher in perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, satisfaction.

With respect to information presentation, how information is displayed and formatted may have a different effect depending upon whether consumers are browsing or searching. It is hypothesized that when a Web shopping site presents information in a way that is conducive to a consumer’s search or browsing mode, consumers will rate the Web shopping site higher in perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, satisfaction, and attain higher efficiency, and effectiveness.

Next, the paper discusses an experimental design that places the consumer into either a browsing or searching mode, and manipulates the mediating variables outlined above and measures the extent to which these manipulations lead to improved outcomes within a simulated Web shopping environment, called Sparky’s Electronics Online Store. This environment makes use of Amazon’s Associates Web Services program to retrieve and display product information.

From there, the design a pilot study detailed. In this pilot, subjects are randomly placed in product browsing and searching modes and asked to utilize the Sparky’s Electronics site to conduct their shopping tasks. Later, subjects are asked to rate their experiences with the Web site via a questionnaire. The Sparky’s Electronics site manipulates the study’s two mediating variables and measures consumers’ navigation metrics while shopping. The questionnaire measures consumer reactions to these manipulations in terms of the study’s remaining three dependent variables (perceived usefulness, ease of use and satisfaction). As such the experiment tests various potential layouts of information and features of a Web-based shopping site across scenarios of browse and search activities in order to determine the best layouts of Web design for shopping and the more salient mediating variables affecting consumer behavior with such designs.

Currently, the Sparky’s Electronics online store and the survey instrument are under development. A pilot study will be conducted in the fall of 2003 in order to test the viability of the online store and the study’s data collection and analysis method.

Creative Conversation: An Allegorical Perspective on the Parallels between Developing Meaningful Advertisements and Conducting Meaningful Research
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In response to a call for research that investigates creative phenomena (Zinkham 1995), this paper represents an exploration into creativity within advertising practice with inferences for academic research. The goal is to appreciate the nuances of the creative process by listening to the voices of creative professionals. Based on a series of conversations with creative personnel, the paper takes the form of traditional academic prose interspersed with an allegorical conceptualization of the main findings. Emerging parallels between developing meaningful advertisements and conducting meaningful research include a profound understanding of the target consumer, a willingness to challenge existing norms, and unapologetic obedience to personal conscience. Research implications aid in generating
advancements and research that improve consumers’ experiences with a given brand by appreciating a greater sense of connection between interested parties.

In keeping with the spirit of the personally demanding nature of creativity and in an effort to incorporate writing as a form of inquiry (Richardson 2000), the findings and premise of this paper, which revolve around a quest for understanding the creative process, are expressed in allegorical form. Verbatim comments from the study participants are emboldened and participants are identified with superscript throughout both the story and the more traditional academic prose. Using the characters of Writing Art and Towering Ivory who are journeying to Creatopia, an allegorical story is crafted and interspersed through the paper to demonstrate the findings and premise.

According to Webster’s Dictionary an allegory is a literary, dramatic, or pictorial device in which each literal character, object, and event represent symbols illustrating an idea or moral or religious principle. As with most allegorical expositions the characters and places in this manuscript are thinly veiled abstractions of existing ideas and principles (Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia). Therefore, it becomes incumbent on the reader to intentionally interact with the story’s progression in order to discern meaning. In so doing they personally exercise their own creative ability to concoct mental images and to generate reasonable synthesis of the ideas presented. An excerpt is below.

Our story begins in the Fields of Ambition. Here the people are strong and sensible while still espousing a sense of play and wonder. It’s an impressive combination, but in keeping with the spirit of the Fields, one is never encouraged to stay here. It is a seasonal location and so at some point, you must depart to take a series of journeys.

The most hallowed excursion leads to Creatopia. Creatopia is just as far away as it is close. Some people spend a lifetime in search of it; others get there, but have no idea how they reached it; many claim to know the way, but still aren’t quite sure if they’ve ever been; and a handful, go and come freely—the most noble are always looking for company.

Methodology
Four conversations were held with one woman and three men who are advertising creative professionals in the US. Three were creative directors and one was a copy writer. Sample questions included the following:

• How do you show empathy so that it registers with consumers?
• Describe how you communicate a profound sense of understanding to consumers?
• How do you let consumers know that you are on their side?
• What are some executional “must haves” for meaningful advertisements?

Before constructing the allegory, Thompson’s (1997) interpretive approach to analysis was employed. Multiple readings of the text uncovered a few themes that reflected “holistic understanding… of the participant’s personal history” including human truth moments and everyday relationship, an emphasis on the experiential nature of creativity, strategic personalization, and the challenge of balancing integrity and entertainment.

Findings
Although participants were asked to reflect on creating “meaningful” advertisements (e.g., ads for products and services that reflected deeply held emotions), the theme of authenticity emerged as the primary route to achieving connection with consumers via advertisements. Repeatedly, participants mentioned wanting to guard and convey tactile credibility. In additional to contextual considerations such as physical settings and wardrobe, model selection and dialogue were the main areas of authentic influence.

Discussion
The absence of references to time and the preeminence of intuition are notable observations. From the verbatim found in the allegorical text, no participant spoke in distinctively chronological, progressive, or systemic terms and this mirrors the full interview corpus. Because the construction of an advertisement is often an iterative process, they tended to speak more about experimenting, playing, and reworking until it “felt right”. Using allegory triggers the abstract thinking that is required to make sense of the story and gives the reader entry into creativity’s dependence on gut feelings for full comprehension.

Implications
Overall, the implications of this study rest in the executional details that creative personnel must incorporate in designing advertisements that can successfully achieve a sense of connection with the advertiser. In demonstrating authenticity, advertisers draw primarily from their own daily lives look to everyday occurrences for inspiration. By offering consumers a vicarious experience of reality, they can potentially enhance receptivity of a given advertisement.

Conclusion
This initial undertaking responds to a call for research that investigates creative phenomena by employing an allegorical abstraction. The insights gleaned in the pursuit of creative authenticity such as attention to detail and a commitment to gut reactions, resonate for academic research.

References
How Brands Guide Innovation—and Leave Room for the Schumpeterian Entrepreneur
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Relentless innovation is the very essence of economic development and lies at the core of any sustainable business strategy. But is it the entrepreneur or Schumpeter’s early theorizing who is responsible for this “creative destruction” or is it the trained specialist in the R&D departments of large companies (Schumpeter 1942/1947)? Although there is some plausibility in the Schumpeterian argument that large bureaucratic organizations are powerful engines of innovation, both research findings and practical experience indicate that excessive bureaucracy constitutes an obstacle to technological innovation and that small companies still contribute significantly to the innovativeness of small businesses (e.g., Baum 1986; Burns and Stalker 1961; Kitchell 1995; McKenna 1988).

As an evolutionary process, innovation may be analyzed within its historical context only. Past innovations of a company create their own substratum of tangible assets (e.g., buildings, machinery) and intangible goods (e.g., knowledge, corporate culture) that set that stage for future innovation. This applies to factors both inside and outside the company. One of the most important external remainders of past innovation is the goodwill the company has acquired among its customers. The success of past inventions imparts an image of innovativeness and trustworthiness to the company and facilitates the introduction of new products. Most companies try to capitalize on this “brand equity” (e.g., Aaker 1991; Kapferer 1999; Keller 1998): Today, nearly 90% of all new products are introduced to the market under an existing brand name instead of carrying a new brand name (Aaker 1991).

Drawing on marketing theory and organizational behavior, this theoretical paper analyzes the role that brand-architecture strategy plays in determining the level of innovativeness of a company. Strong corporate brand names are assumed to guide innovation by lowering the costs of introducing products that are similar to the existing ones and by increasing the anticipated marketing costs of innovations that diverge from the current product range of the company (e.g., Smith and Park 1992). Thus, a corporate-branding strategy should enhance the innovativeness of a company by facilitating the introduction of new products, provided that the fit between the new product and the corporate brand is sufficiently large. On the other hand, a corporate branding strategy is supposed to increase reciprocal interdependence between the units of the company, heightening the need of formalization, hierarchical control, and centralization within the company (e.g., Thompson 1967). Corporate-branding strategies thus are assumed to make corporate culture more inner-directed and mechanism (e.g., Berthon, Pitt, and Ewing 2001, p. 139; Cameron and Ettington 1988, p. 356), which in turn has a negative effect on innovativeness.

In the end, the positive effects that a corporate-branding strategy exerts on innovativeness by lowering the costs of marketing really innovative new products could at least partly be counterbalanced by the negative influence that a corporate-branding strategy has on innovativeness by making the corporate culture more bureaucratic and inflexible. Among other factors that all bear the dilemma between exploiting past success and generating future innovation, this effect could be one of the explanations of why there is apparently still enough room for small companies and the Schumpeterian entrepreneur to succeed with path-breaking innovations.

References
The advance of the Internet as a relatively low-cost and flexible communications channel has greatly increased the opportunities for manufacturers to communicate directly with consumers (e.g., Ghosh 1998). An important type of manufacturer-consumer communications for which the Internet is used increasingly often, are product information exchanges. Software firms such as Microsoft (www.microsoft.com/catalog) and Symantec (www.symantec.com) use their websites to provide detailed product information to consumers, and also more traditional manufacturers such as Sony (www.sony.com) and Nestlé (www.nestle.com) use the Internet to share new product information with consumers as well as information about product usage such as movie tips and cooking suggestions. Consumers also may benefit from using the Internet as a product information source because it improves the efficiency of their information search (e.g., Ratchford, Talukdar and Lee 2001). A recent survey by the PEW Internet & American Life Project (Horrigan and Rainie 2002) showed that 63% of the study’s respondents (a nationwide sample of 2,092 individuals in the continental US) expected companies to have a Web site that would give them relevant product information if they were considering buying one of the company’s products.

Given these developments, it is important to understand consumer preferences with respect to product information channels and how manufacturers’ Web sites can meet these preferences. One challenging suggestion made in the literature on consumer-firm interactions is that consumers’ product and information needs depend less and less on systematic differences between consumers (e.g., demographics) and more and more on the specific situation in which the consumer operates and the goals he or she is trying to achieve within that situation. For example, Seybold (2001) stressed the importance of understanding the unique customer scenario when developing new service value proposals.

This paper builds on this and earlier research on situational variation in consumer preferences (e.g., Belk 1974, Belk 1975, Dubois and Laurent 1999, Lutz and Kakkar 1975, Ratneshwar and Shocker 1991, Srivastava, Alpert and Shocker 1984, Srivastava, Leone, and Shocker 1981) to develop a conceptual model of consumer product information channel preference in different situations. Our central thesis is that consumer usage situation is a key driver of differences in product information channel requirements of consumers therefore also affects consumer product information channel preferences.

We test the proposed approach by investigating variations in consumer preferences for using a food manufacturer’s website as a product information channel in different hypothetical situations. We use survey data from 453 consumers who are responsible for most of the food purchases in their household.

The survey was constructed on the basis of the Association Pattern Technique (APT) (Ter Hofstede 1998, 1999) to map the different connections between product information channels, channel properties and situations. This approach was originally developed to study the relationships that consumers see between different products, product benefits (e.g., low in calories), and their own personal objectives (e.g., to be healthy). The use of the APT allowed us to quantify the types of relationships between web channels and their properties and between situations and properties that we were interested in.

Based on 4 focus groups and discussions with industry experts we identified fourteen relevant product information channels, seven channel properties and three usage situations for use in the study. Besides the manufacturer website the following other product information channels were studied: a third-party website about cooking, a food information website by an independent agency, and eleven non-Internet channels: television advertising, television program, radio advertising, radio program, magazine advertising, magazine article, newspaper advertising, newspaper article, store magazine, product label, educational brochure, Internet website of the vegetable producer, Internet. Seven channel properties were included in the study. They included whether or not a channel was trusted, detailed, time saving, easy, personal, stimulating, informative, and relaxing. Finally, three usage situations were selected that were appropriate for a context in which a consumer would be looking for product information on a food product. They were: (1) a food scare in which an ingredient of one of the manufacturer’s food products would be contaminated, (2) a new product introduction, (3) a situation in which the consumer is looking for a recipe to prepare a meal that includes one of the manufacturer’s products.

In our analysis we contrasted the manufacturer website to two other websites and to the three best competing other channels. The results provided strong support for the fact that product information channels differ in terms of perceived channel properties. Furthermore, we investigated the role of usage situation as a driver of consumer channel property requirements. A comparison was made between the three situations (a food scare, a new product introduction and a recipe search) and the results revealed that usage situation had a significant effect on the channel properties that consumers require. For example, comparing the food scare situation vs. situation in which consumers were search for a recipe illustrated that consumers required the properties trusted and informative in case of a food scare, whereas they required properties such as stimulating and relaxing in case they were searching for a recipe.
operationalization of emotion dynamics. For instance, most of these studies have primarily considered changes in emotions from one episode to another, or the impact of discrete fluctuations in one facet of emotions on perceived quality of provider performance and satisfaction within a given service episode. None of them have directly assessed the change in momentary emotions over the course of a given episode.

**Study Objectives**

The present study investigates the dynamics of emotions experienced within a discrete service episode and its impact on subsequent service satisfaction and perceived quality. Dynamics of emotions were captured by the change in reported momentary emotions from the beginning to the end of the service episode. We also have for objective to determine whether the impact of emotions on perceived quality and satisfaction is the result of changes in interpersonal aspects of the episode due to providers’ response to consumers’ emotions, or to general “biasing” effects of emotions on judgments.

**Methods**

The study was conducted in the context of healthcare services to elderly consumers. The service episode consisted in a meal, and meal-related food and nursing services were the observed health services. The design followed an event-sampling approach whereby 30 participants (Age: $M=78.8$ $SD=6.3$ years; 20 females, 10 males) were observed on repeated care episodes ($M=46.8$ care episodes per participant). Participants’ self-reports of emotions were collected before (pre) and after (post) each care episode, while satisfaction with and perception of the sensory and interpersonal quality of the service episode were reported immediately after each care episode. Participants’ self-reports of emotions were subjected to intra-individual factor analysis (P-technique), from which two to five factors emerged. Factors scores were obtained for each participant’s emerging factors, estimated separately for pre- and post-episode emotions. Average change in positive and negative valence factors over the episode were used to predict the subsequent measures of satisfaction and perceived quality.

**Results**

Random coefficient regression analyses revealed that the dynamics of emotions significantly predicted satisfaction with and perception of the interpersonal quality, but not sensory quality. Moreover, the effect was limited to positive-valence emotions, with an increase in intensity of positive emotions over the course of the episode being positively related to interpersonal quality satisfaction and perception.

**Discussion**

The absence of a relationship between satisfaction and perception of quality of tangible (sensory) aspects of the episode suggests that the results cannot be explained by pure biasing effects, but are rather thought to reflect a successful response to consumer emotions by service providers. This interpretation is consistent with the interpersonal view of emotions, according to which interactions between individuals allow them to encode, decode and respond to emotions. In addition to alter the objective nature of the service provided and hence indirectly influence the perceived quality and satisfaction with the service, provider’s capacity to respond to the emotions displayed by consumers in their expected way may lead to further (dis)satisfaction. In order to provide stronger support for the above interpretation, we plan to extend the current study by assessing the relationship of dynamics variables with objective values of interpersonal components of the episode. Specifically, we plan to use provider’s perception of the interpersonal quality of the episode (collected in parallel with participant’s reports) as a proxy for its objective interpersonal quality in order to rule out the perceptual bias hypotheses, and provide further support for the interpersonal view alternative.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the results of this study suggest that in order to achieve optimal consumer responses, design and management of services and experiential products should explicitly consider the emotional content of the service/product, as well as the degree to which the service/product responds or can respond to the emotional expectancies of the consumers.

**Consumers in Wonderland: Mirror Reversal of Atypical Pictorial Stimuli as Recollection Enhancers**

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The effect of the mirror reversal, between study phases and a test phase, of a pictorial ad featuring a well-known endorser on viewers’ recollective experience for, and attitude toward such pictorial ad is the object of two pretests and a proposed experiment. It is posited that such effect is moderated by the level of typicality of the endorser’s pictorial representation. Using Chi-Square testing, a theoretical framework focusing on the distinctiveness vs. fluency of stimulus processing will be shown to be the source of the observed differences across conditions.

On the one hand, if the ad endorser’s pictorial representation is typical, i.e., does match ad viewers’ existing mental representation of the endorser, its mirror reversal, once presented, will be processed effortlessly by the viewers. This is explained by the fact that any familiar/typical percept (e.g., a famous endorser’s face) has its mirror reversal automatically mentally encoded over time (Corballis 1974). Consequently, the mirror-reversed representation of the endorser, when shown to the viewers, will not significantly differ from the already mentally encoded representation of the endorser, due to its high level of typicality. The resulting fluent processing of the presented mirror reversal will lead to an increased feeling of familiarity with the pictorial ad, but will have a deleterious effect on the recollective experience attached to the presentation of the ad (Roediger 1996; Rajaram 1996; Mantyla and Cornoldi 2002).

