Endowment Effect As Inertia Equity in Brand Switching

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WORKING PAPERS

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Abstract
Little research has investigated the behavioral aspect of brand inertia in brand switching based on behavioral decision theory. The present research employs endowment effect to conceptualize the inertia element of brand switching (e.g., from brand A to B). Past research normally separately assesses consumers’ willingness to accept (WTA) to give up brand A and the willingness to pay (WTP) to acquire brand B. The effect postulates that the WTA is normally larger than the WTP. The present research proposes a joint assessment of the endowment effect in brand switching. It uses the price reduction (i.e., inertia equity) that just overcomes brand inertia to measure the difference between WTA and WTP. Empirical evidence demonstrates and strengthens the conceptualization of endowment effect as inertia equity in brand switching.

References

Relationship Proneness–The Concept, Its Dimensions and Indicators
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Introduction
In the last decades, research has highlighted the existence of a wide spectrum of approaches to buyer-seller exchanges, ranging from transactional to relational (for instance, Dwyer, Schurr and Oh 1987). In search for explanations of such a wide spectrum, reference is sometimes made to the individual attributes of both buyers and sellers, pointing towards their inclinations to engage into or to shy away from relationships. As far as buyers are concerned, researchers have evoked the existence of “relationshipal”, “long-term oriented” or “transactional”, “short-term oriented” customers (Garbarino and Johnson 1999)—meaning that some of the customers are eager to engage in stable relationships and interactions with their suppliers, while others are more prone to establish arm’s length transactions.

Nevertheless, very little research has been devoted to the analysis of this orientation, and of its antecedents and consequences, if it isn’t for some pioneering efforts and a few noteworthy exceptions (De Wulf, Odekerken-Schroeder and Iacobucci 2001; Odekerken-Schroder, De Wulf and Schumacher 2003).

Such an orientation is meant to be a stable trait of individuals and has been termed “relationship proneness”, defined as a conscious tendency to engage in relationships.

“Relationship proneness” has been associated with an interest for stable exchanges, and has been measured in terms of willingness “to be a regular customer” and “a steady customer”, and for “going the extra mile” to buy at the same shop (De Wulf et al., 2001). But, occasionally, a different approach has creeped into and different items have been used, without much discussion, related to the existence of personal contact and special treatment (“looking for personal contact with the personnel” and “making efforts in order to be treated in a special way”) (as in De Wulf and Odekerken-Schroeder 2000). This is an important undertaking, since relations are multidimensional, and it is therefore very important to work out their different facets and to better understand how those facets relate to each other.

Researchers have also dealt with a whole host of constructs related to the antecedents and consequences of relationships. On the one hand, in keeping with evidence from social psychology, showing that relationships are influenced by stable traits of personality of the partners involved (Robins, Caspi and Moffitt 2000), they are suggesting that also buyers-sellers relationships are influenced by those traits (Aaker, Fournier and Brasel 2004). On the other hand, they have addressed the complex web of links between the propensity to engage in relations (relationship proneness) and behavioral intentions or relationship outcomes (De Wulf and Odekerken-Schroeder 2000; De Wulf, Odekerken-Schroeder and Iacobucci 2001; Odekerken-Schroder, De Wulf and Schumacher 2003).

Research objectives
Our research objectives are threefold. First of all, we want to analyze the 3+2 items that have been associated originally to relationship proneness (De Wulf et al., 2000; 2001), and that have been referred to above, to uncover their links.
Secondly, we want to explore the many aspects of relations, that add to the ones which have already been focused upon and that have been associated to interpersonal relations in the literature in socio-psychology (Fiske, 2000). Finally, we relate relationship proneness to personality traits, and in particular to basic traits (Big Five) and narrower dimensions (sociability and approval motivation).

Methodology
We develop a scale of relationship proneness, trying to capture the many-sided facets of relations; we end up with a compact and parsimonious 14-items scale, referring to the relationship to hairdressers. We measured the Big Five with a short version of the Big Five Questionnaire (Capra, Barbaranelli, Borgogni & Perugini, 1993). Sociability is measured as in Cheek and Buss (1981); approval motivation as in Martin (1984). We run the traditional correlation and factor analysis. The sample is a convenience sample of 220 subjects, with diverse socio-demographic characteristics.

Results
When the 3+2 original items are pooled together and factor analyzed, 2 factors emerge, accounting for 68% of variance, with the 3 initial items loading on the first factor and the other 2 on the second. When factor analyzing our 14-items scale, 3 factors emerge—social/interpersonal dimension, preferential treatment and reassurance, explaining 51% of variance. Correlations among factors ranged from .26 (social/interpersonal and preferential treatment) to .46 (social/interpersonal and reassurance).

When the 3+2 original items are pooled together with our 14 items, 4 different factors emerge, with the 3 items loading on a factor by themselves, and the other 2 splitting on 2 different factors (social/interpersonal and preferential treatment).

The social/interpersonal dimension was significantly correlated with traits of extraversion (r=.21), friendliness (r=.18) and sociability (r=.30). Preferential treatment and reassurance were respectively correlated with extraversion (r=.20) and approval motivation (r=.34). Relationship proneness and social/interpersonal dimension were significantly correlated (r=.30). These two dimensions showed the only relevant associations with satisfaction, respectively r=.27 for social/interpersonal and r=.35 for relationship proneness. An alpha level of .01 was used in all significance test.

Managerial implications:
We suggest that managers need to analyze the multi-dimensional nature of buyer-supplier relationships and to identify their different facets, and the relations among them. We have established clearly that the orientation towards repeated and stable relationships is different, and can be treated differently, from the willingness to establish personalized relations; but also that they are related to a certain extent. This same orientation is not linked to the willingness to receive a special treatment and reassurance from one’s own supplier.

We have also established that there is a significant relation between personality traits and orientation towards relations, implying that buyers will establish the same kind of relation across categories and across suppliers.

Limitations and extension for further research:
Although it has been widely used in research, we are aware that results may not be directly generalizable, because of the idiosyncratic nature of the service setting. Therefore a wider research approach is required, in order to feature in differences across categories (in the service sector and otherwise) and different approaches towards categories by consumers.

References
U.S. Consumer’s Cultural Choices: The Interplay of Ethnocentrism and Global Openness
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Extended Abstract
This paper focuses on the factors affecting U.S. consumers’ cultural choices, especially their consumption of domestic versus foreign movies. The U.S. movie market is the world’s most profitable and has been dominated by domestic productions for nearly a century (Vogel 2004), with foreign movies rarely exhibited in American theaters and often only at smaller independent theaters (Kaufman 2006). Although this market situation is often explained by corporate or government tactics (Putnam 1997), it may also be attributed to the American consumer, the focus of this inquiry.

The constructs of ethnocentrism and global-openness can be especially useful in explaining their behavior. The propensity of American consumers to primarily view domestic movies may reflect the citizenry’s ethnocentric tendencies and lack of global-openness. Global-openness, also referred to as cultural-openness, reflects a willingness to interact with foreign people and cultures, including cultural products (Suh and Kwon 2002, Sharma, Shimp and Shin 1995). It connotes both cognition and emotion, whereby the human will is engaged in learning about global differences and similarities, and is characterized by three essential components: (a) a desire for cross-cultural understanding, (b) cultural self-awareness, and (c) the development of cross-cultural skills, such as languages (Wenger 1998).

Ethnocentrism is a psychosocial construct depicting the proclivity for individuals to view their own group as superior and to reject people who are culturally dissimilar (LeVine and Campbell 1972). This concept was first adapted into consumer research by Shimp and Sharma (1987) who developed an instrument to capture consumer ethnocentrism. Research found it to be an important predictor of domestic versus foreign purchases, and more consistently of the former than of the latter (Balabanis and Diamantopoulos 2004). The extant research suggests that these constructs should apply to cultural choices, with ethnocentrism being positively related to consumption of domestic movies and global-openness positively related to consumption of and desire for watching foreign movies.

These propositions were tested with survey data collected from American moviegoers. Movie consumption was addressed by having respondents list the last five movies they had watched at a theater and at home in the past month. This actual consumption measure ensured the validity of the answers. All reported movies were subsequently coded by country-of-origin to compute ratios of U.S. and foreign movie consumption. Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding the factors contributing to their movie choices and preferences. They indicated their level of agreement with a series of statements, including measures of the two key constructs, on 5-point Likert scales. Control measures about movie consumption and preferences as well as demographic data were collected last.

The dataset included 405 complete responses from U.S. consumers (151 males; mean age 22.5). The age group represents an important segment for movie consumption. In 2003, consumers aged 12-24 comprised 39% of all U.S. moviegoers (USCB 2005; MPAA 2004). Respondents had watched an average of 10.15 movies in the past month. In general, ethnocentrism levels (α=.72) were low, with a mean of 1.95 (SD=.64), echoing recent research reporting that America’s Generation-Y expresses little ethnocentric tendencies (Werder and Roberts 2005). Global-openness (α=.74) was skewed to the high end of the scale with a mean of 4.15 (SD=.70). The two constructs were negatively correlated (r =-.41, p<.01).

Consumption ratios were computed based on the reported movies watched at the theater. Movie consumption was strongly skewed toward U.S. films, with 95.86% being American movies. Global-openness and ethnocentrism scores were compared between those consumers who had seen 100% American movies at the theater and those who had seen at least one foreign movie. As the literature suggested, consumers in the first group were more ethnocentric and less globally open than consumers in the second group (1.99 vs. 1.54 t(292)=3.42 p<.01 and 4.08 vs. 4.56 t(292)=3.43 p<.01 respectively); but regression analyses indicated that global openness (or lack thereof) was the only factor ultimately affecting movie consumption.

To provide additional insights, the ratings of movie decision factors were also compared. Interestingly, for foreign movie consumers, only the language of the movie was rated as a less important factor, suggesting that language may be a strong barrier to American movie consumers. A close investigation of the open-ended responses provides further insights into the resistance to foreign movie consumption amongst U.S. consumers. Respondents were asked if they preferred movies from any specific country, and why. Even though few respondents had reported seeing foreign movies, the majority of the comments (67%) reflected openness to them. 11.7% brought up, without being prompted, the lack of access or limited exposure they have to foreign movies. Few indicated they disliked foreign movies (2.9%); that they would never watch one (4.3%); or that foreign films are difficult to relate to (3.2%); still, 14.3% indicated that domestic movies were easier to relate to and understand.

A truer test of participants’ openness to foreign films is their choice for the movie tickets offered as an incentive for participation. Chi-square analyses comparing choices between respondents who expressed global-openness and those who did not showed that, of the latter group, only 1.2% selected the foreign movie tickets whereas amongst the former, 13.8% did (χ² (1)=19.2, p<.01). Those selecting foreign movie tickets were more globally open (4.7 vs. 4.10; α=.74) was skewed to the high end of the scale with a mean of 4.15 (SD=.70). The two constructs were negatively correlated (r =-.41, p<.01).

References
Self-Monitoring and Status Motivation: An Implicit Cognition Perspective
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Extended Abstract
People differ in the way they regulate themselves in social situations (Snyder 1974). Some care little about the appropriateness of their behavior in the eyes of others. These are the low self-monitors, who project towards others a stable self in diverse settings of social interaction. High self-monitors exert more expressive control over their social behavior and tend to adapt their appearance and acts to specific people and situations.

In an extensive review, Gangestad and Snyder (2000) concluded that we know little about the motivational factors in self-monitoring. They called on researchers to study the possible role of status as a motivation associated with self-monitoring. They claim that high self-monitors wish to progress upward in social hierarchy by trying to win others' favor. Therefore, they adapt their behavior to the specifics of the context. Indeed, “high self-monitors may well attempt to cultivate public images that create appearances that connote social status and may strive to construct social worlds that function as effective instruments of status enhancement” (Gangestad and Snyder 2000, p. 547). Status motivation could therefore be the driving force behind the high self-monitor's social behavior, whereas low self-monitors should be motivated less by status. If self-monitoring indeed proves to be motivated by status seeking, this should explain why it is an important moderator of consumer behavior. In particular, why low self-monitors are more receptive than high self-monitors to functional quality cues; whereas high self-monitors are more receptive than low self-monitors to symbolic cues serving a social-adjustive function (DeBono 1987, 2000; DeBono and Harnish 1988; DeBono and Rubin 1995; Shavitt, Lowrey, and Han 1992; Snyder and DeBono 1985).

Our approach is based on advances in implicit cognition and builds heavily on Fazio and Olson (2003), Fazio et al. (1986) conceptualized attitudes as object-evaluation associations in memory. According to the MODE model of attitude-behavior processes, there are two ways in which attitudes may exert an influence on consumer behavior (Fazio and Towles-Schwen 1999). Depending on motivation and opportunity, attitudes play a role in behavior either through spontaneous processes or deliberative processes. In spontaneous processing, “attitudes may have an impact on eventual behavior, even without the individual’s reflecting upon the attitudes” (Fazio and Towles-Schwen 1999, p. 98). That is, some attitudes can be activated spontaneously, on the mere presentation of the attitude object. In such cases, a behavior is acted upon on the basis of the automatic attitudes that become spontaneously accessible in memory (Fazio, Powell, and Williams 1989). Spontaneous processing contrasts with deliberative processing, whereby the consumer engages in extensive retrieval of any data available about the attitude object. In deliberative processing, automatic attitudes may also be activated; however, they will be used less to form explicit judgments and to choose a response vis-à-vis the attitude object.

The motivation component of the MODE model is our central interest. If the attitude object does not induce sufficient motivation, subsequent explicit judgment and behavior toward it will be guided by spontaneous processing, through automatically activated attitudes. In this case, we can expect a high correspondence between automatic attitudes about an object and explicit judgments about it (Fazio and Olson 2003). On the other hand, if motivation is high, the consumer engages in a processing of the attributes of the object, situational factors etc. In these circumstances, the consumer would rely less on automatic attitudes to form explicit judgments. Therefore, a weak match is expected between automatic attitudes about the object and explicit judgments about the same object (Fazio and Olson 2003).

We expect high self-monitors to be highly motivated by status. When probed explicitly about their attitude toward status with no time constraints, we expect elaborated answers from them in agreement with deliberative processing, leading to a low correspondence between automatic attitudes and explicit attitude measures about the concept of status. If motivation is low, as Gangestad and Snyder (2000) theorize it should be for low self-monitors, then the explicit evaluation of an attitude object should correspond to automatically activated attitudes (Fazio and Olson 2003; Karpinski and Hilton 2001), leading to a high correspondence between automatic attitudes and explicit attitude measures with respect to status. The following hypothesis is therefore to be tested:

For low self-monitors, there will be a high correspondence between automatic attitudes about status and explicit attitude measures about status; for high self-monitors, there will be a low correspondence between automatic attitudes about status and explicit attitude measures about status.
Eighty-one undergraduate students participated in the study in individual sessions. The traditional Implicit Association Test (IAT) was used to measure automatic attitudes about status (Greenwald, McGhee, and Schwartz 1998). Word stimuli to represent the attitude objects of interest (high status vs. low status) were selected on the basis of a pretest. For “high status”, “upper class”, “high status”, “high society”, “noble”, and “royalty” were used. For “low status”, “lower class”, “employee”, “worker”, “low status”, “blue collar”, and “working class” were used. For the “pleasant” and “unpleasant” attributes, stimuli were randomly selected from Greenwald et al. (1998). Explicit attitude measures were elicited through six-item, seven-point semantic differentials: “unpleasant-pleasant”, “bad-good”, “dislike-like”, “ugly-beautiful”, “unfavorable-favorable” and “awful-nice” (Swanson, Rudman, and Greenwald 2001). The order of IAT and explicit attitude measures was counterbalanced. Finally, participants completed Snyder and Gangestad’s 18-item self-monitoring scale (Snyder and Gangestad 1986).

To calculate IAT effects, we used Greenwald, Nosek and Banaji’s (2003) scoring algorithm. For explicit attitude measures, difference scores (e.g. summed item score for “prestige brands” minus summed item score for “common brands”) were calculated. Groups of high- vs. low self-monitors were constituted using conventional median split.

Implicit attitude measures were positive for low and high self-monitors. Traditional IAT measures correspond to automatic association strength between status-related concepts and valence attributes. They may be interpreted as the sum of environmental stereotypes and personal experience with attitude objects in a specific cultural environment (Dasgupta and Greenwald 2001; Karpinski and Hilton 2001; Olson and Fazio 2004). The dominance of positive automatic associations suggests the presence of shared stereotypical associations about status.

Explicit attitude measures were also positive for low and high self-monitors. Following Aiken and West (1991), explicit attitude measure was regressed on IAT measure (r=.32, p<.01), self-monitoring (r=-.32, p<.01) and the IAT X self-monitoring interaction (r=–.27, p<.05). As expected, the correlation between IAT and explicit measures was significant for low self-monitors (r=.45, p<.01) but not for high self-monitors (r=.01, ns). These results suggest that consumers have positive automatic associations about status, but only low self-monitors seem to rely on those associations to form explicit status judgments, confirming our hypothesis. However, this preliminary result calls for more empirical evidence about the processes at play.

Replications with other consumer segments are warranted. Within the same cultural environment, people with different income levels may share the same stereotypes about status and status symbols. However, personal experience with status symbols could vary, with affluent people having easier access to these brands than people with lower incomes. The effects we observed could actually be stronger with high-income consumers, since they might have more and more diverse experience with status and status symbols than undergraduates. Relatedly, it would be interesting to introduce variation in the level of cultural capital (Holt 1998). We may expect consumers with a high cultural capital either to be less sensitive to stereotypes or to have different stereotypes than people with lower levels of cultural capital. Additionally, high self-monitors may reveal different types of status evaluations depending on situational cues. For example, if they are in a party with people who all look down on prestige brands, the high self-monitor may adapt to the circumstances and reveal a very negative evaluation of these brands, just to please others. Therefore, future research may benefit from the manipulation of situational cues, too.

References
A Construal Level Theory Approach to Understanding Self-Control Strategies

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Failures to exercise self-control over one’s behavior contribute to a variety of maladies that affect modern society. Virtually constant media attention, on such issues as increased health care problems due to obesity, rising bankruptcies caused by overextension of credit, lack of savings by Americans, and a variety of addictions to both legal and illegal substances, suggests a common link to under-regulated behavior. As such, understanding strategies that can be used to increase consumer self-control is crucial. Many strategies have been discussed in the marketing and psychology literature, but a thorough integration of the different strategies is lacking. In extant research, Hoch and Loewenstein (1991) distinguish between desire reducing and willpower enhancing strategies. Similarly, Dholakia et al. (2006) categorize self-control strategies either as “approaching the desire-resistance goal” or “avoiding the temptation”.

The present research seeks to enlighten various strategies that consumers use to exercise control over their own behavior by organizing these strategies using construal level theory (CLT) principles of psychological distance (Trope and Liberman 2003). Recent research by Fujita et al. (2005) discussed the integration of CLT and self-control in order to better understand consumer decisions. The basic proposition is that consumers’ high-level construals are more highly correlated with their actual values and attitudes than are their low-level construals.

Although the primary focus of their CLT research is temporal construal, Trope and Liberman (2003) suggest that the same principles apply to other dimensions involving psychological distance, and therefore propose level of construal as a basis for a unified theory. The specific construal level mechanisms are known as the four W’s of CLT: 1) When (temporal distance), 2) Where (spatial distance), 3) Who (social distance), and 4) Whether (hypotheticality or probabilistic distance). Across the various construal level mechanisms, a concerted focus on higher-level construals enhances the likelihood that an individual will successfully exercise self-control. The present research uses the four construal level mechanisms to organize and understand specific a total of 30 distinct consumer self-control strategies.

Construal Level Self-Control Strategies

Many temporally-based self-control strategies are likely to be fairly common for consumers. Because two of the three primary components of self-control (i.e., both standards and the monitoring of progress) (Baumeister 2002) are represented in the temporal distance category, this set of strategies is foundational to overcoming potential consumer self-control failures. Spatial strategies primarily involve contextual changes to one’s environment, such as avoidance or removal. Social distancing strategies use distance between oneself and others, as well as one’s actual and ideal selves. Probabilistic strategies cover a broad spectrum of approaches to regulating self-control through careful assessment of one’s potential actions and the impact of these actions on the likelihood of accomplishing higher-level goals.

The present research specifies strategies as representing one or more CLT mechanism. Many interesting issues arise from this organization of self-control strategies. It is simply not possible for all of the various strategies to be equally effective or for the same strategies to be equally effective for all individuals. Identifying the circumstances and individual difference variables that most impact self-control represents an important next step in understanding the effective use of self-control strategies.

Factors Affecting Self-Control Strategy Use

The first individual difference factor for examining the differential effectiveness of self-control strategies is one’s inherent level of self-control. Generally, consumers with high levels of trait self-control will be more likely to successfully use self-control strategies than those with low levels of self-control. Identifying which strategies or category of strategies work most effectively for those with low levels of self-control would be an important contribution. Individuals with low self-control are likely to try fewer strategies in their efforts to self-regulate. Self-efficacy suggests that past failures in exercising self-control will be taken into account in dealing with current temptations (Bandura 1977). Similarly, those with high levels of self-control simply need fewer strategies to obtain the desired results because they are confident in the success of a few core strategies based on past experiences. However, consumers with moderate levels of self-control are more likely to draw from a larger assortment of strategies when attempting self-regulation because of the greater ambiguity associated with their own ability to exercise self-control.

Method. Two studies involving various individual difference measures and open-ended response data regarding use of self-control strategies were conducted to enlighten the use of such strategies by consumers. Study 1 used a student sample (n=80), while study 2 consisted of adult consumers (n=157). Select study 1 results are reported below. The data collected in the two studies provide a rich data source that can be analyzed in a variety of ways useful to understanding consumers’ use of self-control strategies.

Results. A total of 238 self-control strategies (i.e., an average of 3.0 per participant) emerged from the open-ended responses obtained in study 1. Two coders independently coded responses into predetermined categories, based on extant literature and the CLT framework.
Temporal strategies were the most common (127), followed by probabilistic (85), spatial (21), and social/self (3). These results indicate that temporal and probabilistic strategies are the most commonly used strategies. Specifically, budgeting was by far the most common self-control strategy used by consumers.

The data collected in study 1 also allowed for a test regarding the number of self-control strategies used by individuals differing in their level of self-control. Responses to Tangney et al.’s (2004) 13-item self-control measure were averaged to form an index (α=0.83). The sample was then split three ways to represent low, medium, and high self-control groups. A one-way ANOVA revealed the predicted curvilinear relationship among the three groups, with the greatest number of different strategies being used by those in the moderate self-control group (M_{LowSC}=2.77, M_{MediumSC}=3.44, M_{HighSC}=2.69, F=2.82, p=.066).

Summary

Although previous research has investigated the ability of various self-control theories to explain a variety of consumer behaviors, only limited research has focused on understanding the strategies used to combat self-control failure. The present CLT based approach for organizing and understanding self-control strategies serves to enlighten previous research on self-control and provides a foundation for future related work. Increasing understanding of how, when, and why particular self-control strategies are used provides an important avenue for enlightening the problems associated with self-control failure.

References


Collins’s Interaction Ritual Theory: Using Interaction Rituals to Conceptualize How Objects Become Sacred Symbols

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Abstract

Numerous marketing articles have been published on special possessions emphasizing the roles that objects play in constructing identity or self. While these articles emphasize the importance of special possessions, there has been a dearth of theory and understanding as to how these objects are commissioned as “special” by the consumer. Currently unbeknownst to marketers, Collins’ Interaction Ritual Theory provides a new conceptual tool by which marketers can investigate this consumer selection process. By examining consumer’s interaction rituals, marketers can gain a better understanding of the process by which objects become sacred, that is to say how material objects become special possessions symbolically representing previous positive interactions.

Summary

It was not until the late 1970s that sociologists like Heise (1979), Hochschild (1979), Kemper (1978), and Shott (1979) undertook the systematic study of emotions. In retrospect, this late date is remarkable in spite of the fact that emotions permeate virtually every aspect of human experience. How could a majority of sociologists have turned a blind eye to emotions all this time? Not all of them did, but with relatively few exceptions, sociologists had studied just about every aspect of human behavior and somehow given comparatively little attention to the dynamics of emotion (Turner & Stets 2005). Historically, it seems that Western thought has juxtaposed emotion or affect and cognition. Cognition is often associated with rational thinking, such as information processing models. However, research on the neurology of emotions now demonstrates that this is simply incorrect. Data clearly indicate that when areas of the cerebral cortex, particularly the prefrontal lobe, are disconnected from subcortical emotion centers of the brain, individuals have difficulty making decisions of any kind and almost always make what appear to be irrational or at least suboptimal decisions (Damasio 1994, 2003). Thus, human rationality and, more generally, decision making are dependent on emotions, and without them, individuals cannot attach valences or utilities (Turner & Stets 2005).

Therefore, emotions make individual decisions, social structures, and systems of cultural symbols viable. Conversely, emotions are also what can drive people apart and push them to tear down social structures and challenge cultural traditions (i.e. Berlin wall). Thus, experience, behavior, interaction, and organization are connected to the mobilization and expression of emotions and greatly need to be
more understood at the individual level of consumption. Randall Collins (2004) argues that emotions are the common denominator of rationality because rationality depends on assessing the utility (or capacity to bestow positive affect) of alternative lines of conduct. Hence, in general, sociological theories of emotion assume that people pursue lines of conduct that bring about positive emotional outcomes and try at all costs to avoid experiences that lead to negative emotional consequences. Using this assumption of emotional behavior, it is the purpose of this paper to bring to light Collins’s Interaction Ritual Theory and its possible impact on marketing literature in understanding how emotions transform symbols (objects) into sacred artifacts for groups and individuals.

Collins explains that the interaction ritual is an emotional transformer, turning some transient emotions (e.g., joy, happiness, fear) into other enduring emotions (privilege, power, status acceptance or rejection) as outcomes representing emotional energy that is carried across situations. Collins gives us a model by which this emotional transformation process occurs. For a ritualistic situation to produce emotional energy, there are some necessary ingredients required of the situation. First, there must be a co-presence of bodies or a group assembly (more than one). According to Collins, an interaction ritual cannot occur by one’s self. Next, barriers to outsiders must be established. These can be physical barriers like house walls or a group of girls standing in a tight circle, or these barriers can be psychological. Either way, a person commonly knows whether they are on the inside or outside of the interaction circle. Thirdly, there must be mutual focus of attention by all persons in the ritual. People focus their attention upon a common object or activity, and by communicating this focus to each other become mutually aware of each other’s focus of attention. Finally, there must be shared common mood or emotional experience among the individuals. Ingredients three and four become a feedback loop that intensifies through rhythmic entrainment, meaning that as the persons become more tightly focused on their common activity, more aware of what each other is doing and feeling, and more aware of each other’s awareness, they experience their shared emotion more intensely, as it comes to dominate their awareness.

This feedback intensification then produces collective effervescence, or what Durkheim called collective consciousness, which is the collective situation engrossment or participation in the moment that results in shared common excitement. This process then produces very specific ritualistic outcomes that become important only to the group who experienced the collective effervescence. The first outcome is group solidarity or group identity, which is a feeling of membership to each person. Secondly, each member receives emotional energy, or a feeling of confidence, elation, strength, enthusiasm, and initiative in taking action, which is able to be transferred beyond just this interaction ritual. Thirdly, emblems or other representations (object, visual icons, words, gestures even) become sacred symbols of social relationship. These artifacts are representative of the group interaction and only the interaction. These objects are not sacred to those who did not experience the interaction ritual, but only to the participants. And finally, the group develops standards of morality or the sense of rightness in adhering to group norms, especially concerning the sacred symbols. Participants respect these symbols and will even defend them against group transgressors or outsider’s violations of the symbols. Therefore, it is clear to see how Collins’s IR Theory describes the process by which symbols or objects become sacred to a group or individual, and how these objects become symbolic representations of positive emotional rituals.

Within a marketing context, numerous articles have been published on special possessions and the roles that these objects play in constructing identity or a sense of self (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton 1981; Belk 1988; Curasi, Price, & Arnould 2004; Ahuvia 2004). While these articles emphasize the importance of special possessions, there has been a dearth of theory and understanding as to how these objects are commissioned as “special” by the consumer. Currently unbeknownst to marketers, Collins’s Interaction Ritual Theory provides a new innovative conceptual tool by which marketers can investigate this arena of the consumer selection process. By examining consumer’s interaction rituals, marketers will be able to gain a better understanding of the process by which objects become sacred, that is to say how material objects become special possessions symbolically representing previous positive interactions.

References
Increasing Persuasion, Reducing Resistance: Maximizing the Efficacy of Persuasive Appeals for Esthetic Product Consumption

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consumers are inundated with messages via print, television, Websites and interpersonal conversations—all with the purpose of inducing a certain behavior or eliciting attitude change. The choice decision process has increased in complexity as consumers are presented with more and more options in today’s marketplace. In some cases, the consumer may have difficulty in arriving at a decision.

Knowles and Linn (2004) propose that there are two different ways to persuade people to accept alternatives. Using Dollard and Miller’s (1959; Miller 1944, 1959) approach-avoidance conflict model as a conceptual framework, Knowles and Linn (2004) introduce two different strategies for promoting movement toward a goal: Alpha and Omega strategies. Alpha strategies activate the approach forces, thereby increasing motivation to move toward the goal. Alpha strategies have a long tradition in the marketing literature. Offerings are made more attractive by adding incentives, creating more convincing reasons, and finding more credible sources (Knowles and Linn 2004).

Conversely, Omega strategies promote change by minimizing the avoidance forces, reducing the motivation or resistance to move away from the goal. Omega strategies have appeared less frequently in the influence literature. Examples of Omega strategies, as codified by Knowles and Linn (2004), include sidestepping resistance, addressing resistance directly, addressing resistance indirectly, distracting resistance, disrupting resistance, consuming resistance and using resistance to promote change.

The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of using both Alpha and Omega persuasive message appeals in a consumption domain where consumers express or exhibit some resistance—attending the symphony orchestra.

Attendance at Symphony Orchestras

The symphony orchestra, one of the oldest artistic institutions in America, is facing declining audiences (Wang 2003). Nationwide, the average age of consumers who attend orchestra performances is 57; sadly, audiences of many local and regional orchestras are dying off (NEA 2002; Winzenreid 2004; Page 2005). Critics admonish that as the segment that appreciates this art form dwindles, the local orchestra may cease to be a beacon of civic pride. (Brooke 2005).

Symphony orchestras face a challenge in finding convincing ways to communicate to younger consumers the affordability and enjoyment of attending the symphony. In order to ensure survival, marketing managers should look to develop innovative marketing practices to attract new and younger audiences. Subsequently, this involves tailoring elements of the marketing mix to meet the needs of younger audiences. One way marketing managers can go about targeting younger audiences is by developing marketing communications with the goal of reaching this segment. In addition to emphasizing the benefits of attending a symphony orchestra performance, the resistance that younger consumers might have to such an experience should be addressed.

Two studies in this paper assess the efficacy of various persuasive appeals directed toward younger adults in encouraging them to attend the symphony orchestra. In Study 1, Alpha and Omega influence strategies as well as self-and other-referencing techniques were examined for their efficacy in engendering favorable attitudes and strong behavioral intentions towards attending the symphony orchestra. The moderating role of affect intensity (Larsen 1984) was also examined to ascertain whether individuals that have more favorable attitudes toward attending a symphony orchestra performance possess this trait in greater magnitudes.

Study 2 complemented Study 1 by further examining the effectiveness of Alpha and Omega influence strategies, but in the context of temporal framing. Additionally, ego-control (Block 1980, 2002), or the inhibition/express of impulse, was examined for moderating effects on temporal frame.

Study 1

Study 1 was a between-subjects experiment that included manipulations of advertisements using both Alpha and Omega influence strategies as well as self-and other-referencing. The experiment was a 3 (Alpha/Alpha-Add Incentive/Omega- Acknowledge-Validate Resistance) x 2 (Self/Other Referencing) x (High/Low Affect Intensity) between subjects design. A total of 119 students from a southern university participated in the study.

The Alpha condition was a “traditional” advertisement that made the symphony orchestra experience appear “enjoyable, exciting and dramatic;” the benefits of attending the symphony orchestra were emphasized. The Alpha-Add incentive condition included the same enticing appeal but also offered a free T-shirt with each ticket purchase. The Omega-Acknowledgement/Validation condition confronted resistance by acknowledging that one “might think that the symphony is dull and boring”. All three conditions referenced the self by use of first person (i.e., “you want to be sure to experience this enjoyable evening”) or referencing others, by use of third person (i.e., “everyone should be sure to be a part of this enjoyable evening”). All ads indicated that student tickets were available.

In study 1, it was found that individuals that possessed greater magnitudes of the emotional component of affect intensity expressed more favorable attitudes ($M_{\text{high}}=4.48$ and $M_{\text{low}}=4.01, p<.05$) and behavioral intentions ($M_{\text{high}}=3.96$ and $M_{\text{low}}=3.52, p.05$) toward attending the symphony orchestra. Additionally, in the Alpha: Add Incentive and Omega: Acknowledge/Validate conditions, individuals that exhibited high levels of affect intensity expressed stronger intentions toward attending the symphony orchestra than those in the traditional Alpha condition. Furthermore, self-referencing played an important role in increasing the persuasive impact of the advertising appeals, particularly for those that exhibited high levels of the intensity component of affect intensity.

Study 2

A total of 110 students from a southern university participated in Study 2. The experiment was a 2 (Alpha-Discount/Omega-Guarantee) x 2 (Proximal/Distal Temporal Frame) x 2 (High/Low Ego-control) between subjects design.
The Alpha-Discount condition consisted of an advertisement that again presented the symphony experience as “enjoyable, exciting and dramatic” but also offered a second subscription to the symphony for half-price with the purchase of one subscription at full price. The Omega-Guarantee condition promised a money-back guarantee if the performance was not enjoyed. Both conditions were framed in a proximal (in the present) and distal (several months from the present) temporal frame. Ego-control (Block 1980, 2002) was a measured variable.

Results from Study 2 indicated that the Omega-Guarantee condition elicited stronger behavioral intentions than the Alpha-Discount condition ($M=3.53$ and $M=3.07$, $p<.05$). There was no significant moderating effect between temporal frame (proximal/distal) and ego control; however, those individuals that exhibited higher levels of ego-control expressed more favorable attitudes towards attending the symphony orchestra than those low in ego-control ($M=4.27$ and $M=3.75$, $p<.01$).

These findings could have implications for marketing managers at symphony orchestras as well as those responsible for developing marketing communications for products that are emotionally provocative, hedonic and experiential in nature. Specifically, targeting consumers that exhibit higher levels of affect intensity might be prudent. These high affect intensity individuals might include more socially active consumers that belong to various clubs and organizations, as well as enjoy activities that are emotionally stimulating. In developing marketing communications targeted at these consumers, employing self-referencing techniques might be an effective strategy for increasing the persuasive impact of the message.

Also, either providing incentives for attendance or addressing some form of resistance that these individuals might have could yield better results than just emphasizing the features and benefits of a product or experience.

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**Are Good Intentions Enough? Encouraging Regular Savings Through Implementation Intentions**

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**Introduction and Hypotheses**

This study concerns the implications of Gollwitzer’s (1993) concept of implementation intentions. Intention, attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control and past behavior from for Ajzen’s (1985) Theory of Planned Behavior were used to measure the motivation of participants’ of an “America Saves” campaign to save regularly prior to an intervention in which participants made implementation intentions concerning when, how, how much, and from what source of income they will deposit money into their savings accounts in the next month. The study suggests the following testable hypotheses:

Participants who form implementation intentions concerning when, how, how much, and from what source of income they will deposit money into their America Saves account will be more likely to deposit money into their America Saves account than participants who do not form such intentions.

Participants who form implementation intentions will save in a manner consistent with their intentions.

**Procedures**

We are collecting data of three points in time: one baseline and two follow-up surveys. For the present paper, we present the results of the first two data collections. The third data collection is currently ongoing. One hundred and fifty-six participants completed the questionnaire at Time 1. N=68 completed the questionnaire at Time 2. The data collections for Time 2 and Time 3 are not yet completed but will be available for the conference presentation.

**Measures**

The standard “Theory of Planned Behavior” measures followed closely the description in Ajzen (2002). The implementation intention intervention was designed following the procedure described by Gollwitzer (1993) and Orbell, Hodgkins, and Sheeran (1997). Participants in the treatment group were asked to make implementation intentions specifying first, when they would deposit into their America Saves account will be more likely to deposit money into their America Saves account than participants who do not form such intentions.

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Participants who form implementation intentions will save in a manner consistent with their intentions.

**Results**

Sixty-nine per cent of this sample were women (N=47) and 31 per cent were men (N=21). Participants’ mean age was 40.06 years (SD=12.66), most were white (66%), had a college degree (66.2%), were married (42.6%), employed full time (80.9%). The mean family size was 2.71 people (SD=1.39), the mean household income was $42,000 (SD=$2,760). The primary savings goals are saving for emergencies (30.3%) and for retirement (15.2%). The 47 responses are divided into 57.4 per cent treatment group (N=39) and 42.6 per cent control group responses (N=29).

All scale reliabilities were satisfactory, ranging from .689 (Past behavior) to .937 (Intention).

A MANOVA showed no significant differences between the two groups on preintervention measures of intention, attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, or past behavior, F(5, 64)=0.562, ns. These findings indicate that prior to the intervention, the two groups held similar beliefs concerning regular savings.

Univariate F-tests confirmed that there were no differences between the groups on preintervention measures of intention, attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, or past behavior. Similarly, there were no significant differences in age, family size, household income, employment status, education (t-test not significant) between the groups and there were equivalent proportions of men.
and women, races, marital status in the control and treatment group. We also inspected the correlations between past behavior and intention for the two groups. Past behavior is significantly associated with intentions for both the treatment group ($r=.578$, $p=.000$) and the control group ($r=.766$, $p=.000$).

In sum, both groups had positive intentions, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Behavioral intentions were strong in both conditions, with mean scores greater than $14$ on a $3$ to $21$ scale. We can conclude that both groups base their intentions to save regularly upon their previous savings behavior and that both groups are motivated to save regularly.

Overall, the effect of the implementation intervention is not yet obvious from the data currently available. At the $1$-month follow-up, $83$ per cent of the respondents reported that they had deposited money into their savings account compared to $86$ per cent of the control group ($\chi^2=27.499$, ns.). Thus, our first hypothesis cannot be supported. The effect of implementation intention manipulation may emerge on the second follow-up only as described in Sheeran and Orbell (1999).

At follow-up, participants were also asked to report when, how, and from what source they have deposited money into their savings accounts, and these responses were compared with their implementation intentions. At both time-points, most participants intended to and actually deposited on payday (baseline: $74.4\%$, follow-up: $71.4\%$) or on a specific day during the month (baseline: $23.1\%$, follow-up: $21.4\%$). At follow-up, all respondents in the treatment group reported to take the savings from their paycheck ($100\%$), compared to $92.3\%$ in the implementation intentions. The responses differed for the mode of deposit. While about half of the respondents ($54.1\%$) intended to use direct deposit, only $14.8\%$ per cent did so, responding to an increase in payroll deduction, electronically/internet deposit, and mailing. About one-third of the respondents intended and actually deposited the funds in person (baseline: $29.7\%$, follow-up: $29.6\%$).

In conclusion, the ongoing data collection will provide further evidence of the usefulness of implementation intentions to increase the likelihood of action among people motivated to save.

References

**Consumers’ Appreciation of Product Personalization**
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**Extended Abstract**
Due to consumers’ individual preferences, many consumers are unfulfilled with standard goods (Piller and Müller 2004). A promising strategy for companies is to offer consumers the opportunity to personalize their products (Franke and Piller 2003). Based on the definition of Blom (2000), product personalization is defined as a process that defines or changes the appearance or functionality of a product to increase its personal relevance to an individual. By implementing product personalization, consumers are offered a certain degree of design authority (Fox 2001). An example of product personalization is mass customization. Mass customization allows consumers to create a personalized product by choosing different options (e.g., colors) from lists that are predefined by the manufacturer. For example, Nike enables consumers to design their own personalized shoes (http://nikeid.nike.com). This study investigates consumers’ attitude to and purchase intention for personalized products. Specifically, we focus on personalizing a product’s appearance.

Consumers may want to personalize a product’s appearance in such a way that the product becomes expressive of their identity (Blom and Monk 2003; Mugge, Schifferstein, and Schoormans 2004). If consumers are only offered a relatively low degree of design authority, the options to create a product that fits one’s unique identity are limited, resulting in a suboptimal solution. In contrast, personalizing a product with unlimited options enables consumers to create a product with a supreme fit to their identity. It is likely that consumers have a more positive attitude and a higher purchase intention for personalized products if they are offered a higher degree of design authority.

Offering consumers a higher degree of design authority in product personalization also has a downside: Personalizing a product requires consumers’ time and effort. Therefore, the outcome of the personalization process has to provide enough additional value for the owner. Otherwise, the required time and effort will negatively affect consumers’ attitude to and purchase intention for the product. Expressing one’s identity may have both a personal and a social goal. People have a need to define their identity to themselves (personal goal), but also to others (social goal). The social goal of self-expression is reduced if the personalization is only visible to the owner. Therefore, we hypothesize that the visibility of the personalization moderates the effect of design authority on attitude and purchase intention.

Our study had a $2$ (design authority: low vs. high) x $2$ (visibility: low vs. high) between-subjects full factorial design. In each condition, subjects read about a company that sells wireless home phones with an opportunity to personalize the phone’s appearance. The personalization process was illustrated by a written description and several color pictures of examples of personalized phones. To
operationalize design authority, the number of personalization options was varied. In the low design authority condition, subjects could personalize the home phone by choosing a color out of a palette of 99 options. In addition, they could select one of the 24 possible patterns, resulting in a total of 2376 personalization options for the high design authority condition. Visibility was operationalized by varying the component of the home phone that was personalized (display vs. cover). Subsequently, subjects filled out a questionnaire in which measures were obtained for attitude, purchase intention, design authority, and visibility of the personalization. All variables were measured using multiple items on seven-point Likert scales.