On the other hand, if the ad endorser’s pictorial representation differs from ad viewers’ typical mental representation of the endorser (e.g., the endorser is represented at an age that does not correspond to his/her period of fame), presentation of the ad’s mirror reversal will trigger a distinctive processing due to (1) the perceptual novelty of the percept (due to its lack of typicality, the mirror reversal of the percept...
had not been mentally encoded prior to the presentation of the ad—Corballis 1974), and (2) the perceptual differences between the mentally-encoded mirror reversal of a typical representation of the endorser, and the presented mirror reversal of an atypical representation of the same endorser. The double distinctive nature of the processing, by warranting viewers’ attention, will foster a feeling of recollective experience (Mantyla and Cornoldi 2002; Mantyla 1997; Roediger 1996).

Beside its impact on the nature of ad recognition (i.e., semantic/Knowing, or episodic/Remembering), the mirror-reversed presentation to ad viewers of an atypical pictorial representation of a well-known endorser is also posited to affect ad viewers’ liking for such percept. Because the process of successfully resolving a slight pictorial ambiguity produces positive affect that can enhance viewers’ evaluation of a percept (Meyers-Levy and Tybout 1989; Peracchio and Meyers-Levy 1994), it is hypothesized that, when presented with the mirror reversal of an atypical representation of a well-known endorser, and mentally comparing it with the (already mentally encoded) mirror reversal of the corresponding typical face, viewers will strive for the resolution of the discrepancy, which will bring some satisfaction upon closure, hence should increase viewer attitude toward the ad (and the advertised product itself, through a direct transfer of affect from the picture to the advertised product—Stuart, Shimp and Engle 1987).

Such positive effect, however, will depend on the level of atypicality of the presented pictorial stimulus. If the pictorial representation is too different from the original, well-known representation of a familiar face, i.e., too atypical, the discrepancy might not be successfully resolved by the viewer, or resolved at an exceedingly high cognitive cost, which will negatively affect viewers’ attitude toward the ad (Peracchio and Meyers-Levy 1994).

The present research endeavor is seen as significantly contributing to the existing marketing literature, as few researchers have investigated pictorial stimuli in advertising, especially within a framework focusing on memory for and attitude toward an ad. The mirror reversal of a pictorial advertising is seen as a potentially highly effective attention-catching device which can be paralleled with other, previously-studied picture-enhancement strategies (e.g., color enhancement in print ads—Meyers-Levy and Peracchio 1995). More specifically, adopting as a corporate logo or ad a slightly modified, i.e., slightly atypical representation of a well-known endorser’s face, may allow advertisers to subsequently use the mirror reversal of that logo or ad to single out a new or distinctive product line, and attract consumers’ attention to the new product offering (and increase in the process viewers’ attitude toward the ad—Stuart, Shimp and Engle 1987).

If such advertising method has already been adopted by some corporations (e.g., Whiskas for its “favorites” product line), this is the first time to the author’s knowledge, that the effect of mirror reversal on consumer recollection has been studied.

References


**Brand Names as Sources and Targets of Tangential Implicit Associations**

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Mere exposure research has shown that individuals often engage in learning without explicitly allocating cognitive resources for this purpose. Moreover, they often build positive affective associations with incidentally or even subliminally encountered stimuli, phenomena conceptually captured within the mere exposure paradigm (Zajonc 1980). Although knowledge elaboration involves associating new information with knowledge already stored in memory (Greenwald and Leavitt 1984), consumers often assess the validity of advertising claims without much elaboration. Even when individuals are aware of the non-diagnosticity of this mere-exposure based strategy, they are still influenced by the perceptual fluency emanating from initial exposure (Jacoby, Kelley, Brown, and Jasechko 1989).

Not only does mere exposure cause low-involvement learning, but mere exposure to a brand name or product package may also produce more favorable attitudes even when the consumer does not recollect the initial exposure. Janiszewski (1993) proposes that during incidental exposure “there is a feature analysis, memory access, implicit memory formation, and perceptual construction.” The author finds evidence that the feature analysis may be automatic and independent of the operations associated with attentive processing, concluding that perceptual fluency created via exposure brings about a feeling of familiarity that is sufficient to impact consumer attitudes.

Winkielman, Schwartz, Fazendeiro, and Reber (2002) note the clear effects of perceptual fluency on subsequent judgments even under conditions of strained cognitive resources. Proposing that automatic processes play an important role, they make a conceptual distinction between objective fluency (high-speed, efficient mental processing) and subjective fluency (associated with a conscious
experience). As the two types of fluency often become dissociated along conceptual lines reminiscent of the implicit-explicit dichotomy, measuring them arguably requires distinct types of procedures.

Two arguments exist for maintaining the distinctiveness of explicit and implicit techniques as measures capturing these transitive relationships. First, Wagner, Gabrieli, and Verfaellie (1997) address the fact that dual-process theories of recognition posit that a perceptual familiarity process contributes to both explicit recognition and implicit perceptual memory. Second, Holden and Vanhuele (1999) show that a single exposure to fictitious brand names is sufficient to create the impression that these brands actually existed. The authors argue that measurement of explicit memory of marketing communications may understate their influence, and implicit measures are better equipped to capture it. The present research makes use of one specific implicit measure—the Implicit Association Test (Greenwald, McGhee, and Schwartz 1998).

Are all individuals susceptible to the priming necessary to build implicit associations? Musen, Szerlip, and Szerlip (1999) used an experimental paradigm wherein implicit memory was tested after priming subjects with words, novel shapes, non-words, and colors. New-association priming occurred between words and colors but not between abstract shapes and colors or between non-words and colors, suggesting that new-association priming occurs for familiar but not for unfamiliar stimuli. An immediate extension of these results suggests that consumer familiarity with each of the to-be-associated concepts is necessary before novel implicit relationships are constructed.

Based on the previous theoretical accounts from both cognitive and consumer psychology, it was hypothesized that incidental exposure is a sufficient source of perceptual fluency to produce novel implicit associations of concepts, but only for individuals familiar with the respective category. In the first case, a specific brand name was proposed as the concept that mediates the novel relationship, while in the second the newly formed relationship involved brand name associations created via perceptually fluent concepts.

In Study 1, a concept was chosen that represented both the brand name of a “party”-related product and the mascot of a major American university. After incidental exposure to the brand name and logo, subsequent implicit associations of the specific university with the “party” concept (relative to a comparable school) emerged robustly among subjects familiar with both the university and product category. Furthermore, these post-priming implicit associations actually reversed the pattern of pre-priming explicit evaluations of the two colleges in terms of their reputation as party schools.

In Study 2, a brand name was chosen with perceptually similar concepts that could trigger different valence connotations depending on the context. After incidental exposure to these concepts under different priming valence, subsequent implicit associations of the brand name and the valence suggested by prime (“good” or “bad”) emerged clearly among subjects familiar with the brand.

The present work shows that incidental exposure to brand names is powerful enough to produce novel implicit associations among individuals susceptible to such occurrence. It also suggests that incidental exposure to valenced concepts that are perceptually similar to brand names are sufficient to trigger implicit associations of brands with primed valence attributes. The current research also quantifies the above-mentioned priming power of concepts, as the processes involved were shown to effectively change implicit associations from their original direction in the explicit measure to their reverse image in the implicit measure. This article adds to the growing body of cognitive and consumer research literature addressing issues of dissociation in terms of knowledge representation.

References

Differentiating Hedonic Consumption On the Basis of Experiential Qualities and Emotional Make-up
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As an ever-increasing number of firms compete for the consumer’s mind, heart, and wallet, even manufacturers of commodity products need to weave experiences around their brands in order to gain competitive advantage (Pine and Gilmore 1999; Schmitt 1999). This requires an intimate understanding of the exact pleasure delivered by brands that are positioned along a hedonic promise.

Conventionally, consumption goals, and brand positioning strategies designed to appeal to those goals, have been described as either hedonic or utilitarian. Utilitarian consumption is task-oriented, and focused on efficiency (Babin, Darden, and Griffin 1994; Wolfinbarger
and Gilly 2001). Hedonic consumption focuses on the pleasure that arises from the consumption experience and the enjoyment it produces (Babin et al. 1994; Dhar and Werttenbroch 2000; Lofman 1991). Utilitarian consumption, then, is focused on outcomes while hedonic consumption seeks fun during the experience.

The objectives of the present study were three fold. First we wanted to explore whether consumers would reliably associate specific types of products with the four pleasure prototypes (physical pleasure, social pleasure, emotional pleasure, and intellectual pleasure) in a commercial context. Results from studies by Dubé and Le Bel (2003) showed that people associated particular product categories with the four prototypes, but would the same finding hold for a specific consumption experience with a particular product or service?

Second, we wanted to explore further the experiential descriptors or qualities of the four prototypes; to build on existing knowledge about the makeup of the types of pleasure. Physical (sensory) pleasure arises from things that predominantly stimulate some or all of the body’s senses. Social pleasure arises from enjoying various aspects of relationships with others. Emotional pleasure arises from feelings triggered by objects, events or people. Intellectual pleasure arises from the appreciation of objects, events, or people that present a high degree of complexity and challenge.

Third, we wanted to assess the link between experiential descriptors and the specific emotions arising with each type of pleasures to see whether the differences in the emotional make-up of the four prototypes of pleasurable experience observed by Dubé and Le Bel (2003) in non-commercial contexts would be replicated in commercial settings.

Two hundred forty-eight young adult consumers were surveyed on the campuses of two large Canadian universities. Each participant described his/her consumption experience with a self-chosen product on the basis of the pleasure type elicited and a series of experiential descriptors and emotion statements. The sets of experiential descriptors and emotion statements evolved from research by Dubé and Le Bel and extensive reviews of the literature (e.x. Richins 1997).

The results were consistent with Dubé and Le Bel (2003), demonstrating that: participants could retrieve an example of a recent consumption experience from memory and associate it with one of the four pleasure types. Our analyses of participants’ responses regarding that consumption experience further explicate the unique affective and experiential composition of each of the four types of pleasure. Finally, relationships between the experiential and affective qualities of a consumption experience begin to emerge.

Physical pleasure was primarily associated with food, beverages, sports equipment, massage and fragrance. This pleasure type is characterized by experiences such as ‘pleases all senses’ and ‘sexy.’ The emotional makeup of physical pleasure is illustrated by positive, high arousal emotions.

Social pleasure is commonly associated with friends (Dubé and Le Bel 2003) and products and services such as ground transport, travel agency, car rental, hotels/resorts, and games. The unique composition of social pleasure includes experiential descriptor ‘forge bonds’ and emotion statements ‘relaxed’ (low arousal, positive emotions).

Emotional pleasure is more affectively complex than physical or social pleasure, nonetheless it shares several characteristics with social pleasure: experiential descriptors ‘lose sense of self,’ ‘independence,’ ‘pleases all senses,’ and ‘sexy.’ Products such as music, greeting cards, flowers, jewelry/accessories, clothing, home furnishings, and movies typify emotional pleasure.

Intellectual pleasure is the most complex of the four pleasures, and the most clearly differentiated from physical pleasure. The experiential makeup of intellectual pleasure comprises ‘lose sense of self,’ ‘independence,’ ‘good human nature,’ when compared to physical pleasure. The emotional descriptors ‘irritated’ (negative emotions) and ‘accomplished’ typify intellectual pleasure.

Our results supporting the existence of the four differentiated pleasure types provides a parsimonious framework for planning the experiential branding strategy for a given product or service. Using this framework, firms can focus on the specific types of pleasure, and their underlying affective qualities, that would add real value to their product and differentiate it from competitor offerings. It is hoped that future research and scale development in this field will eventually allow us to reliably identify the nature of pleasure experienced by a consumer in any specific situation.

References
A New Classification of Uncertainty Orientation: Exploring the Susceptibility to the Hindsight Bias in a Gambling Context

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Previous research has shown that individuals who tend to attribute the outcome of random events to chance (chance oriented individuals) compared to luck (luck oriented individuals), react differently when making decisions under uncertainty. This exploratory study proposes that not only do luck and chance-oriented people react differently, but within these groups responses to uncertain stimuli vary.

Chance and Luck Orientations

Chance refers to the fact that precise future outcomes cannot be predicted (Wagenaar & Keren 1988). Chance is also often misconceived, as people believe that equally probable events are distributed fairly and evenly (Wagenaar & Keren 1988; Keren 1994; Friedland 1998), leading to the belief that uncertain outcomes are dependent on one another.

We use an uncertainty orientation framework that divides consumers into four groups based on Rotter’s (1966) locus of control (internal locus of control and external locus of control) and Friedland’s (1998) luck and chance orientations. The purpose of this study is to explore whether individual luck and chance beliefs affect the susceptibility of individuals to apply decision heuristics when making judgments under uncertainty.

Uncertainty Orientation

Luck Internals & Luck Externals

Luck-oriented individuals pay little attention to salient probabilities that define the decision problem (Friedland 1998). They believe in “lucky streaks,” expecting carryover from one random event to another. Luck Internals feel personally lucky and have more positive expectations for outcome of events (Darke & Freedman 1997). As Luck Internals rely on faulty personal luck attributions, they are expected to be most susceptible to the hindsight bias. Luck Externals believe that luck is an external phenomenon as luck cannot be made to happen, but can be detected and used to one’s advantage. As Luck Externals have a lower sense of perceived control, they are expected to only be somewhat susceptible to the hindsight bias.

Chance Internals & Chance Externals

Chance-oriented people believe outcomes will be the same regardless of the person involved. Chance Internals are expected to be very susceptible to the hindsight bias, as they believe that random outcomes are dependent and expect a pattern in external probabilistic events, which can be detected. Chance Externals are proposed to have an increased ability to avoid the hindsight bias, as they hold the more rational beliefs that luck and chance are external and unreliable phenomena.

Method

Two hundred thirty five undergraduate students were asked to make a foresight prediction of the final outcome (heads (H) or tails (T)) of the coin tosses in each of 5 random sequences of coin tosses. The participants then handed their predictions to the investigator and spent 30-40 minutes completing other items. At the end of the questionnaire, the same five coin toss sequences were presented in a different order with the actual final outcome, which they had predicted earlier. The participants were then asked to make a hindsight prediction of the final outcome they would have chosen, had they not been shown the final outcome. The participants were divided into the uncertainty orientation based on a locus of control scale and responses to four luck/chance orientation scenarios adapted from Friedland (1998).

Major Findings

To investigate how the uncertainty orientations explained susceptibility to the bias we ran a General Linear Model on the susceptibility score with the two independent factors, locus of control and luck/chance orientation. No significant main effects were found for either luck/chance ($F(1,231)=.37, p=.54$) or locus of control ($F(1,231)=.48, p=.49$). However, there was a significant interaction between luck/chance and locus of control ($F(1,231)=3.81, p<.05$), revealing differences between the uncertainty orientations.

Previous research into the hindsight bias has shown that its effects are quite pervasive with research efforts focusing on factors that can moderate the degree to which a person exhibits the bias (Christensen-Szalanski & Willham, 1991). Our research contributes to this area by devising a framework that displays differences in hindsight bias susceptibility. In fact, had we used Friedland’s luck orientation only, we would have found that everyone was equally susceptible to the bias. Had we used the locus of control scale only, we would have found that everyone was equally as susceptible to the bias. By using both measures we found differences between groups based on their uncertainty orientation.

As expected we found that Luck Internals were susceptible to the bias and Luck Externals were less susceptible. Contrary to our expectations, Chance Internals were found to be susceptible to the bias, with Chance Externals to be most likely to change their recollection of their foresight prediction.

References

Deception in Interpersonal Consumer Exchanges
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Word of mouth (WOM) has been extensively researched in the last decades. A tacit assumption underlying virtually all studies that investigate its determinants is that the valence of the information provided is triggered by the level of satisfaction of the informant with the referred product or service. In other words, positive WOM is given when satisfaction with the consumed product or service is high, while negative WOM will be given after a dissatisfying experience (e.g., Anderson, 1998). This intuitive assumption has been validated in a number of empirical studies (e.g., Richins, 1983; Westbrook, 1987).

However, sometimes, WOM may not reflect the informant’s true perception about a consumption experience. For example, some people may be unwilling to publicly admit that they have chosen a “bad” brand or product, because they fear this may reflect on them as not being able to make good choices. In other cases, consumers may be hesitant to admit negative experiences with a chosen service because it may negatively affect other people’s assessment of them. For example, even a dissatisfied college student will be very careful to speak negatively about his school or program, because the diffusion of negative information about those issues may weaken his opportunities on the job market.

The examination of WOM communications in which inaccurate consumption information is exchanged, is completely lacking. This paper deals with such “opportunistic WOM” (OWOM) which we define as consumers lying, cheating, or withholding important market information in order to achieve an end when giving experience-based referral information to other consumers. In particular, this paper focuses on OWOM conversations that are subject to a WOM source’s intention to conceal a purchasing failure by distributing OWOM information after a negative consumption experience.

Theoretical and Conceptual Background
The paper mainly builds on Frenzen and Nakamoto (1993), who show that when the transmission of information is associated with financial disadvantages, WOM is inhibited. In contrast to Frenzen and Nakamoto (1993), though, we are not concerned with an inhibited information flow, but with the transmission of false information. It is therefore necessary to investigate potential benefits of engaging in OWOM.

Benefits of OWOM Information Giving
Reporting a dissatisfying or disappointing consumption experience will not help the communicator appear as “sophisticated consumer”. It is, on the contrary, sometimes associated with considerable psychic costs. Frenzen and Nakamoto (1993, p.373), argue that “… consumers may be reluctant to reveal information that bears a social stigma and imposes psychic costs such as embarrassment or shame.” Similarly, Saarni and Lewis (1993) argue that the deception of others occurs in cases where the cost of shame, humiliation or embarrassment exceeds the cost of deception.