The questionnaire was sent to 100 members of a consumer household panel. Sixty-one subjects (51% males, M_age=41) returned the questionnaire, resulting in 14 to 17 subjects per condition. Both manipulations were satisfactory and no confounding effects were found. The results revealed a significant design authority x visibility interaction effect for attitude (F(1, 57)=4.52, p<.05) and purchase intention (F(1, 55)=4.32, p<.05). If the personalization concerned a highly visible product component, subjects in the high design authority condition had a more positive attitude towards the product (M_{low DA}=4.60 vs. M_{high DA}=5.56) and a stronger purchase intention (M_{low DA}=4.21 vs. M_{high DA}=5.11) compared to the subjects in the low design authority condition. However, if the personalization concerned a hardly visible product component, the opposite pattern was found: Subjects in the high design authority condition had a more negative attitude towards the product (M_{low DA}=4.78 vs. M_{high DA}=4.24) and a weaker purchase intention (M_{low DA}=4.23 vs. M_{high DA}=3.43) compared to the subjects in the low design authority condition.

Our findings suggest that although offering consumers a higher degree of design authority in product personalization enables them to create products that better fit their identity, consumers may in some cases actually prefer to have less freedom. Personalizing products only provides value for consumers if the personalization concerns a highly visible product component. Personalizing a visible aspect enables them to create a more self-expressive product to define their identity to themselves and to others. If the personalization is only visible to the owner, the social goal of self-expression is reduced, and consumers refuse to invest their time and effort in the personalization process.

References
Consideration of Future Consequences as a Moderator of Temporal Framing and Regulatory Focus in a Risk Domain
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Introduction
In this working paper, we examine Consideration of Future Consequences (CFC; Strathman et al. 1994) as an important moderator of temporal frame and regulatory focus. CFC is an individual difference variable that captures the extent to which people consider distant versus immediate consequences of potential behaviors. Drawing from construal level theory (Liberman and Trope 2003), recent literature on temporal framing effects (Chandran and Menon 2004), and regulatory focus theory (Higgins 1997), we demonstrate how this time orientation variable can moderate framing effects observed in the literature.

Study 1
Study 1 examines the moderating effect of CFC on temporal frame. Hypotheses were tested using a 2 (temporal frame: proximal versus distal) X 2 (CFC: low versus high) between-subjects experiment. During freshman orientation, 90 first-semester college freshmen were presented with a mock public service advertisement that discussed the risk for weight gain while in college. Temporal frame was manipulated by altering the time in which the typical college student experiences weight gain (i.e., one month versus 48 months). After stimulus ad exposure, participants responded to questions related to their perceived levels of risk for weight gain. The 12-item CFC scale was administered at the end of the questionnaire.

As predicted, the more proximal temporal framing of the risk message resulted in (marginally) higher probability estimates of gaining weight ($F=2.32, p=.10$) than the more distal temporal framing. However, this temporal framing main effect was qualified by an interaction effect between temporal frame and CFC. Pairwise contrasts show that the probability estimate for low-CFCs was much higher for the proximal temporal frame than for the distal frame ($t=1.70, p<.05$). However, high-CFC subjects reported similar probability estimates across temporal frame conditions ($t=0.64, p>.30$). Similar results were found for the risk likelihood variable.

Consistent with previous research (e.g., Chandran and Menon 2004), Study 1 findings suggest that framing the health risk in more proximal terms may be more effective than framing the risk in more distal terms. Study 1 also uncovered a moderating effect of CFC on temporal framing effects for consumer risk perceptions. For both the consumer’s probability estimates and risk likelihood estimates, low-CFC individuals were more strongly affected by the more proximal framing of the health risk than were high-CFC individuals. As predicted, high-CFC individuals reported relatively high risk perceptions for gaining weight (a risk typically construed as long-term in nature) regardless of the temporal frame of the message. Low-CFCs reported low risk perceptions when the health risk was framed in distal (distant future) terms. However, when the health risk was framed in more proximal (near future) terms, low-CFC’s reported much higher risk perceptions consistent with, and even exceeding that of high-CFC’s.

Study 2
The purpose of Study 2 was to replicate findings from Experiment 1 and examine an important third factor, regulatory focus. Although there has been some studies that have examined the relationship between regulatory focus and temporal distance (e.g., Pennington and

1A median split was performed to represent low versus high CFC subjects. This procedure for segmenting subjects based on an individual difference factor is consistent with past research (e.g., Strathman et al. 1994; Joireman, Sprott, and Spangenberg forthcoming; Boninger, Gleicher, and Strathman 1994).
Roese 2003), no study to date has examined the moderating influence of individual differences in time orientation on regulatory focus. Hypotheses were tested using a 2 (regulatory focus: promotion versus prevention) x 2 (temporal frame: proximal versus distal) x 2 (CFC: low versus high) between-subjects experiment. Temporal frame was manipulated by altering the time period in which consumers of high-fat fast food meals may suffer adverse health effects as a result of consuming the food. Regulatory focus was manipulated through evoking a promotion or prevention focus through framing of the message. After exposure to the mock public service ad, 119 participants responded to dependent measures and the CFC measure.

Findings show a significant univariate temporal framing effect on the probability estimate \( (F=2.90, p<.05) \). Consistent with Study 1 findings, the more proximal temporal framing of the risk message resulted in higher probability estimates than the distal temporal framing. Also consistent with Study 1, CFC was found to moderate the temporal framing effects. Contrasts indicate that low-CFC individuals reported somewhat higher probability estimates \( (M=58.48 \text{ versus } 49.37, t=1.40, p<.10) \) when the risk was framed in proximal rather than distal terms. High-CFC individuals reported similar probability estimates for the proximal and distal frame conditions \( (p>.30) \).

As in Study 1, similar results were found for the risk likelihood variable.

A regulatory focus by CFC interaction was found for perceived effectiveness of the message and attitude toward the message \( (F=2.94 \text{ and } 11.07 \text{ respectively, } p<.05) \). Consistent with predictions, low-CFC individuals evaluated the promotion framed message more positively \( (M=5.26 \text{ versus } 4.71) \) and perceived it as more effective \( (M=4.87 \text{ versus } 4.35) \) than prevention-framed message. In contrast, high-CFCs evaluated the prevention framed message more favorably \( (M=5.54 \text{ versus } 4.75) \) and more effective \( (M=4.54 \text{ versus } 4.22) \) than promotion framed message.

Findings from Study 2 show consistent effects of temporal framing in this health-risk domain and demonstrate that CFC can moderate these effects for risk-related variables. Findings also show that CFC can moderate regulatory focus for attitude and perceived effectiveness variables. High-CFC individuals evaluated prevention-framed messages more positively and as more effective; low-CFCs evaluated promotion-framed messages more positively and as more effective.

Brief Discussion

Consideration of future consequences has not yet been directly studied in a marketing context, nor has the potential interaction of this variable with temporal framing on risk variables been addressed. Findings from our preliminary studies offer evidence that CFC may be an important moderator of both temporal frame and regulatory focus. While Chandran and Menon’s (2004) ground-breaking work addresses important moderators of temporal framing, our results extend their findings by demonstrating another important variable (CFC) can moderate temporal framing effects. This research also contributes to the small amount of literature examining the relationship between time and regulatory focus. The findings also have potential practical implications the important areas of public policy and health marketing (Aaker and Lee 2006).

References


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**Managing Experiential Marketing: Insight from a Prototypical Experience**

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**Extended Abstract**

One of the greatest assets that a company or individual can have is a strong brand identity. The leading brands of the world all enjoy one thing—a strong emotional connection with consumers. Recently, experiential marketing has gained momentum among marketers as a means of communicating a brand’s personality and values (Live Brand Experience Association 2005). Conceptually, experiential marketing attempts to engage consumers in memorable ways by “staging experiences” around products and services, in hopes of invoking positive emotional energy around a brand.

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2This manipulation is consistent with past studies that manipulate regulatory focus by framing outcome contingencies in terms of gains or loses (e.g., Higgins 2002; Lee and Aaker 2004, Pennington, Aaker, and Mogilner).
Experiential marketing can encompass everything from “live” product sampling to product demos. In 2004, companies spent 17.6 billion on in-store advertising and this number is expected to continue to rise (Nelson and Ellison 2005). Limited research has explored and explained what actually occurs when experiential marketing is successful. The purpose of this paper is to provide theoretical explanation for the phenomena using Randall Collins’ Interaction Ritual Theory (1975, 1981, 1990, 2004). The paper will also present an ethnographic analysis of a prototypical interaction ritual—a live music performance. The specific purpose of this approach is to glean information from an ideal experiential context that can be applied to the management of experiential marketing phenomena.

**Interaction Ritual Theory**

An interaction ritual, according to Collins, is an emotional transformer, taking some emotions as ingredients, and turning them into other emotions as outcomes. There are four elements or ingredients that go into producing an Interaction Ritual: (1) co-presence of individuals (2) ecological barriers (3) common focus of attention (4) and common emotional mood among present individuals.

The outcomes of the Interaction Ritual are (1) symbols marking the social relationship, which can include objects, persons, gestures, words, and ideas (2) a sense of moral righteousness about symbols marking group membership (3) group solidarity (4) and enhanced emotional energy. Interaction Ritual Theory is a useful tool in explaining a live music performance since all the ingredients of an Interaction Ritual are present.

**Enhancing the Experiential Marketing Experience**

Ethnographic fieldwork was conducted in a local dueling piano bar, called Charley’s, in a medium-sized city in the southern part of the United States during the course of two months. Participatory observation and ethnographic interviews were conducted. Findings from field notes are discussed in terms of four major themes extrapolated from Collins’ Interaction Ritual Theory: (1) ecological barriers (2) emotional transformers (3) symbols and (4) emotional energy.

**Ecological Barriers**

According to Collins, a primary component of an Interaction Ritual is the creation of physical barriers to outsiders. The more effective boundaries are in separating people from external stimuli, the greater the likelihood that an emotionally rousing, successful interaction will occur. Charley’s was a quaint, charming venue. Every element of the club set its patrons up for an experience. Its décor, including the abstract paintings and the pencil sketching of musicians all helped to create and welcome an atmosphere for music and fun. Companies are aware that creating an environment that appeals to the senses is paramount in creating an experience for the consumer. Examples of retailers that successfully stimulate the senses by creating effective ecological barriers include Apple computers, Victoria Secrets Auntie Anne’s, and Bath and Body Works.

**Transforming the Emotions: Focusing Attention and Creating Shared Mood**

Interaction Rituals have the ability to transform negative emotions into positive emotions (Collins 2004). When individuals are gathered together and separated from the surrounding environment, a mutual focus of attention and common awareness can set the stage for a shared mood among the group. Moods are transitory and may ebb and flow, but creating shared mood can be facilitated by rhythmically synchronizing the group. The musicians at Charley’s were able to skillfully manage the emotions of the audience by allowing interaction among individuals at tables, but then periodically calling their attention back to the stage by getting the group to engage in an activity, whether it be clapping in unison or singing along.

Based on the values and interests of the target group for an experiential marketing endeavor, activities can be planned which stimulate interaction among consumers and get them to share in carrying out the same activities. This can include involving them in a recreational activity, enjoying a live music performance or eating and drinking.

**Symbols**

In Collins’ Interaction Ritual Theory, symbols become the focus of attention of emotionally entrained crowds. These symbols can be objects, ideas and theme, or people and are imbued with emotional overtones. Audience members at Charley’s engaged in a chant that had become the Charley’s rallying cry and theme. Even though there were expletives and offensive language in the chant, both men and women, young and old heartily participated in shouting out the chant at their top of their lungs along with the musicians on stage.

Collins’ symbols are not unlike brands. The most popular brands of the world have a strong emotional connection with consumers. Experiential marketing endeavors should be designed in such a way that the brand’s image (ie. logo) is always visible or present. At Charley’s an important artifact that became a symbol were the red mugs that patrons brought to the club on Thursday nights. Although very utilitarian, these mugs were imbued with meaning.

Placing the brand on other objects (in the form of promotional giveaways) that may be of both utilitarian and hedonic benefit for the consumer might help to create additional symbolic representations of the brand. Having the brand on these objects (although not necessary the actually product itself) can help to keep the brand at the “top of the mind” of consumers.

**Emotional Energy: Becoming a Link in the Consumption Chain**

Transient emotions such as joy help to fuel Interaction Rituals. In interaction Ritual Theory, these emotions intensify into shared excitement and culminate into a collective effervescence. The high, positive emotional energy generated from each encounter at Charley’s helped to facilitate and fuel subsequent visits. Patrons became “regulars” and Charley’s became part of their consumption chain.

Applying Collins’ theory in an experiential marketing context, if a marketing event is successful, the identity of the brand has been enhanced in the minds of consumers. This positive affect toward the brand, product, or even company should help to spawn future consumption of the brand or product.

As future consumption begins to take place and consumers develop strong emotional ties to a brand or product, they may start to feel a sense of belonging to the community of consumers that also share strong loyalty for the product. Consumers may become so enamored with the product that they are encouraged to participate in brand communities. Subsequently, by focusing on the ingredients that go into an interaction ritual, marketers can create successful experiential marketing experiences.
Extended Abstract

Many consumer decisions involve comparing the emotional intensity of alternatives that occur at different points in time. Is a currently sampled movie preview more or less enjoyable than the last movie previewed? Is the present culinary sample more or less delicious that the last sample? Is the song just sampled in iTunes more or less enjoyable than the last song sampled? Such judgments of emotions over time have the potential to influence consumer attitudes, involvement, and choices.

Our past research finds that people tend to exhibit an “immediacy bias,” judging immediate emotions as more intense, all else equal, than temporally or socially distant emotions (Van Boven, White, and Huber 2006; Van Boven, White, Johnson-Graham, and Kruger 2006). For example, people perceive a recently viewed (i.e., more immediate) movie clip as creating more intense emotions than a movie clip that was viewed in the past (regardless of the order in which the two clips are shown). This immediacy bias appears to be quite robust and can emerge across various emotions such as fear, amusement, and sadness. In the current research, we suggest that the immediacy bias should have important implications for consumer attitudes, involvement, and choices when consumers sequentially sample different alternatives. In particular, we propose that a positive consumption experience that is immediately experienced is more likely to lead to positive attitudes, greater consumer involvement, and product choice than a consumption experience that is not immediately experienced.

In study 1 we provide a preliminary test of the predictions that consumers will experience more positive emotions, have more positive attitudes, and report greater involvement towards an immediately experienced alternative rather than an alternative that was experienced in the past. Fifty-nine participants were asked to watch and evaluate a short film by BMW (Ticker, 2002). One half of participants evaluated the film immediately after viewing it (immediate condition) and one half of participants evaluated the movie after a half hour delay (past condition). Participants were asked to report the intensity of their emotions, their attitudes towards the film, their involvement with the film, and whether they would be inclined to repeat the consumption experience. As predicted, participants rated their feelings while watching the film as more intense ($F(56)=2.05, p<.05$), indicated their attitudes were more positive ($t(56)=2.10, p<.05$), and reported a greater degree of involvement ($t(56)=3.48, p<.01$) when the consumption experience was immediate rather than in the past. Finally, those in the immediate condition reported being somewhat more interested in repeating the consumption experience again than did those in the past condition ($t(56)=1.93, p<.06$).

In study 2 we tested the same predictions as in study 1, but also wanted more explicitly to test our prediction regarding consumer choice—that consumers would be more likely to choose an immediate option as opposed to a past option. Sixty-nine participants viewed two video clips of stand up comedians (i.e., Tim Allen and Robin Williams), each approximately four minutes long. The order in which the two film clips were shown was counterbalanced and the viewing of the film clips was separated by a 50 minute time delay. Thus, half of the time the Tim Allen clip was the immediate option (and Robin Williams the past option), whereas half of the time Robin Williams was the immediate option (and Tim Allen the past option). After participants viewed the first film they were asked to report their attitudes towards the first film. Immediately after viewing the second film, participants were asked to report the intensity of emotions in response to each film, their attitudes towards each film, their involvement with each film, and which comedy routine they would like to view in its entirety (i.e., our measure of consumer choice). Repeated measures ANOVAs, including film 1 and film 2 ratings as the repeated measure and order as a factor, revealed that participants reported more intense emotional reactions ($F(1, 67)=4.85, p<.03$), more positive attitudes ($F(1, 67)=4.10, p<.05$), higher involvement ($F(1, 67)=4.08, p<.05$), and a greater inclination to actually watch the entire comedy routine ($F(1, 67)=7.73, p<.01$), when the film was immediate rather than distant. Participants also misremembered their emotional reactions to the first film as less intensely positive after viewing the second film. Finally, the immediacy bias meant that participants were more likely to “mischoose”—that is, choosing to view the film they actually enjoyed less—when they chose the second rather than the first film.

The results of the current studies demonstrate that the immediacy bias does indeed have implications for consumer attitudes and choices. That is, compared to the distant option, the more immediate option led to greater perceptions of emotional intensity, more positive attitudes, higher involvement, and consumer choice. The results of our research have implications for both consumers and marketers. For consumers, it is valuable to be aware of this bias and to be cautious regarding choosing immediate options (i.e., Do I really want a cheeseburger more than chicken teriyaki, or is just because I can currently smell the cheeseburger?). In addition, because consumers show a preference for more immediate alternatives, marketers should invite consumers to make choices while they are currently experiencing or sampling the key product option.

The Second Wind Phenomenon: Recovery from Cognitive Fatigue with Sensory Arousal

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Extended Abstract

Historically, researchers studying cognitive overload have examined the effects of decision making such as suboptimal choice and choice deferral. However, research is just beginning to focus on how consumers recover from overload in order to try to maintain optimal decision making ability (Brice & Smith, 2001 and van Duinen, Lorist, & Zijdewind, 2005). Brice and Smith (2001) administered caffeine to participants in a one-hour simulated driving task and found that steering accuracy was improved. Van Duinen et al. (2005) explored...
the effectiveness of caffeine in improving cognitive performance when faced with motor fatigue. Researchers found that caffeine improved cognitive performance resulting in fewer errors during a motor task. However, these studies did not examine decision making in cognitively demanding scenarios that consumers often face over prolonged cognitive effort resulting in cognitive overload. There may also be more effective means for improvement than chemical arousal (which may have decreased effectiveness over longer periods of time).

Here, we explore the effectiveness of other strategies: decreasing arousal (relaxation or sleep), increasing mental arousal (listening to music, playing an involved video game), increasing arousal through physical activity, distracting oneself from the task, interacting with people (talking on the phone or to someone), or as a control merely continuing the task until completion or failure. The perceived and actual effectiveness of cognitive overload cures has important implications for how and when consumers will use different strategies to cope with difficulty in decision-making situations.

One hundred and twenty participants participated in a preliminary study focused on gaining initial insight into the ways that consumers experience and attempt to remedy cognitive overload. Participants were first asked to describe a situation in which they felt “mentally tired,” and subsequently, provided a description of the measures they took to relieve their tiredness. After describing their remedy strategies, consumers reported the degree to which they felt their strategy was effective, and how cognitively tired they remember feeling after undertaking this measure.

Overload cures were coded as either:

1. Decreasing Arousal
2. Increasing Arousal—mental
3. Increasing Arousal—physical
4. Distraction from the task
5. Social Interaction
6. No cure used, attempted to keep working.

The most common cognitive relief strategy reported by participants involved the use of artificially induced physical arousal—caffeine—in order to recover from their cognitive overload. Interestingly, although such strategy was most widely used, it was not reported to be the most effective: A significant effect for cure type (F=3.478, p<.006) revealed that instead, “Social Interaction” (M=7.286, SD=.745) and “Distraction” (M=6.769, SD=0.547) were perceived as significantly more efficacious as compared to the control of “No change” (M=4.091, SD=.594), (M =3.195, p<.001 and M =2.678, p<.001 respectively). The most common reported strategy, physical arousal through the use of caffeine or other chemical stimulants, did not differ significantly from the reported effectiveness of doing nothing to alleviate cognitive fatigue.

These preliminary results indicate that consumers may be misguided in their choice of recovery strategies. Although they routinely choose increased physical arousal (especially through using chemical stimulants such as caffeine and nicotine) as a means to get a cognitive “boost”, this strategy seems to be less effective than mere social interaction. As a result, consumers may make poor judgments and actually decrease their cognitive ability in the long run, even if they experience a short enhancement (van Duinen, 2005).

Based on these results, Study 1 will be conducted in order to further explore the efficacy of strategies cited by consumers as means of recovery from cognitive overload. We will increase cognitive load by asking participants to conduct a series of ordinary cognitive tasks, such as price-related calculations. These tasks will include objective timing and performance measures, so that pre-remedy performance can be measured. Participants will then either increase cognitive arousal by listening to fast-paced music, decrease cognitive arousal by listening to slow music, send an email on an unrelated subject (social interaction), eat a piece of chocolate candy (to increase physiological arousal), or simply continue working on calculations. After their remedy activity, participants will resume another objectively measured cognitive task. Finally, they will rate their own feelings of cognitive tiredness and subjective sense of the efficacy of their remedy activity. Analysis will focus on performance patterns subsequent to the remedy activity, particularly as compared to participants’ subjective sense of cognitive repair. Results from this study will be available for discussion at ACR 2006.

References

The French Paradox Redux: Internal and External Cues of Meal Cessation
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Extended Abstract
A person who uses internal cues (such as hunger, satiation, or taste) to determine when to stop eating may be more effective in ultimately eating less than one who relies on external cues (such as portion sizes, social norms, or when an accompanying beverage or activity is over).
A demographically-matched sample of 134 Parisian and 148 Chicagoan students completed a brief survey on meal cessation, which asked the extend to which they agreed with three statements associated with internal cessation cues and three statements with external cessation cues. Their answers to these were compared across countries, genders, and BMI-levels.

While the French indicated they were more likely to be influenced by internal cues of meal cessation than Americans (P<.001), Americans indicated they were more likely to be influenced by external cues of meal cessation (P<.001). In summary, compared to their counterparts, French people (P<.001), females (P<.05), and normal weight individuals (P<.01) were more influenced by internal cues of meal cessation than external cues.

This study shows that one correlate with obesity may be the extent to which people rely on external cues to determine when they will stop eating a meal. While there are a number of possibilities of why those in some countries have less of an obesity problem than the United States, these results suggest one contributing explanation would be they are more likely to use internal cues, versus external cues to know when to stop eating.

References

Exercise Behavior in Loyalty Program: The Influence of Regulatory Focus
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Abstract
Our study examines the influence of regulatory focus (RF) on reward preferences in a customer loyalty program. Specifically, we aim to contribute to the emerging literature on RF by addressing five issues. First, we simultaneously investigate RF as a state and a customer trait. Second, we address the interaction between type of rewards and message framing. Third, we test whether the influence of the RF trait on consumer loyalty is mediated by exercise motivation. Fourth, we examine whether the transfer of regulatory fit effect is embedded in multiple interrelated constructs that make up a customer’s evaluative judgment. Finally, we investigate the impact of simultaneously presenting promotion and prevention rewards on customer loyalty.

Overview of the Research

In many retail contexts, loyalty programs are employed to attract new and retain existing customers. This form of customer relationship management is also enjoying widespread popularity in the health club services (e.g. http://www.firerewardsclub.com). Many gyms have adopted loyalty programs (similar to frequent flyer programs in the airline industry). We investigate the influence of regulatory focus (RF) on reward preferences in a health club member loyalty program.

RF posits that there are two types of foci: (1) a promotion focus which aims at achieving positive outcomes and guides an individual to use an eagerness strategy and (2) a prevention focus aimed at avoiding negative outcomes, instigating individuals to use a vigilant strategy (Higgins, 1997). In prior research on RF, these foci are either framed as situational states or personal traits (e.g., Lee & Aaker, 2004). However, as reward preferences of health club members may be determined by both situational and individual differences, it is both theoretically and managerially relevant to understand the relative contributions of situational and dispositional foci by analyzing them simultaneously rather than independently (Kammrath et al., 2005).

In addition, regulatory focus fit has recently been advanced to explain the match between a person’s goals and the way to pursue these goals (Avnet & Higgins, 2006). The fit between regulatory focus and the manner in which goals are pursued influences customer beliefs about the appropriateness of their (re)actions. It has been argued that the ‘feel right’ factor, in turn, enhances motivational intensity in goal pursuit (Avnet & Higgins, 2006).

We address the interaction between types of reward and message framing, advocating an action to pursue loyalty program credit points. The type of reward is presented to health club members as a means to induce their state RF. Two types of goal exercise-related rewards are used: approach reward (which aims at improving their health) and avoidance reward (which aims at helping them to maintain good health). Thus, the messages are framed as either eagerness (using a gain frame) or vigilance (using a loss frame). In the gain frame, respondents are informed about the benefits of recommended future exercise. In contrast, in the loss frame, health club members are informed about the consequences of not exercising frequently enough. Consistent with RF theory, we expect that a fit effect occurs between the approach reward and gain frame as well as the avoidance reward and loss frame. Furthermore, this fit effect is predicted to be embedded in multiple interrelated constructs that form a customer’s evaluative judgment of loyalty.
Our research also aims at contributing to goal framing research in relation to the mixed results that have been reported with respect to message framing (Lee & Aaker, 2004). In our study, we assess the interaction effect between type of rewards and message framing in support of the regulatory focus fit effect. In addition, we hypothesize a main effect of frame in that a loss frame is expected to be more effective to promote exercise. This is suggested by Levin, Schneider, & Gaeth (1998), who report that a loss frame is more effective for goal framing. In addition to a main effect of message framing, we predict that avoidance type of reward will be most preferred by health club members, because, in general, exercise is predominantly construed as a preventative behaviour (Rothman & Salovey, 1997).

In addition to the direct impact of RF on consumer preference in loyalty programs, we investigate whether this impact is mediated by other, more domain-specific variables. We introduce exercise motivation as a mediating variable as it has been demonstrated that this is a powerful predictor of exercise behavior (Markland & Inglelde, 1997). In our experiment, we expect promotion (prevention) RF will be more enhanced if an approach (avoidance) reward is presented to a promotion (prevention)-focused individual than to prevention (promotion)-focused individual, and this strengthened-RF orientation is predicted to influence exercise motivations, which in turn, will have an effect on customer exercise behavior.

Another important concept in RF theory is regulatory relevance, which refers to the match between customer’s goals and his/her outcome decisions (Avnet & Higgins, 2006). This theoretical refinement of RF theory posits that customers with different regulatory focus value a reward as a function of its relevance to their regulatory orientation namely, promotion (prevention)-focused individuals prefer promotion (prevention)-related stimulus. However, it has not been assessed how customers with a different regulatory focus orientation react to promotion and prevention focus stimuli when these are simultaneously presented. Wang & Lee (2006) argue that in this case, RF serves as a selective filter to process the information, such that people pay attention to information that fits their RF, but only when they use heuristic information processing. The argument for this finding is that regulatory fit occurs due to the use of heuristic rather than systematic information processing (i.e., customers paid attention to perceptual salience of the product that fit their regulatory focus). In this research, we test the robustness of the fit effect in the setting of loyalty program (a high involvement situation). We predict that promotion-focused health club members are more likely to adopt approach rewards than avoidance rewards and vice versa.

To test these predictions, two studies were conducted. The first study aimed testing regulatory focus fit theory in the context of exercise, whereas the second study aimed at regulatory fit relevance. For the first study we used an experimental design in which different participants were assigned to each scenario in 2 (type of rewards: approach, avoidance) X 2 (advocated message: gain, loss) between subject design, whereas in the second study, survey with questionnaire was used. Data analyses of both studies were conducted using structural equation modeling with partial least squares.

Significance and Implication of the Research
In general, our study aims at to contribute to the emerging RF and regulatory fit literature. Specifically, we investigate whether the regulatory focus fit effect is an important explanatory mechanism that accounts for the customer preferences in relation to loyalty programs.

References

Hey, What Gives?
The Effects of Altruistic Versus Egoistic Charity Appeals on Donation Intentions
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Extended Abstract
In the face of unprecedented competition, charities have adopted many sophisticated marketing techniques—relationship marketing, branding, and the measurement of marketing return on investment—previously considered to be the domain on their for-profit counterparts.
One of the more notable techniques used by charities is a move away from traditional charitable marketing strategies that are characterized by altruistic appeals to initiatives that focus more on the egoistic (i.e., selfish) benefits received by the donor (Hassay and Peloza 2005).

The long-running debate between those argue that charitable donations are based in altruism (e.g., Batson 1990) and those who argue charitable donations are merely an exchange relationship (e.g., Cialdini et al. 1987) highlights the primary distinction between the majority of charitable appeals. When charities are seeking donor support they typically position the appeal either as an opportunity to help others (i.e., an altruistic appeal) or an opportunity for the donor to receive something in return (i.e., an egoistic appeal). Whether altruistic or egoistic appeals lead to more positive responses to requests for charitable donations remains equivocal and research has produced mixed evidence supporting the effectiveness of both altruistic and egoistic appeals (e.g., Pessemier, Bemmaor, and Hanssens 1977; Holmes, Miller, and Lerner 2002). The current paper seeks to address this contradiction by exploring moderators of the influence of appeal type (i.e., altruistic versus egoistic) on donation intentions.

A series of three experiments was conducted in order to test for the effects of potential moderators of the influence of egoistic versus altruistic appeals on consumers’ willingness to donate. We predicted that consumers would respond more positively to egoistic rather than altruistic appeals under conditions that make egoistic motives salient. In particular, we examined the type of donation (volunteerism versus money), the donation setting (private versus public), and self-construal (independence and/or interdependence) as moderators of the effectiveness of egoistic and altruistic appeals. Across all three experiments, participants were shown an advertisement requesting donation in which the appeals were either egoistic (i.e., promoting donation as a self-serving behavior) or altruistic (i.e., promoting donation as a selfless behavior). One local charity that provides shelter and food to the homeless was chosen because in pretests it was generally well regarded and was equally likely to receive donations of time and money.

First, we hypothesized that people would respond more positively to egoistic appeals when the donation request was for time rather than money because donations of time mean higher costs which tend to lead to exchange valuations (i.e., more egoistic motives) by potential donors (e.g., Snyder, Omoto, and Crain 1999; Wilson 2000). In study 1, participants responded to either altruistic or egoistic appeals and indicated on a three-item scale how willing they would be to donate time and how willing they would be to donate money. As expected, a 3 (Appeal Type: egoistic vs. altruistic vs. combination) X 2 (Donation Type: volunteer vs. monetary donation) mixed model ANOVA revealed a significant interaction ($F(2,57)=10.39$, $p<.01$). Intentions to donate time were significantly higher than when participants viewed the egoistic versus the altruistic appeal ($F(1,57)=2.38$, $p<.025$). When the donation intention was to donate money, the donation setting (private versus public) and self-construal (independence and/or interdependence) as moderators of the effectiveness of egoistic and altruistic appeals. Across all three experiments, participants were shown an advertisement requesting donation in which the appeals were either egoistic (i.e., promoting donation as a self-serving behavior) or altruistic (i.e., promoting donation as a selfless behavior). One local charity that provides shelter and food to the homeless was chosen because in pretests it was generally well regarded and was equally likely to receive donations of time and money.

Next, we hypothesized that the donation setting would impact the effectiveness of charity appeals on donation intentions since individuals alter consumption patterns in private versus public (Ratner and Kahn 2002). Because society generally expects individuals to donate to charity as a selfless act, we expected egoistic appeals to be more successful than altruistic appeals when donation intentions are private. A 2 (Appeal Type: egoistic vs. altruistic) X 2 (Donation Setting: public versus private) ANOVA revealed a significant interaction ($F(1,140)=14.68$, $p<.001$). When donation intentions were private, people who more willing to donate in response to the egoistic than the altruistic appeal ($F(1,137)=4.45$, $p<.001$). Intentions to donate money revealed the opposite effect, with intentions to donate time significantly higher intentions to donate time in response to altruistic appeals ($F(1,137)=2.38$, $p<.025$).

The third study expands on the results from study 2 by examining the interactive impact of self construal (Singelis 1994) and donation setting on responses to egoistic and altruistic charity appeals. Previous research has shown that those high in independence are less likely to have negative reactions to the misfortunes of others (White, Lehman, and Cohen, in press). The private donation setting should reveal respondents’ “true” intentions and those who are independent should exhibit the most positive donation intentions in response to egoistic appeals. A 2 (Appeal Type: egoistic vs. altruistic) X 2 (Donation Setting: public vs. private) ANOVA revealed a significant 3-way interaction ($F(1,137)=14.95$, $p<.001$). In the private condition, consumers high in independence were reported significantly higher donation intentions in response to the egoistic than the altruistic appeal ($F(1,137)=2.23$, $p<.03$). In addition, among those low in independence in the private condition, donation intentions were stronger in response to the altruistic appeal ($F=4.81$) than the egoistic appeal ($F=3.73$) and the egoistic appeal ($F=2.08$, $p<.04$).

Despite the fact that the execution style of an advertisement has been shown to affect consumer response in a variety of settings (e.g., Shiv, Edell, and Payne 1997), the debate over the efficacy of egoistic and altruistic appeals in motivating charitable giving has, until now, remained relatively unexamined. Although it has been argued that both egoistic and altruistic appeals can be successful, our research provides evidence that the efficacy of each appeal is dependent upon the task, contextual characteristics, and individual differences.

References
Extended Abstract

The role of affect in consumption experience has attracted substantial research interests in the last two decades (e.g., Erevells 1998; Mano and Oliver 1993). A general finding from the literature is that affective responses are important consumption outcomes that relate to satisfaction/dissatisfaction. However, in addition to being just a consumption outcome, affect can also serve as a primitive motive for consumption as consumers purchase products (e.g., video games) and participate in leisure activities (e.g., theme parks) in order to experience desired affect (e.g., Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). When the consumption is driven by affect, consumers usually anticipate that they will experience higher levels of some specific affect (e.g., pleasure, arousal) during the consumption process. Such goal orientations often play very important roles in consumer behavior. For example, Garbarino and Johnson (2001) have demonstrated that customers’ goal orientation can determine what information is used in satisfaction evaluation of a live theatre company. Yet, little is known about how consumers’ goal orientation and affect derived form the service consumption experience together influence quality and satisfaction evaluations in different service contexts. Therefore, the objective of this research is to investigate the different impacts of affect (pleasure and arousal) on perceived service quality and satisfaction in different service contexts in which consumers’ major goal orientation is either task-fulfillment, pleasure-seeking, or arousal-seeking.

Hedonic services refer to those services that are consumed primarily for affective and sensory experiences (e.g., Hirschman and Holbrook 1982). Hence, consumers’ major goal orientation in hedonic services is to experience desired affect. Such an affect-seeking goal orientation can be further classified as primarily pleasure-seeking (e.g., fine dining), primarily arousal-seeking (e.g., nightclub), or both (e.g., theme park). On the other hand, utilitarian services are those services that are consumed primarily for instrumental and functional values, e.g., banking. Therefore, consumers’ major goal orientation in utilitarian service contexts is task-fulfillment.

Consumers’ perceived service quality usually results from the comparison of subjective standards with service performance (Parasuraman, Zaiethaml and Berry 1988). However, satisfaction differs from perceived quality in that it is relative to situational expectations and involves affective dimensions. As consumers’ major goal orientation in different service contexts determines their expectation of different levels of affect, affect may have different impacts on perceived quality and satisfaction.

In utilitarian service contexts, quality evaluations are mainly based on the judgment of the functional utilities. Such judgment often results in pleasant or unpleasant feelings. The valence of affect may influence perceived service quality through the usage of “how-do-I-feel-it” heuristic (Pham 1998) and/or mood transfer (Bagozzi, Gopinath and Nyer 1999). Given that consumers do not anticipate pleasure in utilitarian service contexts, pleasure may not impact satisfaction directly. Instead, such unanticipated pleasure is likely to influence satisfaction through the mediation of perceived service quality. Similarly, consumers do not particularly pursue arousal in pleasure-seeking hedonic services or pleasure in arousal-seeking hedonic services, such secondary affect may enhance the primary affect and influence consumers’ service quality perception. Therefore, the effect of such secondary affect on satisfaction is expected to be mediated by perceived service quality.

On the other hand, when consumers specifically anticipate strong feelings of pleasure in pleasure-seeking hedonic services and arousal in arousal-seeking hedonic services, such primary affect will have a strong effect on satisfaction even after the effect of perceived service quality is controlled. In other words, primary affect will have a direct effect on satisfaction.

We have conducted two empirical studies to test our hypotheses. In study 1, we examine the different impacts of affect on service quality and satisfaction in a hedonic service context in which consumers’ major goal orientation is pleasure-seeking, and a utilitarian service context in which the major goal orientation is task-fulfillment. In study 2, we examine such relationships in two different hedonic service contexts in which the goal orientation is primarily arousal-seeking or pleasure-seeking.

In study 1, a pretest was conducted to identify the prototype pleasure-seeking hedonic service and utilitarian service. Participants from a university in Hong Kong rated that karaoke and banking services were such services that they often patronized. Questionnaires with a screening question asking participants whether they had patronized karaoke or banking (excluding online banking and ATM) services in the last one month were given to undergraduate students in Hong Kong. Consistent with our hypotheses, results show that the effect of pleasure on satisfaction was mediated by perceived service quality in the utilitarian service context in which the major goal orientation is not pleasure-seeking. As expected, pleasure had a direct effect on satisfaction in the pleasure-seeking hedonic service context; the effect of arousal on satisfaction was mediated by perceived service quality as arousal-seeking was not the major goal orientation.

Study 2 was designed to test our hypotheses in two different hedonic service contexts in which the major goal orientation is either arousal-seeking or pleasure-seeking. Two pretests were conducted to identify and confirm such service contexts. In the first pretest, participants from a U.S. university agreed that nightclubs and fine restaurants represented such service contexts. In the second pretest,
participants who didn’t participate in the first pretest were asked to rate the extent of different feelings they wanted to experience the last time they went to a nightclub or a fine restaurant. Results show that participants wanted to experience more pleasure than arousal at nightclubs, whereas they wanted to experience more pleasure than arousal at fine restaurants. Questionnaires with a screening question asking whether they had been to a nightclub or a fine restaurant in the last one month were given to undergraduate students in two U.S. universities. Consistent with the findings of Study 1, the results showed that pleasure had a direct effect on satisfaction in the pleasure-seeking hedonic service context. As hypothesized, arousal also had a direct effect on satisfaction in the arousal-seeking hedonic service context.

This research adds to the literature of consumer goal orientation and service consumption experience. It further examines consumers’ pleasure-seeking and arousal-seeking goal orientation in different hedonic service contexts. This research also shows how goal orientation determines the direct and indirect impact of affect (pleasure and arousal) on satisfaction. Based on the results of the two empirical studies, we can conclude that the affect that consumers pursue most will have a strong and direct impact on satisfaction; whereas, the impact of other desirable secondary affect on satisfaction will be mediated by perceived service quality.

References


### Multidimensional Price Comparison: The Moderating Role of Across Consumers and Across Firms Price Comparison on Perceived Fairness, Regret, and Satisfaction

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#### Extended Abstract

This study is part of a research project that examines the interaction of dimensions in a transaction space of reference price. Research on reference price can be aligned into a congruent perspective by using Bolton, Warlop, and Alba’s (2003) four dimensional transaction space, which postulates that consumers may consider the price of any point along the consumers (i.e., comparing between consumers), products (i.e., comparing cost and profit), firms (i.e., comparing between competitors), and/or time (comparing across time) dimensions in a four dimensional transaction space as a reference point. The results of such realignment exercise enlighten an insight, that sparse effort has been expended to investigate, and clearly separate, both independent and joint influence of multidimensional price comparison on consumer behavioral variables.

Of the four dimensions, the consumers and firms dimensions are particularly important because comparison across consumers is related to the concept of fairness and comparison across firms is related to the concept of regret. While both concepts influence consumer satisfaction, no study has investigated the joint influence of reference price across consumers and across firms on fairness and justice. This investigation not only contributes to both research on reference price and satisfaction but also links the two streams of research together. The relative importance of the two concepts on consumer satisfaction in different price comparison situations may be examined. An equally interesting issue is whether the amount of influence on fairness and regret depends on the direction of price discrepancy; that is, whether the impact is symmetric or asymmetric.

The purposes of this study are 1) to investigate the independent and joint effects of across consumers and across firms price comparison on perceived fairness, regret, and consumer satisfaction, and 2) to examine the presence/absence of asymmetric effect of price inequality on perceived fairness and regret in an experimental setting.

When consumers engage in price comparison, discrepancy in prices across consumers may lead to the issue of fairness (Feinberg, Krishna, and Zhang 2002). Larger price discrepancy across consumers decreases perception of fairness, leading to lower satisfaction (Bolton and Lemon 1999). Similarly, when consumers engage in price comparison, discrepancy in prices across firms may lead to the issue of regret (Inman, Dyer, and Jia 1997). Larger price discrepancy across firms increases perception of regret, leading to lower satisfaction (Taylor 1997). However, the joint impact of discrepancy in prices across consumers and across firms may not simply be additive for two reasons.

First, Kahneman, Knetsch, and Thaler’s (1986) principle of dual entitlement suggests that a price increase is perceived to be fair if the firm’s existing level of profit is the same. When discrepancy occurs across consumers, consumers may attribute the extra income the
company generates as extra profit, this attribution is more applicable when comparing within firm than across firms because the cost of offering the same product/service to different consumers should be very similar. Second, Tsiros and Mittal (2000) identified counterfactual thinking as the underlying cognitive mechanism that stimulates regret. Possibility of counterfactual thinking is reduced when price discrepancy is within firm than across firms.

Regarding asymmetric effect, the property of loss aversion in Kahneman and Tversky’s (1979) prospect theory implies that the impact of a loss is larger than the impact of a gain of equal magnitude. The influence of disadvantageous price discrepancy, which is coded as a “loss”, on consumer perception of fairness and regret is expected to be larger than advantageous price discrepancy, which is coded as a “gain”.

Previous studies have examined the impact of perceived fairness (Bolton and Lemon 1999) and regret (Tsiros and Mittal 2000) on satisfaction independently. This study examined their joint impact on satisfaction. It follows that:

H1: The impact of price inequality across consumers on fairness is diminished when such price comparison is also across firms.
H2: The impact of price inequality across consumers on regret is magnified when such price comparison is also across firms.
H3: The effect of disadvantageous price inequality on perceived fairness is larger than the effect of corresponding advantageous price inequality.
H4: The effect of disadvantageous price inequality on regret is larger than the effect of corresponding advantageous price inequality.
H5: Perceived fairness has a positive influence on satisfaction, and regret has a negative influence on satisfaction.

One hundred and thirty-six undergraduate students in Hong Kong participated in the experiment. The manipulation was scenario-based, in the context of choosing an internet service provider. Price equality (advantageous vs. disadvantageous vs. control) was manipulated to be across consumers and/or across firms. Existing scales for perceived fairness, regret, and satisfaction were adopted and measured. Manipulation checks and suspicion probe were measured. The manipulations were successful and all scale reliability was satisfactory with alphas above 0.80. Data analysis with ANOVA, regression, and SEM yielded converging results supporting all five hypotheses.

This study contributes to the reference price literature in four ways. Firstly, it extends Bolton and Lemon’s (1999) antecedents of payment equity by proposing that consumers not only use their own normative expectation but also another consumer’s outcome as reference points in judging fairness and satisfaction. Secondly, in response to Bolton et al.’s (2003) suggestion, this study investigated the influence of prices paid by other consumers on fairness perception. Thirdly, the findings of asymmetric price effect add support to the property of loss aversion in perceived fairness and regret. Fourthly, this study demonstrates that different dimensions of the transaction space can interact with each other. The significant interaction effect between across consumers and across firms price comparison suggests that simply looking at one dimension of the transaction space at a time may oversimplified the complexity of reference price research. Future reference price research is encouraged to examine other multidimensional interactions.

References

Impact on Online-store Loyalty from Store Image under Influences from Consumption Values
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Extended Abstract
Fast development of electronic technology and low entry barrier precipitated a heated competition in the online business (Auger and Gallaugher 1997; Klein 1998). More and more online shops are seeking new ways to stand out the competition to win over customers, loyal ones in particular.

Extant researches focusing on off-line business found store image a key contributor to business performance (Nevin and Houston 1980; Samli 1989; etc.). Online store also bears image which is able to create a competitive advantage that is not easily duplicated by other
retailers (Rosenbloom 1983). Store image is the complex of a consumer’s perceptions of the different attributes of the store, namely, general attribute, appearance and service (Manolits et al. 1994). Good store image may lead to store loyalty (Lessig 1973; Sirgy and Samli 1989).

People buy out of various incentives, thus paying attention to different aspects of the store image, which is universal in everyday life. Researches on consumption values suggest that the reason why consumers pay attention to different aspects of the product and make different choices is the seeking of different consumption values (Sheth et al. 1991). The five values identified by Sheth et al. (1991) are functional value, which derives from the perceived utility of the object in the choice situation; social value, attached to a product from its association with social groups; emotional value, which relates to the affective or emotional response to the product; epistemic value, obtaining to a product through curiosity, novelty or knowledge seeking; and conditional value, ascribed to an object through circumstance of use.

818 eligible finished questionnaires were collected online by a professional research company. Demographic indicators of these respondents are consistent with former studies of online-shoppers in China (Dong 2005; Cui 2004).

According to Sheth et al. (1991), although the basic five-dimension framework of consumption values is given, the items for the values should be designed based on specific condition, and each dimension may consist of more than one factor. The multi-dimensional value structure is proved in previous research (c.f., Long and Schiffman 2000; Pope 1998).

Following the guidelines suggested by Churchill (1979), we developed scales of consumption values on online-shopping. Each consumption value scale was independently factor analyzed using SPSS. Seven factors for the consumption values were identified, the uni-dimensional social value, epistemic value, and conditional value, along with two-dimensional functional value (functional and costs advantages) and emotional value (gratification and safety). Tests indicate a good reliability of all the seven values (Cronbach η>0.80).

Hierarchical cluster analysis using Ward’s method with Squared Euclidean distance, based on the seven factors, grouped the respondents into three, comprising of 230, 297 and 291 people respectively.

The results of ANOVA indicate that the three groups differ significantly in their evaluation about the consumption values (p<0.001). The second group has the lowest evaluation about all the consumption values except functional advantage and safety. In contrast, the third group exhibits the highest evaluation of all the other values, with the epistemic value lower than the first group. The first group has the highest evaluation of all the other values except social value, the lowest functional advantage and safety.

A model was constructed to examine the difference of the impact on store loyalty from the three dimensions of online-store image—general attribute, service and appearance, and the mediation of satisfaction and commitment in these three groups. We examined the model using AMOS in three groups separately. Statistical results of the path coefficients of all the three models indicate that, the impact from the three aspects of online store image on loyalty differ from one group to another. The mediation of satisfaction and commitment, and the impact of the two mediators on loyalty are also different among the groups.

Group 1 demonstrates the highest level of store loyalty through satisfaction, but the lowest level of transition from satisfaction to commitment, and from commitment to loyalty. Besides, consumers in Group 1 pay more attention to short-term oriented consumption values, like conditional and epistemic value. Those two features lead to the fact that people in Group 1 turn out to be undecided consumers, apt to switch from store to store. General attribute is the most important store image for Group 1. Enhancement in general attribute image, like better overall sales performance, higher reputation, may help maintain the undecided consumers in Group 1.

Group 2 has the lowest level of transition from satisfaction to loyalty. And only general attribute image has direct positive influence on their commitment. According to the path coefficients, they are least possibly to become loyal. Along with the lowest evaluation about the consumption values, they are termed as non-frequent buyers. Enhancing general attribute is also important for encouraging more purchase from the non-frequent buyers.

For all the three groups, satisfaction and commitment towards online stores will lead to store loyalty, and satisfaction will be changed into commitment. However, path coefficients indicate that, consumers in Group 3 are the easiest to change from satisfaction into commitment. Also, they have the highest level of loyalty through commitment, and relatively high level of loyalty from satisfaction. This result, which is consistent with their high evaluation of the consumption values, indicates that Group 3 is composed of loyal customers.

In general, consumers in Group 3 are the most valuable to an online-store. For this group, service is the factor which has the greatest influence on loyalty. Taking their evaluation of consumption values into account, service differentiation can further satisfy those consumers. Customized service can meet the high appeal of the social value from this group.

Additionally, in all the three groups, general attribute image exhibits the highest contribution to loyalty, while appearance image shows the lowest, if any.

Citations
The Effects of Product Scandals on Parent Brands: Linguistic Signatures of a Protective Mechanism

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Extended Abstract

Brand architectures involving a parent brand can improve the perception of their associated brands and allow for a simple and cost saving introduction of new products (Smith, 1992). New or established product brands may benefit from associations with parent brands (Aaker & Keller, 1989; Sattler, Völckner, & Zatloukal, 2002). The opportunity of such positive transfer effects, however, comes at a price: The transfer is neither restricted to positive affect, nor is it unidirectional. There are also examples that negative evaluations of product brands can affect parent brands and other associated products. The empirical findings concerning such negative feedback, however, are not equivocal: while Sullivan (1990) found that technical problems with one model of Audi deteriorated the brand image and lowered sales of other Audi products, other researchers did not find negative feedback effects (Aaker, 1996, Loken & Roedder John, 1993, Keller & Aaker, 1992; Romeo, 1991). It seems that, under certain circumstances, parent brands are resistant to effects of negative evaluations of associated product brands. In the present study, we examined whether attribution processes that are specific to parent brands with a strong positive image may prevent strong parent brands from negative feedback effects.

Attribution research is concerned with the judgment of causes for a perceived event. For example, Heider (1958) examined whether the behavior of an individual and his or her individual dispositions are the primary cause of an outcome, or whether external, environmental influences are considered as a primary cause. While attribution research is predominant in research on person perception, there are also a few studies examining causal attribution in the domain of product failures and product-harm crises (e.g., Folkes, 1988; Siomkos & Kurzbard, 1994; Su & Tippins, 1998). Previous research focused on the effects of an incident’s severity (Su & Tippins, 1998) and the consumer’s personal vulnerability (Laufer & Gillespie, 2004). However, research on expectancy biases in person perception also suggests that the categorization of an actor and the associated expectations influence how causes for negative incidents are construed. For example, Maass, Salvi, Arcuri, and Semin (1998) found that individuals communicate undesirable behavior more abstractly when it was performed by an out-group member than when it was performed by an in-group member. A high level of abstraction can be regarded as a specific form of attribution pertaining the disposition of the actor or the respective group. In contrast, a low level of abstraction can be considered as a more situational attribution in which the undesirable behavior is perceived as caused by external, environmental factors, and is not generalized to the actors’ dispositions. The underlying mechanism is that expected behavior is construed and communicated in more abstract terms and considered as more intentional, while unexpected behavior is construed and communicated more concretely and is considered as less intentional (Fiedler, Blümke, Friese, & Hofmann, 2003). Since the behavior expected for the in-group is mostly positive while for the out-group expectations are often negative, this is a good explanation for the findings of Maas et al.

We assume that a similar mechanism moderates the responses to a product scandal or failure related to strong or weak parent brand. As strong parent brands we consider parent brands that are well established in the market and to which consumers hold strong positive views. In contrast, a weak parent brand should be less established in the market and consumers should not have strong attitudes towards these brands. Since strong positive attitudes are directly linked to positive expectations, a product scandal or product failures are not congruent to the expectations towards a strong parent brand. Therefore, we hypothesized that a product scandal that concerns failures of a product associated with a strong parent brand is construed and communicated by consumers in more concrete terms, and does affect the view of the brand to a minor degree than if the same scandal pertains a product of a weak parent brand.

To test our assumptions, participants received information about a scandal associated with a new product of either a strong or weak parent brand. The product was a soft drink and the scandal was that the product did not contain what the consumers expected. The information about the scandal contained a pictograph and two short essays. The information was sparse and allowed for a variety of interpretations about the causation. The pictograph indicated discordance between what the manufacturer was bottling and what the consumer thought he was drinking, but did not provide any clues on how this had happened and whose fault it was. The essays looked like editorial content of some marketing periodical. They described how the respective company prepared the launch of a new brand in several countries. The product behind the new brand was described, the very competitive market was mentioned, and a vague schedule


for the launch was provided. Also, participants were given the information that the planned launch of the new brand had failed and been aborted to avoid further damage. No exact reasons were explained, only a "flop" was mentioned. Participants were asked to carefully study the material. They evaluated both the product brand and the parent brand before, and after the presentation of the scandal. After studying the information of the scandal, we asked participants to retell the story with their own words as if they were telling it to a friend. The space was limited to one page. We analyzed the resulting texts using the Linguistic Category Model (Semin & Fiedler, 1988, 1991, 1992).

Our Data is consistent with our expectations: the language participants used to retell the story was significantly less abstract, indicating a more situative attribution of the events that were described. In line with this, the strong parent brand took significantly less damage than the weak parent brand did.

This finding implies that the risk of imposing a parent brand may be smaller than thought by some marketing experts. The parent brand, if it is strong enough, can clear the path for a more favorable perception, even of negative behavior.

References

Choosing Between Service Sequences: The Joint Effect of Ego Depletion and Mood on Consumers’ Decision Strategy
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Extended Abstract
Previous research on preferences for sequences of outcomes shows that people prefer some sequences over others. For example, people prefer sequences where positive and negative outcomes are spread out over time (Loewenstein and Prelec, 1993). Although previous research presents us with valuable insights into the sequence evaluation process, the conditions under which these sequence preferences hold have not received much attention. Previous research has shown that mood and ego depletion have a profound influence on the level and quantity of information that is processed and as a result on the decision making process (Schwarz, 2001; Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, and Tice, 1998). Therefore, we believe that when looking at sequence preferences, these two mechanisms cannot be overlooked.

This research presents the results of an experiment designed to test a theoretical framework in which the combined effect of mood and ego depletion influences preferences for sequences of service experiences. We assert that ego depletion and mood play an important role in service encounters and that the initial mood state of the customer will influence which components of the service are considered important for the evaluation of the service. In addition, certain events within a service encounter require active self-control by the customer,
such as long waiting times, which might result in ego depletion. In turn, ego depletion will determine how much information is extracted from the service for evaluation.

Our theoretical framework treats mood and ego depletion as two separate mechanisms which operate under different principles. These principles are based upon the level and the quantity of information processing. Based upon these operating principles, we identify 6 ‘rules’ for sequence evaluation which determine service encounter preferences of consumers.

The level of information processing is influenced by mood and can be either gestalt-based or components-based. Gestalt-based refers to the fact that people in a positive mood will process information more superficially (heuristics) than people in a negative mood (Schwarz, 2001) and therefore they will look more at the gestalt, or ‘overall’ appearance of the sequence. Spreading, improvement and the peak-end rule are three sequence characteristics which are important for the sequence evaluation in this case, because spreading, improvement and peak-end are all related to the gestalt or overall ‘appearance’ of the sequence.

Component-based means that people in a negative mood treat the sequence as consisting of separate components instead of looking at the overall pattern. This is grounded in the fact that negative mood states usually lead to more systematic information processing (Schwarz, 2001). Balanced count, myopia and simplified count are characteristics which are important for the sequence evaluation in this case. Balanced count refers to the fact that people determine the overall utility of the sequence and equally weigh all attributes in this count. Myopia (short-sighted) means that people focus primarily on the first element in the sequence. Simplified count means that people will only look at the utility of their most preferred attribute when evaluating the sequence. These sequence characteristics thus focus on the separate components or one component in the sequence instead of the overall pattern.

The quantity of information processing is influenced by the level of ego depletion and can either be focused on multiple components or few components in the sequence. Multiple components refers to the fact that non-depleted people will focus on more information/components in the sequence when making their choice than depleted people. This is based on the reasoning that depleted people have limited resources available to process information and therefore they will use a more simplified decision strategy and evaluate fewer pieces of information (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, and Tice, 1998). The peak-end rule, myopia and simplified count are important for sequence evaluation in this case because in all these strategies of sequence evaluation, the focus is on only a few elements in the sequence. Non-depleted people have more resources available and are able to focus on more information/multiple components in the sequence. Spreading, improvement and balanced count are important for sequence evaluation here. All these strategies require the processing of multiple components in the sequence.

The combination of the different levels of mood and ego depletion make up a 2 x 2 experimental design with 4 experimental conditions: positive mood/no depletion, positive mood/depletion, negative mood/no depletion and negative mood/depletion. We expect important interaction effects between mood and ego depletion, where mood moderates the selection of decision strategies based on ego depletion. In particular, people in a positive mood who are depleted, will focus on the peak and end moment in the service encounter. In contrast, people in a negative mood who are depleted, will use myopia and simplified count as strategies for choosing between service sequences.

We investigate our proposed hypotheses in a computerized experiment using Windows MouselabWEB where we systematically manipulate mood and level of depletion and present subjects in each condition with choices between sequences of positive and negative service experiences. We expect that the choice and the decision making process in each experimental condition are based on the rules for sequence evaluation that are provided by the theoretical framework for that specific experimental condition.

References

A Need-Satisfaction Model of Superstitious Behavior
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Extended Abstract
Chinese manufacturers favor the use of digit 8 and avoid using the digit 4 in their pricing as buyers in China connote digit 8 with “enrichment” and digit 4 with “death” (Simmons and Schindler 2003). This numeric superstition also results in a price premium for properties on the 8th floor in Cantonesian societies (Chau, Ma and Ho 2001). Many American hotels skip from the 12th floor to the 14th floor to avoid having guests stay on the unlucky 13th floor (Mowen and Carlson 2003).

Why do so many people, usually well-educated members of a modern, scientific society, engage in these behaviors? What motivates such behavior? The objective of this research is to present a comprehensive model of the mechanisms driving superstitious behavior among individuals and highlight its relevance both in terms of theory and practice. There are five basic problems with existing models of
superstition. First, some models view superstitious behavior as a consequence of a superstitious belief system which is based on a superstitious personality trait (e.g., Mowen and Carlson 2003). Such models are narrow in that they do not provide an adequate explanation for a variety of superstitious behaviors that are not based on a lack of belief in science. A second criticism is that current models fail to recognize the differences between superstition in contemporary society and traditional superstitions. Third, even models that accommodate superstitions based on “half belief” ignore instrumentality-based and social-based superstitious behavior. Fourth, existing models have an inordinate focus on negative superstitions instead of positive superstitions. The most widely used scale measuring superstitious beliefs—the three-item superstition sub-scale of the Paranormal Belief Scale (Tobacyk and Milford 1983; Tobacyk 1988)—only measures the belief that certain omens (e.g., seeing a black cat) are associated with harmful consequences. Not only does this constrain our view of what constitutes superstition, but restricts it to negative superstitions instead of also considering positive superstitions such as rubbing a lucky charm to bring good luck (Wiseman and Watt 2004). Finally, superstition models based on psychological therapeutic effects do not fully explain why the superstitious behavior takes on the particular and stereotyped form that it does.

Assuming that superstitious behaviors serve some underlying individual need, we present a need-satisfaction model of superstitious behavior that classifies the needs met by superstitious behavior into (1) Functional Needs, (2) Psychological Needs, and (3) Social Needs. The operating principle underlying functional need satisfaction is the illusion of control (Langer 1975). A key construct driving this need is perceived luckiness. Luck has been conceptualized as a personal and stable trait that leads individuals to maintain irrational and superstitious beliefs (Darke and Freedman 1997). The illusion of control effect has been found to be a robust psychological effect underpinning lottery gambling (Rogers 1998).

The operating principle underlying the psychological need satisfaction of superstitious behavior is counterfactual thinking (cf. Kahneman and Miller 1986). Individuals evaluate outcomes not only in isolation, but also in relation to alternative events that could have, might have, or should have happened. While a gambler may initially engage in a superstitious ritual because of an illusion of control, the literature has often been at a loss to explain why they continue to engage in the ritual when a series of negative observations show that the ritual is not effective in influencing outcomes. The psychological need-satisfaction element of our model suggests that there is an emotional comfort offered by continuing a ritual and having hope in positive future outcomes. On the flip side, a superstition (e.g., picking an anniversary date as one’s personal lottery numbers) may be discontinued, there is the “emotional amplification” effect associated with the dread that those numbers would be drawn soon after the behavior is discontinued. Since a person can easily imagine the situation of these long-played numbers hitting right after s/he chooses a different number, there is a strong pressure to continue the superstition. Engaging in a superstitious behavior to avoid a negative outcome “might stem not from the belief that bad things are more likely to happen … but from the belief that any bad thing that does happen will be more psychologically painful.” (Miller and Taylor 1995; p. 368). Our model expands on the concept of “hope” (MacInnis and de Mello 2005) and invokes “anticipated regret” as an opposite emotion that is just as important in driving behavior.

The operating principle underlying the social need satisfaction dimension of superstitious behavior is social learning (Bandura 1962). A great deal of superstitious behavior may be based on observing others and following traditions simply as a way of identifying oneself with the group. Several non-religious superstitious behaviors are driven by social factors without any individual-level belief in its instrumentality. The showering of a newly married couple with rice (interestingly, many modern weddings substitute soap bubbles for the rice suggesting the lack of belief in any instrumental or religious significance of rice), the sharing of rice cakes in Korea before important exam days, and the Indian superstition of putting a lemon under the wheels of a new automobile are examples of superstitions driven by socio-cultural norms. While it is possible that some of these superstitions were originally developed based on perceived instrumentality, they get adopted as a social ritual over time. The main motivation for individuals engaging in such behavior is to maintain or strengthen their social ties.

This research makes several contributions to the marketing, consumer behavior, and superstition literature. It is the first to present a comprehensive model of superstitious behavior that accommodates a variety of superstition types and different motives consumers may have for engaging in superstitious behavior. The model resolves several problems with prior models of superstitious behavior and provides the operating principle underlying each of the motives for superstitious behavior. We offer a new conceptualization of the emotional underpinnings of counterfactual thinking. We expand the concept of hope and anticipated regret as positive and negative emotions associated with counterfactual thinking opens a promising research stream for researchers. The model also lays the groundwork for the development of a more comprehensive scale for the measurement of superstition. Existing scales are grossly inadequate in capturing the variety of factors underlying superstition. Finally, the model helps those interested in superstition-related marketing communications—both marketers and public policy advocates—to better understand how various communication elements influence consumers to enhance or reduce their superstitious beliefs.

References


Is There an Expected Trade-off Between a Product’s Ethical Value and Its Effectiveness?: Exposing Latent Intuitions about Ethical Products

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This research seeks to demonstrate consumers’ intuition that there is an inherent tradeoff between a given product’s “ethical attributes” and the product’s effectiveness, or functional performance. Ethical attributes are those attributes that reflect a person’s conscience and which may relate to a variety of environmental, individual and societal issues. We demonstrate in our first two studies, using toothpaste (Study 1) and laundry detergent (Study 2) as a product context, that the “ethical=less effective” intuition is moderated by the degree to which the consumer believes that the focal ethical issues are important overall. Those consumers who place the highest importance on these ethical issues infer that these products will actually be more effective. This halo effect, however, disappears and ultimately reverses such that the less importance the consumer places on the ethical issues, the less effective they believe the product will be, i.e. products rated “superb” on ethical attributes were rated significantly lower in effectiveness than products rated “poor” on ethical attributes. We also intend to replicate these studies using a broad, nationally representative sample, as well as test moderators of the intuition such as self/other judgments and precommitment to the intuition.

A national survey found that 88% of consumers were more likely to purchase products from a company deemed socially responsible (Public Relations Quarterly Winter 94/95). However, anecdotal evidence suggests that products from these companies receive limited distribution support and capture a minority share of the market when they are available. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that many ethical products are positioned as premium products, and that price, therefore, may be a critical barrier to their mass market appeal. Recent research, however, suggests that the relative lack of success of ethical products is much more complex than just the tradeoff of ethicality and price. For example, Ehrich and Irwin (2005) demonstrate that consumers who are more motivated to buy products positioned as socially responsible are proportionally less likely to seek out information about a product’s ethical attributes. This “willful ignorance” is driven by an avoidance of the guilt one might experience upon discovering that a desired product does not perform well on ethical attributes. Ehrich and Irwin’s (2005) research also hints at the tradeoff that consumers assume they must make between purchasing a product that satisfies their immediate consumption needs versus one that satisfies their conscience.

In order to more fully understand consumer decision making about ethical products, our research explores both consumers’ inferences as well as their judgments about these products. We propose and test the following hypothesis:

H1: Rated importance of the relevant ethical issue will moderate ethical-effective inferences: As importance increases, respondents are more likely to infer greater product effectiveness from product ethicality. Conversely, as importance decreases, respondents are more likely to indicate that ethical products are less effective.

Thus, consumers who do not believe that a product’s ethics are important make inferences consistent with an intuition we believe is widespread in the market place, i.e. that ethical=less effective. Consumers who do place high importance on a product’s ethics will, instead, make inferences consistent with a halo effect mechanism, in which ethical products are inferred to be more effective. While we intend to show that rated importance moderates ethical-effective inferences, we also intend to explore whether expression of the ethical=less effective intuition also depends on how the question is framed. It is likely that responses of subjects who rate the ethical issues as important will be more reflective of social desirability influences than of subjects’ beliefs. Belk et al (2003) demonstrate that when dealing with sensitive issues, such as ethical responsibility in our case, projective techniques will mitigate subjects’ tendency to respond in a manner consistent with social desirability influences. As such, we propose to test the following hypothesis:

H2: When subjects are asked to infer what the average person would think about the ethical-effective relationship (vs. what they personally believe), self rated issue importance will no longer moderate responses and instead all subjects will tend to express the intuition that ethical=less effective.

In our first study (n=207), we manipulated product ethicality by telling participants that a new brand of toothpaste had received a rating from the Environmental Sustainability Council (ECS) of either “poor,” for a lack of environmentally friendly practices, or “superb,”
for a demonstrated record of environmentally responsible actions. Thus, the study had a 2 factor (ethics: poor vs. superb) design. In order to test H1, participants were given information about the ethical attributes of the toothpaste, which varied by condition, and were asked to infer its effectiveness. The two key dependent variables were how well the toothpaste was inferred to whiten teeth and how well it provided the benefits the participant looks for in a toothpaste. Participants also rated the importance of a product’s ethics in general.

Two 2 factor ANOVAs (ethicality of toothpaste x participants’ ratings of importance of a product’s ethics) were conducted with differences about whitening ability and the benefits provided as the dependent variables, respectively. In neither case was there a main effect of ethics on preferences. However, consistent with H1, there was a significant interaction between the ethicality of the toothpaste and the importance ratings such that those participants who felt that a product’s ethics were less important rated the toothpaste with poor ethics as better able to whiten, $F(1, 203)=4.53, p<.05$, and more likely to provide the benefits they desired than the toothpaste with superb ethics, $F(1, 203)=13.73, p<.001$, while participants who rated a product’s ethics as more important showed the opposite effect: they believed that the toothpaste with superb ethics would whiten better and would be more likely to provide all the benefits they desired in a toothpaste.

A second study confirmed the interaction between the ethicity of a product and ethical issue importance ratings in a new product context. Since toothpaste ingredients may also have health consequences for the consumer, we chose a new category without this confound: laundry detergent. Consistent with our findings in Study 1, we found a significant interaction between ethicity of the detergent and ethical issue importance ratings with both dependent measures: likelihood of the product’s being recommended by Consumer Reports, $F(1, 179)=17.32, p<.0001$, and likelihood of providing the benefits desired in a detergent, $F(1, 179)=4.84, p<.05$.

While these initial studies support H1, Study 3 intends to test H2, i.e. whether subjects will believe that ethical=less effective when asked to infer what the average person would believe about the focal products (as opposed to what they personally believe). In addition, this study will use a broad, nationally representative sample to improve generalizability of the results. Finally, Study 3 will explore what effect precommitment to the intuition has on subjects’ responses. This will be accomplished by varying the order of questions such that we can determine whether the ethical importance ratings were influenced by subjects’ prior inferences. While we have no a priori hypothesis for this manipulation, our intent is to understand the degree to which the ethical importance rating is an accurate assessment of subjects’ beliefs as opposed to resulting from subjects’ desire to be consistent with their prior inference ratings.

References

Examining the Influence of Prominent on Nonprofit Organizations
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Abstract
Corporate sponsorship is an often used fundraising strategy for nonprofit organizations and is considered to be a “win-win” situation for the sponsoring company as well as the nonprofit. While prior research suggests that corporate sponsorship can positively affect the sponsoring company, little research to date has investigated the impact of such sponsorships on the nonprofit particularly when it is the nonprofit that is communicating the existence of the sponsorship. We address this question and examine the impact of corporate sponsors on people’s perceptions of and willingness to support nonprofit organizations. Results from an experiment suggest that revealing corporate sponsors may, under certain conditions, negatively affect a nonprofit’s effort to garner financial support from the general public.

“I’m Glad I Did” or “I Wish I Had:” The Comparative Effects of Satisfaction and Non-Purchase Regret on Future Purchase Intentions
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Extended Abstract
It seems counterintuitive that a consumer who does not experience your product may be just as valuable as your most satisfied customers. Even less obvious is the recommendation that marketers design promotions such that they can highlight missed opportunities to consumers who did not take advantage of the offer. In this research we examine regret for a forgone purchase opportunity and
demonstrate that non-purchasers reveal a motivation to purchase the product in the future similar to customers who experienced the product and were satisfied.

Traditionally, marketers have focused a great deal of effort on understanding customers who have tried and used the product. The issue has always been to keep these customers satisfied and to find ways to ensure that they continue to purchase the product in the future. The flip side of this equation is to ensure that consumers feel a minimal amount of dissatisfaction and regret for their purchase. The study of regret has been restricted to regret following some action, most often a purchase (Cooke et al. 2001; Tsiros and Mittal 2000). Such a focus is clearly relevant and justified given the negative effect that feelings of dissatisfaction and regret have on repeat purchase and brand loyalty, among other post-consumption outcomes.

In this research we propose that the feelings of regret following a forgone opportunity, i.e. regret for inaction, represents a potent driver of consumer behavior. Unlike regret for inaction examined in the psychology domain, regret for inaction in the consumption arena might be assuaged by the possibility of a similar opportunity arising in the future.

Prior research on inaction inertia suggests that forgone opportunities increase the likelihood of similar inaction in the future (Arkes et al. 2002). At least this seems to be the case when the current opportunity is less attractive than the forgone opportunity, although still positive in an absolute sense (Tykocinski and Pittman 1998). However, it may not be the case when the current opportunity is as attractive or more attractive than the forgone opportunity. We theorize that consumers who experience inaction regret tend to idealize the forgone opportunity (Newby-Clark and Ross 2003), construing it to be positive and satisfying and eliciting a necessity to act by the contrasting of present reality with favorable expectations (Oettingen et al. 2001). In this case, regret for inaction serves as motivation not to make the same mistake twice. Indeed, in two studies we examine the impact of inaction regret on future purchase intentions and demonstrate that regretful non-purchasers are just as likely as satisfied customers to purchase in the future, and also to pay a premium for this purchase.

Study 1 used a critical incident method to examine inaction regret arising from forgone opportunities versus the feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction arising from taken opportunities in a consumption context. One hundred and eighty-two undergraduates participated. Participants in the regret for inaction condition were asked to think about a product that they had not bought, but wished they had. Participants in the satisfaction and dissatisfaction conditions were asked to think about a product/service about which they felt either “much more happy or satisfied than you expected you would” (satisfaction condition) or “much less happy or satisfied than you expected you would” (dissatisfaction condition). After describing the incident, participants answered questions designed to assess future purchase intent and willingness to pay more. Results revealed no significant differences in either the likelihood of future purchase (Mregret=5.91 vs. Msatisfaction=5.92) or the willingness to pay more for the future purchase between the inaction and satisfaction conditions (Mregret=4.67 vs. Msatisfaction=5.08), but significant differences in both between these conditions and the dissatisfaction condition (Mdissatisfaction=2.11, F(2, 156)=63.11, p<.05 for likelihood of future purchase and Mdissatisfaction=5.33, F(2, 156)=51.30, p<.05 for willingness to pay more). These results indicate that consumers who experience regret for inaction are likely to purchase the item the next time they have a chance, and that they are willing to pay a premium for it.

Study 2 was designed to evaluate key findings from study 1 in an ecologically valid environment. One hundred and twenty-five undergraduates who had just returned from spring break completed a questionnaire online. Fifty-one participants had taken a trip during spring break and fifty-eight of the remaining participants wished they had. Next, satisfaction with spring break, regret with spring break, and dissatisfaction emerging from a trip were measured. Results revealed no significant differences in any of these conditions (Msatisfaction=5.08, Mregret=5.91, Mhigh regret=6.3, and Msatisfaction=5.33, Mregret=6.15, Mhigh regret=6.15). Similar results were revealed for anticipated regret (Msatisfaction=5.33, Mhigh regret=6.15, F(2, 103)=8.21, p<.05) and for the willingness to commit resources to go on the trip at the next opportunity (Msatisfaction=6.57, Mhigh regret=6.64, F(2, 103)=10.67, p<.05). These results indicate that when consumers feel considerable inaction regret, this feeling leaves them just as motivated to seek out the forgone product at the next opportunity, just as likely to anticipate regretting forgoing the product, and just as likely to commit to purchasing at the next opportunity as are those consumers who did avail of the opportunity and enjoyed the product experience.

An important implication of these findings is that potential customers who have missed or declined opportunities to purchase may be more important than previously surmised. Past promotional efforts directed at those customers are not necessarily sunk costs, with no anticipated future value. Instead, managers may take advantage of the forgone purchase opportunities by highlighting them in retrospect, thus intentionally inducing inaction regret.

References

3 An analysis of the open-ended statements revealed that participants who experienced low regret for inaction had deliberately chosen to stay home for spring break for work or some other commitment. On the other hand, participants who had high regret for inaction were those who wanted to go for spring break but failed to make plans or had plans thwarted for some reason.
Food for Thought: Role of Counterfactual Thinking in the Interpretation of Health Claims and Nutrition Information

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Extended Abstract
According to the American Heart Association, obesity represents the number two preventable cause of death in the United States and leads to about 300,000 deaths each year (Center for Disease Control and Prevention). This trend is largely driven by an inactive lifestyle, a poor diet and inferior nutrition choices. In an effort to help consumers make more healthful food choices, government agencies have passed measures specifically aimed at strictly limiting misleading health claims used on food packages (Ford et al. 1996). The way consumers use, interpret and attend to both health claims and nutrition information has received considerable research attention due to the significance of the topic to packaged food marketers as well as public policy makers (Ford et al 1996; Kozup, Creyer and Burton 2003). In the present study, we seek to extend the literature on consumers’ interpretation and use of health claims and nutrition information by connecting it to the literature on counterfactual thinking (CFT).

Counterfactual thinking is the practice of mentally generating alternative realities. According to Page and Colby (2003), counterfactual thinking refers to the process of looking back at past events and mentally imagining how these events could have turned out differently. Krishnamurthy and Sivaraman (2003) suggest that the careful elaboration of information involved in the process counterfactual thinking influences future problem solving behavior and future attitude formation. Hence, by mentally creating alternative realities to past events, individuals may outline prescriptive actions for future encounters (Page and Colby 2003). We propose that the process counterfactual thinking may alter prior findings in regards to the relationship between health claims and nutrition information on food packages on the one hand and product nutrition attitudes and evaluations on the other.

We argue that consumers engaged in an elaborative processing of information through attempting to mentally construct alternative realities to a past negative event are more likely to carefully scrutinize subsequently encountered information. Hence, they will be more likely to distinguish between superior and inferior arguments in favor of a food package that promises better health. Accordingly, we predict that health claims will become especially salient to this group of consumers and as a result have a stronger effect on attitude formation and product evaluation. We also expect that this effect will be positively moderated by the presence of favorable nutrition information. In contrast to prior studies suggesting a limited effect of health claims on attitudes and intentions in the presence of nutrition information, we hypothesize that counterfactual thinking may intensify a positive effect of health claims on product nutrition attitudes. Furthermore, we argue that such effect is affected by the alignment of the nutrition information to the health claim.

The design of our first study was a 2(CFT vs. Control) x 2(health claim vs. no health claim) x 2(favorable nutrition information vs. unfavorable nutrition information.) The design for this study is identical to study 1 of Kozup, Creyer and Burton (2003). One hundred and fifty four undergraduate students participated in the study. The stimuli were identical to the stimuli developed by Ford et al. (1996). Subjects in the counterfactual thinking condition were instructed to indicate how this experience could have turned out differently while those in the control condition were asked to indicate how realistic this scenario was. All dependent measures were assessed using items similar to those used by Kozup, Creyer and Burton (2003). All dependent measures were assessed with seven-point scale, and on all scales higher values indicated a more positive response. Mean scores were used in the case of multi-item measures.

Multivariate effects of the health claim (Wilks’ Lambda=0.06, F=3.34, p<0.03), nutrition information (Wilks’ Lambda=0.25, F=15.92, p<0.01) were significant and interaction effect between health claim and nutrition information was not significant. There was no main effect of CFT (Wilks’ Lambda=0.03, F=1.52, p<0.22). None of the other two-way interactions were significant. The three-way interaction between health claim, CFT, and nutritional information was marginally significant (Wilks’ Lambda=0.04 , F=2.15, p<0.10). Specifically, follow-up univariate analyses revealed a marginally significant interaction effect of health claim and CFT on nutrition attitude (F=3.74, p<0.09) in the favorable nutrition information condition. Thus, when the nutrition information was favorable, exposing subjects in the control condition to health claim negatively influenced the nutrition attitude whereas exposing subjects in the CFT condition to the health claim positively influenced their nutrition attitude. The univariate analyses also indicated a main effect of favorability on all three dependent variables (Nutrition Attitude: F= 59.28, p<0.01; Attitude toward the product F= 62.93, p<0.01; Purchase Intentions F= 44.49, p<0.01).

Study 1 examined the influence of counterfactual thinking on the effect of health claim and nutrition information on health-related beliefs. Consistent with prior research, we find that the effects of health claim and nutrition information on judgments and favorability are independent. However, we find that the interaction effect of health claim and counterfactual thinking on nutrition attitude is strengthened in the presence of favorable nutrition information. This result is in contrast to prior research that has suggested that, in the case of packaged food products, the effect of health claims are independent of the effects of available nutrition information.

One of the limitations of this study is that we did not study the effect of counterfactual thinking on health claims when no nutritional information was present. Study 2 addresses these limitations and also further
investigates the process by which counterfactual thinking influences the interpretation and use of health related claims and nutrition information.

References


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**Choosing to Conceal: An Investigation of the Impact of Social Influence on Luxury Consumption**

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**Extended Abstract**

Throughout the years various theories have been proposed to explain why people engage in conspicuous consumption. Veblen (1912) suggested that the purchase of expensive goods and services is used to signal status and wealth to others. McCormick (1983) suggests that people buy expensive items in an attempt to “keep up with the Joneses” due to a desire to maintain their self-esteem. Regardless of the motivation, both theories suggest that when people buy luxury goods they intend to make their purchase known by either talking about it or showing it off in some way. However, the current research investigates occasions when people may conceal their luxury purchases from others. In four studies, we examine whether and under what conditions the concealment of luxury purchases from others occurs.

Prior research by Kivetz and Simonson (2002) indicates that people need to force themselves to indulge through pre-commitment and that they need to earn the right to indulge through higher levels of expended effort. This stream of research prompts questions concerning what people do when indulgences have not been earned–will they indulge anyway and conceal their indulgences? In the first of two completed studies we explored the circumstances under which people tend to conceal purchases from others. Findings from this study indicate that consumers were more likely to conceal their purchases from others when the item purchased was a luxury or high-priced item. Also, participants tended to conceal from some friends and not other friends. For example, one participant indicated that she paid $100 for a pair of jeans because they were an excellent fit. However, this participant decided to conceal the purchase from her boyfriend because “he’d think they were too much money” yet she revealed the purchase to her girlfriends because “they would understand how hard it is trying to find a pair of jeans that fit.” Similarly, another participant indicated that he concealed the purchase of a $400 cell phone from his friends because “it was expensive”; however, this participant revealed the purchase to his parents because he felt “closer to his parents.” Overall, the findings from this exploratory study suggest that people do not always want to attract attention to the amount of money they spend on an item and that luxury good consumption does not always occur in order to signal wealth and impress others.

The second study investigated whether type of friend (e.g., friend seen day to day versus a friend seen less often) influenced whether or not participants concealed a luxury purchase. We expected that a friend seen day to day would be more aware of the participant’s past purchase behavior and may be more judgmental than a friend seen less often. In general, participants in the day to day condition reported that they normally told each other about the products they purchased for themselves to a greater degree than participants in the less often condition shared this information with each other. This is reasonable since participants in the day to day condition have more interaction with their friend as well as more opportunities to disclose information about their lives and consumption patterns. In the experiment, however, after purchasing a luxury good, participants in the day to day condition were more likely to conceal the luxury purchase from their friends than were participants in the less often condition. An investigation of the open-ended responses indicates that participants were particularly concerned about their friends knowing how much they paid for the luxury good. Here, we have converging evidence that concealment of luxury occurs and that people are not always trying to signal status or wealth with their luxury goods purchases. Specifically, people would prefer that their friends not know how expensive an item happens to be.

Prior research suggests that people will allow themselves indulgences when those indulgences can be justified (Prelec and Herrnstein, 1991; Shafir, Simonson and Tversky, 1993). Kivetz and Zheng propose two routes to justification: through effort or excellent performance or without depleting income. This research raises the question of whether justification needs to be made to self, others or both. In two more studies we explore this question and examine whether effort (high vs. low) and a friend’s awareness (public vs. private) of said effort influences the decision to conceal the purchase of a luxury good. In study 3, our manipulation of high effort is a natural one in that the survey was administered during the week of midterms, a demanding time for undergraduates. Low effort will be manipulated by administering the survey during a normal week. Whether the friend is aware or not (public vs. private) of the effort is measured asking participants about their friend’s level of awareness. In study 4, both effort and awareness are manipulated. The public versus private factors are included to examine whether indulgence needs to be justified to self, to others or both. We expect that participants will be least likely to conceal a luxury purchase when effort is high and public and expect that participants will conceal most when effort is low and public. In the high effort condition we expect participants to conceal more when the effort is private versus public because participants are less
able to justify the indulgence to the friend who is unaware of their high effort. For this same reason, we expect participants in the low effort condition to conceal more in the public condition versus private condition. Overall, we predict that amount of effort and the ability to justify indulgence will significantly impact a consumer’s tendency to conceal luxury goods purchases.

References

From Egotism to Averseness: The Role of Implicit Self Judgments in Seller Choice
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Abstract
Actual bidders in Internet auctions were more likely to participate in auctions when sellers’ screen names had the same first character as their own screen name. This is a case of implicit egotism, whereby people gravitate toward things that resemble the self, and the first such case to be driven by a non-birth given characteristic. However, bidders were less likely to win higher-priced auctions under the same conditions. We propose that this reversal of implicit egotism is due to the salience of risk that may have negative implications for the self.

John enjoys participating in Internet auctions. His screen name is pguy111. One day he comes across two auctions for a new DVD. One seller’s screen name is patrick6, while the other’s is matman. Judging from information like the sellers’ feedback ratings, John believes both are equally trustworthy and that neither one’s auction represents a potential cost savings over the other. In which auction will John participate? It may be expected that John will be indifferent. In this paper we propose that John will be more likely to participate in patrick6’s auction than matman’s auction. Further, we propose that if the auction was not for a DVD, but for a more expensive item such as a DVD player, then John might tacitly avoid patrick6’s auction.