Communications literature typically refers to two groups of factors that may influence a communicator’s decision to act opportunistically in an exchange situation. First, perceived product category characteristics (such as the perceived value of information), and second, perceived characteristics of the exchange partner (such as the closeness of the relationship). An exploratory study was conducted to shed more light on those two factors.

Results of an Exploratory Study
94 undergraduate students of a Western European university (45 females, mean age ≈ 22 years) participated in a two-page qualitative survey. After the introduction of an exemplary OWOM case scenario (a person disseminating false information about a recent consumption experience was described), respondents were asked (a) whether they had already behaved in a similar manner and what the reasons for doing so were, (b) whether they believed that certain properties of their exchange partner would influence the decision to engage in such deceptive behavior, and (c) whether they believed that certain product classes or categories were more likely to be subject to such behavior. Responses were analyzed using critical incident technique (CIT). The results of this initial study made apparent that indeed self-esteem or the avoidance of shame acted as main influencers of opportunistic WOM behavior (≈ 67,5% of all given answers). Further, concerning the influencing character of the social context, results suggested that to a vast majority, people with whom a strong relationship is shared are less likely to be deceived or betrayed (≈ 85% of all given answers). Regarding product class characteristics, it became apparent that especially product categories that are important for a respondent’s self-perception (among them many high-priced or luxury product categories) were named (≈ 34,5% of all given answers).

From the exploratory study, product involvement was derived as the key product-category level variable (e.g., Celsi and Olson, 1988) and tie strength (e.g., Granovetter, 1973) as the key exchange partner characteristic that should be related to OWOM behavior. Further research, currently undertaken, is needed to investigate OWOM behavior more thoroughly.
A Multi-Attribute Multi-Stage Model of Online/Offline Shopping Preferences

Irwin Levin, University of Iowa
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Consumers may decide to shop online or offline for a variety of reasons that may differ across products and across different stages of the shopping experience. Our first study (Levin, Levin and Heath 2003) aimed at determining factors that lead to differential preferences for online and offline sources at different stages of the shopping experience for different products. We asked participants to indicate whether they would prefer to shop online or offline for different products at different stages of the shopping experience. We found that for “low-touch” products such as airline tickets and computer software, most consumers prefer to search and compare options online but only about half preferred to make the final purchase online. For “high-touch” products such as clothing and health and grooming products, most consumers preferred offline (brick-and-mortar) services at all stages. Other products, like books and CDs, fell in between.

We then asked our participants to rate the extent to which a variety of shopping features were better delivered online or offline. The ability to see-touch-handle the product, personal service, no hassle exchange, speedy delivery and shopping enjoyment were rated higher for offline services. The ability to shop quickly, have a large selection, and get a better price were rated higher online. Finally, participants were asked to rate how important each of these features is for each product. For example, fast search and better price were especially important for airline tickets while personal service, being able to see and handle the product and shopping enjoyment were especially important for purchases of clothing. At the qualitative level, these attribute-specific findings helped explain the different online/offline preferences for the different products.

It was clear, however, that this analysis needed to be supplemented with more data for testing a quantitative model of online/offline preferences for different products. In particular, more attribute-level evaluations were needed. In order to provide a real test of a multi-attribute model, we need estimates of both the importance of different attributes for different products and how each attribute is evaluated on online/offline superiority. Our new study will provide these estimates. We developed a model of online/offline shopping preferences where various attributes of the shopping experience such as price, selection, speedy delivery, and no hassle exchange are each assumed to vary along a dimension of “shopping offline is much better” to “shopping online is much better,” with each taking on different importance for different products. The essence of the model is that to the extent that a consumer perceives a product’s main features to be delivered better online, the consumer will prefer to shop online for that product. Conversely for products whose important attributes are better served offline. We assume that the overall preference for shopping online or offline for a given product is a weighted average of attribute values where weights are obtained from separate ratings of attribute importance for each product. Formally, the model can be stated as where is the preference for online or offline sources for product , is the importance weight of attribute for product and is the value of attribute on a scale from “shopping online is much better” to “shopping offline is much better.” (See Anderson 1981 and Gaeth et al. 1990 for previous applications of weighted averaging models.)

Recently, attention has been called to individual differences in lifestyle related to the tendency to shop online (Brengman, Geuens, Smith and Swinyard 2002). This is consistent with our observation of mixed preferences for shopping mode within a number of our product categories. Thus, our extended model test will not only use product-related attributes to differentiate online/offline preferences for different products, but will include measures of consumer traits such as introversion-extroversion, social-identity and need for cognition to differentiate those consumers who prefer the solitary but more information-laden experience of internet shopping or the more social experience of shopping with other customers and service providers. The ultimate goal is to understand the customer-product interactions that drive the decision to shop online or offline.

References

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**The Objectification of Moral Support: An Ethnography of Networks in the Making**
Jean-Sebastien Marcoux, HEC Montreal

This paper examines the formation of support networks in a North American context. Starting from an ethnographic examination of the circulation of physical help on occasions like a move, it demonstrates the importance of mundane crisis situations as catalysts for the formation of support networks. As it appears, networks cannot be reified. They are built over time, through a dynamic process of objectification which incorporates the particularity of the object of exchange, and from which emerges, as a result, an idea of social class. By adopting a material culture perspective borrowed from the anthropology of consumption, this paper shows how crisis events become occasions for asserting class. Indeed, class is not important in a determinist fashion, but at the performative level.

Using ethnographic evidence, this paper shows how moving day is a bodily experience embedded into broader social networks. It describes the importance of support networks in a crisis context like a move, and shows how the move may become an occasion for measuring the size of support relations, not to say a catalyst for the shaping of networks. In trying to understand the significance of support networks, it is important to move beyond the utilitarian understanding of network. As such, this paper brings into focus a gift giving perspective on network, highlighting how network may assert itself as supportive from a moral point of view. It shows what is to be gained by adopting such a perspective for understanding network mobilization, while stressing how the assumptions of gratuity describe a middle class reality. If we push this line of argument further, the provision of physical help is intertwined with class. As much as it is related to class, the materiality of help cannot be dissolved and reduced to a symbol of solidarity or mutual aid. This physically demanding form of help is also socially consuming, or even enslaving from a middle class perspective. In fact, the physical help objectifies a threat to the middle class valorization of autonomy for it entails relational costs, creates obligation and potentially leaves traces. The question remains nonetheless as to how autonomy should be interpreted. Can the middle class’ refusal to be helped be taken as an altruistic gesture, not to say a gift? The conclusion examines how divesting networks may become a means for performing class, and for re-establishing differences. This discussion pushes the work of Holt (1997, 1998) further, while unveiling the limitations of his approach. It reveals what is to be gained by re-considering the philosophical distinction between people and things, and by considering network formation through a process of objectification (Miller, 1998). Support networks evolve over time. They take shape in day to day activities, along the different crises that people go through. As such, we should not reify them at the expense of their dynamic character. This paper demonstrates what can be gained by adopting a material culture approach and getting access to social reality in the making. It shows how support gets objectified in the network mobilized. A material culture perspective does not only praise the re-enchantment of popular cultural manifestations, however. Instead, it forces us to transcend the opposition between things and relations. It requires us to recognize the importance of situations that are taken for granted and often conceived as obvious, so obvious that they are relegated to the realm of the mundane. As a matter of fact, such an approach allows us consider different and deeper levels of meaning; sometimes the most important ones.

**Persuasion and Haptic Properties: There’s More to Touch than Meets the Eye**
Joann Peck, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Jennifer Wiggins, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Persuasion appeals often include verbal descriptions of products, pictorial representations of products and their features, and more recently, appeals implores customers to touch. For products that have an instrumental touch element, for example, a sweater for which softness is a key desirable attribute, providing individuals with touch information has been shown to increase positive attitude toward the product and purchase intention. These effects have been found to be greater for individuals who are high in Need for Touch (NFT) than individuals who are low in NFT. However, touch appeals have begun to be seen for products that have no instrumental touch element, even in abstract contexts like appeals for charitable donations to causes. The goal of this research is to examine whether a touch-based appeal using a more abstract touch concept not directly related to a product attribute can influence persuasion.

We suggest that appeals that include a touch element will be more vivid than appeals without touch elements, which previous research in persuasion has suggested may facilitate or inhibit persuasion, depending on the congruence of the touch element with the appeal’s message and on individual differences in message processing. Specifically, we predict that a touch based appeal will be more persuasive than a non-touch based appeal, and that this effect will be significantly higher for those individuals who are high in NFT than for those who are low in NFT. Further, we predict that when the touch element is congruent with the appeal’s message, persuasion will be higher than when the touch element is not congruent, and that this difference will be greater for high NFT individuals than for low NFT individuals. Finally, we will examine the impact of the valence of the touch element on the effectiveness of the appeal. We predict that incorporating a positive touch element, such as silk, will be more persuasive than incorporating a negative touch element, such as sandpaper, except when the negative touch element is highly congruent with the appeal’s message.

This paper will incorporate two lab studies that will allow us to control aspects of the situation to look carefully at process factors. A third study moves into the field to increase the external validity of the findings as well as to examine the effect of actual charitable donation behavior by appeal type. We have selected appeals by charitable organizations as our context for several reasons. First, this is a natural setting in which individuals are familiar with persuasive appeals. Second, in this context, both attitudes toward the appeal and toward the organization, as well as behavior measures, are easily obtainable. Finally, using non-profit organizations also allows us to extend the research using a field study for a third study to look at actual donation behavior by type of appeal.
The first study examines the effects of the type of appeal as well as the individual difference NFT on attitude toward the organization as well as behavioral measures of willingness to donate time or money to the organization. Study 1 is a 2 (NFT, high/low determined by a median split) x 3 (type of appeal; no haptic information, haptic congruent information, haptic incongruent information) x 3 (valence of haptic information; positive, neutral, negative) with the first factor measured between subjects and the second and third factors manipulated between subjects. Congruency and valence of touch information was determined by a pretest. The context for this study is an appeal for donations to the local arboretum; one example of congruent touch information is a piece of tree bark, while a piece of steel wool would be an example of incongruent touch information. The second study replicates Study 1 with an additional manipulation of motivation to process information. Past research has found greater effects for vividness under lower motivation to process conditions. Controlling for this in a lab study may allow additional insights.

In Study 3, we will work with two non-profit organizations, one that is highly congruent with the idea of touch (a “hands-on” children’s museum) and one that has considerably lower congruence with the idea of touch (a symphony orchestra). Each organization will mail out three versions of an appeal designed to solicit either ticket sales or charitable donations. In order to make the haptic information congruent to the organization’s message, the message must be phrased in a manner that evokes haptic imagery, particularly for the symphony where the organization is not highly haptic congruent. In order to control for the potential effects of the haptic imagery itself, the three versions of the appeal will include one with a touch element as well as haptic imagery in the text, one with only haptic imagery in the text, and one with no haptic information. The 12-item NFT scale and additional control questions about familiarity and past donation behavior, gender, and age will be included in a separate questionnaire included with the appeal with the cover story that the questionnaire is a separate research project the organization is participating in for researchers at the university. Actual ticket sales or donation behavior will be tracked at the individual level by the organizations.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the persuasiveness of touch information in an abstract context, where touch is not instrumentally related to the product. By tracking actual behavior in response to touch based appeals at these two organizations, we will be able to test the boundaries of the touch based appeal and determine if and when the abstract touch information becomes too abstract to be persuasive. Working with the symphony, for example, will allow us to examine whether the haptic appeal type will be persuasive even when it does not easily match the organization. The results of these studies will help us to predict under what circumstances organizations should and should not use touch-based appeals.

Globalization of Consumption and Advertising in a Transitional Market
Katherine C. Sredl, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Goods and advertising play large roles not only in accelerating change in contemporary societies but also in surviving change (Fox 1985; McCracken 1988). This research investigated how consumers and advertisers use goods and advertising in the post-socialist transformation in Croatia. Fieldwork was conducted using naturalistic inquiry methods from June 2002-August 2003, involving depth interviews and focus groups with fifty two consumer and advertising agency respondents (Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989). Triangulation was sought through content analysis of a representative number of advertising campaigns, photography, and measures of materialism surveys (Walendorf and Belk 1989; Ger and Belk 1996). This abstract presents the preliminary research findings.

Primary themes which emerge from the data include consumption and advertising symbolism and their relation to citizenship, ethnicity, and creation of differences. The themes suggest that the transformation brings increased opportunities for the symbolic use of goods, but that the meanings and interpretations are often a continuation of Yugoslav socialist consumer culture. These findings question the approach of previous research on post-socialist consumption and advertising in Europe, which views it as a transition from socialism to capitalism, and East to West, when in fact it is not a transition but a transformation with undetermined and perhaps unprecedented outcomes. It also ignores socialist consumption and advertising, analogous to ignoring much of the socialist experience (Verdery 1996).

Clearly, it is time to revisit post-socialist consumer culture in Europe with an empathetic and informed understanding of the ambiguities and qualitative changes of the current phenomenon. In the confusion of applying American marketing models and advertising in the region, it is clear that a reorientation is needed in understanding consumer behavior and marketing in the region. My research contributes to a new approach to understanding global marketing since the Cold War.

Bibliography


Both personally and professionally, the Italian painter Caravaggio was a controversial figure even during his lifetime (1573-1610), much less after it. Brawls, robberies, relations with prostitutes both female and male, murder, exile, shipwreck, imprisonment and escape—the events of Caravaggio’s life read like a postmodern version of a Robert Louis Stevenson novel. Professionally, his accomplishments met with equal controversy: many of his paintings, graphically depicting crucifixions, decapitations, and conversions, were refused by their patrons; those that were accepted were often hung so high on chapel walls that they could only vaguely be seen in the candle-lit shadows.

After his death, Caravaggio’s reputation lay fallow for 300 years. It was not until the 1930’s that the art historian Robert Longhi revived the artist’s work by organizing an extensive exhibition and making pronouncements such as this:

People speak of Caravaggio, calling him now a master of shadow, now a master of light. What has been forgotten is that Ribera, Vermeer, la Tour and Rembrandt could never have existed without him.

(Lambert, p. 15)

While many critics agreed with Longhi, an equal number did not. To this day, may critics see his paintings as vulgar, excessive, and sadomasochistic.

**METHOD**

By using the textual-interpretive method advanced by McQuarrie & Mick (1999) as well as Stern (1988), I am in the process of examining the interplay of Caravaggio’s art and the critical response to it. For example, what can explain such a clearly-drawn distinction between Caravaggio’s admirers and detractors? Why are reactions to his work so polarized? Analyzing the interpretations of Caravaggio’s “texts” has allowed me to identify three distinct schools or strand of thought surrounding his work: the Spiritual, the Erotic, and the Psychological.

**The Spiritual**

Because may of his subjects were religious in nature, it is hardly surprising that some critics respond to Caravaggio’s work in a spiritual vein. This is certainly the case with The Ecstasy of Saint Francis. In this painting, Saint Francis appears to have fallen back on the ground, lying gently in the arms of a protective angel. In her meticulously-researched biography of Caravaggio, Helen Langdon makes the connection between the ecstasy of religious conversion and the ecstasy of romantic love. She cites the love poetry of the period that likens ‘the light of the stars and flames with the mystic light of God.’

**The Erotic**

It is this response, more than any other, that makes Caravaggio’s work so sensational to contemporary eyes. Whether observing Saint John the Baptist, Sick Bacchus, or The Entombment of Christ, some critics become most sensitive to what they believe are homoerotic elements in Caravaggio’s paintings. One painting that often draws such a reaction is Boy with a Basket of Fruit. Donald Posner’s reaction is typical of this school. Describing Boy Bitten By A Lizard, he notes: ‘the boy’s hands do not tense with masculine vigor in response to the attack; they remain limp in a languid show of helplessness.’

**The Psychological**

Critics in this interpretive mode, typified by Bersani and Dutoit in Caravaggio’s Secrets, begin with relations of bodies to one another, then quickly move to the deeper psychological meanings such juxtapositions may symbolize. They speak of fantasies, and Caravaggio’s sense of options in space—and how such options relate to the ego and consciousness.

**MAJOR FINDINGS**

Having identified these three strands of interpretation, I develop five axioms that explain how such criticism both reflects critics’ prejudices, and shapes ordinary viewers’ consumption of the artist.

**AXIOM 1:** Critics see what they “want” to see, and often what they want to see will determine which paintings they choose to discuss.

**AXIOM 2:** Critics represent an important step along the path of consumption. Like some animals and birds, they pre-consume the product first, then pass along—regurgitated—the outcome to their offspring.

**AXIOM 3:** While the visual image itself contains great persuasive power, critics need language to construct an argument as to the nature of the image’s persuasion. In so doing, they instruct the viewer what to see and what not to see, what to connect and what not to connect. Critics construct reality.

**AXIOM 4:** Caravaggio’s work, like that of many artists, offers a number of what Gibson calls “affordances”—images of potential utility or danger. The more affordances provided by an artist, the more footholds a critic may gain into his work.
AXIOM 5: The more “ways of seeing” that critics can attach to an artist, the longer the artist lives. As Proust wrote in Sodom and Gomorrah, ‘Theories and schools, like microbes and globules, devour each other and, through their struggle, ensure the continuity of life.’

Environmental and Ethical Consumers’ Concerns for Food Products
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New expectations have emerged among consumers over the past twenty years. They first oriented towards the environment, now also concern ethical issues, and already express themselves through an interest for fair-trade products and “social” labels. Four movements have allowed food product quality to emerge in these new fields: organic and integrated agriculture in the environmental field; fair-trade and ethical trade in the field of social ethics. The typical attributes of these products can be called “pro-social” credence attributes (Nelson, 1970, Osterhust, 1997).

Environmental and ethical consumers’ concerns: similar problems and differences

In order to know if these new expectancies can converge, several questions must be asked. Do consumers who buy “green” products share common values with those consumers who buy “ethical” products? Is the concern-behavior link the same in both cases? Finally, do they perceive the same kind of proximity with environmental and social problems?

Our hypothesis is that some issues are common to both fields (e.g. problems of awareness and institutional credibility, and little consumer concern about environmental and ethical aspects), but most problems are different.

The field of environment is perceived as being relatively homogeneous by consumers, who do not really see any difference between products from organic and integrated agriculture. In the field of ethics, consumers supporting fair-trade are specifically interested in helping small producers in developing countries, whereas consumers who care about social ethics have much more varied concerns, going from labor conditions to more global issues, such as respect of human rights.

According to several authors, consumers who buy products for environmental or ethical aspects share common concerns (Murray and Reynolds, 2000), but studying the consumers motivations and the values linked to these motivations, reveals differences: the values associated to the social ethics dimension are homogeneous, whereas those associated to environmental aspects are heterogeneous. Indeed, the field of ethics seems to be related to almost only universalist values, whereas that of environment also refers to egocentric-type values, such as health, tradition or pleasure.

The third difference deals with the link between purchase and the consumers’ values. The link seems to be stronger in the ethical field than in the environmental field. If the market for organic products has recently developed, it is not mainly due to an increasing concern for environmental issues, but rather to a reaction to the recent food crises. Fair-trade being more strongly linked to the ethical dimension than organic production is to the environmental dimension, it must be feared that it will not develop in the same way.

Finally, a great difference between both fields comes from the importance of the problems and their proximity. The proximity to environmental problems has contributed to develop consumer awareness; but since social problems are perceived as far-off and diffuse, social ethic signs do not touch consumers as much.

Marketing and communication implications

The relative importance of environmental and ethical concerns against other self-oriented attributes is small. Does it mean that to increase the consumption of “green” and “ethical” products, it would thus be relevant to communicate on self-oriented attributes instead of communicating only on such pro-social attributes?

The social dilemma theory (Wiener and Doescher, 1995) may suggest other ways of communicating to consumers. Some consumers may refuse to cooperate because they want to maintain their freedom; others refuse to make efforts to save a resource and see this resource destroyed, being so a “sucker”. A third reason can be self-interest; lastly, some consumers may not trust others to cooperate.

Most environmental problems can be studied within this frame; but is it relevant for the study of ethical products? Both deal with concern for others, but while environment problems only deal with the community’s good, ethical products deal with a larger group which gets benefit from them: the community, but also producers, workers, even animals, … A second difference is due to the possible association, within a product, of pro-social and self-oriented attributes, as it is the case in the environment field: the first and third barriers thus do not exist. Therefore, to communicate on ethical products, solutions will be different from those used in environmental marketing. To overcome the sucker barrier, communication strategies could emphasize that the goal will be achieved, and for consumers who do not trust others to cooperate, communication could be oriented on efforts made by other groups, i. e. retailers, producers…

Research avenues

This analysis finally leads to the conclusion that from an academic point of view, some questions remain to be treated more in detail. How does the consumer integrate the environmental and social dimension of food product quality? Do we have to think in terms of distinct attributes (environmental versus social) or in terms of ethical or “societal” sensitivity, which includes both dimensions?

Methodological questions also have to be answered: how to measure environmental and ethical concerns without bias? How to measure consumers’ willingness to pay an ethical premium? Conjoint analysis could be used to estimate this consumers’ willingness, but it raises the problem of the validity of non-observed choices. Vickrey or BDM auctions bring an interesting alternative to hypothetical approaches, and will thus be used in our research to reveal true consumers’ willingness to pay (Wertenbroch and Skiera, 2002).
Images of Black Women in U.K. Magazine Advertising
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Introduction
In consumer behavior research there has been almost total silence about the representation of black women in advertising; and the implications for social comparison. White women have been the traditional focus of studies undertaken in response to critiques of the representation of women in advertising. However women’s magazines are an important influence on ideas about beauty, race and gender. Where black women’s images in advertising have been explored their looks have often been homogeneously classified as ‘sensual/exotic’; whereas differentiation has been noted for the white models. This study examines how black women are portrayed in U.K. advertising.

Social comparison
How black women are portrayed is important because advertising affects both how women are viewed, as well as how they view themselves. The images generated by U.K. advertising represent a significant environmental influence which women draw on in the social comparison process. Early social comparison theory suggested that the environment played an essentially passive and co-operative role. Subsequent research showed that the environment can play a very active role in providing comparisons which shape individuals’ self-evaluations. In the U.S.A. social comparison theory has been used to examine the ‘short-term effects of advertising stimuli’ in order to contribute to understanding the ‘long-term cumulative effects of exposure to advertising’ (Richins 1991:72), and in particular how women often set their frame of comparative reference drawing on advertising images. Social comparison theory has been used to explore the effects of advertising images on women’s self-perceptions of their physical attractiveness and their levels of self esteem. Moses (1999) researched the effect of body images of Caucasian and Afro-American models on Afro-American college girls. She identified that firstly, low self-esteem and the drive for thinness go hand in hand, supporting earlier research; secondly, images of underweight black females led to an apparent decrease in intellectual confidence; thirdly, the portrayal of racialized and underweight models has a significant impact on social comparison; and fourthly images of overweight models elicited fewer upward comparisons and generated more downward comparisons.

Research questions
The research question was: how are black women represented in the U.K. media? The specific objectives were: firstly to determine what types of images are used to portray black women in women’s magazine advertising in the UK; secondly to interpret some of the images of black women; and thirdly to discuss the potential implications of these images on black women’s self-esteem in the social comparison process.

Method
Advertisements were selected from three women’s magazines (1996-2002): Vogue (4 ads); Cosmopolitan (3 ads); and Pride (3 ads). The main criteria were that the models in the ads should be of ethnic origin; their image should appear as full page advertisements or covers; and the images should be in colour. An interpretive approach was used, beginning with an initial description of the advertisements, which was followed by the application of visual rhetoric and semiotics for further analysis and interpretation.

Discussion
Initial findings largely confirmed firstly Simonton’s (1995) research which suggested the use of a limited range of stereotypical images; and secondly Fears’ study (1995) of colourism, where black women’s images were characterized by differences in hair textures, skin tones and facial features in terms of euro-centricity and afro-centricity. However a more careful scrutiny suggested some variation and mixing between the two general types identified by Fears (1995) with different combinations of skin colouring, facial features and hair. Ethnicity was often downplayed (e.g. hair was straightened and/or lengthened with weaves), confirming Simonton’s earlier research (1995). There was scope to start to identify a wider range of ‘looks’ among black women and thus extend Solomon, Ashmore and Longo’s (1992) classification of beauty types of black women beyond ‘exotic/sensual’.

The potential implications for black women’s self-perception, self-esteem and body imagery of the limited range of black women’s images represented in the U.K. media have to be understood within the context of social comparison (Festinger 1954) and the goal (i.e. self-evaluation, self-improvement or self-enhancement) in the social comparison process (Wood 1989:231). The positive or negative impact of advertising images on women’s level of self-esteem varies according to their goal in using advertisements for social comparison.
Conclusion

This study was limited to a small range of U.K. magazines over a fairly short time period. It would be valuable to use advertisements from a longer time period and from a greater range of magazines to see how the representation of black women in the U.K. media has evolved and changed over time, and across different types of media. It would also be valuable to collect consumer interpretations of the images of black women in U.K. advertising.

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The Double-sided Consumer: Ambivalence, Duality and their Link to Behavior, a Review and Conceptual Framework

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This working paper defines two attitude constructs rather new to consumer psychology, ambivalence and duality. Ambivalence is described as inconsistencies in the evaluations of an attitude object (i.e. having both explicit positive and negative evaluations of the same attitude object; Thompson, Zanna, and Griffin, 1995). Typically ambivalence has been measured through the separate assessment of the positive and negative components of the attitude on unipolar scales, combined into an index reflecting differences in similarity and intensity of these evaluations. On the other hand, duality involves inconsistencies between the implicit and explicit evaluations of the attitude object (e.g., having both an unconscious negative attitude and a conscious positive one; Wilson, Lindsey and Schooler, 2000). Whereas explicit attitudes are measured through traditional attitude scales, implicit attitudes are assessed unobtrusively through a variety of priming techniques or more recently through the Implicit Association Test and its variants (Greenwald, McGhee and Schwartz, 1998).

Ambivalence and duality share several common characteristics, especially as both are based on the coexistence of discrepant evaluations in memory for the same attitude object, and both might create conflict in the attitude. Yet, we propose major differences in the differential strength of conflicting evaluations as the source of either ambivalence or duality. Ambivalence supposes that positive and negative evaluations are equally accessible, important and viewed as legitimate to the holder, resulting in a conscious experience of conflict in the attitude (Newby-Clark, McGregor and Zanna, 2002). In contrast, duality should involve the predominance of one evaluation over the other (accessibility, importance, and legitimacy). Yet, duality might also involve introspectively unidentified discomfort when the behavior is performed, due to diverging spontaneous and controlled reactions. For instance, Dovidio et al. (1997) found that the response-lateness measure of implicit negative racial attitude was the best predictor of non-verbal reactions related to negative arousal, specifically differences in rates of blinking and percentages of visual contact with a black relative to a white interviewer.

The paper also proposes different consequences on the overall summary evaluation as well as on the attitude-behavior relations when holding either or the other structure (ambivalent or dual attitudes). Ample literature provides evidence that ambivalence creates summary evaluations that are low in accessibility and certainty, unstable and poor predictors of subsequent behaviors. We suggest on the contrary, that explicit attitudes based on duality should be well established, more stable and held with more confidence to serve as competitive responses to the automatically activated attitude. In turn, we expect these explicit attitudes to be strongly related to behavioral intentions and controlled behaviors, the implicit attitudes driving nonetheless impulsive behaviors and more spontaneous responses. For instance, several researches on racial prejudice (e.g., Dovidio et al., 1997) tend to demonstrate that explicit attitudes are strongly related to overt and controlled behavior whereas implicit attitudes are better predictors of spontaneous responses that lie outside of conscious awareness and control.

Two main consequences are suggested for consumer psychology. First, the importance of developing alternative measures of attitude to the current self-report bipolar scales for consumer research is discussed. Second, the implications in the domain of persuasion and attitude change when ambivalence and duality are at play (e.g. unhealthy diets, condom use etc.) are highlighted.

References


**When do Others’ Opinions Matter? Moderators of Implicit Interpersonal Influence on Attitudes**

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This paper analyzes the effect of implicit interpersonal influences on an individual’s attitudes toward an object. By implicit interpersonal influence we refer to situations in which an individual is influenced by significant others’ attitudes, without being explicitly exposed to them.

Balance theory, originally formulated by Fritz Heider (1958), gives a nice framework to understand in which direction significant others’ attitudes toward an object may influence an individual’s attitudes toward that object. Basically, Balance theory proposes that people will tend to agree with liked others and to disagree with disliked others.

We propose that an individual’s attitudes toward an object will be implicitly influenced by significant others’ attitudes in the direction predicted by Heider’s Balance theory. That is, people will tend to agree with liked significant others and to disagree with disliked significant others. However, this influence may be moderated by many factors. We analyze individual’s Attitudinal Ambivalence toward the object as one of such factors. Specifically, we propose that individuals who score Low on Attitudinal Ambivalence will not be influenced by significant others’ attitudes; while scoring high on Attitudinal Ambivalence will make the individual react in the direction predicted by Balance theory. We also tested people’s awareness of this implicit interpersonal influence.

One hundred and twenty undergraduate students participated in Experiment 1, which was adapted from that of Priester and Petty (2001). In a between-subjects design, we measured subjects’ overall attitudes, attitudinal ambivalence, and their perception of their parents’ attitudes toward voting in the New York Governor’s elections. We also measured how relevant subjects considered their parents’ attitudes for their own decision to vote.

To test the hypothesis regarding the conditions under which the participants would recruit their parents’ attitudes in order to report their own, we analyzed the data using a 2-way ANOVA with Participants’ overall attitudes toward voting as the D.V. in a 2 (Attitudinal Ambivalence toward voting: High vs. Low) x 2 (Perceived parents’ attitudes toward voting: Positive vs. Negative) between subjects design. As predicted, planned contrasts showed that parents’ attitudes affected subjects’ attitudes only when the latter experienced high ambivalence toward voting in the New York Governor’s elections (High ambivalence: F(1, 116)=9.60, p<0.003; Low Ambivalence: F(1, 116)=2.64, p<0.11 n.s.).

Also, if parents’ attitudes affect subjects’ attitudes only when the latter experience High Ambivalence, then the correlation between own and parents’ attitudes toward voting should be significantly stronger when participants experience High attitudinal ambivalence than when they experience Low attitudinal ambivalence. To test this proposition, we ran two bi-variate correlations between parents’ and subjects’ overall attitudes, one using data of subjects experiencing Low ambivalence and the other using data of subjects experiencing High ambivalence. Results were consistent with our prediction, the correlation between parents’ and subjects’ attitudes were significantly stronger under High ambivalence than under Low ambivalence (r_{High}=0.565, p<0.0001; r_{Low}=0.29, p<0.03; Fisher’s z=1.82, p<0.035 (one-tailed)).

In order to test the hypothesis regarding participants’ awareness of the implicit influence of their parents’ attitudes, we analyzed the data using a 1-way ANOVA with Relevance of parents’ attitudes toward voting on one’s own decision to vote as the D.V. and Attitudinal Ambivalence toward voting (High vs. Low) as the I.V.. Results were consistent with the prediction that people seem to be unaware of their parents’ influence on their own decision to vote. Although participants experiencing High or Low ambivalence rated their parents’ attitudes toward voting as somewhat relevant to their own decision to vote; the 1-way ANOVA showed that mean differences of Perceived parents’ attitudes relevance between High and Low ambivalence were not significant (Mean_{LowAmb}=4.68; Mean_{HighAmb}=4.93; F(1, 118)=0.215, p<0.65 n.s.).

We agree with prior research that the influence of others is an important determinant of an individual’s judgments and behaviors. However, most prior consumer research focused on the effects of explicit interpersonal influence on consumers, such as word-of-mouth effects.

We proposed, and results from Experiment 1 suggested, that individuals may be implicitly influenced by others’ attitudes, even if they are not aware of it.

Under certain conditions, people may spontaneously recruit significant others’ attitudes from memory and use them as cues to report their own attitudes. Uncovering conditions under which this attitude formation process occurs is the focus of this research program. Research on this phenomenon may contribute to increase our understanding of how interpersonal influences may be present in consumers’ everyday life.

Some limitations of Experiment 1 need to be acknowledged. In this first study, we measured the independent variables. A cleaner test of the hypotheses requires manipulations of the independent variables. Also, we did not assess the relevance of the topic for the participants. A key aspect of our predictions relies on the fact that people should be motivated to solve their ambivalent attitudes. The study was conducted the week before the New York Governor’s elections and for this reason the topic should have been relevant for the participants. Also, results suggested that the New York State Governor’s elections were sufficiently relevant for the subjects to recruit their parents’ attitudes. However, a proper measure of topic relevance would bring insights regarding the motivation issue.

Future research involves looking for the conditions under which implicit interpersonal influence takes place. Other sources of motivation besides topic relevance are worth studying (e.g.: involvement, accountability, etc.). Also, other factors may moderate the effect. For example, self-construal differences (i.e.: independent or interdependent) may also moderate implicit interpersonal influences. Finally, it would be interesting to properly disentangle the psychological processes that drive this phenomenon.
Consumer Credit Behavior: A Conceptual Model and Proposed Research Agenda
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The use of credit cards has become an area of social and economic concern, particularly in the past ten years. The development of a model to study consumer credit behavior appears to be an important issue given the recent increase in use, and misuse of credit cards. This paper proposes a research model of consumer credit behavior, identifying the antecedents contributing to one’s level of credit consciousness, and the resulting credit behavior activity. Previous studies have been identified that addressed various aspects of consumer behavior, including those that have dealt with credit card activity. These studies are utilized as a basis for the development of an overall contextual model of consumer credit behavior.

The antecedents to one’s level of credit consciousness include: (1) Background Factors such as gender, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and culture; (2) Socialization Factors such as socialization agents, parenting styles, learning mechanisms, and family communication; and (3) Individual Factors such as materialism values, personality characteristics, and credit knowledge.

These antecedents are proposed to impact one’s level of credit consciousness. Credit Consciousness addresses both an individual’s awareness of the usefulness and problems associated with using credit cards, as well as their usage behavior. In the credit consciousness scale, individuals who have a high level of credit consciousness are defined as having a greater level of awareness and acknowledge both its usefulness and its problems.