One reason John may choose to participate in patrick6’s auction is because of John’s apparent self association with the letter P, as indicated by the choice of his own screen name. Research on implicit egotism indicates that for the most part people feel good about themselves and that these positive associations spill over into judgments of stimuli that share even the most superfluous characteristic with the self such as the initial of their first name (Jones, Pelham, and Mirenberg 2002; Pelham, Mirenberg, and Jones 2002). The implicit egotism effect has been shown to be truly implicit, outside of conscious awareness (Jones et al. 2004). Implicit egotism has been shown to influence major life decisions including choices of professions (Pelham, Mirenberg, and Jones 2002; e.g. Dennis is likely to be dentist.), living locations (Pelham et al. 2003; e.g. Florence is likely to live in Florida.), and romantic partners (Jones et al. 2004; e.g. Jennifer is likely to marry Jesse.). It has also been shown to influence brand choices (Brendli et al. 2005).

Based on this line of research, if John associates himself with the letter P, then he should have positive associations about sellers who also use the letter P to represent themselves. Thus, while his conscious comparison of matman’s and patrick6’s auctions may deem them equal, we argue that John should be more likely to participate in the latter’s auction because his implicit judgment of patrick6 should be more positive than that of matman. This is an important contribution because extant research shows that implicit egotism stems only from a person’s birth given characteristics. This research shows that the effect of implicit egotism is more prevalent than previously thought because other types of self-associations (e.g., pseudonym) may lead to implicit egotism.

To date, research has shown only positive effects of implicit egotism. However, negative effects are theoretically possible. For example, if John encounters someone who resembles himself, like patrick6, and that person potentially has negative attributes, would John still gravitate toward this person? Prior research indicates that an individual will distance oneself from a group when the group exhibits undesirable attributes that might reflect negatively on oneself (Cialdini et al. 1976; Snyder, Lassegard, and Ford 1986; Schimel et al. 2000). When John bids on Internet auctions, he is aware that sellers might act fraudulently. When auction prices are high, the threat of fraud should loom particularly large. John should not want to associate his self-concept with the negative attributes that sellers may possess. Therefore, if auctions for an item have high prices, then John should avoid those auctions in which the seller’s screen name shares characteristics with his own. If matman and patrick6’s auctions are for a DVD player, then John should avoid patrick6’s auction because he does not want to associate potentially negative characteristics with his self-concept. As discussed next, our data support this argument. Thus, this research makes another important contribution by demonstrating the reversal of implicit egotism for the first time.

A field study demonstrates the influence of implicit egotism in Internet auction participant behavior. Data was collected from the popular Internet auction site Ebay from November 2005 through January 2006. The set included 123,639 unique auction-bidder-seller combinations and 59,208 unique auction-winner-seller combinations. To ensure that we were studying a truly implicit effect, we examined...
An Exploratory Study on Attitude Toward Luxury Products, Counterfeits and Imitations

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This research investigates how individual and company-controlled variables affect attitudes toward original luxury goods, counterfeits and imitations. We distinguish original products, which are “goods for which the mere use or display of a particular branded product confers prestige on their owners” (Grossman & Shapiro 1988, p.82), from counterfeits, which are strict copies of genuine products (Kay 1990) and from imitations “designed as to look like and make consumers think of the original brand” (d’Astous & Gargouri 2001, p.153). Consumer’s attitude toward brand imitations and counterfeits has a great impact on brand management decisions and has been recognised as an important stream of research (Keller, 1998). Although several academicians (e.g. d’Astous & Gargouri, 2001; Warlop & Alba, 2004) studied this field, the literature remains scarce and largely incomplete.

The purpose of this research is to study a main effect (the impact of product type on consumers’ attitude), a potential moderator (conformity) and several items that may hinder the purchase of counterfeits or imitations.

Hypotheses

Our main proposition is that consumers will respond differently to original products than to counterfeits or imitations. The purchase of luxury goods is primarily intended to “satisfy buyers’ appetite for symbolic meanings” (Dubois & Duquesne 1993, p.37). Since originals and counterfeits look exactly the same, the attitude toward these two types of products should not differ. However, imitations may be distinguished quite easily from an original or a counterfeit and should therefore be less liked. We propose:

H1: Attitude toward original luxury products will be different from counterfeits and imitations. Specifically, attitude toward:
(a): originals is the same as toward counterfeits
(b): originals is more positive than toward imitations
(c): counterfeits is more positive than toward imitations

However, this first hypothesis is moderated by a personal variable. “Individual behavior is motivated in large part by social factors [desire for prestige, esteem, popularity, acceptance... which] tend to produce conformism” (Bernheim 1994, p.842), defined as an...
individual’s behavior in the sense of the conventions of his peer-group. Consumers being highly conform to the rest of the society and wanting to appear as a part of the group (e.g. by dressing similarly to one’s friend, Lumpkin 1985), will evaluate original products more favorably than consumers not caring about conformity to the group. Following these arguments, we propose that:

H2: Attitude toward the product will vary according to the level of conformity. Specifically:

(a): originals are evaluated more positively (the same) than counterfeits by consumers with a high (low) level of conformity
(b): originals are evaluated more positively (the same) than imitations by consumers with a high (low) level of conformity
(c): counterfeits are evaluated more positively (the same) than imitations by consumers with a high (low) level of conformity.

Concerning company-controlled variables, we intended to assess factors which could hinder consumers to buy counterfeits or imitations. Eight items were chosen based on a literature review and on a pretest: perceived level of quality, legal issues, image perceived by others during product usage and purchase, external aspect, price, ethical aspects and made in of the product.

Method

Materials: Two brands (handbags and polo shirts) from the luxury industry were chosen because they were familiar to almost everybody and, even if expensive, were not out of touch for the respondents. Additionally, a lot of counterfeits and imitations for these two brands are available on the market.

Procedure: 62 undergraduate students participated in the study, comprised of two ostensibly unrelated surveys. The first one inquired about personal characteristics like dress conformity (Lumpkin, 1985) and other variables not taken into account in this study. In the second part, a 3x2 between-participants experiment was conducted (type of brand: original vs. counterfeit vs. imitation; conformity: low vs. high). The three stimuli of the experiment were composed of a scenario and an illustration (visual / semantic) describing one of the three types of products.

After time for reflection, the respondents were asked to rate their attitude toward the product (Sujan & Bettman, 1989) and the eight items which could possibly hinder their consumption. Every respondent was randomly affected to one of the three scenarios and evaluated the two brands. This gives us a total sample of 124 observations.

Results and Discussion

Manipulation checks indicated that the three types of products were perceived as having different levels of similarity compared to an original product (M<sub>original</sub>=6.05, M<sub>counterfeit</sub>=5.45, M<sub>imitation</sub>=4.61 F(1, 103)=15.962, p<.01).

A 3 X 2 ANOVA was conducted with attitude toward the product as dependent variable, type of product and conformity as between-participant factors. Low/high groups on the conformity scale were constituted using a conventional median split.

The attitude toward original products, counterfeits and imitations was different (M<sub>original</sub>=4.44, M<sub>counterfeit</sub>=3.75, M<sub>imitation</sub>=3.11, F(1, 102)=7.38, p=.01). Post hoc tests revealed that this difference is only significant between originals and imitations. These results confirm H1a, H1b and infirm H1c.

The two-way interaction between type of products and conformity was significant by Hotelling’s criterion (F(1, 99)=5.45, p<.01). Planned contrasts revealed that the evaluation of the three types of products differed significantly for consumers with a high level of conformity (F(2, 99)=11.27, p<.01) but not for consumers with a low level of conformity (F(2, 99)=.632, n.s.). For high conformity individuals, participants evaluated more positively originals (M<sub>HCO</sub>=5.26) than counterfeits (M<sub>HCC</sub>=3.89, p<.05) and imitations (M<sub>HIC</sub>=2.98, p<.01). For low conformity individuals, the evaluations of the three products are the same (M<sub>M</sub>=3.56, M<sub>LC</sub>=3.65, M<sub>IC</sub>=3.21, n.s.). Therefore, we confirm H2a and b. On the contrary, counterfeits and imitations were evaluated the same way by high and low conformity individuals, which infirms partially H2c.

Concerning the company-controlled variables, results indicate that the legal and ethical issues are not really taken into account when considering purchasing a counterfeit or imitation. The criteria identified as most important concern primarily the external aspect of the product and its quality.

On basis of this first research, high conformity consumers may be identified as an interesting target group since their product attitude is more favorable towards original products. In a second study, we plan to investigate not only attitudes but also purchase intentions and responses to the identified factors hindering the purchase of counterfeits and imitations. Therefore we project to develop several advertising stimuli in order to verify their effects on purchase intentions.

References

The Effect of Market and Merchant Comparisons on Customer Satisfaction: The Moderating Role of Information Uncertainty and Price Negotiation

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Abstract
We examine whether consumers are influenced by comparisons to other consumers and to the merchant. Past studies have estimated the impact that each type of comparison has on customer satisfaction separately, but have not examined the relative impact of each comparison simultaneously. We also examine the moderating effects of information uncertainty and price negotiation on the relationship between comparison information and customer satisfaction. Results show that unfavorable market comparisons impact customer satisfaction significantly more strongly than unfavorable merchant comparisons. However, no such difference is found for favorable comparisons. Information uncertainty and price negotiation decrease the impact of unfavorable market and merchant comparisons.

Introduction
Past studies have shown that comparative information has an effect on consumer purchase evaluations. For instance, some studies focused on comparisons to other consumers while others looked at comparisons to the merchant. Past research has found that both market and merchant comparisons influence consumer evaluations of a purchase experience.

This research has two contributions. First, we examine the relative impact that comparisons to the market and comparisons to the merchant have on consumer evaluations of their purchase experience. Second, we examine the moderating effects of information uncertainty and price negotiation on the relationship between market/merchant comparisons and customer satisfaction.

Hypotheses
Since earlier studies examined only one type of comparison at a time, there is no evidence which type of comparison may have a stronger impact on customer satisfaction. However, people are likely to pay attention to information to the extent that it is relevant to their decision. For example, paying more than the market price implies that the consumer would probably pay less for the same item if s/he went to another merchant. On the other hand, getting more or less than the merchant typically has little direct impact on the consumer’s wallet. Thus, we expect:

Hypothesis 1: (a) Favorable comparisons to the market affect satisfaction more strongly than favorable comparisons to the merchant; and (b) unfavorable comparisons to the market affect satisfaction more strongly than unfavorable comparisons to the merchant.

The more ambiguous and uncertain a piece of information is believed to be, the less likely people are to attribute value to it and incorporate it into their decisions. Consumer certainty in the market price and the merchant’s net outcome (output–input) varies with the consumer’s familiarity with the product category, the market, and the merchant. For instance, whereas consumers typically can only speculate about the merchant’s net outcome from a sale, consumers familiar with the merchant’s business or the industry (such as market analysts specializing in the industry) may have a fairly accurate idea of the merchant’s outcomes. Thus, we propose:

Hypothesis 2: Information uncertainty decreases the impact of (a) comparisons to the market and (b) comparisons to the merchant on customer satisfaction.

Price negotiations are common in farmers’ markets, garage sales and flea markets, the real estate market, and in markets for used products such as automobiles. Consumers at such marketplaces are likely to view initial comparison information as less relevant because the outcome of the transaction can potentially be changed through negotiation. Thus, we can expect that:

Hypothesis 3: Price negotiation decreases the impact of (a) comparisons to the market and (b) comparisons to the merchant on customer satisfaction.

Method
Two studies were conducted. In both studies, participants were asked to evaluate 25 hypothetical transactions with a local light fixture store. Participants were asked to imagine considering a table lamp for purchase. The retail price of the table lamp was $50 in all 25 transactions. Two variables—the market comparative outcome and the merchant comparative outcome—were systematically varied in the hypothetical transactions. The market comparative outcome had five levels. At the midpoint level, the retail price was the same as the market price. There were two levels where the retail price was above the market price and two levels where the retail price was below the market price. Similarly, the merchant comparative outcome also had five levels: the midpoint level where both the consumer and the merchant benefited equally; two levels where the merchant benefited more; and two levels where the consumer benefited more. For instance, in one condition the transaction was described as follows: “The market price is $50. You save $10 from the market price. You benefit $10 less than the store from the transaction.”
Manipulation of Information Uncertainty and Price Negotiation. The market comparison information and the merchant comparison information were administered either as an exact number (low uncertainty) or as a range (high uncertainty). In the “no price negotiation” condition, participants were told that prices in the store were final and consumers could not negotiate prices at the store. In the “price negotiation” condition, participants were told that it was fairly common to negotiate prices at the store and were specifically instructed that the 25 scenarios showed transaction outcomes before any price negotiations had taken place.

Measures. Participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with each of the 25 hypothetical transactions on an eleven-point Likert scale anchored between “do not like at all” and “like very much.” Participants also completed manipulation checks.

The main difference between study 1 and study 2 was that, in study 1, participants saw the difference between the item’s retail price and the market price (the market comparison information), and the difference between their outcome from the transaction and the merchant’s outcome from the transaction (the merchant comparison information). In study 2, participants saw the market price, the product’s price, and the merchant’s total product cost and were left to infer the differences in outcomes.

Results
Preliminary results indicate some interesting relationships. More specifically, unfavorable market comparisons had a significantly stronger impact on customer satisfaction than unfavorable merchant comparisons in all conditions in both studies. In contrast, in all conditions in both studies, favorable market comparisons were not more impactful than favorable merchant comparisons. Thus, hypothesis 1b received full support, but hypothesis 1a was consistently disconfirmed.

In addition, information uncertainty significantly decreased the impact of comparison information on customer satisfaction for unfavorable merchant comparisons (when the market comparison was favorable) in study 1, and for unfavorable market comparisons in study 2. Hypothesis 2 was not supported for unfavorable market comparisons in study 1 or for any favorable comparison (market or merchant) in either study.

Finally, price negotiation had exactly the same pattern of effects as information uncertainty. Thus, hypothesis 3 was supported for unfavorable merchant comparisons (when the comparison to the market was favorable) in study 1, and for unfavorable market comparisons in study 2.

Do I Belong? Clothing, Group Membership, and Identity During the College Transition
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Clothing has always been “a rich source of signification” for teenagers (Danesi, 1994, p. 76). Fashion has also been described as “salient markers in [individuals’] narratives of personal history” and as “a repository for dreams of an envisioned good life” (Thompson & Haytko, 1997, p. 35). Unlike individuals’ personal possessions, which can be either private or public markers of identity, clothing by definition is a public marker of identity. That is, in a consumer culture clothing reflects various aspects of individuals’ identity to others, including group identity. Consequently when individuals experience identity uncertainty as they transition from one peer culture to another it is likely that they will actively reevaluate the communicative aspects of their wardrobe and adjust it accordingly in an attempt to create and communicate a socially acceptable identity to members of the new peer culture. Moreover, clothing aids in individuals’ attempts to maintain a coherent self-narrative during this period of identity uncertainty.

This paper, therefore, attempts to investigate what role clothing plays in helping individuals negotiate their changing identity during the high school to college transition. The paper begins by discussing how college freshmen engage in anticipatory consumption and pack clothing they believe is appropriate to communicate a college identity. The paper then examines the process by which informants learn to decipher the college fashion-meta code and adapt their fashion to conform to their perceptions of the group norm. Finally, the influence of the college peer culture on students’ fashion for special occasions, especially when they “go out,” is discussed.

Method
Overview and Rationale
The current study answers the call by Corsaro and Eder (1990) to employ longitudinal research to “chart children’s transitions from one peer culture to another” (p. 216). Longitudinal interviews were conducted with college freshmen at the beginning and end of their first semester to examine fashions’ role in the maintenance and creation of identity over time. A longitudinal approach is superior to cross-sectional (e.g., Karp et al., 1998; Mehta & Belk, 1991) and cohort (e.g., Silver, 1996) analysis because it allows the researcher to observe informants’ use of fashion as it changes in relation to both time and make-up of students’ self-concept and social networks. Previous research confirms qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews are the preferred means of measurement for this phenomenon for their ability to provide detailed descriptions of informants’ lives experiences (e.g., Hill & Somin, 1996; Mehta & Belk, 1991; Silver, 1996). Thus, the current study employed a semi-structured interview format because it provided informants some structure and direction during the interview while allowing them to discuss any additional topics they viewed as relevant. Further, this approach allowed informants to discuss their experiences in their own terms, accounting for the complexities of their lived experiences.

Informant Recruitment
Informants from a large Midwestern university were recruited via flyers posted in heavily trafficked areas around campus and via announcements made in entry-level English, Sociology, and Journalism courses. This approach resulted in 21 inquiries and 19 students (16 female, 3 male) agreeing to participate in the interview process. As compensation for their participation, informants’ names were entered into two random drawings for $50. One drawing occurred at the completion of each round of interviews. This sample, although limited, is consistent with sample sizes of other studies in this field (e.g., Karp et al., 1998; Silver, 1996) and the goals of qualitative investigation, which values depth of description over breadth and generalizability.
Interview Schedule

Initial interviews were conducted during the first four weeks of the school year (September 9-24, 2004). Initial interviews ranged from 35-60 minutes. Second interviews were conducted between November 30, 2004 and December 9, 2004. Of the 19 informants who participated in the first interview, 14 (74%) participated in the second interview. Interviews during this round ranged from 26-54 minutes. Interviews were conducted either in a location of the informant’s choosing (e.g., their dorm lobby) or in the lead author’s office. All interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder for future transcription.

Interview Structure

Interviews began with “broad stroke” questions (Thompson, Locander, & Pollio, 1989), such as “tell me a little about yourself and your family,” that were intended to put the informants at ease and make them feel comfortable sharing intimate details of their lives with the interviewer. Follow-up questions covered a wide breadth of topics, with the emphasis placed on the role of fashion in the transition process. The first interviews began with a discussion of informants’ high school experience and their preparation for attending college. The interview then transitioned to students’ initial experiences and impressions of college peer culture as well as descriptions of their daily lives. The second interview focused specifically on how students viewed themselves fitting into the college peer culture and whether their life had changed since high school and the beginning of the academic year. At the completion of the interview protocol, 33 individual interviews had been conducted, resulting in just over 26 hours of discussion. Interviews were then transcribed, resulting in a total of 308 single-spaced pages of text. Interviews were printed out and bound and this text served as data for the analysis.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed when all interviews were completed following the hermeneutic method (Thompson, 1997). First, the researchers began with an impressionistic reading and the identification of recurring themes within each individual interview. This initial reading sought to identify instances where informants explicitly discussed the role of media in their lives. Differences in informants’ descriptions of media use across the two interviews were also noted so as to gain a better understanding of how the role of media evolved over time. A second analysis of the data involved cross-informant analysis, the goal of which was to identify “global themes” that emerged from informants’ descriptions of their experiences. Because any qualitative analysis is an iterative process, a third reading of the transcripts sought to identify any emergent themes not previously identified. Emergent themes were analyzed based on their prevalence, their impact on the students’ transition, and whether or not they contradicted any previously identified themes.

Summary

In response to the primary research question explored by this paper, what role do clothes play in the negotiation of identity, it appears that students change their personal style to reinforce and communicate changes in their self-concept, both to themselves and to their new peers. Adjusting their wardrobe allows individuals to express their changing internal identity to others. That is, by wearing certain peer culture approved clothes, students believe that they can communicate to their peers, individuals who possess and use a great deal of consumption stereotypes (Belk et al., 1982), and ultimately themselves, that they belong to the peer culture. This belief allows students to bolster their internal conceptions of self while dealing with the uncertainty associated with this period of transition.

Prior to their arrival on campus, students pack the “identity suitcase” with clothing they perceive as representative of college style in anticipation of their new identity. Once on campus, however, students must decipher the meanings communicated through others’ clothing and decide whether to emulate that style, reject it, or use it to reinforce their previous consumption behaviors (Hirschman & Thompson, 1997). Students appear to most often emulate the style they see on campus in an effort to communicate an appropriate college identity to others and reinforce their own conception of self as a mature college student. Despite informants’ assertions to the contrary, communicating a college identity typically involves some level of conformity to the group norm. Data illustrate that informants not only relaxed their personal style to reflect their perceptions of the group norm, but also purchased specific status items, all in an attempt to conform to the larger peer culture. The context of the situation (Silver, 1996) also has a direct influence on students’ fashion, as both moving to the college campus and “going out” result in changes in students’ prior dress. By adjusting their clothing, students can communicate various social identities to their peers that reflect the appropriate social role; wearing relaxed clothing such as that from The Gap and Abercrombie & Fitch, for instance, signifies the “student” role, whereas, specifically in this instance for women, wearing more upscale brands, “anything with a label,” and dressing in a provocative manner signifies the adventurous “party girl” role. Clothing, therefore, allows informants to express various, and often contradictory, social identities to others and to themselves as they negotiate their new college identity. At this point it is interesting to note that male informants were less likely to adjust their wardrobes drastically to fit in to the college peer culture in comparison to the more pronounced changes female informants discussed. Whereas women felt a desire to dress in a more casual fashion and consume different brands than they did in high school, it appears male informants did not feel a similar desire. Rather, the casual preppy style males adhered to during high school appears to remain socially acceptable within the new peer culture, potentially making the transition to college less stressful, at least in regard to the expression of a college fashion identity.

Overall, informants’ descriptions of the high school and college fashion meta-code are extremely similar. Three possible reasons arise as to why this similarity exists: 1) both high school and college students appear to consume similar media and, therefore, become socialized to and emulate the ideal images the media presents depicting youth culture; 2) high school students emulate college fashion in a process that Goffman (1959) calls “anticipatory socialization” where individuals have already been well versed in the “reality” that is just becoming a reality for them; and/or 3) college students simply carry over their fashion from high school and adjust it slightly to distinguish their current identities from their high school identities by incorporating specific items and brands they perceive as being distinct to the college peer culture into their wardrobes. Future research should explore these possible reasons for the similarities between the two peer cultures in more detail. Regardless, clothing and the negotiation of identity during periods of transition seem to be intertwined. As the informants in this sample moved from the high school peer culture to the college peer culture, they purchased and brought clothing with them that they felt best reflected their identity at that point in time. However, as they slowly incorporated their college identity into their self-concept, specifically for female informants, they also adjusted their style to mirror the dominant peer culture, even taking some articles of clothing home with them. Thus, as they gain greater confidence in their ability to use clothing to enact the college identity, informants...
became less reliant on their previous high school identity. Thus, they move one step closer to reconciling the identity uncertainty the transition from high school to college initiated.

What do Rats Think While They Run? Goal Distance and Cognitive Effort Acceleration
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Extended Abstract
Recent development in consumer goal research pointed out that goal-achieving effort increases as distance from goal decreases (Kivetz, Urminsky, and Zheng 2006). It was found that consumers accelerate their effort (e.g., making purchase more frequently and in larger quantity) when they approach the reward of a reward program (RP). Looking from the behaviorist perspective, these studies regarded the behavior as a manifestation of rats running toward the food. And the inverse relationship between rate of behavior and goal distance are robustly demonstrated in several studies. This paper argues that changes in the physical efforts are just part of the consequence of goal proximity. Cognitive efforts in processing goal-related information should also increase when one gets closer to the goal. Specifically, we propose that the amount of information people will attend to and the depth of processing should increase with goal proximity.

Generally speaking, people are more likely to engage in systematic and thorough cognitive processing when their involvement in a purchase decision is high than when their involvement is low (Bettman, Luce, and Rayne 1998). For people who are far from the goal of an RP (i.e., at the early stage of an RP), their involvement in the purchase decision is probably low because the subjective value of a distant future reward is minimal (Kirby 1997; Kirby and Herrnstein 1995). One consequence of low involvement is the tendency to use heuristics rather than effortful information processing when making decisions. This is consistent with previous findings that decision to join an RP is influenced by heuristics. Kivetz and Simonson (2003) showed that the perception of one’s own effort relative to that of other consumers influences RP joining decisions. This heuristic may even lead to preference for RPs with greater effort requirement. Their findings suggest that, when the RP goal is far away, consumers tend to base their decisions on effort heuristics (e.g., how achievable is the RP goal?) and may overlook the reward implications of a decision. Such type of information will then make little impact on their decisions.

On the contrary, for individuals who are close to the goal in an RP (i.e., at the late stage of an RP), the subjective value of the RP reward is augmented by the short temporal distance (Kirby, 1997; Kirby & Herrnstein, 1995). The increased subjective value of the reward would lead to high involvement in purchase decisions, in turns, individuals are more likely to attend to and subject information to thorough and systematic processing. Thus, we expect consumers will make more effortful decisions rather than using heuristics. Taken together, we predict that information pertaining to reward value should have a greater impact on purchase decisions when the RP goal is near than far away.

As an initial attempt, we tested this idea by assessing the differential influences of unit value of RP reward on people’s purchase decisions across goal proximity. Unit value of RP reward refers to the equivalent reward value earned per purchase. Consider an RP in which participants will be given a $150 cash coupon for every 10 stamps collected. The unit value of the RP reward is $15, which equals to $150 reward value divided by the total number of purchases (i.e., 10). This information informs people the reward implications (i.e., monetary implication of each purchase in terms of the RP reward). In the example, unit value highlights the chance to get $15 in return for each purchase. Our basic tenet is that the unit value information of an RP should have a greater likelihood in altering purchase decisions when people subject incoming information to deliberate and thorough processing, but not so when the processing appears to be heuristics based (unit value does not have implications on effort heuristic). In short, we predict an interaction between unit value of RP reward and goal proximity that the availability of unit value will have strong impacts on individuals’ purchase decisions only when they are close to the goal but not when they are far from the goal.

The above prediction was supported in a study using the RP described above. Participants (180 undergraduate students) were asked to imagine that they joined the reward program of Supermarket A. In the reward program, they would obtain one stamp for every certain amount of purchase at Supermarket A, and would receive HK$150 cash coupon once they accumulated ten such stamps. Goal proximity was manipulated by the number of stamps (one vs. eight stamps) participants got. Unit value information was manipulated by the information printed on the stamps—“$15 reward” in the unit value conditions whereas “reward” in the control conditions. Also, a statement “Each stamp is equivalent to $15 in cash reward!” was included on the stamp cards in the unit value conditions. Participants had to decide whether to do their purchases at Supermarket A or Supermarket B. While Supermarket B did not have any promotional offers, it is more accessible than Supermarket A.

Consistent with our predictions, unit value influenced repurchase intention only when participants were at the late stage of the RP ($M_{absent}=5.78, M_{present}=4.71; F(1,88)=15.12, p<.001$), but not when they were at the early stage ($M_{absent}=3.73, M_{present}=3.89; F<1$). We also found that perceived ability to complete the RP (i.e., effort heuristic) influenced purchase decisions only at early stage but not at late stage. One interesting finding of this study is that effort acceleration (Kivetz et al. 2006) is actually reduced by the presence of certain reward information (lower purchase intention when unit value information is available during late stage). It suggests a possible boundary condition of the goal-gradient effect. While physical efforts to attain a goal increase with goal proximity, this study highlights that cognitive efforts increase in a similar fashion. Increased cognitive effort leads to processing of more information and more effortful decision-making.

References

**The Influence of Consumer Altruism on Complaining Behavior**

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**Extended Abstract**

This paper examines the effects of consumer altruism on complaining behavior in the context of a dissatisfactory marketplace experience. Complaining behavior is conceptualized as consumer voicing directed at the company at fault and negative word-of-mouth communicated to others (Singh 1988). Altruism can be conceptualized as a constellation of actions performed by individuals to assist others that make people performing these acts feel good about themselves. Price, Feick, and Guskey (1995) introduced the concept of *market helping behavior* defined as “acts performed in the marketplace that benefit others in their purchases and consumption.” Although market helping behavior was studied in the context of consumers helping each other in shopping tasks and providing marketplace information, this construct also captures altruistic tendencies that might motivate dissatisfied consumers to warn others of negative experiences in the marketplace context. Past research has investigated a number of antecedents of complaining behavior including severity of dissatisfaction leading to complaining (Singh and Wilkes 1996), consumer self-confidence (Bearden and Teel 1980), a psychological need to vent dissatisfaction (Kowalski 1994) and culture (Huang 1994, Keng 1995).

Altruism has been examined in past research in the context of charitable donations (Strahilevitz 1997); however, research has not examined the potential influence that altruism may have on consumer complaining behaviors. The purpose of this study is to examine whether consumer altruism is indeed related to the likelihood for both consumer voicing and negative word-of-mouth. Importantly, research on complaining behavior has demonstrated the impact of the severity of consumer satisfaction. Specifically, Singh and Wilkes (1996) have shown that dissatisfaction intensity affects the consumer complaint response process: the greater the dissatisfaction the more likely the consumer is to engage in a complaint action. Bearden and Oliver (1985) provided evidence that a greater problem cost stimulates both voicing and negative word-of-mouth. Additionally, Richins (1983) has shown that severity of the problem experienced by consumers increases the likelihood of negative word-of-mouth. Thus, severity of dissatisfaction is included as a control variable in this study for both voicing and negative word-of-mouth.

A survey methodology with scenarios manipulating the severity of marketplace encounter failure was used in this study. A mailing of 321 questionnaires to a convenience sample of adult, non-student consumers (25-54 years old) recruited by college students resulted in 280 complete and valid responses (87 percent response rate). Respondents were asked to read a description of a dissatisfactory consumption experience and then indicate their likelihood to engage in voicing (i.e., complaining directly to the company at fault) and negative word-of-mouth (i.e., letting others know about the negative experience). The measure of voicing included two items (Pearson r=.78) and the construct of word-of-mouth included three items (Cronbach’s alpha=.85). Both measures of consumer complaining were derived from past literature (Day and Bodur 1978, Villarreal-Camacho 1983, Blodget and Tax 1993). Additionally, a five-item measure of consumer altruism, developed based on the market helping behavior measure (Price, Feick, and Guskey 1995), was included in the survey (Cronbach’s alpha=.85).

Two multiple regression equations were used to examine the relationships between consumer altruism, the severity of the dissatisfaction with the encounter and the dependent measures of voicing and negative word-of-mouth. The results indicate that consumer altruism is a statistically significant predictor for both voicing (Adjusted R²=.23, β=.223, t=4.24, p<.001) and negative word-of-mouth (Adjusted R²=.28, β=.266, t=5.24, p<.001), when controlling for the severity of the encounter failure (also a statistically significant predictor, β=.455, t=8.98, p<.001, accordingly).

These results have important implications for marketers and consumer protection agencies. Past research has indicated that, in general, the incidence of consumer voicing is low and this behavior needs to be facilitated (TARP 1986, Vavra 1992). Additionally, past studies have provided ample evidence that consumer voicing can be beneficial to companies in providing negative feedback quickly, improving consumer satisfaction, and preventing negative word-of-mouth among consumers (Fornell and Wernerfelt 1987, Tax et al. 1998, Nyer 2000).

The findings of this research imply that one of the important motivators for consumer complaining is an inclination of consumers to help others by warning them about dissatisfactory marketplace experiences and preventing them from experiencing such negative encounters. It appears that the greater the consumer altruism, the greater the likelihood for voicing the concerns to the company at fault and the greater the propensity to engage in negative word-of-mouth to others. Companies interested in facilitating consumer voicing to find about problems quickly so they can be addressed before a major fallout occurs could use altruism appeals to encourage consumers to voice their concerns by emphasizing the helpfulness of complaining not only for the company at fault but also for the welfare of the current and future consumers. Consumer protection agencies might also consider the use of altruistic appeals in soliciting information about shoddy practices in the marketplace.
The Impact of Culture Orientation on Consumption Impulsiveness and Beer Consumption

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Beer consumption is an extremely important consumer phenomenon. Given this importance, the lack of research examining the determinants of consumer beer consumption is striking. Further, research has never investigated the role of culture orientation in consumers’ beer consumption decision. In this paper, we propose that individualism versus collectivism culture orientation has a systematic impact on beer consumption and consumers’ self-construal and the consequent consumption impulsivity are two factors that systematically affect consumers’ likelihood of engaging in beer consumption.

Examining the role of self-construal in impulsive consumption decision like beer consumption is a unique contribution of our work. More generally, this research is important for four reasons. First, we fill a conceptual gap in the beer consumption literature by investigating the role of culture orientation. Second, we provide ways to reconcile the seemingly conflicting results in the literature. Our results provide a plausible conceptualization to reconcile the divergent results in the literature. Third, we provide both managerial and public policy implications. Through demonstrating the impact of culture orientation and self-construal on beer consumption, we provide a constructivist view on beer consumption, suggesting that beer consumption is a malleable process and there is ample room for policy makers to exert efforts. Fourth, we offer the first ever experimental evidence on the relationship between self-construal and consumption impulsiveness. Accordingly, we provide the complete causal knowledge among the constructs of culture orientation, self-construal, consumption impulsiveness and beer consumption.

Hypothesis Development

What determines consumers’ beer consumption tendency? As reviewed by Hirschman (1992), impulsiveness plays a large role in beer consumption tendency. Given this underlying process, our key argument is that a construct that can systematically affect consumers’ impulsive tendency should theoretically affect their beer consumption. We posit self-construal to be one such construct.

Self-construal has been defined as “the relationship between the self and others and, especially, the degree to which they [people] see themselves as separate from others or as connected with others” (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p. 226). Two prominent dimensions of self-construal include the degree of independence and/or interdependence of a person.
Research also posits a relationship between self-construal and consumption impulsivity (Kacen & Lee, 2002). Specifically, when an independent self-construal is activated consumers tend to be impulsive. In contrast, when an interdependent self-construal is activated, consumers tend to be less impulsive.

If self-construal systematically affects beer consumption tendency, then consumers from collectivistic cultures should show less beer consumption tendency than those from individualistic cultures. Formally:

**H1**: Cultural orientation will influence consumers’ beer consumption tendency. Specifically, consumers with a collectivist orientation will tend to have lower beer consumption tendency than consumer with an individualistic orientation.

**H2**: Self-construal will influence consumers’ beer consumption tendency. Specifically, consumers with an interdependent self-construal will tend to have lower beer consumption tendency than consumers with an independent self-construal.

**H3**: Consumption impulsivity will mediate the effect of self-construal on beer consumption tendency.

Next we report results from three studies. Study 1 and 2 are designed to test hypothesis 1, while Study 3—building on Study 1 and 2—tests hypotheses 2 and 3.

**Study 1a,b, & 2**
Beer consumption per capita data of forty-two countries in 1999 were used to test hypothesis 1. The consumption per capita of liters serves as the measure of central tendency of each specific country’s beer consumption.

Country scores on culture orientation are taken from the Hofstede’s cultural analysis website (2005). Income data are from United Nation’s website.

**Hypothesis 1.** We ran a regression on per capita beer consumption level. Specifically, the effect of individualism versus collectivism was significant ($r(1, 40)=3.29, p<.05$). Thus, hypothesis 1 was confirmed.

Beer consumption tendency data of fifty states in 2002 were used to test hypothesis 1 in Study 2. State scores on culture orientation are taken from existing study (Vandello and Cohen, 1999). Hypothesis 1 was confirmed through this approach too.

**Study 3**
A total of 75 undergraduates from a large southwestern U.S. university participated for course credit. We used a 2 (Self-Construal: Interdependent vs. Independent) between-subjects design.

Participants were told that they were taking part in two different studies. The first study consisted of the priming material for activating the self-construal. This approach of priming self-construal was adapted from past studies (Mandel, 2003).

After this, participants were probed on their attitude toward drinking beer on question of “How do you feel about drinking beer at this moment?” They rated drinking beer on bad vs. good and dislike vs. like ($r=0.92$), with higher scores indicate more positive attitude.

Lastly participants were asked their thoughts on the study purpose and then debriefed. No one was correct in guessing the research purpose.

**Hypothesis 2.** To test hypothesis 2, we ran a regression on the beer consumption attitude scale. We coded the independent self-construal as 1 and interdependent self-construal as -1. Specifically, the effect of self-construal was significant ($r(1, 73)=2.29, p<.05$), indicating that independent tends to hold more positive attitude toward drinking beer than those with interdependent. Thus, hypothesis 2 was supported.

**Hypothesis 3.** We ran a set of regression analyses based on Baron and Kenny’s (1986) suggestions for testing for mediation. We found that consumption impulsivity mediated the effect of self-construal on the beer consumption tendency. These results fully support hypothesis 3.

**General Discussion**
Our results are consistent with the existing literature on self-construal and impulsiveness. For example, Kacen & Lee (2002) found that consumers with independent self-construals tend to be more impulsive than those consumers with interdependent self-construals. We extend this literature in a number of ways. We provided a stronger test of this connection by manipulating self-construal rather than measuring self-construal only. In addition, we extended the causal linkage between self-construal and consumption impulsiveness to the domain of beer consumption.

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Stinkin’ Inconvenience!
How Consumers Experience and Respond to Disgust
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Abstract
We explore how consumers deal with feelings of disgust in consumption situations. We look at the common elicitors of disgust, and discover two categories not previously documented in the literature: (1) ignorance, and (2) things that did not work out as planned, desired, or imagined. In Study 2 we use scenarios to look at responses to disgust in consumption situations, and in Study 3 we manipulate scenarios to see if reported responses in study 2 are how people actually behave.

Introduction
What disgusts consumers? How do consumers respond to their feelings of disgust? Disgust can be elicited in response to physical objects, and to social violations (Haidt 1997; Rozin et al. 2000). Several researchers take the view that the disgust emotion grew with human evolution, from a way to guard the human body from bacteria and illness (Haidt 1997; Rozin et al. 2000), to an emotion that helps humans know how to behave in society (Haidt 1997). In other words the emotion disgust serves an important function in society.

Disgust, as it is researched now, is divided into two major categories, core disgust and socio-moral disgust. Core disgust elicitors include food, animals, body bi-products, sexual deviance, poor hygiene, and contact with death (Haidt 1997). Socio-moral disgust is elicited by contact with evil, or objects that are associated with evil or dirt (i.e., a shirt worn by an evil person). According to Haidt et al (1997), the following are often categorized as disgusting: “racism, brutality, hypocrisy, political attitudes, and violations of important social relationships.”

Linked to social wellbeing and social interests, disgust is considered a moral emotion (Rozin et al. 2000). It motivates people to act in a particular ways, and to avoid certain actions.

Disgust has been identified as an emotion with relevant implications for advertising (Batra and Holbrook 1990; Holbrook and Batra 1987). Thus, it is curious that more research on the relationship between disgust and consumer behavior has not been conducted.

In the current study we are interested in how consumers deal with feelings of disgust that arise in consumption situations, and how feelings of disgust influence future perceptions, behaviors, and intentions in similar situations.

Study 1
Methodology. We gave questionnaires to 108 undergraduate students at a northeastern university. Because disgust is a little-studied topic in the marketing literature, our first goal was to verify the meanings of disgust that have been found in the psychology literature. We asked participants to define disgust, to give examples of times when they felt disgusted, or experienced disgust, and to describe what they did in these situations.

Results. Our participants’ definitions of disgust overlapped with previous definitions of core and socio-moral disgust. When asked to list what disgusted them, core and social disgust elicitors were equally prevalent. 91.7% and 90.7% respectively.

In line with existing disgust research, our respondents indicated that disgust, or a disgusting object or situation made them angry (20.4%), annoyed them (22.2%), and upset them (22.2%).

Taking existing research further our study revealed that the objects and situations that cause disgust, as well as emotions facilitated by disgust have broadened. The participants included two categories of disgust not previously documented in the literature. These two categories are (1) ignorance, and (2) inconvenience, things that did not work out as planned, desired, or imagined. 19.4% of our respondents stated that they were disgusted by situations that are inconvenient to them (i.e. waiting in a line; going to an early morning class; walking in the cold, etc.), and that these situations are disappointing (23.1%) and frustrating (10.2%).

According to Nabi (2002) there is a difference between the theoretical definition of disgust, which refers to core disgust, and the common use of the word, which takes on a broader meaning including irritation, annoyance, or anger. It is our observation that the experience of disgust has gone beyond physical or social survival situations, to include perceptions of inconvenience, and interruptions to individual comfort. Perhaps this is a by-product of today’s high-technology and web-based world, in which individuals are increasingly isolated.

Based on this observation, we see a need to look more closely at a definition for disgust in the consumption context. Our first goal is to create a current definition of disgust, and to describe its elicitors and how people respond to it. We propose that in addition to current definitions of disgust, feelings of disgust are also felt any time an individual’s personal space and “ways-of-being” are invaded.

Proposed Studies
Consumer responses to feelings of disgust in consumption situations are not well understood. According to past research, and verified by our participants, disgust yields a passive response.

We are curious about how individuals respond to disgust in consumption situations, where the consumer has more control. Do disgusted consumers try to escape situations, or do they take corrective action? Does the response vary by the nature of the disgust elicitor? Do customers try to avoid socio-morally disgusting situations (i.e. avoid a store in which employees are not treated fairly) and inconveniences while taking action to have a core disgust elicitor fixed (i.e. have the dirty table top at a restaurant cleaned)? We propose two additional studies to investigate these questions.

Study 2
In Study 2 participants will read scenarios about situations that evoke either socio-moral or core disgust. Participants will complete a questionnaire about each situation to indicate the emotions they would feel in each situation, and how they believe they would respond.
In this study our goal is to clarify how different situations that elicit disgust are emotionally experienced by individuals. We aim to test the disgust elicitors that we uncovered in study 1 and verify that the elicitors of disgust have broadened. We are currently pre-testing our scenarios.

Study 3

Study 3 will manipulate similar scenarios to those used in Study 2 in a lab, to see if the reported responses in study 2 are in fact how people behave in the actual situation. The purpose of this study is to understand the passive nature of the responses to feelings of disgust.

Conclusion

Disgust is a core emotion that has known importance in marketing, but has not received much attention in the literature. With known effects on perceptions of advertisements, we believe that feelings of disgust also affect individuals in consumption situations. Disgust is an important, but understudied emotion in consumer behavior research. We hope to shed light on how this emotion functions in consumption situations. How often are you disgusted, and what do you do when you’re a disgusted consumer?