We also propose that a variety of situational factors may have an impact on an individual’s level of credit behavior. For example, credit card companies act as aggressive marketing agents in the promotion of credit cards to college students and other market segments. In addition, technological factors have impacted credit behavior in the marketplace. The proliferation of payment options through the use of technology has provided opportunities for consumer to make more impulse decisions and pay for them with credit. Finally, one’s social surroundings or the particular context of the shopping experience may impact the credit behavior exhibited.

The final outcome in our model is one’s level of credit behavior. Credit behavior is defined as the individual’s level of usage activity, reported as the number of credit cards possessed, the balance on those cards, and the percentage of total credit limit that is used. The difference in credit behavior and credit consciousness is that credit behavior is the actual usage of a credit card, while credit consciousness is the individual’s perceived overall usage of a card.

This model offers several avenues for testable hypotheses. Specifically, what are the direct and indirect relationships among the constructs proposed in the model? How do these constructs interact with each other and ultimately, credit behavior? How do the situational factors moderate the relationship between credit consciousness and credit behavior? An additional question of interest is an individual’s ability to discriminate between credit consciousness and credit behavior.

The Culture of Voluntary Simplicity
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The social movement known as Voluntary Simplicity “…means singleness of purpose, sincerity and honesty within as well as avoidance of exterior clutter, of many possessions irrelevant to the chief purpose of life…” according to Richard Gregg (quoted in Elgin, 1993). There is no single correct way of simplifying and no sanctioned level of affluence. The literature of the movement encourages a deliberative approach to purchase decision-making and often decry the “culture of consumerism”. Interest in Voluntary Simplicity has waxed and waned throughout U.S. history. The most recent resurgence dates back to the early 1980’s and roughly coincides with growing worldwide interest in sustainability in consumption and development. Much simplifying behavior is directly related to consumption. Simplifiers strive to rid their homes of clutter, including direct mail advertising, newsletters and magazines. They turn down their thermostats; buy in bulk to avoid over-packaging, buy locally grown produce. They also read labels and product information more carefully, seeking information about how the product was produced and how using it might impact the natural environment.

According to the theory of Diffusion of Innovation a relatively small proportion of the population will initially adopt new practices. These people are often opinion leaders and role models. Their experience and recommendations will influence a larger, but still relatively small proportion of the population who are called Early Adopters. They, in turn, influence an increasingly large proportion of adopters until the practice has reached its ultimate level of adoption (Rogers 2003). The purpose of this research is to begin to explore the premise that the practices of voluntary simplifiers, if diffused more widely through the population, would lead to more sustainable levels of consumption. This initial study identified the most important practices and those that were most disruptive to adopt.

The research was conducted online during late summer of 2003. Those who responded to the survey were overwhelmingly female (73.5%). They were roughly evenly divided among three ten-year age spans between 25 and 54 while 12.4% were over 55 and 8% under 25. They were highly educated, with more than 65% holding at least a four-year degree and 22.1% holding graduate degrees. About a third of respondents had annual household incomes below $45,000. Another 52% had incomes over $45,000. The rest of the respondents declined to answer the income question.

Avoiding impulse purchases was rated the most important of the 21 simplifying practices. This was followed by recycling and eliminating clutter, which was also considered the most disruptive practice to adopt. Five of the ten most important simplifying practices relate directly to consumer behavior, including limiting exposure to advertising, buying from local merchants, buying locally grown produce, buying environmentally friendly products, and buying products produced by socially responsible companies. Both limiting exposure to ads and limiting clutter impact the respondents’ exposure to marketing communications, since limiting clutter usually includes limiting or eliminating magazines, newspapers, catalogs, and direct mail pieces.

The respondents indicated that most of the practices they adopted as part of their efforts at simple living required a moderate to moderately high level of change in their behavior. Recycling required the least behavioral change, presumably because many communities have put curbside recycling systems in place. Respondents also noted that simplifying practices sometimes work against one another. For example, moving to a rural community in search of a slower-paced lifestyle also means more dependence on a car.
Technology and the Media: Utopian Promises in a Dystopian World
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The current research hypothesizes dual causes for “technophobia,” or fear of and discomfort with technological products. Comparing Modern and Postmodern views of technology combine with differing levels of consumer expertise regarding technology to result in unmet expectations and subsequent self-blame in the face of technological failure, on the one hand, and a severely negative assessment of the power of technology on the other. This strong influence of the media on perceptions of technology is supported by previous work on the influence of television on perceptions of violence and other social factors.

Technology has become pervasive in our society. Technological products are often viewed with a certain reverence for what they enable consumers to do and achieve. Understanding how consumers interact with technological products is of critical importance. Consumers can accomplish goals much more easily and quickly than they would without technology. Technological products also serve to level the playing field across disparate consumers and groups. Less knowledgeable consumers may use technology to help them keep up with better-trained peers (tax preparation software), or consumers in underdeveloped areas may use technology to achieve a more equitable existence relative to their contemporaries in more developed areas (solar powered electricity and water pumps). Hence technological products are of great importance to consumers, are often met with high hopes and expectations, and so can have significant negative impact when they don’t live up to them.

Beyond the goal-achievements and equity enablement associated with technology itself, the media also has a great impact on consumer perceptions of technology. It is suggested here that the media actually distorts the reality of what technology can do, leading to detrimental consumer interactions with it. One way to examine consumer relationships with technology is via their perspectives on it, and much has been written about a shift in consumer viewpoints over the past few decades from a Modern perspective to a Postmodern one. The Modern perspective views technology as benignly helpful. Consumers use and control technology to accomplish goals and advance their lives. Prominent in the Modern view is a positive outlook on technology, and a perception that we control it.

Recently we’ve seen a more Postmodern view of technology. This view is associated with greater distrust of technology, and acknowledgement of its dangers. Prominent in this view is the concept of technology as interactive, and something that has significant potential to control us, rather than we it. Both the Modern and Postmodern views of technology shape how consumers feel about technological products—and the media has had great influence in determining which of those views we subscribe to.

Prior work has documented the effects of the media on viewers’ perceptions of a variety of societal factors, including judgments about the level of violence in society, the prevalence of certain occupations, and the incidence of affluence and its symbols. Cultivation theory, which argues that viewers of television cultivate a view of society that is biased towards what they see on the screen, has been used to explain the mechanism behind these effects. The theory does not, however, show causality. More recent research has applied the Availability Heuristic as a means of explaining the psychological processes at work behind cultivation theory. The current research extends this work to explain the effects of media representations of technology on consumers’ fear and distrust of it.

A key avenue through which the media influences consumer perceptions is via the placement of technological products within television shows—product placement. This is becoming a more popular form of advertising. In the past product placements were subtle—a well-placed can of soda here, a new brand of cereal there. Now products are more frequently interacted with and discussed by the show’s characters. Given the nature of the placement relationship it is not surprising that such interactions are usually positive—and in the case of technology, show the character using the product to achieve their goal (think James Bond and BMW). The result: consumers have very high expectations for these products which apparently perform so well when needed most.

The current research proposes there is a moderating factor to the effects of the media on consumer perceptions of technology—expertise. Research has shown that novices, among other things, take information provided at face value—as opposed to experts who are more likely to question information and search more deeply. Prior work on the effects of television viewing has found that heavy television viewers tend to have lower incomes and less education than light television viewers. It is argued here that they will therefore have less expertise with technology, as an understanding of technology requires by definition certain scientific knowledge, and possession of technological products is greater among those who can more easily afford them.

Thus, it is hypothesized that heavy television viewers are more likely to be novice with technology than light viewers, and so take its portrayal at face value. Given the above discussion about the positive bias and modern perspectives on technology in the media it is also likely that heavy television viewers will be exposed to more positive biases in representations of technology than light viewers. Thus it is hypothesized that heavy television viewers will have higher expectations of technological products in general than light television viewers. Given their lack of expertise, if the technological products do not work as expected—which is likely given the positive bias of their portrayal in the media—heavy television viewers (novices) are hypothesized to be more likely to blame themselves for the failure. Finally, in face of this failure, attributed to themselves, heavy television viewers are more likely to exhibit “technophobia” than light television viewers. Indeed, it is argued that the heavy viewing of television, at least in part, leads to the technophobia via the above process.

These hypotheses will be evaluated in three studies: An examination of technological product frequency and valence, an exploration of consumer perceptions of technology as represented in the media, and a formal test of the hypotheses using a survey methodology.

References
The launch of the euro has caused significant consternation among consumers in the twelve participating countries. This paper examines whether Italian consumers have successfully adapted to the new currency, and whether they have substituted their old internal price references with a new set of prices that reflects a low-denomination currency.

According to the information-processing literature, consumers develop acceptable price ranges for products based on a subjective or psychological judgment that is influenced in part by previous pricing experiences (Monroe and Lee, 1999). The consumer uses these internal price references along with external price references to evaluate new pricing information. Thus, they can determine whether a price differential between two offers is substantial or not. Cross-cultural research, however, suggests that consumers are less adept at evaluating pricing information when it is presented in foreign currencies that are a fraction or multiples of the domestic currency (Raghubir and Srivastava, 2002; Dehaene and Marques, 2002). In a previous study, we found that Italian consumers, with a traditionally high-denomination currency in the lira, were still evaluating foreign prices using a high-denomination internal pricing reference system. The original study was conducted in February, 2002, one month into the launch of the euro.

The current study is a follow-up of the previous study, examining whether the Italian consumer has successfully adjusted to the low-denomination currency. We propose that consumers facing an unfamiliar currency can either use currency conversion tactics that keep their existing internal price references intact, or they can adjust these internal price references by substituting old pricing information with new prices. We propose that over time the Italian consumer will adjust their internal price references to the low-denomination currency, since this is the most effective method for evaluating prices in euros.

We develop a 2 x 2 between-subject experimental design to test our hypotheses. We compare responses to foreign pricing information in high-denomination and low-denomination currencies. The initial data set was collected from Italian students in February 2002, one month after the arrival of the euro. The second data set was collected nine months later using different Italian students from the same university. Our findings suggest that Italian students have become more comfortable with the low-denomination framework over time, since the respondents from the second sample viewed price reductions in a low-denomination currency more favorably than those in the first sample. In addition, the Italians who had been exposed to the euro for ten months were generally less impressed than the other group with the price reduction in the high-denomination condition.

Our results suggest that the single currency experiment has been successful in terms of how quickly the new generation of Italian consumers has adjusted its internal price references to a low-denomination numerical system. The implementation of a single currency has standardized to a certain extent the manner in which new pricing information is processed, and is a significant first step in creating a unique European culture and consumer.

**Materialism and Basic Food Groups: The Effects of Status Enhancement and Survival Security Motivations on Materialists’ Choice of Food Groups**

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The aims of the present studies are to investigate if materialism manifests in food group choice, and if so, if the motivation for doing so is status enhancement or survival security. The issues are important for several reasons. First, theorists are divided on whether materialists are motivated primarily by status enhancement or survival security (i.e., Belk, 1984; Inglehart, 1977/97; Richins & Dawson, 1992). Second, many people’s diets fall short of that recommended in health campaigns (i.e., National Diet and Nutrition Survey of 1995, 1998), implying to us that the psychological motivations underpinning food choice could be better understood. Finally, although it is obvious that a food such as caviar may appeal to materialists, no systematic framework has been developed that details the extent to which the everyday, seven basic food groups may appeal or be rejected by materialists. Our framework suggests that the status values of the seven basic food groups, from highest to lowest, are: red meat, white meat, fish/seafood, dairy products, vegetables, fruit, and cereals, respectively. Consequently, if materialism is expressed in food choice and the motivation for doing so is status enhancement, then materialists’ food preferences should co-vary with each food’s status value. In contrast, if materialism is expressed in food choice and the motivation for doing so is survival security, then materialists should prefer, hoard, and consume all seven food groups heavily but equally because most foods are equally required for survival.

Most theorists agree that one motivation driving materialists is status enhancement (i.e., Inglehart, 1977/97; Richins & Dawson, 1992). Status enhancement or prestige seeking is choosing products and possessions that will increase or maintain one’s social status in order to impress others, be distinct from others, to keep up with a reference group, to arouse feelings and affective states, or to achieve perfectionism (i.e., Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). Richins and Dawson (1992) suggest that materialists use possessions to increase social status and differentiation, and Inglehart (1977/97) suggests that materialism is an outcome of modern culture in which economic growth is a culture-level goal that is internalised as achievement motivation and materialism.

Although there is a consensus among theorists that one motivation compelling materialists is status enhancement, the other motivations of materialists are debated. For instance, Inglehart (1977/97) suggests that materialists are driven by survival insecurity. Modern culture is typified by survival insecurity regarding economic self-sufficiency and fear of military or national conflict. Inglehart suggests that survival insecurity during the formative years of socialisation motivates individuals to seek survival security later in life, including acquiring possessions. However, empirical research has reached inconsistent conclusions on the subject (i.e., De Graaf & Evans, 1996; Marks, 1997; Warwick, 1998). Moreover, no research has investigated whether materialists favour a product because the product brings them survival security.
Likewise, no previous study has investigated the ways in which materialism might be expressed in food choice, though the connection seems reasonable. The two theoretical motivations that compel materialists, survival security and status enhancement, could be satiated by food. Food is necessary for survival and so individuals motivated by survival security would likely strive to ensure that food is plentiful. In terms of nutritional values, foods such as meat, fish and dairy products are higher in protein and some minerals than most fruits, vegetables and cereals (except legumes and beans)(i.e., (Piper, 1996). However, most fruits, vegetables and cereals are higher in carbohydrates, vitamins, some minerals, fibre, and polyunsaturated fat. Thus, in our view, the survival benefits of the various basic foods seems to be evenly distributed among the seven food types, and so individuals concerned about survival security should favour all seven foods strongly but equally. Likewise, if materialism is expressed in food choice and the motivation for doing so is survival security, then materialists should prefer all seven food types strongly though equally.

In contrast, if materialism is expressed in food choice and materialists’ motivation is status enhancement, then materialists should prefer high status foods and reject foods of low status. In particular, materialists’ food preferences should be in the following order, from most to least: red meat, white meat, fish/seafood, eggs and dairy products, fruit, vegetables, and cereals, respectively. This inference is based on observational research carried out by sociologists and anthropologists pursuing the Structuralist approach, which examines how food habits are maintained by broader social structures and forces (cf., Cuff & Payne, 1977; Lupton, 1996). Structuralist sociologists and anthropologists have mainly examined one dimension or ordering of basic foods; that is, red and white meat at one end, fruits, vegetables and cereals at the other end, and diary and seafood in the middle (Adams, 1990; Caplan; 1997 Fiddes, 1989; Fieldhouse, 1995; Heisley, 1990; Lupton, 1996; Twigg, 1983). These researchers suggest that this dimension or ordering may be the predominant way Western culture conceptualises and organises foods, and that at its most elementary level represents high vs. low status.

To test these ideas, Study 1 employed a survey/correlational design and Study 2 an experimental one. Study 1 found that materialism was not correlated with a generalised preference for all foods. Instead, materialism was correlated with the preference, consumption and hoarding of foods in the following order, from most to least; red meat, white meat, fish/seafood, dairy, fruits, vegetables, and cereals, respectively. Factor analyses revealed that this food sequence underpinned all participants’ food preferences, and that the ordering distinguishes high from low status foods. SEM in Study 2 found that lessening the treatment group’s status enhancement motivation (by increasing their support for Equality via the Value Self-confrontation Procedure) decreased support for materialism that in turn diminished preferences for higher status foods in favour of lower status foods. Taken together, the results suggest that materialists’ food choices are driven more by status enhancement than survival security.

**Only Fools Pay More?: Incorporating Behavioral Regularities Into Pricing Decision**

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While the classic economic theory has maintained that price only generates disutility and that a consumer is generally better off with a lower price, consumer behavior research has firmly established that the individual consumer often infers information from price even when the price information carries no real information whatsoever (what as known among economists as cheap talk). For instance, a consumer might infer that a higher price represents higher quality and thus derive positive utility from paying a higher price. This observation, while well accepted in the consumer behavior literature, has not yet been incorporated into the classic economic theories for descriptive purposes. This paper takes the so-called behavioral-based analytical modeling approach, and develops a parsimonious, yet rigorous, mathematical model that captures two key behavioral regularities: (1) consumers infer quality from price even when price information is cheap talk, and (2) consumers make decisions relative to a reference price. The new theory provides interesting insights on consumers’ choice behavior when given otherwise identical products at different price levels. We have shown that, in many cases, an individual has a utility-maximizing price that is not zero. The key theorem states that the behavioral effect of pricing (inferring quality from price) is only relevant when the following two conditions are true: (1) consumers are sufficiently sensitive to price information for a given product, and (2) consumers have a medium default utility for the product (that is, they neither completely distrust nor blindly believe in the product in the absence of pricing information). The nature of this utility-maximizing price changes across individuals as well as across products. A consumer will have a higher ideal (optimal) price for a given product if his reservation price is higher, or if he cares more about quality, or if he is more sensitive to the price-quality relationship when he does not care too much about quality and less sensitive to the price-quality relationship when he cares a great deal about quality. Further, a consumer will have a higher ideal (optimal) price for a given product if the product category is inherently more valuable. When a consumer does not care too much for quality, ideal price is higher if a larger percentage of the price carries quality information. When a consumer cares about quality, however, ideal price is lower if a larger percentage of the price carries quality information. Finally, the new theory allows us to divide consumers into four different types: (1) Bargain hunters or super rationals (who always prefer a lower price), those who will either not buy anything, or only buy when price is very low; (2) Quality conscious (those who will pay a premium for a product); (3) Quality conscious unless the product is dirt cheap (those who seek a medium price unless the price is really low); and (4). Bargain hunter unless quality is high enough (in which case, the consumer will be willing to pay a little more). Both hypothetical (subjects’ choices are not fulfilled) and real (subjects’ choices are fulfilled) experiments were conducted to test the existence of the four consumer types in the context of purchasing a variety of food for lunch (eggroll, soup, and pizza). We proposed a Ranking Order Preference Elicitation (ROPE) method using Random Allocation of Scarce Inventories (RASI) that, if understood, should ensure that its incentive compatible for subjects tell us their true preference order for the alternatives. The empirical data provide strong evidences that consumers can indeed be categorized into the four types predicted by our model.