References


How and When Alphanumeric and Suggestive Brand Names Affect Consumer Preferences

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Abstract

Firms often use alphanumeric and suggestive brand names to influence consumers’ preferences, yet how these influences occur has received limited attention. In two experiments, authors show that alphanumeric and suggestive brands can both mislead or guide consumer choices. Brand name effects on choice are moderated by information availability and need for cognition. Suggestive brands cue the attribute levels consumers ascribe to brands with missing information. Consumers use alphanumeric brands heuristically; higher numbers are perceived as associated with better products. High need for cognition consumers are less affected by misleading brands and attend more to guiding brands.

“Alphanumeric brand names include referential or nonsense mixtures of letters and digits, mixtures of words and digits, or any of the preceding where the figure is written out in word form.” (Pavia and Costa 1993, pg. 85). There are millions of registered and unregistered alphanumeric trademarks in use (USPTO 2006). For some brands it is fairly simple to draw inferences about the product. For instance, BMW 3.25 refers to a 2.5 liter engine volume for 3 series and you can easily tell that 3.30 is a relatively better product due to its larger engine (3.0 liters). Correspondingly, Audi A8 and A6 indicate larger size and higher luxury level than A4 and A3. However, it is not always so easy to understand brand names. Mercedes has over ten letter classes resulting in a rather complicated set of some forty alphanumeric brand names and not many people can tell the difference among C, S or M class cars. Contrary to intuition, Nokia 6110 is inferior to Nokia 6102 and the average consumer has no idea what 6110 refers to.

Alignable difference is a piece of information for a choice option that has correspondence for other options (Markman and Medin 1995). It is usually weighted more heavily and is more likely to be used for justification of decisions. Alignable attributes tend to be comparable and quantitative (Nowlis and Simonson 1997). Most brand names do not fall into this category due to their qualitative nature. However, alphanumeric brand names may be considered as alignable, semi-quantitative and comparable due to their numerical features and their tendency to follow sequences. Consumers believe that number portions of alphanumeric brands have something to do with measurement of features or signify the product’s relative placement in a sequence of products. Therefore, they favor large numbers inferring greater sophistication from them and believing that a product with a large model number in sequence is more recent (Pavia and Costa 1993). However, alphanumeric brands may have no meaning or they may be referring to internal design codes assigned at the discretion of the marketers (Boyd 1985). Depending on the branding strategy, alphanumeric brands may both guide or mislead consumer choices.

Another common type of brand name is suggestive brand names, which convey relevant attribute or benefit information in a particular product context (Keller et al. 1998). Suggestive brands are commonly meaningful words related in some way to product attributes or the problem to be solved (e.g. EverReady or DieHard batteries) (Folkes 2003). Various studies have shown that consumers make inferences
about product attributes using these brands (Peterson and Ross 1972). Firms may also assign suggestive brand names contradicting with their products or referring to an irrelevant attribute. If the suggested product benefit is difficult to observe before product trial, the negative effect on brand image will be delayed until after product experience (e.g. HeavyDuty brand aluminum foil tearing easily during use). In summary, we observe that suggestive brand names may help customers focus on various product attributes and help them make more accurate choices; they may also misdirect consumers to choose inferior products based on fanciful brand names.

In two experiments, we show that on average consumers picked the alphanumeric brands with larger numeric portions whether or not they were the best options. Therefore, alphanumeric brands guided (misdirected) choices when the number portions of brands were (not) actually related to product attributes or product advancements. On the other hand, suggestive brands guided (misdirected) choices when they referred to superior (irrelevant or essentially inferior) product attributes. In general, missing attribute information increased the effects of brand name on choice.

Need for cognition moderated the effects of these brand names. When a suggestive brand was misleading, it was incongruent with the general perception of the product or with the attribute it was suggesting (e.g. an AbsoluteNoFee calling card with a high fee). High NFCs were more likely note the discrepancy whereas NFCs were more likely to get misdirected. For guiding suggestive brands, attribute information was congruent with the suggestions, and high NFCs were more likely to scrutinize this match and make more accurate choices. Alphanumeric brands equally guided and misled subjects with both high and low need for cognition. Low NFCs used the the higher the better heuristic, whereas high NFCs processed all the information and formed illusory correlations among alphanumeric brands and product attributes.

This research is an important attempt to discover the important effects of brand names on consumer choices. Despite their domination in technical product categories, alphanumeric brands have been largely neglected in past studies. Exploring the guidance roles and manipulative powers of brands will help us understand the underlying mechanism of consumer choices and especially inference making under incomplete information. With the increasing importance of technology nowadays, numerous electronics products are purchased over the internet by viewing product-attribute matrices on portals or e-merchants’ websites that seldom have complete information (see Kivetz and Simonson 2000). The systematic effects of brand names on choice indicate potential problems for consumers and opportunities for marketers to manipulate choice sets.

References

Choice With Inference is Different from Choice without Inference
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Abstract
Some researchers argued that consumers rarely form inferences. Others proposed ways for inference formation using: within-brand attribute information; other brands in the choice set (across-brand information); or average values. The authors found that choices made with and without inferences were significantly different from each other. Making inferences reduced choice difficulty and indecisiveness (choosing none of the options) and increased the attractiveness of chosen options. Contrary to the averaging hypothesis, inferences were different from mean attribute values. Supporting across-brand processing, inferences made for different attributes of multiple brands were significantly correlated. Need for cognition played a moderating role in inference making.

Products and services are seldom described completely, therefore, consumers often need to form inferences that go beyond the information given (Kardes et al 2004). Some researchers argued that consumers rarely form inferences (Simmons and Lynch 1991). Others found that inferences for non-visible attributes occur on the basis of available attributes or via various rules of thumb (e.g. adding or averaging). Most found that inferred value of a missing value is often discounted (Huber & McCann 1982; Ford & Smith, 1987; Johnson & Levin, 1985). A comparative judgment context increases the salience of the missing information resulting in more spontaneous inference formation (Sanbonmatsu et al., 1997). In a recent study of choice under incomplete information, subjects faced with binary choice task with missing information reported making spontaneous inferences. Kivetz and Simonson (2000) argued that consumers might treat
missing values in a way that supports their preferences or tentative hypotheses. Following the motivated reasoning and motivated inference theories (Kunda 1990; and Pyszczynski & Greenberg 1987), authors explained that people who are motivated to arrive at a conclusion construct a justification, a rationale for it and they search for evidence to support it.

Linear aggregation models (Fiedler 1966) predict illusory correlation as an inferential bias that arises even in the absence of motivational or memory-based mechanisms (Kardes et al. 2004). Correlation-based inferences for missing attribute information may be heavily based on known information about other attributes of the focal brand (known as same-brand, within-brand or attribute-based processing—e.g. Ford & Smith, 1987; Johnson & Levin, 1985); on other brands in the product category or choice set (known as other-brand, across-brand or alternative-based processing—e.g. Huber & McCann, 1982; Ross & Creyer, 1992) or on both (e.g. Lee and Olshavsky 1997). We propose that when consumers are explicitly asked to make inferences, they will engage in a different process and their choices will be affected by the values they infer. Choices made after inferences will be different compared to choices made without inferences.

In study 1, missing attribute information and inference making were manipulated. The choice sets consisted of product-attribute matrices for three product/service categories. A different attribute was missing for each of the three options in all product categories. Participants were randomly assigned to two conditions. Those in the No Inference condition were simply asked to make choices, whereas the ones in the Inference condition were asked to make inferences for missing attribute values before making choices. Results indicated that making inferences changed the nature of decisions. Choices made after inferences were significantly different from choices made without inferences. Assigning different values to missing attributes significantly decreased perceived choice difficulty and increased attractiveness of chosen options. In addition, inferences made across brands for different attributes were significantly correlated with each other. This finding was in support of the alternative-based correlation inducement (also known across-brand or other-brand processing) earlier proposed by Huber & McCann (1982) and Ross & Creyer (1992).

In study 2, an identical design was used with one exception. Besides the three options in each choice set, a “no choice option” was added, such that participants also had the alternative of not choosing any of the options as in real purchase situations. In addition to the replication of results from study 1, analysis showed that making inferences significantly decreased the selection of the “no choice option” (indecisiveness) as well as reducing perceived difficulty and risks of decisions. This effect was prevalent for all product categories. It has been shown that at least a moderate level of cognition is typically required for correlation-based inference formation (Lee & Olshavsky, 1997) and when cognitive resources are required, spontaneous inference formation is more likely, if the motivation and the ability to deliberate are high (Kardes et al. 2004). Another important finding was that inferences were significantly moderated by need for cognition (NFC). High NFCs made more conservative assumptions regardless of product or attribute types.

While some researchers have argued that consumers do not make inferences, there have been numerous attempts to explain the underlying mechanism and heuristics for making inferences. Past studies have forced participants to make inferences about single attributes for one of the options in the choice set. Our research expanded these by including different missing attributes for multiple options; exploring the effects of multiple inferences; increasing the realism by including a no choice option; and demonstrating the differences in choices made with and without inferences.

References
Mental Visual Imagery, Authenticity and Consumers’ Attitude Formation towards Licensed Brands

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Licensing is no longer viewed merely as technology transfer or modes of entry. Firms are now licensing assets in forms of brands, designs, trademarks and etc. Many researchers (e.g. Holt 2002; Kozinets 2002; Thompson et al. 2006) have noted that such commercialization undermines the value of the brands. However some examples suggest differently. Haier, China’s largest home electronics manufacturer began its ascent by licensing refrigerator technology and the brand from German Liebherr Corp. in 1985 with the original brand name of “Liebherr”. Sanyo Fashion House Inc., a subsidiary of Sanyo Shokai in Japan, is licensed to manufacture and distribute “blue label” Burberry products in Japan since 1980. Despite their licensee image, they have both generated strong domestic sales and built strong and positive awareness internationally.

In this paper, we ask the question “when and how licensed brands achieve the same or even higher value than original brands?” and we reason that consumers’ assessment of authenticity may hold the key to this question. Most researchers agree that authenticity is not an attribute inherent in an object and is better understood and assessed by a particular evaluator in its particular context (Grayson and Martinec 2004). However, little research has studied the antecedents and consequences of authenticity. This is particularly relevant in brand licensing, as the cues for communicating authenticity of a licensed brand will help consumers’ assessment of the value of the licensed brand, and these cues may or may not be related to the attributes of the original brands. Thus this research proposes that there exist multiple dimensions of authenticity as perceived by consumers in the context of brand licensing.

Next, we examine literature in mental visual imagery as one of the mental processes that consumers use to make sense of cues (Richardson, 1999). Assessment of authenticity involves a complex perceptual process (Belk and Costa 1998; Pen aloza 2001). A person construes the cues via the formation of mental visual image before further deriving his/her perception about the authenticity of a licensed brand. Finally, we examine consumers’ attitude formation toward the licensed brands as consequences of their perception of authenticity.

Indexical and Iconic Authenticity

Grayson and Martinec (2004) identified two dimensions of authenticity based on the semiotic model developed by Peirce (1998): the indexical authenticity and iconic authenticity. Indexical authenticity refers to the physical or psychological link which distinguishes the “real thing” from its copies (Grayson and Shulman 2000). Iconic authenticity refers to the preexisting knowledge or expectations which a person perceives something being similar to something else (Grayson and Martinec 2004). In order for the licensed brand to be perceived as authentic, the cues for communicating authenticity are crucial, and this process of understanding and specifying these cues is called the negotiation of meaning (Grayson and Martinec, 2004).

Mental Visual Imagery

Past research (e.g. Adeyemo, 1990; Dahl and Chattopadhyay, 1999; MacInnis and Price, 1987) has shown that mental visual imagery is one of the mental processes which one uses to make sense of cues. Mental imagery is a form of internal representation in which information about the appearance of physical objects, events and scenes can be depicted and manipulated (Richardson 1999, P. 3). Research in marketing has distinguished different types of visual mental imagery: the image based on memory and imagination (Dahl and Chattopadhyay, 1999; MacInnis and Price 1987). These authors define memory image as the event or occasion that a person has personally experienced or observed whereas imagination imagery is a new, never-before-experienced event.

The Link between Authenticity and Mental Visual Imagery

Peirce (1998) explains that to view something as an icon, one usually creates a “composite photograph” (Grayson and Martinec 2004). For instance, to view something as iconically authentic, a perceiver must have some preexisting knowledge or expectations of something being similar to something else. Thus, memory imagery can be interpreted as the cue which links consumers preexisting knowledge toward the perception of iconic authenticity about the licensed brand. For example, when consumers encounter a licensed brand, they form image (i.e. original brand) from memory based on their existing knowledge or previous experience of the brand. Iconic authenticity may be achieved when cues are congruent with their memory. Therefore:

H1: Consumers’ memory imagery is positively correlated with perceived iconic authenticity.

Imagination imagery involves the creation of previously unseen image and the capacity of imagination imagery determines one’s ability to negotiate meaning out of novel information (Adeyemo 1990). To view something as an index, a perceiver must believe it actually has the “factual” and “spatio-temporal link” that is claimed (Grayson and Shulman 2000). Imagination imagery can be interpreted as acceptance of marketing communications from the licensee toward the perception of indexical authenticity by consumers. Therefore:

H2: Consumers’ imagination imagery is positively correlated with perceived indexical authenticity.

H3: The more the licensed brand is perceived with iconic cues, the more licensed brand will be perceived as authentic.

H4: The more the licensed brand is perceived with indexical cues, the more licensed brand will be perceived as authentic.
Although both iconic and indexical cues are likely to encourage consumers to believe that a licensed brand is authentic, iconic cues are likely to be more powerful because consumers possess some preexisting knowledge about the licensed brand or perceive similarities with something they are familiar with. Therefore:

H5: Iconic authenticity has greater influence than indexical authenticity for consumers’ assessment of authenticity.

Finally we examine whether assessment of authenticity will in turn influence consumers’ attitude toward the licensed brand. Attitude towards a brand can be defined as consumer’s overall brand evaluation (Aaker and Keller, 1990). Cognition is part of the belief formation and the salience of beliefs in term form attitude (Ajzen, 2002). Assessment of authenticity is one type of cognitive associations assisting consumers to negotiate the meaning of brand licensing. Therefore:

H6: Perceived authenticity is positively correlated with consumers’ attitude formation toward licensed brands.

Methods and Measures

There are three stages of data collection in this research: exploratory focus group studies, controlled experiments and survey. The focus group studies were completed. The purpose of the focus group studies is twofold. Firstly, we hoped to gain deeper understanding about how consumers perceive the connections among our three focal concepts and to develop a set of hypotheses. Secondly, it would help with the development of relevant measures to be used in the controlled experiments.

Exploratory Focus Group studies

The focus group interviews were carried out to ensure that the dimensionality of the concepts can be discovered as exhaustive as possible. Three focus group interviews were designed and conducted based on the guideline from Krueger (1994) and Yin (1984). Twenty-six informants (20 to 35 years of age) were recruited from both undergraduate and postgraduate students in a west midland university in the United Kingdom. Each focus group lasted around 60 minutes. The informants, 51% of which are female, have Chinese origin. These informants were recruited for the consistency with second stage of data collection in China.

The focus group results were content analyzed according to the guideline of Yin (1984). The preliminary results are the following:

(a) 22 of our informants pointed out that brand licensing activities were well covered in the Chinese media and were aware of the amount of brand licensing activities in the Chinese market.
(b) 20 of them stressed that authenticity was an important issue when facing licensed brands.
(c) 21 informants agreed that when facing licensed brand, they drew inferences from both their past experiences (memory) and their assessment based on the actual licensed brand product they encountered (imagination).
(d) Based on their past experience with the original brand, majority our informants indicated that quality, country of origin, and trademark were first to come through their mind.
(e) The novelty of the licensed product, level of involvement of the brand owner, and the distribution channel of the product helped with their assessment of authenticity of the licensed brand.

The focus group results shown that, firstly, the distinction between the use of memory and imagination imagery is important to assess authenticity of licensed brands. Secondly, there exist different antecedents for the two dimensions of authenticity. Two 7-point authenticity measures were developed based on focus group findings:

(a) Indexical authenticity in brand licensing: novelty, level of involvement of the brand owner, and perception about distribution.
(b) Iconic authenticity in brand licensing: quality, country of origin, and trademark.

Control Experiments

To examine the use of different imagery types upon the perceptions of authenticity (H1 and H2), the two experimental factors (memory and imagination imagery) will be manipulated in a between subjects design. One hundred and fifty students participated in the study are to be Chinese –origin from an UK university. Chinese market is chosen because of its market size and rapid growth in licensing activities (LIMA 2005).

The independent Variables will be the visual mental imagery types which will be manipulated by instructing participants to rely on images based on either memory or imagination during the experiments. Experimental design will consist of a 2 (imagery type) x 2 (authenticity type) + 1 control mixed model. Imagery types are between-subjects variables, with subjects exposed to a set of either memory or imagination stimuli. In the memory imagery condition, participants will be given a booklet containing a brief description of memory imagery and information regarding the fictitious brand. Participants will be asked to “dig” into their memory and visualize similar brand and product in their daily life when filling out questionnaire on the perception of authenticity. In the imagination imagery condition, participants will be given a booklet containing a brief description of imagination imagery and the same information as in the memory condition regarding the fictitious brand. Participants will be asked to visualize the fictitious brand based on the information provided in the booklet when filling out questionnaire on the perception of authenticity. The measurements for manipulation check will be adopted from Dahl and Chattopadhyay’s (1999) 7-point scale. Two 7-point authenticity measures were developed based on focus group findings:

(a) Indexical authenticity in brand licensing: novelty, level of involvement of the brand owner, and perception about distribution.
(b) Iconic authenticity in brand licensing: quality, country of origin, and trademark.

Survey

To examine the effect of perceived authenticity on consumers’ attitude formation (H3, H4, H5, and H6), a set of questionnaire will be administrated on-line. Real licensed brands instead of fictitious brands will be employed as subject of study. The original brands will
be selected based on Aaker and Keller’s (1990) criteria for parent brand selection. Brands will be selected of being relevant to the subjects, generally perceived as high quality, able to elicit relatively specific associations. Specifically, the chosen brands should have not been largely licensed yet, so that it can avoid the impact of over-licensed situations (i.e. noise generated by multiple licensees). Also, the product category should be new for a given brand. A total of four brands from the same product category (to control for the effect of product heterogeneity on the results) will be selected and each of the two brands maintaining distinct indexical or iconic elements. The questionnaire will contain measures of perceived authenticity developed in control experimental study. To measure attitude toward licensed brand, we adopt the scale recommended by Kind and Smith (2001). All measurement items in this research will be using a 7-point semantic differential scale.

Concluding Remarks

This research intends to make three related contributions. Firstly, we attempt to develop measures for authenticity in brand licensing. Secondly, we will empirically test whether mental visual imagery influence consumers’ perception of authenticity. Thirdly, we are to test which types of authenticity determines consumers’ attitude formation of licensed brands.

Reference


Ambivalence as an Inoculating Agent: A Built-In Defense Against Attitude Change
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Overview
The researchers conducted a multi-phase experiment to analyze the effect of initial attitude ambivalence on subsequent attitude change. Regression analyses revealed that subjects were less likely to change their attitude after reading new counter-attitudinal information when their initial attitudes were characterized by high levels of ambivalence ($\beta = -.154; p < .05$) indicating the presence of inoculation. These results suggest that ambivalence does not always lead to attitude change, and ambivalent consumer attitudes are actually more resistant to new, potentially biasing information.

Conceptual Background
An ambivalent attitude is an attitude fed by competing inputs that influence overall evaluation in opposite directions. Previous research on attitude ambivalence suggests that it is an aversive condition that people attempt to ameliorate (Lavine, Thomsen, Zanna and Borgida 1998, Nordgren, van Harreveld and van der Pligt 2006) and that it has a negative effect on customer satisfaction (Olsen, Wilcox and Olsson 2005). Indeed, most research on ambivalence has studied the effects of attitudinal ambivalence toward ego-involving socio-political issues, situations in which ambivalence is often aversive (Harreveld and van der Pligt 2006; Hass, Katz, Rizzo, Bailey and Moore 1992). However, in consumer contexts, it is not clear that ambivalence necessarily produces an aversive state. For example, people may possess positive beliefs about Gucci products, negative beliefs about Gucci users, and both positive and negative overall beliefs about the Gucci brand. Although this creates ambivalence about Gucci, many consumers will not have enough of a personal stake in Gucci for this ambivalence to produce cognitive discomfort. We argue that when ambivalence is not aversive, it may actually inoculate a person from change, by providing the consumer with enough data, positive or negative, to refute any presentation of counter-attitudinal information (McGuire, 1961).

One can characterize ambivalence as a self-generated two-sided argument, similar to the research on “inoculation” developed by McGuire (1961, 1985 and Watts and McGuire 1964). In an inoculation procedure, relatively weak content that refutes a held argument is presented and this causes the recipient to strengthen defensive arguments supporting his or her previous attitude. In turn, these new defensive arguments bolster the attitude against subsequent refutational content that is stronger than the initial material. This basic inoculation effect has been demonstrated in response to comparative advertising, especially when the subject is highly involved in the decision process (Pfau, Parrott and Lindquist 1992.) Previous research suggests that a two-sided argument is more likely to trigger the defenses of the recipient than a one-sided message (Hass and Linder 1972; Kamins and Asseal 1987; Burgoon and Pfau 1995). Instead of presenting an ambivalent argument, our subjects will be working with a pre-existing ambivalent attitude and we anticipate that this will work as a similar defense to attitude change.

Method
Participants evaluated six real brands in a multi-phase experiment. In the initial phase, brand attitude ambivalence was assessed and initial brand attitude was collected. Attitude ambivalence was collected using a Griffin measure and brand attitude was collected with an 11-point scale ranging from −5 to +5. In the final phase, participants read scenarios that presented new negative information about three of the brands and new positive information about the other three brands. The order of the scenarios, the valence of the scenarios and the order of the brands were fully counterbalanced.

After reading the scenario for each brand, participants responded to five measures, influence of the scenario, attitude change, purchase intention change, attitude toward the brand and purchase intentions.

Analysis and Results
Separate analyses were conducted for observations in which scenario information was consistent or inconsistent with the initial brand evaluation on the 11-point scale (-5 to 5). Scores from −5 to −1 were coded as negative, 1 to 5 were positive, and scores of zero (222 cases) were not used in the analysis.

To test the effect of inconsistent information on brand attitudes, regression analysis was used, with the influence of the scenario as the dependent variable. In addition to ambivalence, independent variables included dummy variables for the type of scenario and brand, individual difference measures including need for cognition, advertising skepticism, and need for attitude consistency.

When exposed to counter-attitudinal information, participants reported less attitude change when their initial attitude was characterized by greater levels of ambivalence ($\beta = -.154, p\text{-value}= .013$). This finding stands in contrast to prior research that has argued that an increase in the level of ambivalence would lead to a greater change in attitude.

Discussion
Ambivalence is a common occurrence among consumers. Often the best product experiences are attenuated by some flaw. This research suggests that we, as consumer, have accepted ambivalence and do not allow it to sway our opinions in a more univalent direction. By already possessing counter-factual knowledge, ambivalence creates an inoculation against any new information. Further research could review the effect of visceral brand identification (Apple Computers, Harley-Davidson) on consumer ambivalence.

References
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Sacred Songs, Secular Words: Discourse on the Consumption of Religious Music
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Extended Abstract

The long withstanding debates between sacred and profane have been documented (Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry 1989; O’Guinn and Belk 1989; Arnould and Price 2004), although the sacred in consumer research has been predominantly studied as a metaphoric stance rather than specifically about the ‘Sacred’ per se (Iacobucci 2001). Secularisation theory argues for the decline in sacredness and religion amidst the backdrop of modernity and progress (Martin 2005), while attributing its replacement with secular, material and spiritual pursuits. This theory neither concurs with the continued popularity of Pentecostal (Charismatic) churches (Anderson 2004), nor the growth of Contemporary Christian Music (CCM, Powell 2002). In an attempt to study the inter-relationships between sacred (expressed through religious music) and secular (expressed through consumer culture), a discourse analysis into Christian music is conducted in this research.

Music, like advertisement, is a cultural text which is an important medium in reading the audience (O’Donohoe 2000). Through the language of songs, music like an advertisement text informs and expresses meanings that are not only in alignment with the targeted audience but the socio-historic conditions of a society. As a religious product, it is a site where ideology circulates as well as a mirror to represent the sacred which is highly visible, audible, saleable and malleable to socio-cultural forces. Music style is never neutral, but is organically wed to the socio-cultural setting in which the music is created and developed (Romanowski 1992) to convey certain meanings to a particular audience.

Studies that relate music and discourse include a reading of Madonna, by Bradby (1992) where her songs, music video clips and news about her as reported in the media, were analysed. Through the song ‘Material Girl’, discourses of materialism and maternalism, were expressed as advancement in female liberation. Liederman (2004) in a study of ‘The Free Monks’, a Greek rock band of black-robed Orthodox monks and ordained priests was analysed against the backdrop of the social, cultural and political role of the Orthodox Church in Greece. The ‘singers’ perform in an MTV-style video, singing modern rock music accompanied by live concerts and initial albums that reached gold and platinum status in sales in Greek pop charts. This phenomenon of ‘sacred songs with a secular beat’ can be seen as one example of a mutation that has occurred in the Christian discourse as a result of alignment with changes in the macro-societal shifts, but more is needed to understand the intricacies of this alignment in another setting.

A cross section of Pentecostal and Anglican songs dating from 1990–2005 was selected, including traditional hymns. I used close reading (Scott 1994; Stern 1989) to study the lyrics and explored the meaning expressed through the language of songs. Music as an expression of worship has a visual representation in the way it is played, performed and consumed. This produces an assortment of representations and discourses which requires a marriage of visual, audio, and textual data. The visual materials included pictures of the music performance, the congregation, the architectural space, images of the people (audience, song performers, and church leaders), pictures of artefacts produced by the church, and video recordings of services and music events.

Discourse analysis of the data suggests four dominant themes or discourses: ‘Empowerment’, ‘Tradition’, ‘Today’ and ‘Individuation’. There is a theme of the empowered self in the Pentecostal songs as the ‘I’ is empowered to ‘change the world today’, to ‘move mountains’, and to believe that ‘life could be all that you want it to be’. Both the ‘can be’ and ‘can do’ attitude is an attractive appeal that aligns not only with the so-called ‘Prosperity Gospel’ Pentecostal churches tend to preach, but blurs with new age spirituality that focuses on potential of the ‘self’ (Rindfleish 2005). Empowerment is also expressed in the form of blessings, favour, miracles and an answer to dreams.
The discourse on tradition is apparent in Anglican songs and hymns. Expressed in the form of worship, reverence to God, collective nature of the church family, humility, obedience, reference to sin and heaven provide the language in constructing what appears to be a traditional Christian discourse on the sacred. This is in contrast to the ‘Today’ discourse which construct sacred meanings to a present day context framed in a ‘here and now’ (as opposed to heaven/after life/eternal) timeframe situating the blessings, dreams coming true, favour and miracles to happen today. This suggests a reconciling of sacred constructions with the secular existence of people in the current world. There is no focus on ‘suffering’ in the present and reaping joy in the future but it’s about harvesting and living to the full now. The sacred gets expressed to a ‘present help in my time of need’ which clearly is situated in the secular.

The ‘individuation’ discourse express the self (I, me, my) in the songs, especially prominent in Pentecostal songs. Moreover, these words outnumbered those that feature God (Lord, God, Jesus, Father). The word ‘you’ was evident, although it is not always directed to God but the audience. This different feature of the pronoun ‘you’ to refer to the one who is being addressed illustrate a language that is couched in a personal relationship as opposed to ‘thou’ in a traditional hymn. This difference illuminates interesting points of departures between Pentecostal songs and hymns. The intimacy of ‘you and I’ introduces a spirit of closeness, warmth, and approachability that is more couched in newer forms of spirituality rather than religion. Also, this is interesting to have emerged out of this genre of music as typically hymns are about God, while this is directed to God or the audience. The notion of ownership (‘my God’, ‘my Saviour’) is also evident.

Whilst sacred discourses to do with Christianity are apparent, this is mixed with other secular discourses in the case of contemporary Pentecostal songs. If music is a mirror to meaning and audience values, self-empowerment and individuation of religion framed in the context of ‘today’ are discourses that reflect the shift in socio-cultural conditions of a modern society. This can be aligned to Inglehart’s (1997) post-materialist values which highlight self expression and self empowerment as prevalent in highly developed societies where existential security already exists. Because physical security is already adequate in highly developed societies, the discourse on the sacred appears to play a more self-serving role framed in current consumer culture. Whilst secularisation theory posits a decline in religion at the macro level, the popularity of a certain ‘version’ of religious form and products suggest at the meso level a resurgence of ‘sacred interest’. It appears that a process of appropriation (Thompson and Haytko 1997; Cova and Cova 2000) has taken place whereby religious music is able to align itself to changing socio-cultural shifts to incorporate both sacred and secular discourses into its contents and meaning. This appears to be the version that resonates with current religious consumers. Through analysing the genre, lyrics and aesthetic appeal of religious form and products suggest at the meso level a resurgence of ‘sacred interest’.

References


An Examination of Recall Measures of Sponsorship Awareness

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Extended Abstract

With growth in sponsorship-linked marketing expenditure continuing to increase each year (IEG 2003), consumers are exposed to an ever larger number of brand names in association with various events. In many cases there may be a number of brands linked with a single event, and in some cases several of these brands may be from a single brand category. In addition, many brands may be linked with multiple events. What must be considered when seeking to measure sponsorship awareness in these situations is how the method of measurement may influence results, particularly with regard to the direction of cueing in cued recall.

Due to the nature of memory associations, the associative strength from a brand to an event may not always be the same as the associative strength from an event to a brand. To illustrate, consider a situation where a brand such as Gatorade sponsors an event like the International Relay Run. Asking which brand is the sponsor of the International Relay Run as opposed to which event did Gatorade sponsor, may not produce the same proportion of correct responses. This may particularly be the case when a similar competitor brand (e.g., Powerade) is also salient in the mind of the consumer, and when the event name is given as the recall cue. Not all awareness measures provide consistent access to memory, and deciding which measure to use may depend largely on the situation, and what information is sought by the researcher.

Tripodi et al. (2003) have suggested that variation in memory prompts can affect sponsorship awareness responses. Using a telephone survey they reported that the sequence in which memory prompts (event name, brand name, category label) are given to respondents can affect overall awareness measurements. Specifically, in their study respondents prompted with the event name had the highest level of initial recall, but the lowest overall recall after follow-up prompts (including a recognition-type prompt).

In four experiments we examined the nature of recall in measuring sponsorship awareness. We varied recall methods by cueing with the event name, the brand name, the brand category, and we also considered responses using a free recall method. Participants received exposure to sponsorship stimuli using Johar and Pham’s (1999) press release paradigm, where brands were real and events were fictitious. All press releases involved congruent sponsor-event relationships and all contained a statement articulating the sponsor’s reason for undertaking the sponsorship. Additionally, as a within subjects variable, half of the press release statements mentioned a competitor within the same brand category while half made no such mention. Participants in each experiment were presented with 12 press releases and completed a 10 minute distractor puzzle before beginning the memory task.

Results showed recall differences depending on the cue utilized. In the first experiment, when cueing with the event name, results showed that recall of the sponsoring brand was similar both when a competitor was mentioned in the press release and when no competitor was mentioned (M=.708 and .767 respectively). Overall recall here was 73.8%. In the second experiment however, when cueing with the brand category, recall of the sponsoring brand was adversely impacted by the presence of a competitor. Here there was a marginally significant difference between the competitor present and competitor absent conditions, F (1, 19)=4.061, p=.058 (M=.775 and .850 respectively), with overall brand recall at 81.25%.

In the third experiment which used brand cues, we provided participants with either the sponsor or competitor name and examined event recall responses. This was done for both competitor present and competitor absent conditions. Here, as might be expected, there was a main effect of cue, F (1, 39)=72.335, p<.001, such that sponsor cues (M=.538) were more effective in eliciting the event name than were the competitor cues (M=.146). There was no overall main effect of competitor presence, but there was a significant interaction between cue and competitor presence, F (1, 39)=5.906, p=.020. Marginal means indicated that event recall was lower in the competitor present condition than in the competitor absent condition for the sponsor cue (M=.483 and .591 respectively), but event recall was higher in the competitor present condition than the competitor absent condition for the competitor cue (M=.183 and .108 respectively). This indicates that interference occurred in the competitor present condition using the sponsor cue, and that cueing with a mentioned competitor can elicit event recall. Interestingly, this result also shows that even if no competitor is mentioned, cueing with a market rival of the sponsor can nonetheless elicit memory for the event.

In contrast to the cued recall experiments, in the fourth experiment where free recall was used, a greater number of events were recalled from the competitor present as opposed to the competitor absent condition, F (1, 19)=5.431, p=.031 (M=.650 and .508 respectively). Similarly, a marginally greater number of sponsors were recalled from the competitor present as opposed to the competitor absent condition, F (1, 19)=4.108, p=.057 (M=.700 and .567 respectively). There was no significant difference between the level of recall of events as opposed to the level of recall of sponsors (M=.579 and .633 respectively).

With sponsorship-linked marketing expenditure rising each year, it is becoming increasingly important to have a clear understanding of whether the techniques used to measure sponsorship effectiveness are appropriate. For those interested in measuring sponsorship awareness effects, what this study shows is that knowing a brand name can prompt memory for an event, and knowing that an event name can prompt memory for a brand, are not necessarily the same thing. In attempting to assess sponsorship awareness, researchers must first consider the nature of what they want to know in order to be able to ask the right question.

References
Developing a Deeper Understanding of Scarcity: Contextual and Individual Influences on Demand Scarcity

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Abstract

In this paper, we investigate mechanisms associated with scarcity resulting from public demand not met by supply: demand scarcity. We examine individual and contextual influences on demand scarcity. In four studies we find: 1) Consumers use visual scarcity cues to infer information about products; 2) Consumers’ dependence on demand scarcity as a heuristic is particularly effective in low-involvement choices; 3) “Need for uniqueness” independently influences subjects’ use of scarcity information and their choices about scarce products; and 4) The effect of uniqueness decreases as the ubiquity of demand scarce products is made salient.

Aristotle summarized the underpinnings of scarcity when he stated, “What is rare is a greater good than what is plentiful.” This phrase captures the fundamental elements of commodity theory (Brock 1968) and expresses the robust effect that scarcity has on human behavior. Marketers, having reached the same conclusion (albeit more recently), leverage consumers’ desire for scarce products by implying that access to them is limited. Implications of scarcity embedded in advertising language like “time’s running out,” “limited edition,” or “while supplies last” impel consumer action.

Though well-known and intuitive, scarcity is not a simple construct; research in consumer behavior has highlighted a variety of psychological mechanisms that give rise to scarcity effects (see Lynn 1992). A few examples include reactance, whereby people resist restrictions on their choice (Brehm 1966), social proof (coined “bandwagon reasoning”) in which consumers rely on others’ opinions as a cue for the value of a product or service (Worschel, 1975), and uniqueness, the innate human drive to attain social status by possessing a largely unavailable resource (Veblen 1904).

Though the literature effectively demonstrates types of scarcity and underlying mechanisms, to date there is no overall framework that discusses which mechanisms correlate to specific scarcity appeals. We are initiating the formulation of such a framework with such questions such as: What are the relative effects of reactance and uniqueness for time scarcity appeals (e.g., “time’s running out”)? And, to what extent, if any, does social proof influence supply-generated scarcity (e.g., “limited edition”)? In this paper, we focus our attention on mechanisms associated with scarcity resulting from public demand not met by supply: demand scarcity.

While it has been assumed that people typically use scarcity information as a heuristic cue for value, recent research challenges that assumption (Bannon and Brock 2001). We contend that consumers do use demand scarcity information as a heuristic. We further argue that a social-proof mechanism drives the effect of demand-scarce information, and test Worschel et al. (1975) “bandwagon reasoning” which predicts that scarcity resulting from public demand informs the value of the product. In other words, consumers use relative demand to assess a product’s worth by inferring that fellow consumers’ demand implies value.

We also examine how presumptions of uniqueness influence the effects of demand scarcity. Consumer need for uniqueness is defined as “an individual’s pursuit of ‘different-ness’ relative to others…achieved through the acquisition, utilization, and disposition of consumer goods for the purpose of developing and enhancing one’s personal and social identity” (Tian et al. 2001). Since demand-scarce products endow their possessor with uniqueness, we hypothesize that consumers who desire such personal uniqueness will be more likely to desire products that are highly desired by others (and thus scarce). However, the reality of scarcity is realistically moderated by how much of the product already has been sold in the marketplace. When a product already is owned by many others, those concerned with uniqueness should no longer desire it.

Our initial study establishes that people use visual scarcity cues to infer information about products. We presented participants with a hypothetical shopping scenario in which they were asked to choose between two clocks. One clock (the target) was pictured as either scarce or abundant. The comparison clock was always pictured as abundant. We crossed scarcity with the manner of display. In display conditions, clocks were arranged like a typical display of merchandise; in inventory, clocks were arranged like “backstock” (i.e., inventory a store holds of a product). We found that scarce clocks were preferred to abundant clocks, but only when clocks were shown as “inventory”. We surmised that participants were using inventory information coupled with scarcity as a cue for pubic demand.

Study 2 supports the idea that people use scarcity information as a heuristic. We used the “scarce inventory” condition from Study 1 and gave participants either information that the clock was selling quickly (demand manipulation) or no information (control). We crossed the manipulation of information with level of involvement, where participants were either highly involved in the choice (they could receive the clock as a prize) or less involved (the choice was hypothetical). We found participants who were highly involved in the choice use demand information significantly less than those who were less involved. In short, we show that consumers’ dependence on scarcity as a heuristic is particularly effective in low-involvement choices.

In Study 3 we test how a need for uniqueness influences preferences for scarce items. We primed participants with either uniqueness-related or conformity-related information. Then we showed participants the “scarce inventory” condition from Study 2, again mentioning that the clocks were selling quickly, and asked respondents which clock they preferred. We found the uniqueness prime increased preferences for a demand-scarce clock. The results indicate that consumers predisposed to maintain their sense of uniqueness were more susceptible to social proof cues.

Finally, in Study 4 we tested the prediction that the influence of uniqueness found in Study 3 could be attenuated with the ubiquity of product ownership. We replicated Study 3’s effect of uniqueness on the (demand) condition which stated that the clocks were selling quickly. We also added a condition that told participants that the clocks were selling quickly and many have already been sold (demand ubiquity condition). Our results indicated that the preference for the demand scarce clock was diminished when the clock had already been sold to many others. Similarly, participants primed with conformity showed an increase in their preference for the clock that was owned by many.

We present contextual and individual factors that contribute to consumers’ responses to demand scarcity cues. The results corroborate the notion that consumers use visual scarcity to infer product worth and by extension choose scarce products. Moreover, consumers
motivated to maintain their uniqueness are more susceptible to social proof cues. Finally, the results confirm that demand scarcity is moderated (for participants who are motivated to maintain uniqueness) by whether subjects have information confirming that the product is scarce because many have units already been sold thus implying the ubiquity of the product.

**How Consumers Are Affected by the Framing of Numerical Information**

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Studies on consumer judgments have demonstrated that consumers may consider two options with different attribute levels (e.g., apartments that are 20 minutes versus 15 minutes away from campus) to be vastly different or vastly similar depending on contexts. In particular, research has thus far shown that contextual factors such as the range of the attribute levels (e.g., Gravetter & Lockhead, 1973; Janiszewski & Lichtenstein, 1999; Mellers & Cooke, 1994; Yeung & Soman, 2005), the frequency of the attribute levels (e.g., Niedrich, Sharma, & Wedell, 2001; Parducci, 1965), and their relative spacing (e.g., Cooke & Mellers, 1998; Mellers & Birnbaum, 1982; Wedell, 1994) can influence our perceptions. While these studies noted how the comparisons of two options are altered by changing their peripheral context—that is, what other options are presented in addition to the two target alternatives for comparison—few have attempted to address how our perceptions are shaped by the focal context—that is, the presentation of the two target alternatives themselves.

We proposed that for attribute dimensions that can be described in two equivalent frames (e.g., printing reliability vs. failure rate), the different attribute values associated with each frame (e.g., 97% reliability vs. 3% failure rate) could affect how we compare two options. Our hypothesis is that the presentation format of attribute information can affect the perceived difference between two options. That is, the perceived difference is amplified when the attribute is described in a large ratio frame than when it is described in a small ratio frame.

Two experiments were designed to test our hypothesis. In the experiments, the undergraduate students participated on a voluntary basis and were randomly assigned to one of the two presentation formats (small vs. large ratio). They were given a scenario that described two options differing on two attributes with a trade-off. The scenarios were essentially identical between the two conditions, except that the label and the numerical values of one of the attributes changed according to the presentation manipulations. After reviewing the information, the participants reported their evaluations of each option on each attribute dimension and their preferences for the two options.

In Experiment 1, we showed that when a pair of options are presented in a frame with attribute values in large ratio (e.g., printer A has a failure rate of 3% vs. printer B has a failure rate of 9%), consumers report greater differences in their attribute judgments than when the same pair of options are cast in a frame with attribute values in small ratio (e.g., printer A has failure rate of 5% vs. printer B has failure rate of 91%). Moreover, we also found that the preference between two options with trade-offs is altered by the way the attribute information is presented. Generally speaking, we found that an option is more likely to be chosen when its superior attribute is presented in a large ratio format than when it is presented in a small ratio format.

In Experiment 2, we ruled out an alternative explanation of negativity bias. That is, the effects of presentation format on attribute perceptions are replicated even when positive attribute label is paired with large ratio frame and negative attribute label is paired with small ratio frame. Therefore, our findings cannot be explained by the valence of the attribute label.

In sum, we demonstrated that the same pair of options may appear similar or different depending on how their attribute information is presented. This contextual effect differs from others in that it does not require alternation in the options involved in the evaluation environment.

**Contribution of the Concept of Identity to the Understanding of Responsible Consumer Behavior: Application to the Consumption of Fair Trade Products**

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The responsible consumption is not easy to understand: it is a complex phenomenon and characterized by a large diversity of practices (Shaw, 2000; Newholm, 1999). Thus, I find it necessary to propose my own definition of responsible consumption as being ‘the set of voluntary acts, situated in the sphere of consumption, achieved from the awareness of consequences judged as negatives of consumption on the outside world to oneself, these consequences raising therefore not from the functionality of the purchases nor from immediate personal interest’ (Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2005). The originality of responsible consumption as a research area, besides being various and sometimes surprising, is that it assigns to the consumption a significance that passes the only utilitarian aspects of the purchase. Yet, little research has been given in depth to understand the meaning consumers who declare themselves to be ‘responsible’ give to their consumption (Cherrier, 2005; Connolly and Prothero, 2003; Mosander and Pesonen, 2002).

Fair trade consumption can provide a rich analysis land. According to Foucauldian approach, fair trade products purchase associated with a political project (changing the current economic system) is a ‘politics of self’ (Foucault, 1978, 1980). It becomes therefore a way to affirm one’s own ideas and engagements but also a means to re-construct one’s identity. Instead of postulating a ‘fair trade purchase’ based on self-expression, the responsible consumption may be viewed as an existential choice. Focusing on the purchase of fair trade products as an illustration, this research studies how current social and environmental concerns about consumption are reviving the topic of meaning in consumption practices, through their contribution to identity construction processes among consumers who declare themselves to be responsible.

The notion of identity is considered in this research broader than the classic features used in traditional studies of segmentation—gender, age, social category, incomes…; it allows to touch the way the consumer interprets himself/herself and on the role that his/her
ethical consumption plays (or his/her voluntary no consumption). For a good part of two decades, the term of ‘identity’ has occupied a fundamental place in the social sciences and humanities. Its uses-in-vogue also refer to the actual feeling for numerous people to find it difficult to carry through their own identity research, as suggested by the literature on the ‘post-modern individual’. The Modernity used to possess the capacity ‘to evacuate’ easily some individuals’ anguish-exit of the micro and macro social risks and to assure the continuity of a philosophy turned to the future (Giddens, 1990). But the present context is characterized by the end of the ‘meta-narrations’ and a process of ‘individualization of the social risks’ (Beck, 1986). Generally called a ‘crisis of meanings’, this phenomenon is felt by some individuals as the necessity of a sense research and it seems to encourage the emergency of new behaviors in everyday life, such as responsible consumption.

An interpretative research method and a hermeneutic approach have been chosen in this research. The generation of data from a qualitative approach is based on the propensity of people to talk about their social experiences in their daily lives and the significance of their consumption. Consumers are not used in general to wonder about the meaning of consumption or the existing links between their acts of purchase and their life trajectory. It seems necessary to ‘provoke’ consumers to make an in-depth look at their consumption story. Such a way of gathering information is known as the method of ‘narratives’.

Fourteen narratives of highly practicing responsible consumers, based on individual interviews, have then been studied using a semantic analysis. The individual and comparative results enable us to enter into the details of the meanings these consumers grant to their consumption and the way the concept of identity can be helpful. A responsible consumption typology, based on the meanings given by the narrators to their acts of purchase, is suggested; it distinguishes the acts of ‘moral conformity’ from the deep critical postures, the latter of which derive either from political intention or from a wish to get free from the actual consumption ‘system’. Moreover, a set of common features has been observed among the ‘critical consumers’ interviewed. Three of them have already been identified by Cherrier (2005): the quest for ‘authenticity’, the ‘social integration’ and the ‘control’; they are confirmed and deepened here. Two other features appear: the ‘suffering’ (related to the upstream feelings of the consumer) and the ‘compromise’ (related to his practices downstream).

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It Doesn’t Happen to Mine: A Study of the My-Own-Product Positivity Bias for a Defective Product Management
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Abstract
This paper suggests that self-positivity bias also can occur at product-level and explores how the bias will be reduced. As a follow up study of previous research on self-positivity bias, this study assumes that consumers perceive those products they possess to be better than those possessed by others or than other same product. Also we demonstrated that this bias which highly cost both consumers and companies is moderated by familiarity with a product. Two experiments were employed to demonstrate the bias and to find the effective moderators which increase my-own-product risk perception. Future study and its applications are discussed.

According to previous studies, people are often poorestimators of risk (Slovic, Fishhoff and Lichtenstein 1981) and tend to believe that negative events are less likely to happen to themselves than to other people (Perloff and Fetzer, 1986; Weinstein, 1980). The self-positivity bias which results from “unrealistic optimism” (Weinstein, 1980) was well documented in many areas including car accident and various health problems like AIDS, heart attack, cancer, etc (e.g. Raghubir and Menon, 1998; Perloff and Fetzer, 1986; Kemeny and Hammen, 1991).

At the one end of the continuum, this bias often misleads consumers into nonoptimal decisions like ignoring a likelihood of defective in a product or neglecting a recall alarm which often results from disregarding little notices or policies. For example, consumers believe...
that their new notebook has no bad pixel, or their chances of defective sheet of paper in a new textbook are lower than those of others. These phenomena can be widely observed from trivial goods to costly service such as lasik or plastic surgery.

However this bias causes many problems for both companies and consumers. Despite companies’ efforts to make consumers’ attention to possible risks associated with the products, consumers seldom think a problem ever happens to themselves. Because of this bias, the cost which both consumers and companies should pay increases. Consumers may have to visit a store again. Or they may face a fatal accident without replacing a defective product with new one(e.g. ignoring expiration date in daily products). Automakers may lose their chance of early recall and even face a fatal lawsuit together with bad brand image.

As a follow up study of previous research on self-positivity bias, this study assumes that consumers perceive those products they possesses to be better than those possessed by others, and other same products. They think that the chance of negative outcome associated with their possessions will be less likely than that associated with products owned by others.

Because self-positivity bias originated from the wrong perception of self-risk, we can seemingly assume that this kind of bias will be related to products we have. In addition previous studies on the cause of self-positivity bias show that the bias also occurs in case of products. That is, the product-level bias can also make people deny possible risk(Raghuir and Menon, 1998), reduce anxiety associated with uncertainty of outcome(Taylor and Brown, 1988) and make self-esteem maintenance(Weinstein, 1980). Moreover many studies of both psychological and qualitative studies in consumer behavior indicated that much of our psychological mechanism has carryover to our product by possession. McClelland(1951) suggested that external object become viewed as part of self when we are able to control over them. And Belk(1988) argued that possessions give us magical psychological identification. With Weinstein’s view, self-concept theory and identity theory can also be applied to our hypothesis that the more people own familiarity with self-allied product, the more they may have a psychological bias associated with their products. Therefore we can also hypothesize that the more familiar or self-closer product which satisfies higher self-esteem maintenance has more bias similar to ours. If consumers consider their own product is more familiar, they believe their possessions will not be associated with negative events.

Experiments were employed to demonstrate the bias and to find the effective moderators of this increasing my-own-product risk perception. In the first experiment which was disguised as a blinded test, we used 3(target owner)*3(products by familiarity rating) design to test that people judge (a) their possessions as being at lower risk than other’s and (b) possessions they consider to be more familiar to them to be at lower risk than those less familiar to them. Our new familiarity rating was designed by scales used in previous studies of familiarity scale, self score and intimacy scale, including expected use time and perceived closeness, etc. After offering a newspaper article of a rare but critical error about a product, we gave them a sample and asked them to write down the chance of error of their own. Other groups were offered the same article but asked to write down the chance of error before getting product.

The results of this study indicated that people who had his own product estimate the chance of defectives to be lower than those who didn’t. A product highly scored in familiarity rating was perceived to have lower risk. These results supported our hypothesis that consumers project some biases to their owned product.

The subsequent experiment in progress focuses on how to develop an effective “notice” for reducing the product positivity bias. In a pilot study using a new textbook(“Consumer Behavior”) in our class, we found that noticing a negative event which occurred to a similar group member reduced the bias and eventually increase risk-perception.

From the view of Lin and his colleagues(2003), perceived controllability will be considered to be designed. By showing the notice which says that the end of refund period is coming soon, controllability condition will be manipulated. The effects of some moderators, framing message cue(Chandran and Menon, 2004), information accessibility(Raghuir and Menon, 1998) -will be examined in the experiments.

This paper suggests that self-positivity bias can also occur in case of products and explores how the bias will be reduced. Future study will focus on what and how biases of consumer are carried over to product and its effective method to reduce it.

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Consumers Tripping Over Their Roots
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“I really did the tour as a ‘roots’ exercise and to fit many parts of the jigsaw puzzle that is my heritage, the considerable reading and conceptual development of a lifetime of being New Zealand / British in outlook, and to enjoy the ‘green, green grass of my ancestral home’ so to speak.” (Male, 60, New Zealand)

The growth in global tourism is fueled in part by retirees, primarily from developed countries, born immediately following World War II and now entering retirement age. The premise of this research is that these consumers are using their savings to not only explore
the world, but also to seek a sense of self by returning to the lands of their ancestors, a phenomenon we call ancestral tourism. Where hedonic tourism has been deemed a “nonrational” expenditure as it provides only pleasure to the tourist, ancestral tourism can provide a sense of self by glimpsing at one’s ancestral past (MacCannell 2002, 150).

This research documents the phenomenon of ancestral tourism using a multi-method approach and tests a conceptual model that integrates the extant research on aging, the consumption of authenticity and satisfaction. As consumers grow older, they become reflective on life and develop a need of personal fulfillment that cannot be satisfied by tangible goods. Older consumers often enter a phase whereby they look to dispose of their possessions, which have both sentimental and monetary value, while seeking satisfaction from intangibles (Price, Arnould and Curasi 2000), a process likely to be reflected in the consumption of ancestral touristic experiences. Previous research has attributed a consumer’s search for authenticity as a trek for fulfillment, comparable to that of a religious pilgrim seeking enlightenment (Goulding 2000). This is even more salient for cultural tourists, especially those from western cultures, whose desire to partake in authentic cultural experiences is often the primary objective of their trip (Grayson and Martinec 2004; MacCannell 2002; 1999).

The research was conducted in the context of a 25-day guided bus tour of the United Kingdom (UK) and Ireland; a tour selected because nearly all customers who bought this package in the past were of British or Irish descent and generally resided in former colonies. Therefore, this group of consumers would most likely seek ancestral cultural experiences. The methodological approach was threefold, comprising interviews, observations, and surveys. The triangulation of data served as a validity check while also adding a better understanding to the social behaviors and meanings invoked from the experience (Grayson and Martinec 2005; Hammersley and Atkinson 1995; Arnould and Wallendorf 1994). In an effort to better observe the tour phenomenon, the author actively partook in the tour and optional excursions. The researcher’s direct participation in the tour allowed for better understanding and appreciation of the ancestral tourism phenomenon, as well as detailed observations (Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry 1989).

The tour was designed to expose participants to as much of the UK and Ireland as possible in a short period of time. It was led by a professional tour guide with nearly 20 years of experience. The group consisted of 39 people (18 males / 21 females, mean age of 59), all of them from former British colonies, namely Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the US. The interviews were conducted individually, at the onset of the tour. Exploratory in nature, they sought information regarding the pre-trip planning process, tour expectations, and general background and demographic data. The contents of interviews were then assessed to identify themes to develop a survey instrument. Participant observation was conducted throughout the tour with the researcher maintaining an unobtrusive profile as not to detract from the natural tour experience or bias later survey responses and to maintain the ability to observe from the distance (Palmer 2001; Arnould and Wallendorf 1994). The researcher was able to take detailed notes and pictures of events without drawing attention as such activities are normal for tourists. The survey was administered on the final day of the tour to all participants. The constructs captured the themes identified during the interviews and items to measure them were intermixed. The constructs in the model included: pre-trip expectations, perception of tour as ancestral pilgrimage, perception of tour experience as authentic, cultural experience satisfaction, overall tour satisfaction and likelihood to recommend tour. The last series of questions captured the number of optional tours, the number of souvenirs bought for oneself and the number of those bought for someone else. Finally, demographic information was collected, including age, gender, country-of-origin, country-of-residence, and whether the ancestors emanated from the UK or Ireland.

The survey data along with the qualitative interviews and observations provided rich insights into the phenomenon of ancestral tourism. All participants whose ancestors hailed from the UK or Ireland reported that they considered the trip as a pilgrimage, as the opening quote illustrates. Correlational analysis supported the relationships proposed in the conceptual model. For instance, age was significantly and positively related to the overall number of tours options purchased but negatively related to the number of souvenirs purchased for oneself while positively related to the number of souvenirs purchased for other people. Many participants’ comments reflected a detachment from material possessions at the approach of death, some with a humorous view, others with a more pragmatic one. In turn, the consumption of intangible experiences, such as the optional tours, positively affected perceptions of authenticity and, in turn, overall cultural satisfaction. Among the most important findings was the crucial role that perceptions of authenticity and cultural experiences play in assessing the value of the ancestral tourism experience. Albeit limited by the relatively small size of the group studied, this research provides insights into consumers in search of authentic ancestral experiences.

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Affect Without Cognition
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Do you find young fellows emotional? Do you think that their decisions are often whimsical? Have you noticed that they often buy brands and products that they have no idea of? Then why do they buy? These are the questions regarding brand attitude formation mechanism that is universally accepted as a concept model: cognition-affect-conation. This study tests the model using Chinese young consumers as a sample.

Hypotheses

One question this study seeks to answer is whether brand personality identification, as an affective factor, significantly influences brand buying intention, a conation factor. Nowadays Chinese young generation’s value system has changed dramatically. Traditional Chinese notions, such as “Restraint and Obedience” and “Connotation and Introversion” have been replaced by “Do what you like” and “Show your own personality”. As a result, the consumption notion of Chinese young generation has also changed. Young consumers pay much attention to products that can show their own personality and demonstrate their own life styles. Then our first hypothesis is: For Chinese young consumers, brand personality identification significantly influences their brand buying intention.

The second question this study seeks to answer is whether Chinese young consumers’ buying intention of foreign brands is influenced by brand personality cognition. Since late 1970’s, Chinese have more contacts with the west and therefore known more about western world. Chinese young generation has grown up with western products and values. As frequently pointed out by both media and academia, foreign brand personality cognition significantly influences Chinese consumers’ brand buying intention. Therefore our second hypothesis is: Chinese young consumers’ cognition of foreign brands personality significantly influences their foreign brand buying intention.

Method

Thirty college students enrolled in a well-known university located in Beijing were randomly chosen as participants. In-depth interviews were conducted before a questionnaire was developed. The purpose of the interviews was to identify a pair of brands that could best reflect American culture and Chinese culture respectively. Questions were asked for each of the interviewees: 1) Which American drink/restaurant/apparel brand do you think that can best reflect American culture? 2) Which Chinese drink/restaurant/apparel brand do you think that can best reflect Chinese culture? Results showed that Coca Cola (90% responses) and Xihulonjing tea (70% responses) were thought to best reflect the two distinct cultures by the interviewees. Thus Coca Cola and Xihulongjing tea were finalized as the stimulators for the following survey.

A draft questionnaire was developed based on the interviews and relevant literatures. A pilot test was conducted to check the wording and time span for filling up the draft questionnaire. A questionnaire was then finalized. It comprises measurements of brand personality cognitive strength, brand personality distinctiveness and brand personality identification of both Coca Cola and Xihulongjing tea (independent variables), and measurements of buying intention of both Coca Cola and Xihulongjing tea (dependent variables).

Questionnaire survey was conducted in six major universities located in Beijing. A total of 1,000 questionnaires were distributed and 932 usable ones were returned, with a response rate of 93.2%?

Results

Our first hypothesis is supported. The regression results show that brand personality identification significantly influences buying intention of both Coca Cola and Xihulongjing tea. Young consumers would like to buy the brands that can reflect their personality. This result is consistent with many psychology and marketing theories and research findings. Meanwhile it reveals that popular values of Chinese young generation such as showing their own personality, having their own life styles and expressing themselves influence their buying intention significantly.

Our second hypothesis is rejected. Results show that brand personality cognitive strength and brand personality distinctiveness, as cognitive variables, do not have significant influence on buying intention of foreign brand Coca Cola. It is generally accepted by the academia that cognition is the premise of affect and cognition and affect influence conation. However, buying intention of Coca Cola is only influenced by the affective factor, brand personality identification, not by cognitive factors. Here affect functions independent of cognition. On the contrary, buying intention of Xihulongjing tea is significantly influenced by both cognitive and affective factors, fitting the cognition-affect-conation model perfectly.

Discussion

This research comes up with two very interesting findings: brand buying intention of Chinese young consumers is significantly influenced by their brand personality identification, no matter whether the brand is foreign or domestic. However their brand buying intention is significantly influenced by their cognition of the domestic brand but not the foreign brand. The findings suggest that for Chinese young consumers, the impacts of brand cognition and affect on buying intention may vary between domestic and foreign brands. In the discussion section we will explore the underlying reasons of these findings and the conditions under which they happen. We will also discuss theoretical and managerial implications of this research for consumer behavior and marketing strategies.

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Compulsive Buying Questionnaire and Repression: The Impact of Hot vs Cold Data on General and Gender Scoring

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Mall intercept has been conjectured to be more precise and reliable than other methodologies such as phone surveys (Bush and Hair, 1985) in that less questions were eluded in the former, and the latter was usually yielding more “socially acceptable” answers. This could be caused by a memory priming effect (Bower, 1981) when respondents are answering in a “cold” situation (e.g. inside their homes) rather than in a “hot” situation. In other words, their cognitions could be affected by their affect at the moment when they are filling the questionnaire.

Despite a relatively important number of studies related to the measurement of Compulsive buying, the use of questionnaires through mail surveys seems to have exclusively prevailed over the use of mall intercept procedures (e.g. Faber and O’Guinn, 1992; Valence et al., 1988), and most of these studies found a significant difference in self-reported compulsive score between males and females.

In a small recent study involving 49 participants in a mall intercept, self-assessing their compulsivity by answering a Lejoyeux questionnaire (Lejoyeux et al., 1996; Lejoyeux et al., 1997), we were however unable to find any significant difference in genders, even though some other elements of reliability and nomological validity with the hedonic/utilitarian value in shopping (Babbin et al., 1993) were congruent with previous studies.

We thought that the main difference between our study and the previous studies on compulsive buying was the methodology (a mall intercept vs mail survey) could explain the lack of significant difference between genders in respect of their scores.

We therefore undertook an exploratory meta-analysis with 4 previous studies using the same Lejoyeux questionnaire (Lejoyeux et al., 1996; Lejoyeux et al., 1997) with different methodologies (2 studies in a mall intercept condition, and 2 studies in a “cold” condition, where the interviewing process was done in the respondents’ home), totalling 490 respondents (290 in “hot” condition, and 200 in “cold” condition; 218 male respondents, and 272 female respondents).

The studies included the 20 items likert scales of the Lejoyeux test of compulsive shopping and the shopping value questionnaire (Babbin et al., 1993) was included in order to test the nomological validity of the test (Peter, 1981). The internal reliability for both of the questionnaires was very good overall, and consistent with previous literature findings (?(lejoyeux)=0.78; ?(hedonic)=0.93). Nomological validity was achieved, consistent with previous literature findings (Faber and O’Guinn, 1992) through an established correlation between hedonic value in shopping and the compulsive score (r=0.364; p<0.01).

Although we found a significant effect of gender over the variance of the compulsive score (F(1,438)=31.486; p<0.0001; males=3.1; females=4.5), showing that female respondents tend to score higher than males overall in these 4 experiments, we also found a significant effect, at the highest level, of the “heat” condition (F(1,438)=18.56; p<0.0001; hot=3.3; cold=4.3), showing that the overall levels of compulsivity are slightly higher in “cold” condition than in a “hot” one; it can also be noticed that the interaction of gender and heat is also significant (F(1,438)=4.312; p<0.05; male-hot=2.8, male-cold=3.4, female-hot=3.7, female-cold=5.3), showing a possible effect of affect priming in female respondents.

It should be noted that the hedonic score stemming from the shopping value questionnaire are showing a small evolution that is consistent with respect to genders (F(1,486)=64.28; p<0.0001, male=2.57; female=3.33) and reverse with respect to the heat of the test (F(1,486)=11; p<0.0025; hot=3.13; cold=2.79).

It is interesting to note that, contrary to what Bush and Hair’s (1985) findings could hint at, we do not find a higher mean score of compulsivity in the mall intercept procedure than in the “cold” procedure, but rather the contrary (albeit the overall difference is fairly small).

It is however interesting to note that females seem to be much more sensitive to the change of methodology than men, whose variation does not seem to change much. We can therefore suspect that this variation could indicate the process by which one tends to get a higher difference in compulsive scores between genders in mall intercepts. It could be possible that the females experience a better mood during shopping than at home, thus inducing an affect priming phenomenon that leads them to appraise differently the consequences of their shopping when they have been shopping and when they are in a different condition. Conversely, men could just appraise their shopping experience less emotionally, therefore leading to a more “consistent” evaluation between a “hot” and “cold” condition.

This meta-analysis should however be viewed as an exploratory study, where the results are subject to confirmation in a further study that can truly compare the two conditions in strictly similar methodological settings. We feel however that the results contained herein may foster some reflections on the overall validity of mail surveys with respect to mall intercept, as far as compulsive buying is concerned. A second potential implication of this study is that there may be more explanations to the difference in results between mall intercept methodologies and “cold” surveys than just more involved and expert shoppers in the former methodology.

References


Extended Abstract
Considerable research has demonstrated that people create mental categories to process and access the information that they receive (Barsalou 1992), and that these mental categories may be arranged in hierarchical structures (Collins and Loftus 1975). People add new categories, or subcategories, to these structures when they encounter novel objects or experiences, such as new products, that do not fit within existing categories (Sujan 1985; Sujan and Bettman 1989). An underlying assumption of previous studies is that the general category within which people will locate a novel entity, and hence a new subcategory created for it, is known. However, some entities, such as innovative new products, could be assigned to multiple categories (Keller, Sternthal, and Tybout 2002; Moreau, Markman, and Lehmann 2001). It is here that managers and marketers could benefit from a deeper understanding of how mental categorization works.

In this paper, we develop a spreading activation model of the process by which individuals construct new mental categories. In an experiment and an empirical study, we show that the Category Activation Model (CAM) reliably predicts where individuals will locate a new subcategory within an existing category structure.

The ways in which consumers categorize products have important implications for firms. For example, previous research has shown that the category to which consumers assign a new product can affect the inferences that they draw about it (Moreau, Markman, and Lehmann 2001), their evaluation of and willingness to pay for it (Sujan 1985), and their likelihood of retrieving it in memory-based choice (Nedungadi 1990; Nedungadi, Chattopadhyay, and Muthukrishnan 2001). Thus, being able to predict and influence how consumers construct and locate subcategories for entire classes of products, especially radically innovative new products, could benefit firms substantially. For example, when Motorola introduced the Envoy, the first personal digital assistant, consumers had to create a new mental subcategory because, although the Envoy shared many features with existing portable computers, pagers, and organizers, it was distinctly different from products in these categories (Keller, Sternthal, and Tybout 2002). Knowing where consumers were most likely to locate the new personal digital assistant subcategory could have helped Motorola design and market the Envoy to better satisfy their expectations.

Whereas previous research has examined how people access information in hierarchical category structures and the general rules that govern how these category structures grow and develop (Freyd 1983; Murphy and Medin 1985; Rosch 1978), the ways in which people construct individual new categories have not yet been investigated. We develop the CAM to predict where people are most likely to locate a new subcategory within an existing category structure.

We build on previous research that shows that priming a category increases its accessibility and subsequent use (Herr 1989; Higgins and King 1981). Consistent with this research, we assume that when a category is accessed some of the resulting activation remains with the category and the rest spreads through the entire network, or category tree. Further, we assume that when a category is more activated, the probability that a new subcategory will be constructed under it is increased. Combining these two assumptions, it follows that by accurately describing the process by which activation spreads through the network, we are able to predict the probability that a new subcategory will be constructed at any given location within it. In the paper, we show that these probabilities depend on the network’s link structure, which determines how activation spreads. Specifically, the CAM predicts that the locus of a new subcategory is strongly influenced by the number of subcategories already connected to each category within the existing structure.

We tested the CAM’s predictive ability in an experiment involving an innovative new exercise product that shares attributes with existing products in the health and entertainment categories. In the experiment, we first familiarized 91 participants with a category structure for health and entertainment products. Then we presented them with a description of the new product, and gave them the opportunity to create a new subcategory for it under either the health or entertainment category. We manipulated the number of subcategories already existing under these categories, and also manipulated the priming of these categories using an unrelated proof-reading task. The results support our hypothesis that the probability that a person will construct a new category as a subordinate of a particular category is proportional to the relative number of categories that are already subordinate to i. Furthermore, the results suggest that people are more likely to locate new subcategories within categories that already contain many subordinates precisely because such categories are more activated and accessible than those that contain fewer subordinates.
In a second study, we further tested the CAM’s predictive ability by analyzing how computer users create new file folders within their directory trees. In this study, we analyzed data on nearly 70,000 directories created by more than 1,600 users on internet servers at two universities and a high school. We wrote a program to collect data from these servers and provide a snapshot of each user’s directory tree, including the exact time at which each file folder within the tree was created. We then showed that the structure of these directory trees and the process by which they developed are consistent with the CAM’s predictions. These results provide support for the CAM in an externally valid context.

In addition to categorizing products, consumers also categorize their expenditures by placing them into mental accounts (Thaler 1999). Since consumers utilize these accounts to track their expenses, it follows that the category to which consumers assign an expenditure may affect their willingness to incur additional expenditures that are either similar or different (Cheema and Soman 2006; Heath and Soll 1996). In two extension studies, we show that the CAM can be used to both predict and influence the location of new mental accounts. Thus, the CAM has implications not only for how new products should be positioned, but also for how they should be priced. Influencing category construction is an exciting area that additional research should examine.

References


The Appeal of Others: How to Avoid the Self-Positivity Bias

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Nearly 50 years of research and numerous articles on fear appeals have attempted to illustrate the behavioral motivation such appeals may generate (Witte and Allen 2000). The logical reasoning of using fear appeals in persuasion links back to the “drive-reduction model” (Hovland, Jains and Kelley 1953). The model suggests that a message becomes successful in persuasion only when it is sufficiently intense to create a drive and present recommendations capable of mitigating the fear (Keller 1999). Keller (1999) found that people engaging in risky behavior were persuaded more by lower fear appeals than those who were already adhering to healthier lifestyle/avoiding those risky behaviors. Such findings can be explained by the fact that people who practice risky behavior become more defensive in response to high fear appeals as they find themselves more vulnerable when exposed to such fear inducing messages. This is consistent with defense motivated processing, which is a fairly close-minded form, that leads to individuals’ desire to hold attitudes or beliefs congruent with positive self-concept (Chen and Chaiken 1999). Perceptions of risk for certain health conditions are not congruent with this desire to maintain a positive self-concept. This defensiveness leads to a lower capacity to process the recommendations presented in the message and thereby a higher inclination to discount the message all together with no appreciable influence on risk perceptions (Kunda 1990, Keller and Block 1997, Keller 1999).

This literature demonstrates the importance of understanding how health communications involving fear appeals may or may not influence consumer perceptions. Ideally, health messages should arouse fear only to the extent that the audience perceives increased risk for themselves leading them to adhere to the prescribed behavior. One critical concern of health communications relates to the “self-positivity bias” of the target audience. This bias demonstrates that people have a general tendency to assume themselves as impervious to the threat of being exposed to diseases (Raghubir and Menon 1998) and they do not feel the need or urgency to adhere to the preventative behaviors presented. This self-positivity bias leads people to discount health related messages in order to maintain their self-esteem (Taylor and Brown 1988). This bias does not occur when people are asked to estimate the risk of unpleasant things happening to another person (Perloff and Fetzer 1986, Raghubir and Menon 1998). This opens a new frontier of research studying how self vs. other related appeals can impact on subsequent persuasion.

Recent work on the self-positivity bias has explored how the compatibility between self vs. other-related emotions of the audience and the referent in the message influences perceptions of risk (Agarwal, Menon and Aaker 2006). However, it is yet to be explored how the referent (self vs. other) in a fear appeal message would influence perceptions of risk and behavioral intentions. The current research attempts to fill this gap by manipulating the referent (self vs. other) in the message using a fear appeal and exploring how the perceptions of risk and intention to adopt the recommended behavior changes accordingly. In this case, we anticipate that when a message is self-referent, it will generate more defensive processing and result in self-positivity bias (i.e. lower perceptions of risk). On the contrary, when the referent is someone else, it is not expected to generate the same defensiveness, and the result will be higher perceptions of risk for themselves.

A one-way ANOVA was designed to manipulate the message referent (self vs. other) and measure subsequent influence on risk perceptions and behavioral intentions. A print advertisement for skin cancer was developed for the study. All groups were exposed to the same advertisement that listed the factors leading to skin cancer and preventative steps that could be taken. The only difference in the ads was the first line, which prompted respondents to think of either themselves or someone else while they read the ad. In total, 57 undergraduate business students at a large eastern university participated in exchange for partial course credit. Post exposure measures on risk perceptions and behavioral intentions were collected. Risk perceptions were measured with a single item asking participants if they felt they were at risk for skin cancer and behavioral intentions were measured with 2 items that were mentioned in the advertisements as ways to avoid getting skin cancer (e.g. how likely are you to wear sunscreen and how likely are you to have a doctor check your skin for damage, \( r = .50, p < .001 \)).

Results of the one-way ANOVA showed a significant influence on perceptions of risk (\( F(1,55)=5.99, p<.01 \)). A comparison of the means indicated that the other-referent message generated higher perceptions of risk among the respondents (\( M=4.43 \) as opposed to the
self-referent message (M=3.28). The behavioral intentions measure demonstrated the same pattern of results (F(1,55)=7.31, p<.01) where those reviewing other referent measure had greater behavioral intentions (M=4.07) than those reviewing self-referent message (M=2.91).

As expected, results demonstrated the effectiveness of other-referent messages in avoiding the self-positivity bias. Participants who reviewed the other-referent messages were significantly more likely to have higher perceptions of risk for themselves of developing skin cancer. Further, these participants were also more likely to indicate intentions to follow the advice from the advertisement regarding wearing sunscreen and seeing a doctor to avoiding the disease. Future research will need to explore more fully/comprehensively the processing involved in risk perceptions to determine the exact influence of defensive response and its role in the self-positivity bias.

References

The Effect of Discounting the Influence of Sources of Information on Choice and Product Perceptions
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Extended Abstract
In this research, we examine the effect of the source of the influence (e.g., salesperson or friend) and consumers’ ability to correct for the source’s influence on their product evaluations. Consumer’s perceptions of the source of a persuasive attempt have been found to influence the effectiveness of persuasive attempts in previous research (for a review, see Wilson and Sherrell 1993). People may react negatively when they believe a salesperson has an ulterior motive for persuasion (Campbell and Kirmani 2000), yet yield to a recognized persuasion attempt by a friend (Hamilton 2003).

Wegener and Petty’s (1995, 1997, 1998) Flexible Correction Model postulates that individuals correct for perceived bias when they are motivated and able to adjust their judgments, and that they make these adjustments based on their naïve theories about how a given source influences their judgments. We propose that the manner in which consumers correct for a perceived influence on their judgments is influenced by the perceived source of the influence. If people hold different beliefs about how strong an influence a source might have on their judgments, they may account for that influence differently.

Consumers may think that a salesperson is trying to persuade them (Campbell and Kirmani 2000; Stafford, Leigh and Martin 1995), but may not perceive a friend’s attempt to influence their judgments in the same way. As a result, they may react differently to the same persuasive message depending on whether a salesperson or a friend delivers it. For example, Hamilton (2003) found that under some conditions, consumers were more likely to comply and choose the “suggested” alternative when a friend (rather than a stranger) was trying to influence them, even though the influence attempt was the same. Therefore, we propose that consumers will be more likely to resist the persuasion of a salesperson than the persuasion of a friend.

However, when consumers are instructed to correct their judgments (e.g., if they are told to avoid letting the salesperson or friend influence their judgments), we expect the pattern to reverse. Because consumers naturally resist the influence of a salesperson, they may overcorrect for the influence of the salesperson, resulting in enhanced effectiveness of the persuasive message rather than reduced effectiveness. In contrast, because consumers do not naturally resist the influence of a friend, an instruction to correct may reduce the effectiveness of the persuasion attempt.
We designed an experiment to test these predictions. The study employs a 2 (salesperson vs. friend) x 2 (no-instruction vs. instruction to correct) between-subjects design. The dependent variables were choice and willingness to purchase the product. Measures regarding persuasion knowledge and ulterior motives were also included.

Participants (N=71) read a written scenario (adapted from Campbell and Kirmani 2000) describing a situation in which they imagined they were looking for a jacket. In the salesperson condition, the salesperson makes a comment about one of the two jackets the participant imagines trying on (the target jacket); in the friend condition, the participant’s friend makes the same comment. In the no-instruction condition, participants answered the questions immediately after reading the scenario; in the instruction condition, participants were told “try their best not to let the salesperson’s (the friend’s) opinion influence their own opinion.” Participants then chose between the non-target and the target jacket and completed the other measures.

As predicted, the salesperson was perceived as more persuasive than the friend (Ms=6.21, Mf=4.58), indicating a main effect of source (F(1, 67)=22.13, p<.001). Participants also perceived the salesperson as being more manipulative (F(1, 67)=11.79, p<.001), less trustworthy (F(1, 67)=54.57, p<.001), and less sincere than the friend (F(1, 67)=16.94, p<.001). Consistent with their desire to resist the salesperson’s influence, we found that in the salesperson condition participants chose the jacket that had not been recommended by the salesperson (the non-target jacket) marginally more often (15% of the time) than in the friend condition (7% of the time) (χ²=3.127, p<.07).

In the no-instruction condition, participants indicated that they tried harder to resist the salesperson’s influence than the friend’s influence (Ms=4.5, Mf=2.83). However, when they were instructed to correct, they tended to resist the salesperson’s influence less and the friend’s influence more (Ms=3.71, Mf=3.77), resulting in a significant interaction (F (1, 67)=4.6, p<.05).

Consistent with participants’ perceptions of their resistance, participants in the salesperson condition tended to prefer the non-target jacket relative to the target jacket in the no-instruction condition. However, when they were instructed to correct, there was no difference in their willingness to purchase the two jackets. The opposite pattern was observed in the friend condition, resulting in a significant three-way interaction (F (1, 67)=4.23, p<.05). Participants in the friend condition were more willing to purchase the recommended jacket in the no-instruction condition; the difference was not significant in the instruction condition.

Our findings show that when they are not instructed to correct their judgments, participants tend to comply with their friends and resist the salesperson’s influence, choosing the recommended jacket more when it was recommended by the friend than when it was recommended by the salesperson. Instruction to correct decreased choice of the recommended jacket in the friend condition and increased choice of the recommended jacket in the salesperson condition, making the proportion of choice equal.

This research builds on earlier research on source effects and on correction by showing that providing instructions to correct can moderate source effects. Notably, when people attempt to correct for a source’s influence the persuasiveness of a less trusted source such as a salesperson can actually increase. Despite the advantages of a friend in perceived trustworthiness, manipulativeness and sincerity, a simple reminder to a consumer to avoid being influenced by a third party can make a salesperson just as effective as a friend.

References

Mental Visual Imagery, Authenticity and Consumers’ Attitude Formation towards Licensed Brands
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Many researchers (e.g. Holt 2002; Kozinets 2002; Thompson et al. 2006) have noted that brand licensing undermines the value of the brands. However some examples suggest differently. Haier, a global brand in home electronics began its ascent in China by licensing refrigerator technology and the brand from German Liebherr Corp. Sanyo Fashion House Inc. obtained license to manufacture and distribute “blue label” Burberry products in Japan. Despite their licensee image, they have both achieved strong brand value internationally.

In this paper, we ask the question “when and how licensed brands achieve the same or even higher value than original brands?” and we reason that consumers’ assessment of authenticity may hold the key to this question. Most researchers agree that authenticity is not
an attribute inherent in an object and is better understood and assessed by a particular evaluator in its particular context (Grayson and Martinec 2004). However, little research has studied the antecedents and consequences of authenticity. This is particularly relevant in brand licensing, as the cues for communicating authenticity of a licensed brand will help consumers’ assessment of the value of the licensed brand, and these cues may or may not be related to the attributes of the original brands. This research intends to make three related contributions. Firstly, we attempt to develop multidimensional measures for authenticity in brand licensing. Secondly, we will empirically test whether mental visual imagery influence consumers’ perception of authenticity. Thirdly, we are to test the link between the types of authenticity and consumers’ attitude formation of licensed brands.

**Indexical and Iconic Authenticity**

Grayson and Martinec (2004) identified two dimensions of authenticity based on the semiotic model developed by Peirce (1998): the indexical authenticity and iconic authenticity. Indexical authenticity refers to the physical or psychological link which distinguishes the “real thing” from its copies (Grayson and Shulman 2000). Iconic authenticity refers to the preexisting knowledge or expectations which a person perceives something being similar to something else. In order for the licensed brand to be perceived as authentic, the cues for communicating authenticity are crucial, and this process of understanding and specifying these cues is called the negotiation of meaning (Grayson and Martinec, 2004).

**Mental Visual Imagery**

Past research (e.g. Adeyemo, 1990; Dahl and Chattopadhyay, 1999; MacInnis and Price, 1987) has shown that mental visual imagery is one of the mental processes which one uses to make sense of cues. Mental imagery is a form of internal representation in which information about the appearance of physical objects, events and scenes can be depicted and manipulated (Richardson 1999, P. 3). Research in marketing has distinguished different types of visual mental imagery: the image based on memory and imagination (Dahl and Chattopadhyay, 1999; MacInnis and Price 1987). These authors define memory image as the event or occasion that a person has personally experienced or observed whereas imagination imagery is a new, never-before-experienced event.

**The link between authenticity and mental visual imagery**

Assessment of authenticity involves a complex perceptual process (Belk and Costa 1998; Pen’aloza 2001). A person construes the cues via the formation of mental visual image before further deriving his/her perception about the authenticity of a licensed brand. Iconic authenticity may be achieved when cues are congruent with their memory. Because to view something as iconically authentic, a perceiver must have some preexisting knowledge or perceived similarities of a licensed brand with something he or she is familiar with, memory imagery can be interpreted as the cue which links consumers preexisting knowledge with the perceived iconic authenticity about the licensed brand. Therefore:

- **H1**: Consumers’ memory imagery is positively correlated with perceived iconic authenticity.

  Imagination imagery involves the creation of previously unseen image and the capacity of imagination imagery determines one’s ability to negotiate meaning out of novel information (Adeyemo 1990). To view something as an index, a perceiver must believe it actually has the “factual” and “spatio-temporal link” that is claimed (Grayson and Shulman 2000). Imagination imagery can be interpreted as acceptance of marketing communications from the licensee toward the perception of indexical authenticity by consumers. Therefore:

- **H2**: Consumers’ imagination imagery is positively correlated with perceived indexical authenticity.

- **H3**: The more the licensed brand is perceived with iconic cues, the more licensed brand will be perceived as authentic.

- **H4**: The more the licensed brand is perceived with indexical cues, the more licensed brand will be perceived as authentic.

Although both iconic and indexical cues are likely to encourage consumers to believe that a licensed brand is authentic, iconic cues are likely to be more powerful because consumers possess some preexisting knowledge about the licensed brand or perceive similarities with something they are familiar with. Therefore:

- **H5**: Iconic cues have greater influence than indexical cues on consumers’ assessment of authenticity.

Finally we examine whether assessment of authenticity will in turn influence consumers’ attitude toward the licensed brand. Attitude towards a brand can be defined as consumer’s overall brand evaluation (Aaker and Keller, 1990). Cognition is part of the belief formation and the salience of beliefs in term form attitude (Ajzen, 2002). Assessment of authenticity is one type of cognitive associations assisting consumers to negotiate the meaning of brand licensing. Therefore:

- **H6**: Perceived authenticity is positively correlated with consumers’ attitude formation toward licensed brands.

**Methods and Measures**

There are two stages of data collection in this research: exploratory focus group studies and controlled experiments.

**Exploratory Focus Group Studies**

The focus group studies were completed. The purpose of the focus group studies is twofold. Firstly, we hoped to gain deeper understanding about how consumers perceive the connections among our three focal concepts and to develop a set of hypotheses. Secondly, it would help with the development of relevant measures to be used in the controlled experiments.
Three focus group interviews were designed and conducted based on the guideline from Krueger (1994) and Yin (1984). Twenty-six informants (20 to 35 years of age) were recruited from both undergraduate and postgraduate students in a west midland university in the United Kingdom. Each focus group lasted around 60 minutes. The informants, 51% of which are female, have Chinese origin. These informants were recruited for the consistency with second stage of data collection in China. The focus group results were content analyzed according to the guideline of Yin (1984). The results shown that, firstly, the distinction between the use of memory and imagination imagery is important to assess authenticity of licensed brands. Secondly, there exist different antecedents for the two dimensions of authenticity (detailed findings will be reported in the full paper).

**Controlled experiments**

A set of controlled experiments will be employed to test our derived hypotheses. Brand selection criteria are based on Aaker and Keller’s (1990), i.e. relevance to the subjects, generally perceived as high quality, able to elicit relatively specific associations. Two hundred students will be recruited from a Chinese university to participate in the study. Chinese market is chosen because of its market size and rapid growth in licensing activities (LIMA, 2005).

The independent variables are visual mental imagery and authenticity. Visual mental imagery types will be manipulated by instructing participants to rely on either imagination or memory when evaluating authenticity. The measurements for manipulation check will be adopted from Dahl and Chattopadhyay’s (1999) 7-point scale. Two 7-point authenticity measures were developed based on focus group findings:

(a) Indexical authenticity in brand licensing: novelty, level of involvement of the brand owner, and perception about distribution.
(b) Iconic authenticity in brand licensing: quality, country of origin, and trademark.