**References**


Impulse Buying and Variety Seeking: Two Faces of the Same Coin? Or, Maybe Not!

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Introduction

Impulse buying (IB) and variety seeking (VS) are both classified as spontaneous hedonic purchase behaviors influenced by feelings rather than logical thinking (Baumgartner 2002). However, there is little empirical research into their similarities and differences. We address this gap by investigating the association of both these behaviors with relevant consumer traits (consumer impulsiveness, optimum stimulation level and self-monitoring) and situational factors (involvement, product type, time availability and mood).

Similarities Between IB & VS

Consumer Impulsiveness (CI) and Optimum Stimulation Level (OSL): IB is a spontaneous purchase behavior without any deliberate consideration of alternatives/future implications (Rook and Fisher 1995), somewhat similar to the definition of VS, an urge to seek change for the sake of pleasure drawn from the process of seeking change and not for any rational benefit (Van Trijp et al. 1996). Traditionally, CI trait is associated with IB and OSL with VS (Puri 1996, Baumgartner and Steenkamp 1996). However, based on the above similarities in their motivations we hypothesized a positive association between these traits and both IB and VS.

Time Availability and Mood: Greater time availability leads to more in-store browsing and hence, more IB (Beatty and Ferrell 1998). We suggest a similar association for VS because of the inherent similarity between their motivations. Similarly, positive mood leads to more IB and VS (Rook and Gardner 1993; Kahn and Isen 1993). Hence, more IB and VS under higher time availability and positive mood.

Differences Between IB & VS

Self-Monitoring: High self-monitors seek more variety in public to appear as interesting and creative people (Ratner and Kahn 2002), but they also try to appear rational when their decisions may be scrutinized by others (Lerner and Tetlock 1999). IB is commonly associated with post-purchase negative affect and guilt, which may make high self-monitors less impulsive in their purchase decisions. Therefore, more VS (IB) for high (low) self-monitors.

Involvement: Consumers indulge in more VS for low involvement products (Van Trijp et al 1996) but high involvement coupled with greater argument quality also leads to increase in persuasion (Petty et al 1983). We suggest that under high involvement consumers may develop better quality arguments supporting their impulsive decisions and hence, more VS (IB) under low (high) involvement.

Product Type (Utilitarian vs. Hedonic): Consumers seek more variety in hedonic products (Van Trijp et al. 1996) but they guard against impulsive urges and develop strategies to resist these (Dholakia 2000). Therefore, faced with an impulsive urge for a hedonic product, they may be more cautious and less impulsive but for utilitarian products they may discount the negative normative associations and be more impulsive. Hence, more IB (VS) in utilitarian (hedonic) products.

Moderating Role of Self-Monitoring

Consumer traits have a greater influence on behavior among low versus high self-monitors. Hence, we expected self-monitoring to moderate the influence of impulsiveness and OSL traits on level of impulsiveness and variety seeking in purchase decisions, but because of their opposite normative associations we hypothesized a positive (negative) moderation for VS (IB).

Methodology

We used an experimental approach with 160 undergraduate student subjects. We first administered a questionnaire with all the trait scales, then exposed the subjects to different shopping scenarios (adapted from Rook and Fisher 1995) and finally measured our dependent variables i.e. level of impulsiveness and variety seeking in the purchase decisions. Each subject was exposed to four different scenarios, two each for IB and VS, covering all four situational factors (counterbalanced).

Results & Discussion

All scales used in our study showed high reliability and all manipulations worked. Subjects’ age and gender had no significant impact on the findings. We used multiple regression analysis and mean comparison using T-test. Regression models represented a good fit for both, IB ($R^2_{adj}=0.279, F(5,155)=20.563, p<0.001$) and VS ($R^2_{adj}=0.215, F(5,155)=12.397, p<0.001$). Most hypotheses were supported with significant beta-coefficients and mean differences ($p<0.01$).

Our research makes several important contributions. First, we empirically demonstrate the similarities and differences between IB and VS, in their associations with relevant consumer traits and situational factors. Second, we show the opposite moderating influence of self-monitoring on these two behaviors. Thus, our conceptual framework may lead to a better understanding of the general category of hedonic purchase behaviors.
References


How Do Consumers Learn to Extract Utility from Really New Products?

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BACKGROUND

“Really new” products (RNP) are important sources of growth for many companies. They create new product categories, and have the ability to reshape the competitive landscape (Lehmann, 1997). The growing literature on RNPs has focussed on how consumers think about really new products before they buy them. However, little is known about how consumers put them in actual use (or disuse). This is a critical knowledge gap for marketers. This paper seeks to examine two issues. First, do consumers chronically overestimate the degree to which they will use a really new, durable product? Second, what explains why usage patterns change from the initial period to later periods? The paper proposes a set of hypotheses for further empirical studies.

OVERESTIMATION OF USE AT THE TIME OF PURCHASE

The general tendency to overestimate the extent of use at the time of purchase can be explained in terms of temporal construal theory (Liberman and Trope 2003). The construal level theory specifically proposes when individuals represent information about the consumption of a new product prior to use, they are likely to use more abstract mental models, or high-level construal, which consist of general, superordinate, and essential features of the consumption process. However, when individuals represent information about the consumption of a new product at the time of use, they are likely to use low level construal, which tend to be more concrete and include subordinate, contextual, and incidental features of the consumption process. There is therefore a general tendency to overestimate the extent of use at the time of purchase for all durable products. We conjecture that this overestimation is especially great for RNPs. RNPs differ from normal durable products particularly because consumers lack detailed information about the relevant tradeoffs associated with RNP domains. This is likely to cause mental construal at the time of purchase to be even more focussed on abstract benefits rather than on concrete constraints on use than might be true for incrementally new durables, hence resulting in even greater overestimation of the extent of use. Therefore we hypothesize that:

H1: Consumers buying new products will construe their future use of those products at a higher level than when they use them, and this difference in construal will be greater for RNPs due to higher perceived uncertainty.

H2: Consumers will overestimate their likely use of new durables, and this overestimation will be greater for RNPs due to greater difference in construal.

THE TRAJECTORY OF USE OVER TIME

Initial use

Studies in analogical learning show that consumers use analogy to learn about a new product category. Analogical learning involves mapping prior knowledge in an existing product domain to the new product domain (Gregean-Paxton and Roedder John, 1997). However, for RNPs, consumers have little relevant objective knowledge. Instead individuals may have different levels of subjective knowledge (i.e. the perceived relevance of their prior knowledge to an RNP) influenced by factors such as advertising and over-confidence. This subjective knowledge is likely to have a significant effect on the persistence of use at an initial period. According to the literature of self efficacy (Bandura, 1989; Elliot and Church, 1997), people’s perception of their self-efficacy, rather than their objective ability, determines their
level of motivation, as reflected in how much effort they will exert in an endeavour and how long they will persevere in the face of obstacles. We conjecture that individuals with high subjective knowledge are more likely to have high initial self-efficacy and high approach orientation than individuals with low subjective knowledge. High initial self-efficacy and approach goal orientation in turn increase consumer’s persistence to use the new product and enable them to obtain new objective knowledge.

H3: Individuals with higher subjective knowledge at the time of purchase will have higher self-efficacy at the initial use of an RNP, in comparison to individuals with lower subjective knowledge.

H4: Individuals with higher subjective knowledge at the time of purchase will have higher approach motivation and lower avoidance motivation at the time of initial use than will individuals who have lower subjective knowledge.

H5: Persistence of initial use of an RNP will be a positive function of subjective knowledge, self-efficacy, and approach motivation and a negative function of avoidance motivation at the time of purchase.

H6: Persistent use in the initial period increases the amount of new domain knowledge acquired in the same period.

Later use
The foregoing analysis explains the patterns of use in an initial period. The same principles outlined in H3-H6 determine how usage evolves from initial use to use at some later period of time. We conjecture that the main additional factor that influences the pattern of use beyond the initial period is the negative or positive feedback of surprise from the initial use.

REFERENCES


Internet Usage Across Latino Acculturation Patterns
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The Internet is one of the fastest growing communication media in the marketing arena. As consumer use of the Internet has grown, there has been some concern that the Internet would create a greater divide between the social/economic standing of Internet users and nonusers. Of special concern has been the potential impact on ethnic markets that may be slower in adopting Internet usage. While the Latino market is one of the fastest growing ethnic markets in the U.S., Latino usage of the Internet has lagged behind that of the general population. Recent reports, however, indicate that Internet usage among Latinos is rapidly growing, making them the fastest growing ethnic Internet users in the U.S. The demographic penetration of the Latino Internet market has become so great that the question has shifted from digital access to determining why some would use the Internet and not others, and how to best meet the needs of online Latinos. This paper seeks to address these questions by studying Internet usage across Latino consumer acculturation categories.

Consumer Acculturation and Internet Usage
Consumer acculturation is the process of adapting to a different consumer cultural environment. When adjusting to a different culture, consumers may settle into routines or lifestyles heavily influenced by strong ethnic attitudes and behaviors, or they may become like the dominant culture. Acculturation recognizes that the adaptation process may result in a variety of lifestyle patterns. These lifestyle patterns are called acculturation categories. Four potential acculturation categories are assimilation, integration, segregation, and marginalization. These categories are distinguished by attitudinal and behavioral dimensions associated with strength of ethnic identity and participation in host versus ethnic related behaviors. The hypotheses in this paper predict that Internet access and usage rates will be lower among Latinos in the segregation category, involvement with the Internet will also be lower in this category and the purpose for which these individuals use the Internet will differ from those in the assimilation category.
Methods
The sample for this study consists of 162 Latino high school students attending a Latino student organization conference sponsored by a university in the northwestern United States. Acculturation categories were determined by using a 29 item acculturation scale designed to place respondents in either assimilation, integration, or segregation categories based upon their responses to attitudinal and behavioral questions. The Internet questions asked about points of access to the Internet (in and out of the home), the number of hours spent on the Internet per day, and the reasons why respondents used the Internet. Internet involvement was measured using two scales, one measuring knowledge of the Internet, and Zaichkowsky’s Involvement Scale.

Results
The data indicate that these young Latinos are accessing the Internet at a rate higher than anticipated by earlier research. The data, however, did not provide the information needed of hypothesis testing. Thirty-five percent of the respondents aborted the survey after competing all or part of the Internet usage questions. The remaining 105 respondents were disproportionally spread across the acculturation categories with only ten in the assimilation category. This made hypothesis testing involving this category unreliable. The data however, did indicate that the expected patterns may appear in larger and more evenly distributed data sets. It appears that individuals in the segregation category may not have as much access to the Internet as those in the assimilation category, and their usage rate may be lower. However, the data did not show support for differences across categories for knowledge of and involvement with the Internet. This may be due to the extensive inclusion of Internet skills in high school curriculum. It appears that individuals in the segregation category may be more likely to use the Internet for communication purposes than those in the integration category and less likely than those in the integration category to use the Internet for research purposes.

Contributions and Suggestions for Further Research
The patterns exhibited in this data set indicate that consumer acculturation categories may provide some understanding for who is and who is not using the Internet and for providing some guidance for meeting the needs for online Latinos. A larger and more equally distributed sample will be needed to adequately test the hypotheses, as well as samples from other Latino demographic groups such as college students, young adults who are not in school and older Latinos. If the expanded data set exhibits and confirms the expected patterns, marketers can use the information to design Internet sites consistent with the characteristics of Latinos in the various acculturation categories and determine the most effective ways of increasing Latino patronage of their web sites.

Do Females and Males Evaluate Promotional Emails Differently?
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Along with the growth of the Internet, there has been an increase in the number of females going online. This research investigates the effectiveness of components of promotions communicated via emails that are targeted to the two sexes. The results from a survey suggest that women and men differ in their evaluations of information content and visual presentation used in promotional emails. Compared to men, women were also more concerned about privacy and preferred to use the new media to build social contact. Implications for using promotional emails are discussed.

Differences in Information Processing from Print Ads and Web Pages
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There is a growing body of research on information processing in interactive media such as web pages (e.g., Ariely 2000; Hoffman and Novak 1996). While there is a broad appreciation of differences between new media like the Web and traditional media sources such as print advertising, barring a few exceptions (e.g., Bezjian-Avery, Calder, and Iacobucci 1998), there is a dearth of research comparing information processing effects between new and traditional media sources.

Interactivity is conceptualized as the key difference between web pages and print ads Bezjian-Avery et al. 1998; Coupey 1999). We adopt a commonly used conceptualization that views interactivity as the ability of the consumer to control information flow in a medium (Bezjian-Avery et al. 1998). In print ads, interactivity is usually perceived to be low because the information is typically linearly structured (left-to-right and top-to-bottom) and consumers would typically process the information in the sequence found in the ad. This does not necessarily mean that this medium has negligible interactivity. Consumers have relatively more control over the sequence, and amount of time spent on different aspects of a print ad than a TV ad, where the control is limited to changing the channel or switching it on or off (Ariely 2000). On the other hand, web pages can typically offer far higher levels of interactivity. Consumers are not constrained by a linear traversal of product information. The medium allows consumers to pick and choose information in any sequence.

A potential drawback of interactivity is the increased processing cost associated with control over information flow. Increased effort is experienced when consumers lack the experience or knowledge to navigate and acquire relevant information in a web page (Ariely 2000). The impact of cognitive effort to acquire product information is compared between these two sources.

The effects of interactivity in source and cognitive effort are examined within existing frameworks of information processing (e.g., MacInnis and Jaworski 1989). Information processing from a source produces affective responses, brand cognitions, and source cognitions which are integrated to shape brand attitudes. The higher level of interactivity in web pages is hypothesized to result in greater message strength, more favorable affective responses, and favorable source evaluations. These would lead to more favorable brand attitudes from web page than from print ad.

Increased cognitive effort to process product information has been shown to produce negative affect (Garbarino and Edell 1997). Increased costs of acquiring information would also adversely affect message strength, attitudes toward the source and brand attitudes (MacInnis and Jaworski 1989).

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Method

A 2x2 between-subjects laboratory experiment was used to test the hypotheses. The two factors—type of information source (print ad and web page), and cognitive effort (high or low)—were fully crossed. Subjects were undergraduate students enrolled from a subject pool.

Identical product attribute information of an inflatable chair was used to construct web pages and print ads. The ads were professionally produced in full color with relevant copy about the salient attributes and appropriate execution elements. Cognitive effort manipulation was operationalized by varying the readability of the information provided in the ad. For both levels of cognitive effort, the same information on salient attributes of an inflatable chair was provided. In the low cognitive effort condition, the layout facilitated easy access to information on salient attributes. In the high cognitive effort condition, layout and font colors and style made it difficult to learn the salient attributes of the product.

For the web pages, in the low cognitive effort condition, all the information was laid out under sub-headings of salient attributes in a tabular layout with an image of the chair. Details of each attribute would appear when the cursor was panned over the attribute. All the information appeared in one screen thereby precluding the need to use the vertical scroll bar. In the high cognitive effort condition, the web page layout made it inconvenient to get information. Subjects had to use the vertical scroll bar to view all information on a page. There were separate windows that contained salient attribute information. This window would open up when the link on the salient attribute was clicked.

Results

Manipulation checks confirmed the validity of the manipulations. The hypotheses were tested within a MANCOVA analysis with product relevance as the covariate. Significant multivariate main effects of effort and source x effort interaction effects were observed. Univariate comparisons revealed support for hypotheses regarding main effects of cognitive effort on source cognitions and affect. However, the strong source x effort interaction suggest a disproportionate effect of increased cognitive effort on web pages. Managerial implications of creating efficient web pages that have high usability are evident from these results.

References


The Private World of the internet Shopper: An Exploratory Study of Product Conspicuousness, Self-Congruity and On-line Purchase Behavior
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Internet consumer behavior research has to date generally centered on investigating the type of people who would be more likely to use the Internet for information and transactions (Goldsmith, ; Lynch, Kent, & Srinivasan, ; Smith & Whitlark) and the types of products that lend themselves to online purchasing (Kwak, Fox, & Zinkhan). The investigation reported here explores the effect of purchasing online on consumers’ self image and purchase intention.

The Internet usually affords consumers a measure of privacy and it is proposed here that it is this feature of the Internet and not the technology itself that affects purchase behavior. Further, as collectivistic persons are more likely to consider the opinions of others (Parkes, Schnieder, & Bochner, 1999; Triandis, 1994), this difference in purchase behavior for private versus conspicuous goods will be greater for allocentrics than idiocentrics. A number of hypotheses are developed to represent these ideas.