The dependent variable is attitude toward the licensed brand. To measure attitude toward licensed brand, we will adopt Kind and Smith’s (2001) 7-point semantic differential scale. Two experimental factors (imagery types) will be manipulated. Experimental design will consist of a 2 (imagery type) x 2 (authenticity type) + 1 control mixed model. Imagery types are between-subjects variables, with subjects exposed to a set of either memory or imagination stimuli. Authenticity types are crossed within-subject, so that all subjects will be exposed to all levels of these variables.

**References**


Understanding Value Perceptions in Consumer Relationships: A Look at the Role of Self-Esteem

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Introduction

Value is essential in today’s world of marketing. Levere (1992) argues that, “when it comes to value, today’s consumers want to know precisely what kind of bang they are getting for their bucks” (p.18). Additionally, value has been touted as the central driver of customer satisfaction (Woodruff 1997). Lichtenstein et al. (1990) argue that consumer seek the “lowest priced product that meets his or her specific quality requirements” (p. 56). While these convergent viewpoints suggest that consumers seek low prices, previous research indicates that even though firms might provide a high quality product at an appropriate price, individual differences could influence consumers’ processing of product attributes and lead to different perceptions of value (Rao and Monroe 1988; Inman et al. 1997). This affect of individual differences in consumers’ evaluation of products raises an issue for firms that decide to compete on offering superior customer value (i.e., lowering prices).

The notion of receiving good value is always welcomed news to consumers. This point has not been lost on behavioral scientists, who have proposed that there is a fundamental human tendency for people to seek positive or self-enhancing feedback (Swann et al 1990). For example, consumers generally feel good when they receive great value from their market choices and will attribute such favorable outcomes perhaps to their decision making capacity or ability to recognize a good deal. However, it has been established that not all people are equally motivated to self-enhance or to feel as confident about generating positive outcomes.

Individual differences in self-esteem, that is, one’s global self evaluation is a key factor in explaining how people perceive and construe their own behavior and performance (Baumeister 1982). Furthermore, consumer perceptions of value might vary depending on the type of relationship between consumers and a firm (Woodruff 1997). The extent to which individual differences such as self-esteem and the nature of consumer relationships with retailers impacts value perceptions is the focus of this research.

Theoretical Background

The Role of Self Esteem in Value Perceptions

Self-esteem is known to play a key role in determining a buyer’s susceptibility to marketing communications (Maile and Kizilbash 1977). For instance, consumers with low self-esteem tend to be influenced by less credible than the more credible communications whereas consumers with high self-esteem tend to be persuaded by marketing messages only when communications is deemed credible. Those with high self-esteem hold high expectations about outcomes and expect to excel at whatever task they undertake (Tice 1993). As a result, they exert maximal effort towards processing information and are willing to take risks to stand out in self-enhancing ways (Baumeister 1982). Those with positive self views tend to process information deeply even when faced with uncertainties (Swann et al. 1990). In contrast, people with low self-esteem lack confidence to form judgments and are thus not inclined to extensively consider information to form independent judgments that might call attention to their perceived deficiencies (Baumeister 1982; Baumeister and Tice 1985).

The degree of confidence that consumers have in their price knowledge relates to their purchase experience and their attitudes towards the company making the offer. In situations where consumers have established, loyal relationships with a company, their trust and confidence in the company’s practices could potentially enhance customer loyalty (Siredeshmukh, Singh and Sabol 2002). Furthermore, Suri and Monroe (2003) showed that when consumers spend cognitive resources to process information they use price more to determine the perceived sacrifice associated with the purchase of a product and consequently its value (i.e., low price represents low sacrifice and high value). On the other hand, when cognitive resources are limited, price is processed more in its role to evaluate a product’s quality and value (i.e., low price represents low quality and low value).

Integrating the role of self-esteem and customer loyalty, we expect that consumers with high self-esteem will spend cognitive effort to process information and associate low (high) prices with high (low) perceived value. Because they process information thoroughly and are also tolerant of risk, high self-esteem consumers are prone to draw on their prior knowledge about market prices and likely to utilize external rather than internal reference prices in brand choice decisions even when evaluating price information in uncertain situations (Mazumdar and Papatra 1995). Consumers with low self-esteem, however, want to avoid risky outcomes (Baumeister 1982). To reduce the possibility of making a bad decision, they are apt to trust external information (e.g., provided by retailers) rather than their own prior price knowledge (Brockner 1984) but are likely to feel at a loss when engaged in relationships with multiple retailers. This conceptualization leads to the following hypotheses:

H1: High self-esteem individuals will perceive low (high) price as high (low) in perceived value irrespective of the consumer relationship with a retailer.

H2a: Low self-esteem individuals will perceive low (high) price to be high (low) in perceived value when they maintain a relationship with a single retailer (exclusive loyalty).

H2b: Low self-esteem individuals will not perceive differences in value between low and high prices when they maintain relationships with multiple retailers (divided loyalty).

Methodology

This exploratory study included 196 undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory business course. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the conditions in a 2 (price: high and low) X 2 (customer relationship: single- versus multi-store loyalty) between subjects
design. Participants read a hypothetical scenario describing a customer’s relationship with one or two retailers who specialized in selling denim apparel. This scenario was followed by the presentation of price and other attribute information for a pair of Levi blue jeans, available at the focal retailer for either a low price or high price. Participants completed a number of perceptual and attitudinal measures about price including perceived value, loyalty and behavioral intentions. They also completed the Rosenberg (1965) self-esteem scale a week prior to completing the main study.

Preliminary Results

Based on a median split of participants’ score on the Rosenberg self-esteem scale, support was obtained for all hypotheses. Consistent with predictions of H1, high self-esteem individuals reported differences in value perceptions between the low- and high-price jeans in both the relationship conditions, with the low price jeans being associated with high perceptions of value and purchase intentions than the high-price jeans. Support was also obtained for H2a and H2b. The results showed that low self-esteem individuals associated high perceived value with the low-price jeans under conditions of exclusive loyalty, but under conditions of divided loyalty low self-esteem individuals found no difference in value between low- and high-price jeans. Additional analyses indicated that self-esteem was a better predictor of the patterns of value perceptions in the relational setting used in this study compared to individual differences in value consciousness (see Lichtenstein et al. 1990).

Conclusion

The results show that not all consumers seek low prices in today’s relational environments. It appears that the confluence of strategic (i.e., pricing strategy), situational (relationship type) and individual factors (self-esteem) can have significantly different consequences on how consumers cognitively process price information and the construction of value perceptions. Based on the findings of this exploratory study, the role of value perceptions in consumer relationships warrants further investigation.

References


Perceived Fairness: Conceptual Framework and Scale Development

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Fairness is a concept that first entered the English language about 1460 as a referent to “equitableness, fair dealing, honesty, impartiality, uprightness” (Oxford English Dictionary Online, 2004, 3). From the outset, the concept was associated with morality, commerce, and public life, for its first recorded use is in the line, “it is best that we treat him with fairness,” found in religious plays (Towneley Mysteries, c. 1460, Cawley 1963) put on for townspeople by medieval craft guilds such as cloth merchants or tanners. The definition has remained remarkably unchanged in six centuries of use, and is now a cardinal concept in social science and marketing research, referring to an individual’s social judgment about what is “just” or “deserved.” Its importance lies in its influence on an individual’s feelings, attitudes, and behaviors in interactions with others (Campbell 1999; Feinberg, Krishna, and Zhang 2001; Tyler and
Smith 1998), for perceptions of fairness have been found to have significant psychological consequences such as associations with feelings of anger (Montada and Schneider 1989), envy (Smith, Spears, and Oyen 1994), psychological depression (Walker and Mann 1987), and self-esteem (Koper, Van Knippenberg, Bouhuys, Vermunt, and Wilke 1993). Perceived perception has also been found to have significant marketing consequences in reference to consumer satisfaction and repeat purchase intentions (Oliver 1993, 1997; Oliver and Swan 1989a, b). Yet despite the concept’s presence across research domains, there is a lack of threaded discourse attributable to the commingling of cognitive and affective elements and the failure to distinguish between antecedents and consequences.

To disentangle the elements and establish hierarchical order, we begin by revisiting the cognitive and affective dimensions in terms of theories of equity (Adams 1965; Austin 1977), relative deprivation (Crosby 1982, 1984), and consumer satisfaction (Oliver 1997). Even though most theorists consider fairness to have a cognitive core, there is no consensus about the presence or nature of a causal relationship between cognition and affect. The reason seems to be that the treatment of fairness as a concept in its own right has been taken second place to treatments of it in reference to positive emotional responses such as satisfaction and/or negative ones such as anger and guilt. In consequence, different studies and researchers yield different lists of antecedents and consequences, and controversy abounds. For example, social psychologists do not agree about whether an individual’s degree of satisfaction with a purchase is an antecedent or consequence of his or her perception of fairness (Messick and Sentis 1983). Further, emotion/cognition confounding is perpetuated in recent study findings (van den Bos 2003) that even unrelated moods influence fairness perceptions (van den Bos 2003). Despite efforts to identify satisfaction and fairness as separate concepts in social science research, with satisfaction influenced by one’s personal history of outcomes, and fairness influenced by one’s comparison of personal outcomes to those of relevant others (Blau 1964; Austin, McGinn, and Susmilch 1980; van den Bos, Wilke, Lind and Vermunt 1998), the issue of hierarchical order remains unclear. Even though satisfaction theorists in marketing generally consider fairness an antecedent to satisfaction (Oliver 1993, 1997; Szymbanski and Henard 2001), the order may well be the reverse, depending on how one defines both concepts.

Another problem that arises in studies of fairness vis-à-vis unfairness and negative affect is exacerbated confounding of cognitive and affective antecedents and consequences. Whereas classic accounts of the relationship between judgments of injustice and negative emotional consequences (Adams 1965; Homans, 1961; Walster, Berscheid, and Walster 1978) suggest that cognition of injustice precedes negative affect, later accounts claim (O’Malley and Davies 1984; Scher and Heise 1993; Sinclair and Mark 1991) that in some situations, negative affect may precede and/or influence cognitive ones. Admittedly, limitations are built into these studies, for the virtual simultaneity of unfairness perceptions and negative emotional consequences makes hierarchical ordering difficult. Further, unfairness is an ambiguous state that can be triggered either by receiving less than is fair (anger or resentment) or more than is fair (guilt or fear of retaliation), with the dominant effect of the latter especially difficult to identify. But notwithstanding the limitations, closer study of fairness in relation to similar concepts is required to clarify its attributes, measurement, and outcomes.

Lack of clarity has led to random definitions of fairness with different researchers relying on different ad hoc scales. Some are single-item, and thus lacking in validity and reliability (e.g., Austin, McGinn and Susmilch 1980; Greenberg 1987; Messe and Watts 1983; Seligman and Schwartz 1997; van den Bos et al. 1998). Even though some multiple-item scales have been devised in the social sciences, insofar as their focus is on affective responses, they do not contribute to the understanding of fairness as a multidimensional concept (Scher 1997). In the business disciplines, the study of fairness in organizations is also beset by non-comparable definitions and measures (Blader and Tyler 2003). In marketing research, where the tendency to use ad hoc scales also exists, the dominant focus on price fairness (Darke and Dahl 2003) or service fairness (Clemmer 1993) does not seem sufficiently rich to capture the broad dimensionality of consumer perceptions of fairness. Thus, we find that a theoretically sound scale of fairness in the consumer context has yet to be developed, and to do so, we must first construct a comprehensive framework suited to study consumer perceptions.

Our paper will present a multi-item fairness scale designed specifically for use in consumer research and tested empirically to provide evidence of its construct, internal, and external validity and reliability. Following the fairness research literature, we will conduct experimental studies to develop a new scale that encourages an integrated expansion of fairness perception research. Study findings and the new scale will be finished in time for presentation at the ACR 2006 Conference.

References


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**Effect of Mood on Information Processing Style and Consequent Purchasing Decisions**

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*Extended Abstract*

Moods are a transient and slight mental state; they are different from emotions, which are strong and long lasting feelings (Peterson and Sauber 1983). Moods occur and fade away, any time, any place. Small environmental cues, for example, a piece of music, a store display, a smile sign, or some smells can elicit good or bad moods (Schwarz and Clore 1983). Therefore, it is feasible to suggest that moods may be manipulated through advertisements, level of service, shopping contexts and marketing tools. Thus the purpose of this study is to explore the effects of mood arousal by these methods on consumers’ cognition of product attributes.

Previous research has shown that people in different moods may be inclined to adopt different information processing styles (e.g.: Mackie and Worth 1989; Gardner and Hill 1988; Kuykendall and Keating 1990). The primary mechanism behind the above is that people in a good mood have the motivation to maintain their good mood, so their cognitive resources are relatively lower than those of neutral or bad moods (Forest, Clark, Mills, and Isen 1979). In other words, due to the instinct to maximize reward and minimize punishment, people in a good mood will exert, consciously or unconsciously, an effect on prolonging happiness; hence, most of their attention and cognitive resources are employed to retain the good mood, and they don’t have the capacity and willing to contemplate things in a systematic way. When using the heuristic–systematic model (HSM) (Bohner, Moskowitz, and Chaiken 1995; Bohner, Ruder, and Erb 2002) to classify...
information processing styles, a good mood will lead to the heuristic thinking approach, because people with a heuristic thinking approach evaluate events based on available and applicable heuristics and employ less cognitive effort and capacity. On the contrary, a bad mood will lead to the systematic thinking approach, and people with a systematic thinking approach process information in a more analytical style; they analyze events more rationally and don’t give judgments based solely on environmental cues.

Furthermore, people with different information processing styles will exhibit varied responses to marketing messages. This study suggests that people with different information processing styles pay attention to different product attributes, meaning that when shopping in a store or making purchasing decisions, the importance and attractiveness of the product attributes will change as the consumers’ information processing styles change. Product attributes have been dichotomized into intrinsic and extrinsic cues (Olson and Jacoby 1972): intrinsic attributes are the physical composition of the product, for example, color, texture and size. Extrinsic attributes are external to the product, such as brand name, advertising, and brand image (Olson and Jacoby 1972). Obviously, the evaluation and comparison of intrinsic attributes among several products requires more cognitive labor, while using extrinsic attributes, for example, brand reputation, to determine which to buy requires less cognitive resources. Therefore, it is proposed that the consumers who employ heuristic thinking tend to pay more attention to extrinsic attributes, while the consumers who employ systematic thinking tend to be concerned more with intrinsic attributes.

In this study, the influences of mood on the consumers’ cognition of product attributes are examined. All the 60 respondents were randomly assigned to the three experimental conditions: good, bad, and neutral mood. Short films were then applied to elicit good, bad, and neutral moods. After seeing the 2 minutes short movies, all respondents were told to complete questionnaires about their favorite movie styles and movie-watching behaviors as the experimental filler—the purpose of the filler was to avoid the respondents guessing the objective of this study. When the questionnaires were completed the experimenter asked them to help with an “unrelated survey”—the digital camera purchasing decision survey. In the questionnaire, several intrinsic and extrinsic attributes were listed, and respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of every attribute to their purchasing decisions.

The data of this research show that the consumers in a good mood are inclined to focus on extrinsic attributes more than intrinsic attributes (t=2.21, p=0.0453); the consumers in a bad mood are inclined to pay more attention to intrinsic attributes (t=-2.33, p=0.0352). For the neutral mood respondents, there is no difference between the intrinsic and extrinsic attributes in their decision weight (t=-0.12, p=0.9401).

Therefore, this study shows that moods do indeed influence the cognition of product attributes via differing information processing approaches. A good mood results in concerns about extrinsic attributes, whereas a bad mood results in a focus on the intrinsic attributes. This is a meaningful and useful result that can be extended to advertising and market research, for example, the effect of retail settings, the service quality of waiters, or the advertisement context on mood and attitude.

Measuring the Antecedents of Impulsive Buying Behavior on the WWW
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Introduction
Marketing practitioners have long realized the importance of impulsive consumer actions and use new technologies like collaborative filtering to enhance unplanned cross- and upselling. Amazon.com, for example, generated 23% of its sales from purchases made by suggesting customers’ products which “similar” customers had already bought (Economist, 2000).

However, marketing scholars have not spent much attention on this research topic. Madhavaram and Laverie (2004) state a significant deficit in conceptual and empirical research concerning online impulsive buying behavior. This gap is surprising giving the fact that online shopping is an easily mode for making unplanned purchases (Donthu & Garcia 1999).

The purpose of this paper is to: (1) review and analyze existing research (2) broaden and adopt the concept of impulsive buying to the online shopping environment (3) discuss different antecedents of unplanned purchases on the internet and (4) present exploratory research findings of a pilot study.

Conceptual Framework
Impulsive buying is defined as a purchase decision made within the store without an explicit recognition of a need for this purchase before entering the store (Abratt & Goodey, 1990; Bellenger, Robertson, & Hirschmann, 1978). Basically, the four main factors can be distinguished to have a direct or indirect influence on impulsive buying behavior. Most of them have been subject to thorough analysis in store-based retailing (Kollat & Willet 1967; Rook 1987; Youn & Faber 2000), but have not been validated in an online shopping context:

The relevance of in-store marketing stimuli for unplanned purchases is evident (Belk, 1975; Kollat & Willet 1969; Rook 1987). Possible stimuli of an e-retailer are banners, pop-ups and newsletters. We add electronic marketing stimuli to our model and suggest a positive effect of banners, pop-ups etc. on impulsive buying behavior. [H1]

Situational factors are environmental conditions that surround the buying process and may hinder or favor unplanned purchases (Stern, 1962). Situational factors are diverse constraints at the time of the purchase as well as the individual’s current mood (Dholakia, 2000). The authors suggest a negative influence of constraints on impulsive buying behavior and differ between technical (registration, online payment systems) and other constraints (time, money). [H2]

Personal factors: In their article from 1986, Cobb and Hoyer pointed out that early impulsive buying research had widely neglected the role of consumer characteristics. In social sciences research, impulsivity trait has been identified as an appropriate dimension of impulsive behavior (Plutchik & van Praag, 1995). We suppose a positive effect of impulsive trait on impulsive buying behavior. [H3]
Technical factors: This category of influencing factors has been added due to different characteristics of online shops compared to an offline in-store environment (Adelaar et al., 2003). The authors suggest including website quality and browsing as additional explaining variables (Seethamraju, 2004). Both variables have a supposed positive effect on impulsive buying behavior [H4, H5]

Method
This study is based on a focus group with frequent online shoppers, followed by a data collection using a web questionnaire. The focus group shows (1) the high practical relevance of impulsive buying in online shopping (2) the important role of constraining factors (3) the most frequent unplanned product categories purchased in an online shop (books, CDs and DVDs). Afterwards, an email was sent out to 2,000 students. 290 completed the questionnaire. However, only 91 students quote online impulsive behavior in the past.

Results
All used items and scales meet the recommended levels of fit indices (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1995): (1) substantially high positive factor loadings (2) indicator reliability above .4 (3) factor reliability higher than .6 (4) values greater than 0.5 for the average variance extracted and (5) GFI above .9 (6) RMSEA below the recommended upper limit of 0.08.

Standardized regression weights are significant at .01-level, supporting all hypotheses except H3. Based on these results, we conclude that the model has been validated successfully and can be seen as appropriate for the explanation and prediction of online impulsive buying behavior.

Summary
Literature review of existing impulsive buying research shows a significant lack of studies explaining unplanned purchases of online shops. This paper tries to fulfill this gap by measuring the antecedents of impulsive buying. Additional explaining factors like technical constraints or browsing suggested by the IS literature are added into the causal model. The results of a pilot study show satisfactorily local fit indices indicating high construct validity of the used scales. The supposed hypotheses of the causal are only partially confirmed. The authors suggest conducting further studies focusing on different product categories and personal characteristics.

References

Uncertainty, Virtual Consumption, and Prolonged Happiness
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Abstract
People generally dislike uncertainty. However, recent research shows that uncertainty associated with positive events may actually prolong people’s happiness. The present research further suggests that whether an uncertain positive event (e.g., winning a lucky draw
but not knowing the particular prize won) would lead to prolonged happiness depends on the amount of imagery thought elicited by the event. Positive moods would be sustained only when people can generate sufficient imagery thought about the various possibilities involved in the event. Results from three experiments lend support to the proposed mechanism underlying happiness prolongation following uncertain positive events.

**Effects of Interpersonal Influences on Innovation Evaluation**

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In the present economic environment, where technological advances happen very quickly and a product’s life cycle is cut short, companies need a strategy for innovations development to accomplish the objectives. In this paper, we analyze how the addition of innovations affect product evaluation, and how this influence is affected by the type of innovation, but also by the individual’s interpersonal influences. The preliminary analyses confirm that the impact of the interpersonal influences on innovation evaluation depends on innovation type.

**The Relationship Between Consumer Guilt and Shopping Behavior**

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Extended Abstract

Guilt is a negative state that an individual experiences in reaction to either a positive but undeserved event or a negative but deserved event (Roseman, 1984). Despite its negative valence, guilt is considered a functional emotion, because it informs individuals that they have violated personal or social standards and motivates reparative action (Tangney, Miller, Flicker, & Barlow, 1996). In a consumption context, guilt has been linked to impulsive buying (Rook, 1987), compulsive consumption (O’Guinn & Faber, 1989), and overspending (Pirisi, 1995). This guilt about consumption is usually named “Consumer Guilt.” Furthermore, Burnett and Lunsford (1994) defined consumer guilt as “a violation of one’s internal standard and subsequently a lowering of self esteem”; they also suggested four dimensions of consumer guilt: financial guilt, health guilt, moral guilt, and social responsibility guilt. Although previous research has defined consumer guilt, the difference between consumer guilt versus guilt in a general term is not clear. Beyond the several categories of consumer guilt, the construct and measurement of consumer guilt are still not available in previous research. Therefore, this study focuses on the relationship between the consumers’ shopping behaviors and consumer guilt and intends to explore the dimensions and evolution of consumer guilt.

In order to find out the relationship of the consumer guilt and shopping behavior, respondents were reminded with a shopping situation which consumers usually have the feelings of guilt, which is self-gift giving. Self-gift giving has been promoted heavily as a reward as “you worth to own it” to oneself in advertising. However, under the constraints of budgets and the influence of traditional values, consumers may still hesitate to buy themselves gifts. Self-gift giving is a situation which can elicit consumer guilt. Thus the interviewees were requested to recall their last self-gift giving situation. This research employed the critical incident techniques. A simple constructed questionnaire was first designed and pre-tested three times before the main field work. The main study contains 60 self-gift giving events.

The results illustrate three major findings. First, before beginning the construct development of consumer guilt, we suggest that guilt is an independent construct that is different from the negative side of satisfaction and happiness. 9 questions about the feelings of satisfaction, happiness, and consumer guilt are asked. The respondents are asked to rate, on a nine-point scale, “Before you buy this gift for yourself, how happy, satisfied, and guilty you are?”, “when you are buying this gift for yourself, how happy, satisfied, and guilty you are?” and “After you buy this gift for yourself, how happy, satisfied, and guilty you are?” (1=extremely not satisfied, happy, and guilty; 10=extremely satisfied, happy, and guilty). According to the results of factor analysis, they can divide into four factors. Three questions about consumer guilt, consumer guilt after buying, before buying, and at the point of buying, group to one factor (factor loadings=0.84, 0.75, 0.72). The two questions about satisfaction and happiness before buying group to one factor (factor loadings=0.94, 0.89). The two questions about satisfaction and happiness after buying group to one factor (factor loadings=0.91, 0.91). The two questions about satisfaction and happiness at the point of buying group to one factor (factor loadings=0.93, 0.92). Therefore, the result indicates that consumer guilt is different from negative satisfaction and happiness.

Second, through collecting, sorting and analyzing 60 self-gift giving events, the results pointed out consumer guilt had three dimensions: hesitation, pain of paying, and self-blame. The hesitation means that consumers think they should stop buying these gifts because buying these gifts has violated their value judgment or social standards. In addition, the pain of paying means that consumers have to pay much money when they buy something in a store. Furthermore, the self-blame means that consumers feel something wrong and don’t understand why they have bought something and they disagree with their reason for buying them.

Third, the past researches indicated consumer guilt can divide into two categories: reactive guilt and anticipatory guilt (Rawlings, 1970). Anticipatory guilt occurs before buying and reactive guilt occurs after buying. Our study finds that besides anticipatory guilt and reactive guilt, consumer guilt occurs at the point of buying. We name it proceeding guilt. In addition, the three dimensions of consumer guilt, hesitation, pain of paying, and self-blame, can match the three moments of buying. The major dimension of anticipatory guilt is hesitation, the major dimension of proceeding guilt is pain of paying, and the major dimension of reactive guilt is self-blame.
Abstract
This research develops a conceptual framework which incorporates both the motivational and the interference effects of scarcity on information processing. The results from two studies show that scarcity influences consumers’ perceptions of price information for a travel package with the pattern of results being dependent on price levels and consumers’ motivation to process information. Analyses of thought measures provided further support for the underlying processes.

Consumer Response to Marketplace Deception: Implication of the Persuasion Knowledge Model
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Extended Abstract
Deception—intentionally misleading others about the truth—is a fundamental human behavior, commonly practiced in the marketplace by both buyers and sellers. Building upon the Persuasion Knowledge Model (Friestad & Wright, 1994), we propose that consumers develop sensitivity and coping strategies in response to marketers’ deceptive attempts. In particular, consumers’ deception knowledge functions as a sensor in the formation of a valid attitude towards an advertisement or an influence agent. This process is described as associative decision making in psychology literature (e.g. Massaro, 1994). The basic notion is that consumers are able to recognize similar misleading patterns based on what they learn about marketers’ practices. Therefore, they are more likely to perceive advertisement as deceptive and are less likely to be misled.

The Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM) is a useful framework for organizing knowledge that is relevant to marketplace deception since knowledge of deception can be viewed as a subset of knowledge about persuasion. The PKM argues that from early childhood through early adulthood and beyond, an individual develops knowledge relevant for the two persuasion-related tasks of everyday life: coping effectively with others’ persuasion attempts and effectively executing one’s own persuasion attempts. In this study, we aim to investigate the functions and limits of deception knowledge when consumers cope with deceptive ads. Both situational factors and individual differences are examined: knowledge or salience of the potentially deceptive tactics used, high and low stake situation (whether the expected consequence of being misled is serious), and cognitive optimism (the extent to which consumers wish the claims were true).

Hypotheses
First, we hypothesize that consumer deception knowledge increases the perceived deceptiveness of advertisements. Deception knowledge refers to consumers’ beliefs about a deceptive agent’s motives, strategies and tactics, and how to cope with deception episodes. Although deception knowledge does not necessarily lead to an accurate judgment, it makes consumers more skeptical toward advertisements. Second, we argue that high or low stake situation moderates the effect of perceived deception on consumers’ attitude. In high-stake situation, consumers believe that being misled may cause serious consequences to themselves or others (e.g. safety and health problems), so they will form a stronger negative attitude. Third, we argue that consumers’ attitude is also influenced by the degree to which consumers would like to believe the advertising claims are true. Advertisers often encourage consumers to believe that purchasing a product or service will make them more attractive, sexy, glamorous, popular, etc. The mechanism of cognitive optimism that leads to wishful thinking reduces consumers’ negative attitude toward deceptive advertisements. Even though consumers do not completely trust advertisers’ claims, positive thinking brings hopeful comfort and triggers an intention to try.

Method
The experiment used a 2 (instruction of deception knowledge vs. no instruction, between) X 2 (high vs. low stake situation, between) X 2 (deceptive ads vs. non-deceptive ads, within) mixed design and was administered to one hundred and thirty-three college students on personal computers. Deception knowledge was manipulated by instructions placed at the beginning of the questionnaire. The one-page instruction described the nature of deception knowledge, common deceptive tactics and cues to detect deception in advertising. Participants in the control condition were not given the instruction. The seriousness of expected consequences and advertisement deceptiveness were manipulated by having the participants view different types of print ads. In the high-stake situation (with serious consequences), participants rated six ads, half of which were higher in deceptiveness, and half of which were lower in deceptiveness. This was repeated in the low-stake situation (without serious consequences). A total of 12 stimuli were selected out of 248 print advertisements in major U.S. popular magazines published during the past two years. Stimuli were carefully examined along the manipulation dimensions in a pretest with 48 college students.

Results and Discussion
The repeated-measure ANOVA results show that deception knowledge significantly increased perceived deception but did not change attitude toward advertisements. Participants in the instruction condition (Mean=5.19, SD=1.51) rated the ads as more deceptive than those in the no instruction condition (Mean=4.63, SD=1.38), F(1, 130)=6.007, p<.05. Also, perceived deceptiveness had a significant negative impact on attitude toward ads, F(1,128)=31.581, p<.001, when deceptive ads led to stronger negative attitude (Mean=4.96,
SD=1.33) than non-deceptive ads (Mean=5.63, SD=1.03) in high-stake situation. In low-stake situation, however, participants’ attitude toward deceptive ads was not significantly different from that toward non-deceptive ads. Further, when individuals’ cognitive optimism was controlled for, the interaction between perceived deceptiveness and high vs. low-stake situation remained significant; however, the main effect of perceived deceptiveness was no longer significant, which suggests that participants who wish the claims were true tended to hold less negative attitude toward advertisements despite perceived deceptiveness.

This study extends the Persuasion Knowledge Model to marketplace deception. Deception knowledge appears to make consumers more skeptical toward advertisements. However, whether it involves with a high or low stake situation moderates the effect of perceived deception on attitude. When consumers foresee more serious consequences, they tend to hold stronger negative attitude toward deceptive advertisements. Also, individuals’ desire to trust advertised claims appears to moderate the negative effect of perceived deceptiveness on attitude. As consumers want to believe ads, they tend to hold less negative attitude.

Key References

Consumer Consideration Sets: Altering Memory, Brand Evaluations, and Choice
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Brands that have increased memory accessibility have an advantage to less accessible brands (Nedungadi, 1990). The present work focuses on the effects of prior experiences on consumer memory for brands in choice situations. Previous research suggests that only minor (i.e., relatively low share) brands within a product category will benefit from advertising effects of competitors (Nedungadi, 1990). For example, advertising for Sprite would be more beneficial to a minor brand such as 7-Up than to a major brand within that category, such as Coke.

The DRM Effect
The pattern of priming effects found on only the minor brand is surprising in light of the DRM effect (Deese; 1959; Roediger & McDermott, 1995). The DRM paradigm consists of showing participants lists of related words such as thread, pin, sewing, sharp, point, and so on; participants falsely report having seen the non-presented critical lure, needle (in the context of either an explicit or implicit memory task; e.g., McDermott 1997; McKone and Murphy 2000; Hancock, Hicks, Marsh and Ritschel 2003), and are even more likely to do so if longer lists are used (e.g., Robinson & Roediger, 1997). Warning participants about the illusion right before the memory task does not eliminate the effect (Gallo, Roediger and McDermott 2001); however, if the warning occurs before the exposure session, the instruction serves to attenuate the effect (Gallo, Roberts and Seamon 1997; Gallo et al. 2001), suggesting that the illusion is created by the encoding process.

Hypthesis Development
The DRM findings suggest that advertising effects of competitors would be of more benefit to major rather than minor brands in the same category. That is because the major brands have many more schema-based associations in memory than do the minor brands. For example, Hilton (major) could be linked to, or expected from lobby, lounge, front desk, swimming pool, comfort, and so on, whereas Days Inn (minor) may not be linked to all of those associates. Following this logic, the schema-based associations created by advertising of competitors are more likely to overlap with already existing associations of the major versus the minor brands. This would cause more facilitation of the major than the minor brands.

We speculated that Nedungadi’s (1990) results may have been restricted by the limited set of brand categories he used. Moreover, his hypotheses were derived from assumptions of the separate systems account of memory, assuming principles of activation and inhibition. Recent evidence for the DRM effect has been inconsistent with simple activation accounts (Watson, Balota and Roediger 2003) and has favored attributional accounts (Gallo and Roediger 2003; Whittlesea 2002). Thus we performed a re-inquiry into the work of Nedungadi (1990) to investigate the extent to which his findings may or may not be consistent with the DRM effect; we used more categories and drew our predictions from the current DRM literature.

Current Work
We conducted extensive pilot testing to develop 28 stimulus sets, each comprising a product category (e.g., vehicles), major brands (e.g., Toyota), minor brands (e.g., Nissan), and associates to those brands (e.g., car, drive). In our preliminary studies, we observed that
participants reported having been exposed to “major brand lures” such as Coke, when in fact they had only been exposed to associates (e.g., caffeine) and direct competitors of those lures (e.g., Pepsi). This effect was attenuated when participants were warned about the illusion before the memory test.

We also examined preference ratings of major brand lures. Participants had higher preference ratings for major versus minor brands, and for brands seen earlier versus those not seen. Thus, preliminary testing demonstrated that brand accessibility does influence brand evaluation. It thereby provided the basis for using the present stimulus set to investigate the effects on brand choice and to assess the relationships among consideration set inclusion, brand evaluation, and choice.

In an initial study conducted in a mixed-choice (a combination of memory-based and stimulus-based) setting, prior exposure to associates and competitors had minimal influence on the choice of major brand lures; and more importantly, such prior exposure had no influence on the choice of minor brand lures. Further, prior exposure to associates and competitors had no effect on brand evaluations (of either major or minor brands), although in the absence of prior exposure, evaluations were consistently higher for the major versus minor brands. These results appear to contradict those of Nedungadi (1990). We are currently investigating the reasons for the divergence in the results we obtained compared to those of Nedungadi (1990).

We suggest that stimulus-based and memory-based, as well as mixed choices may be influenced by (a) one’s evaluation of the match between the current fluency of processing and the expectations developed “on the fly” (Kahneman and Miller 1986) that are acquired through the exposure situation that increases accessibility (cf. Whittlesea 2002; 2004), and (b) people’s intuitive theories of cause and effect (Marcel 1983; Ross 1977).

In contrast to Nedungadi’s (1990) assertion that priming can affect accessibility without having any influence of brand evaluation, we hypothesize that accessibility and choice are both based on the same mechanisms, and that the processing style and outcome involved in brand memory are the same as those in brand evaluation (for a similar perspective, see Kronlund and Bernstein 2006). In addition, we assume that stimulus- and memory-based choices are influenced by the same factors (cf. Whittlesea and Leboe 2000), even though the decision-making for each type of choice has been found to differ (e.g., Lynch et al 1988).

References
Adaptive Selling Behavior among Retail Salespeople: The Use of Overt Cues and Consumer Stereotypes

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Extended Abstract

In traditional bricks and mortar retailing, salespeople play a key role in helping to grow and sustain a loyal customer base. Yet as consumers continue to be presented with more ways to make purchases, building consumer loyalty is becoming increasingly difficult; thus even more emphasis is placed on the role of salespeople in terms of ensuring that consumers’ needs are met and that lasting relationships are formed. In theory, in order to best meet the needs of consumers, salespeople must be able to quickly identify consumers’ needs and respond to them with selling behaviors that are most appropriate. The preceding statement is based on the widely accepted notion that a salesperson who adapts his or her behavior to different types of consumers is going to be more successful than a salesperson who uses the same pre-determined approach; thus we might assume that effective retail salespeople practice the concept of adaptive selling (Weitz, Sujan and Sujan 1986). Is this really the case however, that retail salespeople practice adaptive selling and if so how do they go about it?

In order to begin to shed some light on these issues it is necessary to have a detailed understanding of retail salespeople’s actual behaviors with consumers and an understanding of their thoughts and beliefs about how a salesperson should behave with a consumer and what makes a good salesperson. Our first step was to examine their thoughts and beliefs by conducting depth interviews with retail salespeople working for a large consumer electronics/home computer retailer.

Sample Characteristics

The sample consisted of 20 retail salespeople. All informants were male with a median age of 27. The oldest informant was 45; the youngest was 22, and the average length of employment with the company 3.5 years with the shortest length of employment 3.5 months and the longest 8 years. All informants were employed as full-time retail salespeople associated with a specific department—either computers or home electronics/home theater.

Interview Format

A semi-structured depth interview format was used and one researcher conducted all 20 interviews. All interviews were audio-taped with the permission of the informants and were later transcribed verbatim for analysis. Interviews lasted anywhere from 32 to 76 minutes.

Data Coding and Interpretation

The informants’ transcripts were coded using NVivo qualitative software which allows the researcher to customize searches, create nodes within the data of related topics, and search for themes within the data based on key words and phrases.

Excerpts from the interviews illustrate some of the key findings.

Behavior with Customers.

We were interested to see if informants altered their selling behavior with customers, and if so, what caused them to do this. The majority of responses indicated that age, appearance and gender were often used as cues for altering selling behavior

I had this young guy who kind of knew what was cool now and what he wanted and he wanted to take me in a certain direction, so I just treated him like he was my friend and we went from there, but when I had an older gentleman I treated him with a lot more respect and in a more polite manner. Like I didn’t use slang or anything like that (Jeff age 24).

I look at age and gender but not dress style. I look at old people and feel that they are different because they value their money more so they might take a bit more time than say a young person would because they always think they know exactly what they want. Young people tend to spend their money more freely. Sometimes I help the young person first so I can get them out of the way and then I help the older person because they’ll probably take more time and they’ll tell me how their grandson is or whatever and take up about 20 minutes of my time. I don’t look at somebody and say they look rich or they look poor and treat them differently that way (Tim age 26).

When you get somebody like a grandma that comes in, she is going to want extra attention because you know she is an old lady and you have to adapt to that. If you have a guy coming in and he is from the country and he is looking for the latest NASCAR electronic game he won’t want to know about a TV that has progressive scanning and high definition. He’s going to be like what the hell is that and he will get frustrated if you bring that stuff in. You just have to be simple (Pete age 28).

It seems there are clearly preconceived stereotypes about consumers based on very overt characteristics. Informants use these characteristics as indicators of consumer knowledge and/or spending power and spending habits. Using this type of classification system is questionable at best and clearly these observable characteristics do not provide any indication of what the customer’s needs are for the specific interaction with the salesperson.

After hearing these kinds of statements from all 20 salespeople we wondered how the salespeople in the sample would define or describe a successful salesperson. Do they feel that in order to be successful, a salesperson simply needs to observe overt characteristics and then select behaviors based on a stereotype or are there other beliefs about successful salespeople? What we found was a belief that successful salespeople do not behave in the same manner with every customer. Successful salespeople quickly ‘read’ a customer and then select the appropriate selling style. Theoretically, we found that our informants were articulating the concept of adaptive selling, which we would argue is what salespeople should practice in order to best meet consumers’ needs, but what is the troubling aspect are the cues
the salespeople use when attempting to adapt. They use overt cues and associated stereotypes as opposed to really attempting to understand consumers’ needs. By adapting in this manner, the dangers are many including missed opportunities for initial sales and missed opportunities for really connecting with a consumer on a deeper level, which helps to create loyal consumers.

The next step in the research is to conduct additional depth interviews with retail salespeople in different sectors of retailing, e.g., clothing and home furnishings in order to ascertain how wide spread some of the issues we have initially uncovered are among retail salespeople. Following that we plan to gather observational data of retail salespeople in actual selling situations to see if it corresponds with what the salespeople tell us they do.

Reference

Luxury Good Expenditures of Husband and Wife Dyads Incorporating User Attitudes
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Extended Abstract
Luxury is defined as, “something adding to pleasure or comfort but not absolutely necessary; an indulgence in something that provides pleasure, satisfaction, or ease.” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2004). In the broadest definition of luxury, the U.S. luxury goods retailing market, which includes product categories such as perfume, jewelry, watches, cars, champagne and crystal, to name a few, surpassed the $500 billion mark in 2004 (SmartMoney, 2004). Despite its size, the luxury industry as a whole is relatively under researched in the marketing literature. Those that have studied luxury goods have focused on the consumer psychology of consumption, such as materialism, symbolism, and social identity (Prendergast and Wong 2003; Vickers and Renand 2003), to name a few. However, no study in the academic literature has investigated the unique buying behavior of husbands and wives in luxury goods categories, or the impact of user attitudes, spousal purchasing behavior, and individual and household characteristics on either of these.

This paper investigates luxury good expenditures of husband and wife dyads within a household, where all purchases are made for the wife. This allows us to compare the purchasing behavior of user and non-user within a household as well as that of husband and wife dyads. Our main interest is to understand how the purchasing behavior, attitudes, and personal characteristics of one member of the dyad affect the purchasing behavior of the other.

We begin by developing a conceptual model of the dyadic purchasing behavior of husbands (non-users) and wives (users) for luxury goods. To explain the purchasing behavior of each of the two members of the dyad, we include as explanatory variables in our model, 1) the wife’s (user’s) attitudes towards product and product category, 2) the purchasing behavior of the other member of the dyad, and 3) individual and household characteristics. Figure 1 provides a pictorial view that captures this logic.

As Figure 1 shows, our dyadic model of husband and wife expenditures for luxury goods is influenced by exogenous and endogenous factors. The three rectangles represent the exogenous variables of the wife’s attitudes towards jewelry, individual characteristics about the husband and the wife, and household characteristics. The two circles represent the endogenous variables of the expenditure of each spouse, and are determined by the model.

To test our dyadic conceptual model we conduct an empirical study that utilizes 2003 diary panel data provided by Ipsos, a global market research company which ranks 3rd among all global survey-based research companies with 2004 revenues of 605.6 million euros. The data tracks husband and wife expenditures on jewelry for the wife only, for up to a four month period. The jewelry category is a large and important sector of the luxury goods category. U.S. jewelry sales were estimated at $45B in 2004 and in the same year jewelry represented the fastest growing advertising category for many luxury magazines including Vogue and Town & Country (Advertising Age, 2004).