METHOD

Subjects were first asked to complete a validated collectivism scale. Four fictitious advertisements representing two conspicuously consumed products (mobile phone and watch) and two privately consumed products (underwear and a self-improvement program called “Confidex”) were then developed. Each advertisement contained a gender-neutral visual image, a fictional brand name and a tagline that highlighted the personality of the product.

Each advertisement was accompanied by five questions. First the congruity of the product’s image and the respondent’s image was measured, using Sirgy’s self-congruity scale (Sirgy, 1985). Next, respondents’ purchase intentions were measured using a three-item bipolar adjective scale used by Gotlieb and Sarel (1988) and Yi (1990).

Subjects were divided into four groups with equal numbers of individualists and collectivists in each. Two groups carried out the experiment in private and two in public. One private group and one public group used a computer to submit their survey, while the remaining private and public groups filled in an identical paper survey.
RESULTS

Scales
353 good responses were obtained. Reliability tests for the three-item purchase intention scale for each product and the collectivism scale were run and a high Cronbach’s alpha was obtained for all.

Hypothesis testing
The correlation between self image and purchase intention was found to be high for each product, supporting H1 and lending validity to the measures.

Analysis by one-way ANOVA found no significant differences in on- and off-line behavior with image congruity or purchase intentions for the four products, thus supporting H2. Similarly for H3, as there were no significant differences found between behavior (image congruity and purchase intentions) of people buying publicly-consumed goods in either a private or a public purchase situation.

However, there is a significant difference in image congruity between private and public purchasers of the underwear line (F=7.17, p=.008, Mean\_private=3.40, Mean\_public=3.68; \( \omega^2=0.017 \)). The confidence-building product test revealed no statistical differences, however, thus limiting the support that can be claimed for the major hypothesis, H4.

The same Hypothesis is also concerned with purchase intentions under private purchase/private consumption conditions. Again, results for underwear are significant (F=12.73, p<.001, Mean\_private=3.31, Mean\_public=3.69; \( \omega^2=0.032 \)) and the “Confidex” product failed to yield the expected results.

Collectivism was found to act as a mediator in the predicted way. When the 122 (relative) Collectivistic respondents are selected there is a significant effect for underwear (F=3.87, p=0.051, mean\_private=3.43 and mean\_public=3.79, where a low score indicates greater image congruity). No effect is found for Individualists.

When purchase intentions are substituted for image congruity, there is a significant effect for both individualists and collectivists, but the effect is larger and stronger for the former than for the latter (Individualists, F=5.94, p=.016, Mean\_public=3.65, Mean\_private=3.19; Collectivists, F=9.13, p=.003, Mean\_public=3.87 Mean\_private=3.28). Again, the “Confidex” product manipulation failed.

DISCUSSION
This is an exploratory study that does seem to have found some support for the basic idea that it is the privacy of consumption and purchase that drive differences in on-line purchase behavior rather than the being on-line per se. Implications for management and further research are discussed.

The Moderating Effect of Context on Consumer Evaluations of Restaurant Menu Items
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Elizabeth H. Creyer, University of Arkansas
Jeremy Kees, University of Arkansas

Study Background
The epidemic of overweight and obese Americans costs the U.S. over $117 billion a year in medical and related expenses, but these financial expenses pale in comparison to the costs to human life and consumer welfare. Within the context of restaurant menu items, this research examines how attitudes, intentions, and disease risk perceptions, are affected by 1) the provision of nutrition information, 2) a health claim, and 3) the nutritional frame or the context within which a menu item is evaluated. Since the percentage of food dollars spent on food prepared outside the home continues to increase, and since many restaurant offerings are high in calories and fat, improving restaurant food choices may improve the health of millions of Americans.

While several streams of research provide insight into how consumers construct evaluations of restaurant menu items, prior research on “context effects” is particularly relevant. We anticipate that main effects of both target item nutrition information and health claims focusing on the link between diet and the risks of cancer and heart disease will be moderated by the nutrition frame created by alternative (non-target) menu items. For example, provision of a frame that presents very negative nutrition information (compared to the control), will have a more positive effect on attitudes and intentions for a target item with relatively unfavorable nutrient levels, compared to when there is either no target item nutrient information or relatively favorable information. In contrast to many studies examining context-related effects, we also consider how information presented for the target option affects evaluations of other choice alternatives.

Method and Results
A 3 (nutrient levels of the target menu item: control, favorable or unfavorable) X 2 (nutritional frame: nutrition information for three non-target menu items present or absent) X 3 (health claim for the target menu item: cancer claim, heart healthy claim, or no claim) between-subjects experiment was conducted. The nutrition information provided for the alternative items, based on tests of actual restaurant foods conducted by the Center for Science in the Public Interest, indicated that the alternatives were unhealthy choices. All experimental conditions were presented on a four-color menu stimulus.

Participants in the study were 377 members of a consumer household research panel who completed mail surveys (response rate of 58%). Multi-item dependent measures included: nutrition-related attitude, overall attitude towards the product, source credibility, and purchase intention. All coefficient alphas exceeded .90. Disease risk perceptions and nutrient value estimates were also collected. All dependent variables were assessed for both the target item and one non-target (chicken fajitas) menu item.

Attitude and purchase intention measures for the target and non-target items show both multivariate main effects of the nutritional frame and the nutrition information manipulation. (However, at times these effects must be interpreted with caution because there are
several significant univariate interactions between the independent variables. When the nutrition information for the non-target items is provided, nutrition-related attitude ($F=23.9, p<.001$), overall attitude towards the product ($F=27.3, p<.001$), and purchase intentions ($F=19.5, p<.001$) decrease. Because the nutrient values (when provided) were based on CSPI testing, these findings show that effects of awareness of the unfavorable nutrition information for the non-target item affects important measures of consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions.

However, nutritional frame and nutrition information interact to influence target item purchase intentions and product attitude. Relevant plots indicate when there is no nutrition information for the target item, both the purchase intentions and attitude toward the target item are essentially identical ($p'>.50$), regardless of the presence of the frame. When the target item nutrition information is unfavorable, provision of the negative nutrition frame increases purchase intentions and leads to more favorable product attitudes ($p'<.1$). For the favorable target information condition, neither attitudes nor purchase intentions differ significantly ($t's=1.14$ and $0.20$, respectively, $p>.15$) across the frame conditions.

Brief Discussion

The significant two and three way interactions illustrate the complexity of the evaluation task presented to consumers, and extends current knowledge on the effects of a contextual frame created by competing products on target and non-target attributes (e.g., nutrients) and general evaluations (attitudes, purchase intentions, and source credibility). Specifically, findings demonstrate the manner in which a frame created by objective (nutrient) information for non-target items can interact with both a claim and objective nutrition information about the target item.

Results show that providing the (unfavorable) nutrition information for the non-target items affects nutrient evaluations and, more importantly, extends to important product attitude and purchase intentions dependent variables. These results suggest that consumers are not aware of the higher levels of fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol contained in the non-target product. When exposed to these unfavorable nutrient levels, consumers’ disease risk perceptions increase, and attitudes toward the product and purchase intentions decrease, relative to when no nutrition information is presented. Such findings reinforce concerns of policy-makers and consumer welfare advocates that few consumers are aware of the high levels of fat and saturated fat contained in the often large serving sizes offered by restaurants. These findings suggest that consumers who frequently eat outside the home may not consider the long-term disease risk associated with their diet. Our findings, coupled with recent court cases about the disease-related effects of fast food consumption, indicate that further research addressing the implications of inclusion of nutrition information on menus is warranted.

One-Sided vs. Two-Sided e-WOM: Does it Matter?
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The impact of word-of-mouth on consumer decision-making has long been established (Brown and Reingen 1987; Feldman and Spencer 1965; Herr, Kardes and Kim 1991; among others). WOM information has been described as the most powerful form of marketing communication and studies have shown that users find WOM more believable than commercially generated information (Hutton and Mulhern 2002). Recently consumer reviews on the Web or e-WOM has become a ubiquitous phenomena, and an integral aspect of the information revolution impacting consumers’ behavior, particularly with respect to their search for and evaluation of information. Due to eWOM, consumers now have easier access to information from sources other than the marketer of the product.

As with other information on the Web, this kind of information is prolific and it is hard for the consumer to go through all that is available. Besides, there is the issue of legitimacy. In the physical world word-of-mouth is received from family or friends, i.e. people who the receiver knows and has a level of trust, based upon which the receiver decides whether or not to accept the advice (Hutton and Mulhern 2002). But how does a consumer evaluate WOM coming from a virtual person?

While e-WOM has characteristics common with the traditional WOM domain, it also shares characteristics with marketer generated communications such as advertising. For example, the consumer Web reviews are written by consumers and not by the marketers of the product or service itself, and this makes them more believable to the reader. On the other hand, the reader is not familiar with the credentials of the reviewer and has to infer this by the cues that are present within the review and associated with its environment (e.g. the credibility of the Web site can be one important surrogate). Besides that, quite often the review is featured on the marketers Web site, such as in the case of Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble.com, rather than an independent third party, such as epinions.com, consumerREVIEW.com and dooyoo.com. Traditional WOM communications have been shown to have a strong impact on product judgments because information received in a face-to-face manner is more accessible than information presented in a less vivid manner (Herr, Kardes and Kim 1991). We believe that e-WOM would fall in the latter category and therefore their impact will not be the same as that of traditional WOM.

Considering the above, one may characterize the e-WOM domain as a hybrid of traditional WOM and commercial communications, with interesting emerging consumer behavior questions. Though there has been relatively little studied of this phenomenon so far (Bickart and Schindler 2001; Chatterjee 2000; Sen and Lerman 2002), there is a growing interest in this area.

In this research we are interested in understanding how the reader evaluates the review posted on the Web site by another consumer. In particular, we ask the question—whether the usefulness of a review is affected by whether the arguments presented are one or two sided. We select this aspect since past studies have found this as an important dimension in determining the persuasiveness of advertising communication (Kamins and Assael 1987; Settle and Golden 1974; Swinyard 1981).

Using the consumer reviews from a real Web site where readers rate the reviews on its usefulness, we study whether the usefulness rating covaries with the argument type, i.e. one-sided vs. two-sided. Our methodology consists of a content analysis of selected reviews for fiction and non-fiction books to determine the argument type. We analyze the covariance of argument type and the usefulness of the reviews using a regression analysis. Our results suggest that two-sided reviews are deemed more useful than their one-sided counterparts by readers. Additionally, we also find that the length of the review is also positively correlated with usefulness.
Pyrrhic Victories in Consumer Choice: How the Rejection of Inferior Alternatives Weakens the Prevailing Option
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“One more such victory and I am lost”
— Pyrrhus of Epirus

Consider the following scenario. You are moving to a new town and you are looking for an apartment. After spending several days visiting apartments, you’ve finally found an apartment that meets your requirements. However, just before you sign the lease, you learn about another available apartment. This apartment is a lot smaller than the first one, but it is located in a slightly better neighborhood. Given that this apartment is clearly inferior to your original option, you decide to reject it.

More generally, consumers often find themselves in situations in which they decide to stick with their current option and reject an inferior, but not completely dominated, “challenger.” The question we want to address in this paper is how the rejection of this inferior alternative affects the evaluation of the original option.

To address this question, we rely on the phenomena of cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1957) and the feelings-as-information heuristic (Schwarz 1990). As prior studies have shown, consumers may increase their evaluation of the chosen option to reduce any cognitive dissonance created by the rejection of a not completely dominated alternative. However, we argue that in some cases, reducing dissonance may be problematic and, instead, consumers may use the experienced dissonance as information, thus reducing the evaluation of the chosen option. This effect is similar to the effect of prefactual endowment on the evaluation of the rejected alternative (Carmon, Wertenbroch, and Zeelenberg 2003; Sen and Johnson 1997).

In the first study, the inferior alternative was characterized by a large difference (presence vs. absence) on an unimportant dimension. For example, subjects chose between a large apartment without a fitness center in the building and a small apartment with a fitness center in the building. We expected that subjects could easily trivialize differences on an unimportant attribute, thus enabling them to reduce dissonance and increase their liking of their chosen alternative. There were three between-subjects conditions: information, temporary rejection, and sure rejection. Subjects in the information condition received information about the inferior apartment, but were told that this alternative was unavailable. Subjects in both rejection conditions chose to reject the second apartment before evaluating the apartments, but were given different instructions regarding their ability to reverse the decision. There were no differences between the rejection conditions, suggesting that reversibility of the outcome is not a factor.

However, in the second study, the rejection of the inferior alternative decreased the evaluation of the chosen alternative. In this study, the inferior alternative was characterized by a small difference on an important attribute. For example, subjects chose between a large...
apartment with a mediocre view and a much smaller apartment with a slightly better view. We expected that it would be harder for subjects to trivialize a small difference on an important attribute than a large difference on an important attribute, thus decreasing the likelihood of dissonance reduction. There were three between-subjects conditions: control, information, and rejection. Subjects in the control condition did not have access to the second apartment, while the information and rejection conditions were the same as in the first study. In contrast to the first study, subjects in the rejection condition evaluated the chosen option less favorably than those in the information condition.

We hope that our results will contribute to a better understanding of the consequences of consumer choice in general, and of the rejection of inferior alternatives in particular. Whereas our current understanding of consumer choice suggest that the rejection of inferior alternatives should bolster the evaluation of the surviving option, our data indicate the rejection may sometimes constitute a pyrrhic victory and reduce the evaluation of the surviving option. Which effect will ultimately hold seems to depend on the nature of the inferiority of the rejected alternative.

References

Gender- and Context- Specific Beliefs about Anxiety and Anger Episodes
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With the recent research and practice developments on engineering of provider responses to negative consumer, there has been a growing interest to specify and understand precisely how these scripts of emotional episodes are represented in the consumer mind. Building on what is known as a componential approach to emotions, this study focuses on the organized response patterns of anger and anxiety, including agency appraisals, action tendencies and interpersonal components. In order to help marketing and managers to design more effectively their consumer experiences, it is necessary to move beyond these generic representations of emotional experience. We should start to address factors that could modulate this experience in such a way that a more specialized representation of emotional episodes would be called for.

This research is based on the premise that, to provide more insights for emotion engineering in the context of service consumption, generic scripts of emotional episodes may need to be differentiated on relevant bases. This paper focuses on anxiety and anger episodes and studies the possible modulating effects of the gender of the protagonist experiencing the emotional episode (male, female) and of the context in which the episode has arisen (daily life, service consumption). Modulating effects of these two factors are considered on the emotion components: agency appraisal, action tendencies, and interpersonal reactions.

The modulating effect of protagonist gender. Gender differentiation is closely related to agency appraisal, the ability and striving for control and power, in which the male gender is associated to high agency and the female gender to low agency. These distinct patterns of agencies as a function of gender point to the possible divergence among the other components of the scripts of anxiety and anger, since appraisals impact the remaining sequence of script episode (Reisenzein 2000). Therefore, we expect that the protagonist gender will influence the components of anxiety and anger scripts.

The modulating effect of elicitation context. Most studies on emotional scripts and their components were done in non-commercial contexts. By nature, emotions are very context specific (Reisenzein 2000). In comparison to a daily life event, a service context involves more goal-oriented behavior, boundaries of consumer-provider role, higher level of uncertainty and temporary relationships. Consequently, we expect the emotional scripts of anger and anxiety in a daily life event to differ from those in a service context.

Methods. The effects of protagonist gender and context modulators were tested with an experimental factorial design with 143 undergraduate students from an Eastern Canadian university. Participants were presented with the face-picture of a protagonist conveying a clear emotional expression and they were asked to imagine the emotional episode during which such picture could have been taken. Each participant was assigned to one of the eight cell of a full-factorial 2 X 2 X2 between-participants design that combined emotions (anxiety/anger), gender of the protagonist (male/female) and elicitation context (everyday life/service consumption). Beliefs were elicited in terms of agency appraisals, action tendencies, and interpersonal responses and collected with a questionnaire.

Results. Research propositions were tested in a set of analysis of variance (ANOVAs) conducted separately on each dependant measure. Gender- and context-specifies beliefs were further disentangle for each negative emotion with subsequent mean comparison. Replicating prior research, the generic script of anxiety involved low-agency appraisal, coping actions reflecting lower potential, and attracted more interpersonal support than the script of anger. Results show that across both emotions, protagonist gender and context both modulate all episode script components, in particular for agency appraisal and action tendencies. Gender-specific beliefs on anxiety (a low-agency emotion) and anger (a high-agency emotion) for all three components of emotions were in line with expectations derived from gender stereotypes (i.e. low-agency for females and high-agency for males). Beliefs about a male protagonist experiencing anxiety reflected a higher degree of agency than when the same emotion was experienced by a female protagonist, with the converse being observed to a lesser extent for anger. Context-specific beliefs were also observed in the three components. Anxiety beliefs tied to services, describe episodes being appraised lower in submissiveness, action tendencies reflecting more agentic actions, and probabilistic expectation for less
supportive responses. Anger beliefs were differentiated by context only for action tendencies, with more confrontation and less controlled responses in episodes that arose in service consumption than in daily life.

Brands as Complements to the Self
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The purpose of this research is to achieve a better understanding of how consumer-brand relationships work. Much of the previous research in this area focuses on brands as expressions of the self or ideal self. The prevailing thought is that brands with personalities similar to, or desired by, the consumer will be preferred. Research merging relationship theory into consumer-brand study provides a framework for defining and categorizing consumer-brand relationship forms. This research advances the idea that consumer-brand interaction is a two-way street— that the brand is not merely an adornment of self, but also has responsibilities within the context of a meaningful relationship.

Through exploration of consumers’ human-human relationships, it is hoped that insight into consumers’ relationships with their brands can be gained. The underlying construct is that consumers form relationships with brands, not exclusively as an expression of self, but also as a way to fill utilitarian and social needs in their lives. This theory merges the idea of the malleable self with consumer-brand relationship theory. The premise is that the self doesn’t necessarily change with the situation, but that different situations evoke different needs and that consumers may seek different qualities in a companion depending on that need.

The conceptual foundations for the research fall into four areas of study: the construct of brand personality, relationship/friendship theory, brand as an extension of self (malleable self), and situational influences.

The objectives of this research are twofold. The first goal is to demonstrate that consumers’ choices for personality traits in a human partner in a given situation are similar to those traits desired in a brand preferred in that situation. The second goal is to explore the idea that consumer choices may not necessarily be based on self-expression but serve to complement the self as required.

Participants selected one human and several brand companions for each of five situations. First, participants were presented with each of the five situations and asked an open-ended question to identify (by first name) a person to accompany them in that situation (a unique person was required for each situation). After writing a name, participants then selected one brand of watch and one brand of jeans they would prefer for each situation. The brands were selected from preset alphabetical lists consisting of five brand choices for each product category. The five situations were developed to correspond with each of the target brand personality dimensions (Exciting, Sophisticated, Competent, Sincere, Rugged). Participants then assessed the personalities of both the persons and brands selected using Aaker’s “Brand Personality” scale. Finally, subjects answered a series of questions assessing the aspirational aspects of their human-human relationships. The subject pool consisted of 59 undergraduate women from the business school at a large state university. Previous studies of brands in conjunction with relationship theory have established precedence for using women for this type of exercise.

Prior to attempting to test the hypotheses, a check of the situational manipulation was performed. The purpose of this check was to insure that the situations presented in the study did indeed cause the respondents to perceive a need for employing varying brands to accompany them across the five scenarios. Results of the manipulation check show that sixty-six percent (66%) of the respondents selected more than one watch across the five situations. Seventy-five percent (75%) of subjects selected more than one brand of jeans. Overall, 85% of the respondents varied on either watches or jeans. These results show, not only that the manipulation was successful, but also that consumers are potentially willing to employ multiple brands within a product category if the situational cues invoke a need to do so. The current findings indicate that the situation can be the impetus to induce choice, beyond merely providing a context in which the choice is made.

Results for the hypotheses were encouraging. Overall there was support for respondents selecting the human and brand companions with the highest overall ranking on the salient dimension. Results for the “Rugged” situation were remarkable—with 54% of the respondents selecting their most rugged companion to accompany them. Additionally, outcomes in 4 of the 5 scenarios were favorable, with respondents selecting the highest ranked human companion for the cued personality dimension at a proportion greater than chance. For H1b, the strongest results were for the jeans product category for which 3 of the 5 situations (Sophisticated, Sincere, and Competent) yielded excellent results—where more than 40% of respondents selected the brand of jeans with the highest ranking on the salient personality dimension. Results for the watch category were mixed, with moderate support for the “Sophisticated”, “Sincere”, and “Rugged” situations (34%).

Results for the main hypothesis are favorable. The results were obtained by “matching” the personality dimensions of respondent’s selection of a human companion with the personality dimensions of chosen brand companion. Results for the friend–watch personality match are encouraging. In three (Rugged, Sophisticated, Sincere) of the five scenarios, the largest percent agreement was found for the salient dimension. For the Hiking situation, 58% of the respondents selected both a person and a watch ranked highly on the “rugged” personality dimension. Results for the friend–jean personality match are similar. Perhaps most supportive of the main hypothesis are the results for the combined friend–brand personality match. In this case the respondent had to select a highly ranked person, watch, and jeans for a “match” to be tallied.

The results of this study suggest that people can show preference for several brands within a product category, depending on the usage situation. Findings also support the notion that brand personality comes into play—not only when the personality fits the person—but when the personality fits the situation. It is hoped that the merging of friendship theory with the brand personality construct will open up new avenues of inquiry that explore the idea of a brand as an instrumental friend or companion.
The Internet economy has been dubbed as the “attention economy” as net users are gluttoned with gigantic amount of information and their attention grows scarcer with the continuing information overload (Davenport and Beck, 2001). At the individual site level, the challenge is even more conspicuous as online publishers occupy every possible screen real estate with online ads and e-tailers peddle their sales items in their already crowded homepages. Thus, it is not surprising that stories about net users who complain about intrusive online ads or online shoppers irritated by poor design continue to make headlines in e-commerce reports (Nielsen Norman Group, 2002).

To win the fierce fight to catch Internet users’ attention, online publishers (e.g., msn.com) and e-tailers (e.g., outpost.com) are starting to recognize that they need more than just flashy images or eye-popping for-sale signs: these tactics annoy users and often are applied at the expenses of other web site content worthy of users’ attention. Consequently, web usability principles (e.g., Nielsen, 2002) have gained wider acceptance in the industries. In particular, focus has been gradually placed on how to developing effective information architecture of web sites (Morville and Rosenfeld, 2002), which referred to how information should be organized or presented. Nonetheless, as a relatively young field, this interdisciplinary discipline is in dire needs for solid theories that can guide the construction of effective web interface (Dillon, 2002).

While studies about web interface design have made significant progresses within the past several years, much are still left to be done in order to elevate its status to the next level. The lack of sound theoretical framework has hindered its adoption among interdisciplinary researchers from computer science, information systems, and marketing. In fact, there is a growing consensus among researchers (e.g., Dillon, 2002) that it is imperative to enhance the rigor of this field through theory-building and empirical testing of existing theories.

A promising candidate for such theories comes from the Visual Information Search field, which has attracted the attention of psychologists, computer scientists, and engineers since the 1970s with the rapid advanced in computer technology and mass adoption of computers. Within this domain, several theories have emerged as prevalent views, including Attention Engagement Theory (Duncan and Humphrey, 1988, 1992), Feature Integration Theory (Treisman, 1980, 1988), and Guide Search Model (Wolfe, 1994, 1998.). While these theories differ in the exact perspectives they take in analyzing visual search, they also share considerable common grounds. The proposed study focuses on the application of Attention Engagement Theory in examining how to stimulate attention to target objects via visual cues on Internet web sites. In a nutshell, the Attention Engagement Theory predicts that the maximum attention given to the target object are likely to be obtained when similarity between target and non-target items is low but similarity among on-target items is high. The similarity measure can be defined along a variety of object dimensions, such as color, size, image vs. text, etc. A graphic illustration for one of the possible study scenarios for web sites is shown in Figure 1. The prediction and the associated operationalizations of similarities also have clear implications for advertising effectiveness measures (e.g., recall, recognition, preference) as well as for consumer choice measures (e.g., regular vs. sale items).

The study represents a first step in the right direction as it sets to synthesize theories from Visual Search in psychology, Consumer Information Processing in Marketing, and Information Architecture in Information Sciences to probe how web site information organization and presentation should be planned so as to maximize user attention to target stimuli, such as advertising display in content sites or featured items in e-tailing sites.

The topic of investigation is important in both the theoretical and practical front. From a managerial perspective, the study results are expected to provide concrete design guidelines to online content and e-tailing sites on the optimal choices of information presentation format (e.g., color, size, position, text vs. image option), which may stimulate the most attention to the target stimuli without jeopardizing the attention to other objects of interests in the web sites. At the theoretical level, the study established a novel application of existing Visual Search theories in the e-commerce setting with real Internet consumers. This theory-testing approach not only enriches the theory-repertoire of consumer researchers but it also renders a more realistic and contemporary testing ground by using real world stimuli (e.g., online ads), which are often missing the abstraction of typical psychology studies. Consequently, the proposed study shall advance knowledge in both the conceptual and empirical domains of visual information search online.

The Impact of Social Satisfaction on Consumer Satisfaction Judgment

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In a recent article, Bagozzi (2000) pointed out that the social aspects of consumer research have been overlooked (e.g., the effects of societal forces on intraindividual processes, interpersonal behavior and relationships among social collectivities/groups). He also mentioned that the level of consumer studies should also be extended to include groups of consumers (i.e., two-person dyads, families, peer or friendship groups, teams, organizations, and other social units). Consistent with Bagozzi’s concerns, most previous satisfaction research studies consumer satisfaction at an intra-personal level and seldom takes interactions among consumers into consideration. This impact of consumer interaction on consumer satisfaction remains largely unexplored with a few exceptions (e.g., Fournier and Mick 1999; Oliver 1999). The primary goal of the present paper is to study consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty in a group context. Namely, social satisfaction and attribute satisfaction are predicted to impact overall satisfaction and brand loyalty in a group context. In addition, the mediating process of the above relationships is explored. A second goal is to study whether individual difference variables impact the above relationships.

In order to account for the importance of social aspects of satisfaction, social satisfaction is proposed and used to compare with attribute satisfaction in terms of their impact on overall satisfaction and brand loyalty. Social satisfaction is defined as an affective state as a result of interacting with other consumers. Attribute satisfaction is defined as the consumer’s subjective satisfaction judgment resulting from observations of attribute performance (Oliver 1993). Overall satisfaction is defined as an affective state that is the emotional reaction to a product or service experience. Overall satisfaction is viewed at a global consumption level while attribute satisfaction is viewed at an attribute level, and the latter is not the only determinant of former (Spreng et al. 1996). To illustrate the importance of social satisfaction,
consider the following scenario: a bunch of friends went to see a movie together and it turned out to be a terrible movie (low attribute satisfaction). However, they interacted with each other in a happy fashion (high social satisfaction). They may feel happy anyways about the entire consumption experience, despite the fact that the movie was horrible.

It is proposed that both attribute satisfaction and social satisfaction predict overall satisfaction and consumer loyalty. Specially, social satisfaction contributes to overall satisfaction through two routes. In the indirect route, social satisfaction affects attribute satisfaction, which in turn leads to changes in overall satisfaction and brand loyalty. In the direct route, social satisfaction contributes to overall satisfaction and brand loyalty directly, over and beyond the impact of attribute satisfaction. In addition, it is proposed that the above relationships are moderated by consumer’s self-construal levels (Singelis 1994). The direct impact of social satisfaction on overall satisfaction and brand loyalty should be stronger for consumers of an interdependent self-construal than for those of an independent self-construal.

Our theory was tested by asking participants to recall a recent dining-out experience with other consumers and complete measures of constructs of interests. Analysis was performed on the overall sample, interdependent self-construal sample and independent self-construal sample. Results show the relationship between social satisfaction and overall satisfaction is partially mediated by attribute satisfaction in all three samples. That is, the impact of social satisfaction on overall satisfaction judgment toward the consumption experience can be partially explained by the fact that social satisfaction influences consumers’ satisfaction judgment toward the product attribute performance, which in turn leads to changes in overall satisfaction judgment. And this mediating effect exists regardless of consumers’ self-construal levels. However, when comparing the direct impact of social satisfaction on overall satisfaction across the independent self-construal sample and interdependent self-construal sample, social satisfaction plays similar roles. Therefore, when using overall satisfaction as a dependent variable, the results show support for our mediating hypothesis, though the individual difference hypothesis did not come out.

The impact of social satisfaction on brand loyalty is partially mediated by attribute satisfaction in overall sample and interdependent self-construal sample, but completely mediated by attribute satisfaction in the independent self-construal sample. For consumers with an independent construal, although they tend to use their own satisfaction judgment about the product as a criterion to determine such behaviors as repurchases and recommendations, this satisfaction judgment already factors into (internalize) social satisfaction judgment. The partial mediation results obtained in the interdependent self-construal sample and overall sample indicate that satisfaction judgment regarding social interaction will directly transfer to consumer’s decision framework of such behaviors as repurchases and recommendations, over and beyond the effect through attribute satisfaction judgment. Therefore, when using brand loyalty as a dependent variable, the results show support for our mediating hypothesis and the individual difference hypothesis.

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The Interplay of Gender and Masculinity Schema in Consumer Responses to Emotional Advertising
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This article builds on the existing knowledge of gender, sex role socialization and negative emotional appeals to explore the interplay of gender and masculinity schema in consumer responses to anger- and anxiety-based emotional advertising. The quality of service industries (such as airline) has been generally recognized as in a chronic state of deterioration. The impact of negative emotions arising from aversive experiences on service evaluation has naturally become a source of concern for both managers and researchers. Concurrent with this concern is the growing interest in using negative emotions as advertising appeals in service marketing. However, up to now there has been little theoretical and empirical development in understanding how negative emotional appeals operate to influence evaluations and what factors moderate their effectiveness.

This study focuses on anger and anxiety, which have been identified as the two most prevalent negative emotions. Building on our existing knowledge of emotions, we assume that although being of the same valence, anger and anxiety nonetheless differ in important underlying appraisal dimensions, particularly in the appraisal dimension of power and agency. Specifically, anxiety is tied to appraisal of low power and agency and is stereotypically regarded as a “powerless” emotion. On the contrary, being viewed as a “powerful emotion”, anger is often tied to appraisal of high power and agency.

Linking gender to emotion, we observe the operation of gender-emotion stereotype. Earlier research has found that “powerful” emotions such as anger are stereotypically regarded as masculine while “powerless” emotions such as anxiety are typically perceived as feminine. Other things being equal, both genders will seek gender-congruent emotions and avoid gender-incongruent emotions. In other words, males will generally feel more at ease with expressing “powerful emotions” such as anger while females are more predisposed to expressing “powerless” emotions such as anxiety.

However, while acknowledging the existence of gender-emotion stereotypes, we must allow for the gender difference in emotional expertise or intelligence. Past research has identified females as the more expert gender in experiencing and expressing emotions and in
adapting to diverse emotional contexts. Compared with males, females are more flexible in handling emotions and less constrained by the social rules imposed upon by emotion-gender stereotypes. Along this line of argument, we expect that females will be equally sensitive to both anger- and anxiety-based advertising appeals while males’ responses will differ as moderated by the gender-emotion stereotypes.

Beyond gender, sex role difference is another powerful factor that determines individual differences in which response to emotional cues is stereotypically appropriate. Sex role differences are often measured in term of masculinity and femininity, each being regarded as representing a gender (or masculinity) schema. Whereas men are generally socialized to be masculine and women are generally socialized to be feminine, the constructs of gender and gender schema do not have to be equated with each other. Individuals can posses high or low value on each gender schema within both genders. Linking this argument to our present experiment, we expected the males' responses to emotional appeals to differ as a function of their individual gender schemas. Specifically, we expect high-masculinity males to have more positive reactions to anger appeals and low-masculinity males to report more positive experience in the anxiety appeal condition.

To test the above hypotheses, we conducted a laboratory experiment that used a 2x2x2 between-participant factorial design with participant gender (male vs. female, masculinity schema (high vs. low) and emotional appeal (anxiety vs. anger) as factors. 220 undergraduate students (107 males and 113 females) participated in this study.

A series of 4 poster ads promoting an airline service was developed as the stimuli. The poster ads manipulated emotional appeals (anger vs. anxiety as of the facial expression of the protagonist) and the gender of the protagonist (male vs. female). Participants were randomly assigned to the four treatment conditions. After taking time to view the ad, participants were instructed to report their attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand (the specific airline) and purchase intent, which constitute the set of dependent variables. Participants were also asked to report their masculinity score on a four-item scale (forceful, assertive, dominant and in control). These four item were selected from the BSRI with the high loading on the masculinity dimension.

ANOVA with emotional appeal type (anxiety vs. anger), gender of the participant (male vs. female), and masculinity schema (high vs. low) as between-subject factors were performed on dependent variables.

For all three dependent variables, results show a 3-way interaction between type of appeals, gender and masculinity schema, with follow-up two-way interaction between type of appeal and masculinity schema being significant for male participants only. Consistent with our expectation, analyses revealed that high-masculinity males preferred anger over anxiety appeals for all three dependent variables. Specifically, high masculinity males expressed a more positive attitude towards the ad, toward the brand and stronger purchase intent in the anger appeal condition. On the contrary, low-masculinity males reported higher scores on the three dependent variables in the anxiety appeal condition. The results of the study supported our hypotheses about the effect of gender and masculinity schema on consumers’ response to emotional ads.

Our study is among the first to explore the interplay of gender and masculinity schema in consumer responses to emotional advertising. We believe that among other things, this study contributed to our existing knowledge by confirming gender and masculinity schema as dichotomous constructs that do not necessarily go hand in hand in moderating consumer responses to emotional advertising. While previous research indicated that reactions to emotional advertising differ between genders due to gender differences in emotional expertise, this study further shows that reactions to emotional advertising also differs within gender (males) due to differences in masculinity schema.

Our finding also has practical implications. This study suggests that in designing and executing emotional advertising, marketing practitioners should give adequate consideration to the effect of masculinity schema as well as the gender of their targeted audience. Failure to differentiate male audience in term of masculinity schema could compromise persuasive effects.