We first use factor analysis to reduce a set of thirteen original variables capturing wives’ attitudes towards jewelry. The thirteen original variables are reduced to five main user attitudes, which we label, “Guilty Consumer”, “Romantic Consumer”, “Enthusiastic Purchaser”, “Involved Recipient”, and “Infrequent User”. We then use the method of instrumental variables to estimate the parameters of our dyadic model of luxury good expenditures where the dependent variables are the husband’s expenditures on jewelry for his wife and the wife’s expenditures on jewelry for herself during the window of observation. The explanatory variables in our model include the five user attitudes mentioned above, the spending behavior of both members of the dyad, and personal and household characteristics of the husband and wife.

Our findings reveal that while household income is a useful predictor of luxury good spending, income has a different impact on the expenditure of husbands (“non-users”) than wives (“users”). We also find that “user” attitudes of the wife affect her self-purchases differently than the purchases made for her by her husband, and that spousal purchasing behavior and individual and household characteristics affect a wife’s purchases of luxury goods for herself differently than they affect the purchases made for her by her husband.

Our results are useful for marketers of luxury goods where both wives (users) and husbands (non-users) within a household are purchasers of the product, but they behave differently and therefore developing a differentiated approach to market to both is advantageous.

References
Advertising Age, “Jewelry Ads Sparkle in Context of Fashion Staple; Fastest-Gaining Segment at Key Magazines with Plenty of Room to Grow,” Kate Fitzgerald, September 13, 2004, 75.37, p. S8
FIGURE 1
Model of Husband-Wife Dyad Expenditure on Luxury Goods for the Wife

Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2004), Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, Springfield, MA.

**Does a Broken Heart Lead to an Empty Wallet? Social Exclusion Affects Impulsive Spending**
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**Extended Abstract**
Impulse purchases are made spontaneously, without deliberation, and without regard for the consequences of making the purchase (Rook 1987). Hoch and Loewenstein (1991) argued that the decision to purchase is determined by 2 factors: The desire to purchase and the amount of willpower one has to overcome this desire. When the urge to purchase becomes stronger than the amount of willpower, purchasing becomes more likely.

Recently, Vohs and Faber (in press) demonstrated that people with a reduced capacity to exert self-control are more likely to spend money impulsively. That is, participants who engaged in prior acts of self-control, and therefore had a reduced capacity to exert self-
control, spent more money than participants who had not engaged in prior acts of self-control. Research on social exclusion has shown that when people are socially excluded they engage in behavior indicative of low self-control (Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocco, & Twenge 2005). For example, they eat more cookies, drink less of a healthy but unpleasant-tasting drink, and give up on difficult tasks sooner than participants who were not socially excluded. Thus, socially excluded people are less able to implement a more desirable response than participants who are not socially excluded. Taken together, these results suggest that social exclusion should lead to increased impulsive spending via reduced self-control. One laboratory study supports this hypothesis.

Social exclusion was manipulated using a procedure developed by Baumeister and colleagues (2005). After arriving to the experiment, participants completed the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ). The experimenter scored their questionnaire; based on random assignment, the experimenter gave the participant bogus feedback regarding their personality score. Participants in the future belong condition were told they would have rewarding relationships throughout life, a long and stable marriage, and lasting friendships. Participants in the future alone condition were told they would end up alone later in life; their current friends and relationships would fade away, their (several) marriages would all dissolve, and they would essentially be alone later in life. Participants in the misfortune control condition were told they would be accident prone later in life. This condition served as a negative feedback control, allowing us to attribute increases in spending to the specificity of negative feedback regarding social relationships, not negative feedback in general. After the feedback, we checked for differences in affect by administering the Brief Mood Introspection Scale (BMIS; Mayer and Gaschke 1988).

Next, we measured amount willingness to spend, using a Feinberg (1986) method adapted by Vohs and Faber (in press). Participants were given a binder, which contained 15 glossy pictures of various mid to high end products (watch, car, fridge, sofa, jewelry, etc.). Participants were asked to indicate the maximum price they would be willing to pay for each product. Independent raters classified the products according to three categories: 1) Products one purchases for the self (e.g., widescreen flat-panel TV) 2) Products one purchases to indicate status or resources, that is, conspicuous consumption products (e.g., Audi, Rolex) and 3) Products one buys for practical purposes (e.g., table, sofa).

We summed amount willing to pay for all 15 products as an overall index of willingness to spend. An ANOVA with condition as the predictor showed that participants in the future alone condition were willing to pay significantly more than the future belonging condition and the misfortune control condition. Willingness to pay was not significantly different between the future alone condition and the misfortune control condition.

We also summed amount willing to pay for the three categories of items: Conspicuous consumption items, items for the self, and practical items. Three separate ANOVAs using condition as the predictor showed that participants in the future alone condition were willing to pay significantly more for conspicuous consumption items and items purchased for the self than participants in the future belonging condition and misfortune control condition; however, there was no difference between the three groups in willingness to pay for practical items.

Our experimental design precludes the possibility that obtained results are attributable to receiving negative feedback. Participants in the misfortune control condition also received negative feedback; however, they were willing to pay less than participants in the future alone condition. The increase in willingness to spend seems more specific to the negative feedback of social exclusion.

No differences in emotion, measured by the BMIS (Mayer and Gaschke 1988), were found as a result of the feedback. This is consistent with previous laboratory social exclusion manipulations (e.g., Baumeister et al., 2005). Furthermore, correlations between amount willing to pay and emotion indicated there were no significant relations between our dependent measures and emotion.

In sum, this study provides evidence that social exclusion leads to increased willingness to spend. Participants who have been socially excluded indicated they would pay more for products that demonstrate status and resources, as well as for products one purchases for the self, relative to participants who were not socially excluded. Social exclusion did not, however, lead to an increased willingness to pay for practical items.

References

It’s About Time: Sex Differences in Estimating Time for Shopping in Five Contexts
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Traditional sex roles hold that women not only spend more time shopping than men, but also enjoy shopping far more than men do. Indeed, there seems to be as much pride among men when they announce how much they “hate” shopping as among women who proclaim their prowess (Dennis & McCall, 2005). If retailers and researchers wish to alter males’ perceptions of shopping, we require a better
understanding of the processes that maintain those sex differences. To help fill this gap, this research will test the hypothesis that sex differences in shopping behavior are reflected in, and influenced by, the amount of time women and men estimate in advance for shopping tasks, and more fundamentally, in how they arrive at these estimates. Men, more so than women, may be falling into a form of planning fallacy (Kruger & Evans, 2003) where time estimates become unrealistic, leading to unpleasant experiences.

Time estimation and shopping enjoyment are linked in a close, reciprocal relationship that can have dramatic effects on the retail environment (Donovan, Rossiter, Marcoolyn & Nesdale, 1994). Previous research shows that enjoyment of a task may lead to an underestimation of time elapsing as the task unfolds, as when people lose track of time doing something they enjoy (see Chaston & Kingstone, 2004). Conversely, underestimating time in advance of an activity will tend to create a sense of time pressure that can interfere with the task and reduce enjoyment. Time pressure has been identified as a significant source of shopping stress (Aylott & Mitchell, 1999; Fram, 1991, 1992; Fram & Axelrood, 1990; Sujan, Sujan, Bettman, & Verhallen, 1999). Time pressure is an important variable for marketers to understand because it affects attitude towards shopping (Mowen, 1993) and consumer behavior (Van Kenhove & De Wulf, 2000). The amount of time allotted for shopping, and the way in which shopping time is estimated, can either exacerbate or relieve time pressure. For this reason, time estimation holds the potential to be a lynchpin in understanding the psychological differences between men and women shoppers; there is little previous research in this area.

To test the hypotheses underlying this study, we required a diversity of shopping contexts experienced by both sexes and a relatively homogeneous sample of shoppers. We selected a sample of men and women enrolled full-time in the Business program at Cape Breton University. This allowed for with the added benefit of a “member check” (Maxwell, 2005) of our interpretations of the results with a subgroup of 30 study participants. After pilot testing, we asked the main sample of 203 respondents to estimate the time required to perform specific shopping tasks with which they had experience. The self-report questionnaire had several elements, but our focus in this paper is on the time estimation data.

Shopping is a contextualized act (Buttle, 1992). Therefore, we asked respondents to imagine shopping in five different contexts commonly experienced by both men and women. In each context we presented respondents with a product acquisition motive. The specific contexts were shopping for (1) a gift, (2) a computer, (3) a leisure product such as sporting goods, a book, or music, (4) clothing (specifically jeans or casual pants) and (5) a short list of grocery items. We tested the hypothesis that men and women estimate time differently within each of the contexts (MacNeil, 2006).

In analyzing the time estimates provided by men and women in the five shopping contexts, significant main effects were found for both sex ($F(1,162)=17.2, p<.001$, partial eta-squared=.096) and shopping context ($F(4,648)=28.9, p<.001$, partial eta-squared=.151), and the interaction was significant ($F(4,680)=5.91, p<.001$, partial eta-squared=.035). The main effect for sex indicates that women and men differ significantly in their estimates of shopping time, and the significant interaction indicates that sex differences in time estimation depend on shopping contexts.

Results showed that in all contexts women estimated longer amounts of time than did men, but sex differences were statistically significant ($p<.05$) in only three of the five shopping contexts: gift, computer, and clothes. In two contexts, gift and computer, women estimated it would take almost 50% more time than did the men. In the clothing context, women’s estimates were almost twice as high as those given by men. The estimates of time were very similar and not significantly different for leisure product and grocery shopping.

To better understand why men and women are providing different estimates of time, we examined sex differences in the methods by which those estimates were generated. In three of the shopping contexts, we asked respondents to indicate the method of time estimation by selecting one of four options (ballpark, desired time, recall, and subtasks). Using 2 x 4 cross-tabulations and the chi-square statistic we found significant differences in both the gift and leisure product contexts, where men preferred the cursory “ballpark” estimation method, and women preferred to estimate by recalling a previous shopping trip. No significant differences were found in the method of estimating the time required to purchase a computer.

The major results of this study both support and qualify the hypotheses we had in approaching the research project. We found that women tend to allocate more time to shopping than men, but the difference depends on context. We also found that men tend to use more cursory methods of time estimation, though again the shopping context has an impact. Finally, when asked to use the same time estimation procedure, breaking the task into subtasks and estimating the time allocated to each, men and women differ in one context (clothing) and not the other (grocery). The complexity of the results and their implications for retail environments suggest that time estimation for shopping will be fertile ground for future research.

References


The Role of Prior Knowledge in Advertisement Evaluation  
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Extended Abstract
As an important construct in consumer research, prior knowledge has garnered researchers’ attention for more than two decades. Previous research traditionally focuses on prior knowledge’s impact on consumers’ information search, information processing and learning behaviors. Very few studies (e.g. Roehm and Sternthal 2001) have directly explored the role of prior knowledge in advertisement evaluation. The attempted contribution of this research is to broaden our understanding in this area by investigating the processes by which knowledge has its impact on consumers’ evaluation of advertising messages.

The angle from which this study looks at prior knowledge is different from past research in which knowledge is often operationalized as a dichotomous variable (i.e. high vs. low or objective vs. subjective). This study distinguishes itself by focusing on knowledge accessibility and its applicability in judgment. Advertising messages are usually seen or heard by consumers for a very brief period of time. It is unlikely that consumers will mull over their stored knowledge before forming impressions of the ads. In these circumstances, the accessible knowledge ought to play a major role in making judgments. What remains unclear is the interaction between the accessible knowledge and the salient features of the messages to which they attend.

Higgins (1995) proposes that the relation between the stored knowledge and stimulus information depends on whether the perceivers have a priori expectancies or goals. When expectancies or goals are absent, only those salient features of the stimulus that match stored knowledge are relevant. When expectancies or goals are present, “both features that match and features mismatch stored knowledge are relevant” (p.137). Armed with the popular persuasion models such as Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty and Cacioppo 1986), I translate Higgins’ proposition into the following research hypothesis: (1) when message processing motivation is low, consumers will give more positive evaluations to the advertisement whose salient feature matches their accessible knowledge about the advertised product; (2) when message processing motivation is high, consumers will not rely on their accessible knowledge to make judgments. There will be no significant difference between the evaluations of matched and mismatched advertisements.

A 2 (processing motivation: low vs. high) x 3 (knowledge accessibility: match vs. mismatch vs. control) between-subjects laboratory experiment was conducted to test the research hypothesis. In the experiment, student subjects’ prior knowledge about a specific product feature was made accessible by a priming task. A no-prime control condition was also included. After the priming, subjects were presented with a print newsletter that contains the focal advertisement. Subjects’ processing motivation was manipulated by instructing them either to produce a detailed evaluation (high motivation condition) or to provide reading time estimation (low motivation condition).

The results confirmed the hypothesis. Under the low processing motivation condition, matched ads received more favorable evaluations and the mismatched ads were judged worse than those in the no-prime control condition. Under the high processing motivation condition, no significant difference was found across all conditions.

A second study is proposed to test the external validity of the findings from the first study and to provide managerial implications of this research to marketing practitioners.

References

I Self Gift Therefore I am: An Examination of Self-construal and Consumers Attitudes Towards Self-gifting
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Extended Abstract
Up until the last decade, gift giving theory and research had been primarily dyadic or interpersonal in nature (e.g. Belk, 1979). Nonetheless, it was acknowledged that people may sometimes give gifts to themselves, and suggested that the self-gift phenomenon may be widely occurring in American society (Mick and DeMoss, 1990a, 1990b).

More specifically, it appears that gifts to oneself are ubiquitous, at least in American society. (Mick and DeMoss, 1990b). Other research has substantiated the notion that self-gifts are a fairly common and important phenomenon particularly in western consumer
behavior (e.g., Faure and Mick, 1993). According to social researchers, Western individuals have become increasingly self-oriented in their purchases and consumption behavior (Mick, DeMoss and Faber 1992), and an example of this phenomena has been labeled self-gifts. Similarly, McKeage et al. (1993) believe that people have been giving gifts to themselves since the early beginnings of self-indulgence.

Self-gifting is clearly prevalent in western consumer behavior. The question then becomes whether the propensity to self gift is confined to the United States, or a more widespread phenomenon. For example, it is well established that people with different cultural backgrounds may behave differently and have different reactions to similar situations. More specifically, research has shown that different cultural identifications have an impact on the way people think, feel, and behave (e.g., Markus and Kitayama, 1991). How does this effect self-gifting behavior? This research proposes to answer this question by investigating whether self-gifting is a universal phenomenon or one simply confined to Western societies by examining consumers self-construal and attitude towards self-gifting.

Overall, it has been suggested that self-gifts represent a complex class of personal acquisitions that offer intriguing insights on self-directed consumer behavior (Mick and DeMoss 1990b), “Self gift theory will likely benefit from drawing on additionally relevant psychological research” (Mick and DeMoss, 1990b p. 329) since “with rich and complex qualities, self-gifts provide a window through which consumer behavior can be viewed in some of its most adaptive, dramatic and personal significant forms” (Mick and DeMoss, 1990b p.331).

As demonstrated by its name and definition, one of the predominant aspects of self-gifting is the direct focus on the self. Clearly, if people view the self differently, they will react differently to self-gifting. Taken together with the recommendation above by Mick and DeMoss (1990), we propose to draw on the psychological research of Markus and Kitayama (1991) that identified two dimensions of the self that can be used to characterize consumer’s self-construal as well as explain and identify differences between cultures: independence and interdependence.

According to Markus and Kitayama, self-construal can be conceptualized by the degree of independence/interdependence that a person possesses. They further state that all people contain both an independent and interdependent self, but that the culture in which they are bought up influences which one dominates. For example, Europeans and Caucasian Americans are typically said to be independent because they tend to emphasize the individual whereas people from Asian cultures are typically interdependent because they tend to emphasize the group as more important than the individual. People with independent self-construals strive to develop and express their unique characteristics, whereas people with interdependent self-construals place value on harmonious relationships with others and acceptance in their community. Those with well-developed independent self-construals gain self-esteem through expressing the self and validating their internal attributes, whereas harmonious interpersonal relationships and the ability to adjust to various situations are sources of self esteem for the interdependent self-construal (Singelis 1994). After reviewing an extensive array of studies, Markus and Kitayama (1991) argue that these independent and interdependent views of the self influence cognition, emotion, and motivation and help to explain individual differences between cultural groups.

It seems reasonable then to propose that consumers’ self-construal will have an impact on their attitude and likelihood to self-gift. More specifically, it seems that people with an independent self-construal will be more likely to self-gift, as they tend to have self-benefiting motivations, such as the need to achieve, self-enhance, or affiliate. Conversely, people with an interdependent self-construal will be less likely to self-gift as they tend to derive their motivations from what benefits others and a group as a whole, such as the need to be agreeable to others, to accommodate to their needs, and to restrain one’s own wishes or wants.

To test the above propositions, a survey was distributed to 84 college students in the New York area that measured their self-construal attitude, subjective norm, and likelihood to self-gift and some other demographic information. As predicted, subjects with high independent self-construals had a significantly more favorable attitude towards self-gifting, and subjects with high interdependent self-construals had a significantly less favorable attitude towards self-gifting (Mindependent=5.37, Minterdependent=4.87; p<.01). We also tested subjects’ attitude towards self-gifting advertisement slogans (e.g. “The perfect little thank me” (Andies candy) and “Because I’m worth it” (L’Oréal). Overall, Independents had a significantly more favorable attitude towards self-gifting slogans and Interdependents had a significantly less favorable attitude towards them (Mindependent=6.42, Minterdependent=5.98; p=.018).

The results of this research have important implications for managers, particularly when choosing an international advertising strategy. It will help companies who market their products in the United States using self-gift appeals in their advertisements decide whether they should use these messages in other markets or need to modify them to successfully sell their products. Based on our study, it seems that they cannot standardize these ads for countries that have consumers typically classified as having Interdependent self-construal. However, the results of this analysis provide some direction to marketers as to what appeals they should use. More specifically, rather than the slogans used in the United States that emphasizes the worth of the individual, (i.e. you deserve it), to better target Interdependents, the slogans should emphasize family and friends and their happiness.

Bibliography


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Anomie Goes Online: The Emo Microculture

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Abstract

Whether the palliative is jazz or emo, it is common for fringe youth microcultures to identify with a musical genre that gives voice to feelings of alienation. However, the place where these youth connect and communicate with other like me participants. As part of a larger project focusing upon youth microcultures centered on the common theme of anomie, we are collecting data from a variety of sources to identify emergent themes relative to communication, ritual, and resistance within this new cyber-mediated anomie microculture.

Introduction

Back then, they were hanging out in the coffee shop. In the 1960 British movie Beat Girl, “teenage bad girl” Jenny sneaks out of the house to hang out with her “beatnik” pals at the local coffee shop where they talk about alienation and jazz.4

Today, they are commiserating on the Internet. In this excerpt from a typical interview with an “emo kid,” a girl who could be Jenny’s daughter says:

“I had a bit of an abusive childhood, and I was the fat ugly kid in class until high school… My best friend Nina—the one who introduced me to emo bands seemed to think I didn’t like her… That brought me down real hard… Music has always helped me out. Nina and I are a lot alike, and the first thing we found out about each other was that were it not for music we’d probably both either be stuck in a crisis center or dead by now. I rely a lot on music to get me through the day. When I get home from school the only things I do are go online and listen to music.” (Greenwald 2003, p. 307)

4A plethora of online sources richly document the experience of beatniks and other youth microcultures, cf. for example (http://www.stim.com/Stim-x/0895August/Automedia/beatnik.html)
Whether the palliative is jazz or emo, it is common for fringe youth microcultures to identify with a musical genre that gives voice to feelings of alienation. However, the place where these youth connect—their touchspace—has morphed from yesterday’s coffeehouse to today’s website. The purpose of this project is to chronicle how adherents of the emo microculture relieve alienation by finding and communicating with other “like me” participants. We will identify emergent themes relative to communication, ritual, and resistance within this new cyber-mediated, anomie microculture.

Adolescence is for many a tormented period characterized by an approach-avoidance conflict—the need for connectedness (cf. Edgette 2002) coupled with feelings of alienation from adults and social institutions. We can view adolescent alienation within the framework of anomie, originally articulated by Emile Durkheim as instability within society due to normlessness. This void produces a “…personal sense of unrest, alienation, and uncertainty” (Garfield 1987, p. 276). Although these concepts have been used to explain congregational behaviors from union organizing to mafia social clubs, there have been few attempts to study anomie youth-oriented groups like emo.

Microcultures form and evolve on the basis of strong identification with an activity or art form. Gans (1974) proposed that people can be categorized into taste cultures based on their individual orientations toward popular culture—in this case, musical taste. We regard the emo phenomenon as a taste culture characterized by shared anomie and the strong propensity to communicate this central theme by constructing a community (offline or online) that shares and reinforces preferences for music and associated clothing styles, hair styles, hang-outs, etc.

McLeod and Chaffee (1972) suggest that social reality is created when an individual receives information from a mediated source such as television or a website; the verisimilitude of this information often rivals that of direct physical observation or real world (i.e., offline) social interaction. The evolving emo genre is a mass-mediated microculture. Like the beatniks that preceded them, “emo kids” find and connect with one another through music, slang, rituals, and clothing. Emo, short for emotional, is a label both for a musical genre and for the youthful adherents to that genre. Although there are different manifestations of this microculture (e.g. hardcore—extremely abrasive, screamo—screaming lyrics, or post-emo indie rock—softer lyrics), the common thread uniting emo kids is a strong current of alienation, bridging feelings of anger and hurt. Emo song lyrics are histrionic, often desperate, and maybe even whiny. These lyrics from the song “Three Weeks” by the emo artist Aaron Anatasi are typical of this angst: “You are treating me so differently / so different, I can’t explain / I feel like I’m invisible to you.”

Emo kids tend to look like they have just shopped at a garage sale. They often sport work jackets, too-small jeans, and old Chuck Taylor sneakers. The emblematic hairstyle is short, slick, dyed-black hair with pronounced bangs. Their “stores of choice” are retailers that carry the look Hot Topic stores have popularized, although most purchases are made at thrift stores for economy and originality. Emo kids interact primarily on the web, though they may also at times link up at small independent shows. Emo has yet to penetrate mass youth culture. Although a few emo bands have “made it” to MTV, emo kids generally view this commercial success as a form of betrayal.

Method

We will sample a diverse set of photos, movies, websites (including MySpace.com, the emos’ primary gathering place in cyberspace) and blogs to document the emerging emo microculture. Our goal is to identify emergent themes relative to communication, ritual, and resistance as part of our quest to understand how the consumption practices of significant numbers of youths are mediated by this anomie microculture.

Expected Results

We will report results from the first stage of an ongoing project that will chronicle the successive waves of alienation-based youth microcultures since WWII, from the Beatniks of the 1950s to the emos of today (e.g. Mods, Hipsters, Punks). The ongoing study will identify emergent themes relative to communication, ritual, and resistance/ alienation as expressed both in offline and online venues by successive generations of anomie consumers.

We expect that this study will uncover emergent themes associated with varying levels of anomia dependent upon the centrality of the emo experience to the respondent. Emos who are at the core of the movement, participating at every level (e.g. music, clothing, rituals) to construct a lifestyle will demonstrate greater degrees of anomie behavior. As participation ripples toward the periphery (e.g. ‘posers’ that just like the distinctive hair but not the music), we expect to observe less anomie behavior as the intensity of identification with this musical genre decreases.

Background & Conceptualization

Product returns are a vital issue among retailers and distributors in today’s marketplace. Cost of returns range from 5% to as much as 30% of sales in some according to a recent article in the Wall Street Journal and, in aggregate, cost retailers billions of dollars a year (Hess and Mayhew, 1997). This is in addition to various hidden costs that are frequently difficult to model such as consumer disloyalty resulting from disappointing product and unpalatable return experiences and the logistics costs of managing the reverse supply chain.

Research conducted on returns phenomena has been sparse and, where existent, has tended to focus on modeling financial and demographic aspects of returns processes. Padmanabhan (1997) modeled the financial feasibility of various return policies; Hess and

5Researchers have historically referred to these groups as subcultures (e.g. Hall and Jefferson 1976; Hebdige 1979), but some analysts are starting to prefer the term microculture to distinguish taste subcultures from those defined by gender, race, ethnicity, and so on (Solomon 2006).

6Members of this microculture never capitalize the label emo.
Mayhew (1997) modeled a consumer’s likelihood of returning a product given demographic, product-specific and behavioral characteristics of consumers; and Wood (2001) provides experimental evidence that return policy leniency affects consumers’ transaction dynamics in a remote ordering (i.e. internet, catalog, etc.) environment.

The remainder of the extant product returns research has focused on the supply side issues, while indirectly tapping into the motivational aspects of consumers’ thought processes. Hess, Chu and Gerstner (1996) provide theoretical evidence of the efficacy of non-refundable charges in discouraging “inappropriate” (i.e. opportunistic) returns. Davis, Hagerty and Gerstner (1998) document the popular managerial mindset that ease of completing returns (i.e. cost to consumer) correlates with the likelihood of making returns.

The purpose of this study is to examine consumer motivations for return decisions. Although previous research has tangentially concerned itself with consumer motivations in a returns decision context, no study has comprehensively examined an exhaustive set of reasons why consumers could return products and the effects of those reasons on key behavioral variables of interest.

The major hypothesis of this paper is that return motivations affect consumers’ likelihood of returning products, the level of costs consumers will incur to return products, and the amount of guilt consumers experience in engaging in returns. In short, this paper hypothesizes that not all returns are created equal from a motivational perspective.

The managerial implications of this study are potentially far-reaching. Retailers and distributors are constantly striving to minimize or altogether eliminate–product returns, despite their adoption of liberal return policies which serve to maximize sales through low-risk trial. Knowing consumers’ principal motivations for returns would allow distributors to address these issues in their marketing and merchandising plans. This holds true especially in a world of increasingly pervasive internet and catalog (i.e. remote) sales where experiential product trial is diminished for consumers.

Methodology

Subjects are presented with thirteen different reason-for-return (i.e. motivational) scenarios each about a paragraph in length. They include: (1) Being Overcharged, (2) Functional Failure, (3) Aesthetic Failure, (4) Mistaken Needs Assessment, (5) Better Competitor Functionality, (6) Money Generation, (7) Simultaneous Comparison, (8) Sense of Accomplishment, (9) Extracted Use, (10) Cheaper Competitor Product, (11) Combating Feelings of Inadequacy (Failure Salience), (12) Counteracting Impulsive Tendencies and (13) Undue Pressure from Seller.

For each scenario, subjects are told to assume that the price paid for the product being returned is either $10, $100, or $1,000, representing small, moderate and large purchase amounts respectively. Subjects are then asked to report, using a nine-point scale: (1) the maximum amount of cost they would incur to make the return (MaxCost), (2) their likelihood of making the return (RL), and how guilty they feel about making the return (Guilt). Subjects are subsequently asked to report how responsible they believe both they and the seller are for causing the return, given the particular scenario described.

All scenarios were presented using a within-subject design so as to make the manipulation conditions more salient and evoke relative ratings on the dependent variables.

Results and Major Findings

51 respondents completed the surveys. The major hypothesis of the paper is confirmed: The motivation employed in making a return affects (1) the amount of cost consumers will incur to make the return, (2) how likely consumers are to make the return, and (3) the guilt experienced while contemplating making the return.

Correlational Findings

Purchase Price correlates very strongly with the Maximum Cost (Max Cost) subjects are willing to incur to return product (r=.57, p <.001), and less strongly, but still significantly, with Return Likelihood (r =.29, p <.001). Purchase Price does not correlate with Maximum Cost as a % of Amount Spent (MaxCost/Amt). The Maximum Cost (Max Cost) subjects are willing to incur correlates moderately well with Likelihood of Return (r=.21, p <.001). Lastly, Return Likelihood correlates negatively with Guilt (r=-.28, p <.001).

ANOVA Results

For the Maximum Cost respondents are willing to incur dependent variable (MaxCost), only Purchase Price (Amount) is significant. For the Maximum Cost as a Percentage of Purchase Price dependent variable (MaxCost/Amount), only Scenario is significant (p=.014). For the Return Likelihood dependent variable, Scenario is significant (p<.001), Purchase Price (Amount) is significant (p<.001) and the Scenario*Purchase Price interaction is significant at about the 10% level.

For the guilt experienced while contemplating the return dependent variable (Guilt), only Scenario is significant (p<.001). For both the Perception of Seller Responsibility for causing the return and Perception of Buyer Responsibility for causing the return, Scenario was significant (p <.001 for both) while Purchase Price was not.

Specific Results Discussion

Maximum cost consumers were willing to incur as a percentage of price (MaxCost/Amount) was highest for Money Generation and Functional Failure and lowest for Being Overcharged and Cheaper Competitor Product. Return Likelihood was highest for Being Overcharged, Functional Failure, Cheaper Competitor Product and Undue Pressure from Seller and lowest for Sense of Accomplishment and Simultaneous Comparison. Guilt was highest for Extracted Use, Sense of Accomplishment and Simultaneous Comparison, and lowest for Better Competitor Functionality, Cheaper Competitor Product and Undue Pressure from Seller.

References


A Designer is Only as Good as a Star Who Wears Her Clothes: Examining the Roles of Opinion Leaders using the Persuasion Knowledge Model

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Extended Abstract

A basic assumption in diffusion theory is that some individuals, referred to as opinion leaders, are influential in persuading others to adopt products within a given social structure. They directly affect the diffusion of innovation by being the early adopters and spurring new product interest as well as trial. The diffusion of information pertaining to the innovation and its influence depends on the opinion leadership. Many attempts have been made to identify the characteristics of opinion leaders, and the findings have typically shown that opinion leaders are individuals who are knowledgeable about various topics and whose advice is taken seriously by others. They also tend to be very socially active and highly interconnected within the community (Darley and Johnson, 1993). Moreover, effective opinion leaders tend to be slightly higher than the people they influence in terms of status and educational attainment, but not so high as to be in a different social class (Rogers, 1995). This way, the leaders are still a part of their audience’s reference group. And as opinion leaders these individuals are looked upon by the follower-group to make their assessments about the worth of the innovations.

The theoretical contribution of this research arises in the form of empirical evidence that the Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM) (Friestad and Wright 1994) can explain some of the anomalies in the Diffusion of Innovations (DoI) model. We suggest that the perception of the opinion leaders, as endorsers or adopters, is the key variable in determining how much influence the opinion leaders would ultimately have upon the follower class.

Fashion is an area where interpersonal communications has been found to be highly important in the diffusion of information. Additionally, the frequent introduction of new clothing styles each season makes the fashion market a desirable study for diffusion research focusing upon innovativeness (Baumgarten, 1975). Thus, we focused on fashion as the domain of the first study.

According to Rogers (1995), an innovation is any idea, practice or object perceived as new. Fashion is characterized by constant innovations, whether real or perceived that often include small changes from the previous season or year. Because fashions are constantly changing, but the fashion changes are not extreme innovations, they can be classified as dynamically continuous innovations (Rogers, 1995). Understanding the diffusion process for fashion therefore is crucial to marketers in the industry since fashion is so dynamic in nature.

Fashion opinion leaders represent a significant target market with high sales potential for the fashion marketer and furthermore, beyond their individual purchase capacity, they represent important change agents in disseminating fashion information to others during the fashion season (Summers, 1970). The goal of the marketer in reaching these opinion leaders is to stimulate positive word of mouth communication via them to the masses. In other words, the communication message should be tailored so that it’s communicable in interpersonal channels, and can therefore lead to the diffusion of the particular fashion (Summers, 1970).

Opinion leaders are crucial for the social legitimation of new innovations and fashion ideas (Rogers, 1995). If a new look is adopted by fashion opinion leaders, then it has increased chance of becoming a fashion adopted by the rest of the population, and the teen market is no exception. Opinion leadership is defined as “the degree to which an individual is able to influence other individual’s attitudes or overt behavior informally in a desired way with relative frequency” (Rogers, 1995). If designers can determine who these opinion leaders are, and target them effectively, then the introduction of a particular fashion has a much higher probability of becoming adopted.

It is often difficult to determine who the opinion leaders are for a particular segment, and even more difficult to figure out how to target them effectively. However, for the fashion industry, and specifically the teenage market, we propose that celebrities may serve as opinion leaders, in that through interpersonal communication about the latest fashions are facilitated.

To gain more insight into our proposed phenomenon of celebrities as fashion opinion leaders for this segment, we conducted 3 focus groups (8 subjects each) and 6 in-depth interviews with 4 females and 2 males who lived in the New York City area. We found overwhelming support for our notion that teenagers view celebrities as fashion opinion leaders. Specifically, there was a lot of interest in celebrity singers, who were considered to be ‘cool, stylish and real,’ and limited interest in younger celebrities. Additionally, depending on the style, (i.e. funky vs. classy) different types of celebrities (i.e. singers vs. actresses) were preferred.

One of the more interesting findings that our research yielded was that teens seemed to discriminate between celebrities wearing a particular style in a commercial or some other paid form of advertisement and celebrities wearing a particular style on an award show or pictured casually in a magazine, the latter of which they felt displayed a more real and legitimate image. Apparently, credibility was a big issue for the teens and they felt that being paid to wear something was not reflective of personal tastes or likes by the celebrities and therefore would not be influential in getting them to adopt a new fashion.

Our findings are also in tune with robust findings of persuasion knowledge model that suggests that consumers who perceive the persuasive attempts of marketers react in a way to neutralize such attempts (Friestad and Wright 1994). In this research also we show that consumers do perceive the celebrity endorsements in the commercials as persuasive attempts by marketers and thus, try to undermine them by actively rejecting the claim that such an endorser indeed uses or likes the endorsed product (fashion).
When We Practice to Deceive: An Exploration Into the Accommodative Role of Deceptive Practices in Market Exchanges

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Since early in the history of studying consumer markets, scholars have maintained an interest in the use of deceptive practices in market exchanges (Deighton and Grayson 1995; Zinbarg 2001). Much of the deception research that appears in consumer and marketing journals addresses the potential of consumers to be deceived by advertising (e.g. Barone, Palan, and Miniard 2004; Johar 1995; and Burke, DeSarbo, and Oliver 1988) and public policy aimed at protecting consumers against deceptive marketing practices (e.g. Burke, Milberg, and Moe 1997; Ford and Calfee 1986). The understanding of deception that emerged from these studies has greatly informed consumer researchers and policy makers as to the various ways consumers may be deceived and the potentially detrimental outcomes of deceptive market practices.

Most consumer research on deceptive practices assumes that a misleading representation, omission, or practice on the part of a seller ultimately results in injury or loss to the consumer. However, not all deceptive practices result in consumer injury or loss. Evidence from the negotiation and mediation literature suggests that the deceptive practices employed by buyers and sellers involved in a negotiation actually facilitate rather than hinder exchange between the two parties. The accommodative function of deception is particularly important in the management of complex protracted negotiation where mutually beneficial resolutions can “…seldom be accomplished by pure rational analysis and logic alone” (Benjamin 1995, pg. 4). Many consumer market exchanges such as the purchase of a new automobile, a new home, major appliances, etc., involve complex negotiations between buyers and sellers. In capturing the full extent to which deceptive practices operate in complex market exchanges, the conceptualization of marketplace deception currently reflected in the consumer literature falls short in two ways. First, with the exception of a recent study of consumers’ interpersonal deceptive practices (Argo, White, and Dahl 2006), extant research accounts only for the deceptive practices of sellers while virtually ignoring the deceptive practices of buyers. Second, extant research does little to inform the potential efficiencies that may be gained from buyers’ and sellers’ use of deception in negotiation processes.

The purpose of this study is to explore the structure and strategic use of deception in negotiated exchanges between buyers and sellers. Specifically, we examine the question, how might deceptive practices, used by both buyers and sellers, serve an accommodative role in the negotiation between parties in a complex, protracted exchange?

Theoretical Background

This study is theoretically grounded in the sociological concept of accommodative moral schemas. The underlying principle of accommodative schemas asserts that describing the ideological orientations of each party in a social exchange does not sufficiently
describe the interactions of the two parties (Lidz and Walker 1980). For instance, buyers and sellers approach market exchanges with opposing ideological perspectives. These ideologies provide meaning and structure to the roles played by both parties in a social exchange. Buyers are guided by an ideology of maximizing their value and minimizing their costs while sellers are guided by an ideology of maximizing their profit. However, these opposing ideological orientations place the parties in conflict with one another. Yet clearly, to achieve a mutually beneficial outcome, buyers and sellers must not approach the exchange process guided exclusively by their independent ideologies. Instead, they require a shared moral schema that facilitates cooperation with the opposing party in the exchange.

The position here is that buyers’ and sellers’ moral orientations toward the use of deceptive practices accommodate the exchange between two parties with otherwise conflicting ideologies. Therefore, in the present context, an accommodative schema refers to an ideology of the morality of deception that is shared between buyers and sellers. An accommodative schema can be thought of as serving the same function as the rules of sport that allow two teams with opposing objectives to play on the same field under prescribed rules of engagement. They are necessary for the cooperation of two groups whose independent ideologies otherwise mandate conflict.

Proposed Study

The purpose of the proposed empirical study is to analyze the strategic use of deception by buyers and sellers to elucidate the potential accommodative role of deception in negotiated market exchanges. To support the notion that deception accommodates exchange, it is important to demonstrate that the use of deception serves two functions. First, the use of deception by both parties must provide one or more reference points which allow and facilitate cooperative action. That is, the moral schemas that guide interaction in the context of a market exchange must be specific to the exchange context and independent from macro-societal moral codes. Second, the use of deception must provide parties in an exchange with “…ways of neutralizing the binds of their mandating ideologies so that they are released from the moral obligations inherent in those ideologies” (Lidz and Walker 1980, pg. 110).

The position here is that criteria to evaluate the accommodative function of deception are embedded in the motivations that drive buyers’ and sellers’ strategies employed in the negotiation process. As such, we propose a study employing qualitative methodology that will attempt to “un-bundle” the motivations associated with the use of deceptive practices by both buyers and sellers. Data will be collected in depth interviews with both buyers and sellers in the context of new car purchases. As a context for exploring the present research question, the new car market is desirable for two reasons. First, the exchange process for new cars is relatively protracted and typically involves a complex negotiation process. Second, the exchange between buyers and sellers in the new car market is typically unmediated. That is, negotiation occurs directly between a consumer and seller rather than between a consumer and an agent of the seller. This second condition is desirable to avoid the complexity of isolating the use of deception by buyers and sellers from the use of deception by the third party in an exchange.

Results of the proposed study potentially will contribute to consumer research in three ways. First, the study represents the first attempt to articulate the role of accommodative moral schemas in a consumer context. Second, the study will extend current research on marketplace deception to include deceptive behaviors practiced by consumers. Finally, by challenging and elucidating the current conceptual boundaries of marketplace deception, this study will provide a holistic account of when and how deceptive techniques are used by buyers and sellers involved in negotiation. This in turn will inform the debate of possible limits that should be observed in the use of deception in consumer market exchanges. As such, the study will be of interest to consumer researchers, marketing researchers, and public policy makers.

References


The Influence of Impression Management Concerns on Product Evaluation
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Impression management goals are an important motivation across a wide variety of social situations (Tedeschi 1981). Much research has focused on the tactics individuals use to manage their impressions (e.g. enhanced self-descriptions; Leary 1995). In marketing, research has demonstrated that possessions can affect observers’ impressions (Christopher and Schlenker 2000) and it has been suggested that consumers will strategically display products to achieve impression management goals (Burroughs, Drew, and Hallman 1991). However, there is little research examining the effects of impression management goals on product evaluation. The current research contributes to the literature by demonstrating that impression management goals can exert a powerful influence on consumers’ evaluation of a product. It also highlights the importance of impression management as an avoidance motivation—consumers may avoid certain products, despite their functional benefits, because of the impression the product will convey.

Impression Management
Impression management refers to attempts to regulate behavior in order to influence observers’ impressions. Leary (1995) identified a number of different goals associated with impression management, including positive material and social consequences (e.g. positive emotions that stem from being regarded favorably); constructing and maintaining one’s self-concept (Baumeister 1982); and avoiding socially and materially deleterious consequences associated with negative impressions.

Much of the research on impression management has focused on the tactics individuals use to influence others’ impressions (e.g. expressing similar attitudes to observers (Tetlock 1985), engaging in helping behavior (Deutsch and Lamberti 1986), etc.). Other research has focused on the impression created. For example, Burroughs et al. (1991) showed that observers formed an impression of individuals based on their possessions that was consistent with the image owners were attempting to convey. Gosling et al. (2002) found that observers were able to form consistent and accurate impressions of occupants based on the content of their offices and bedrooms.

The current research contributes to this literature by examining the influence of consumers’ impression management concerns on product evaluation. Specifically, it is shown that consumers’ will pay substantially less for a product when they believe it will convey an undesired impression.

Study 1
The purpose of Study 1 was to examine the influence of consumers’ impression management concerns on their evaluation of a product. We chose a product that was likely (at least occasionally) to be used in public—in this case a portable MP3 player that could be worn around the arm. The color of the product was manipulated in a way that was expected to influence impression management concerns. Specifically, we predicted that when the product was offered in a feminine color (vs. a neutral color), men—but not women—would be concerned about their impression. We also tested the alternative explanation that product evaluation was affected by liking of the color rather than impression management concerns per se.

Method
Nineteen students (47 men and 51 women) participated in a 2 (product colour: pink vs. black) x 2 (gender) between-subjects factorial design. Participants were told that they would be participating in an auction for an MP3 player (a “Creative MuVo” with 256Mb of storage). All participants saw the player prior to the auction and were told that they were bidding for that particular MP3 player and that its retail price was $185 after tax. In half of the cases the player was pink, otherwise it was black. The two players were identical in every other respect.

All participants submitted sealed bids. The winner would only pay the amount bid by the second highest bidder though, which creates an incentive for individuals to bid their true maximum willingness to pay. Participants were provided with a detailed example of the procedure to ensure they understood this. After placing their bid, participants completed a questionnaire designed to assess their attitude towards the product (r=.81), liking of the color (single item measure), and the extent to which they would be concerned about using the product in front of other people (impression management concerns, r=.91). All items were measured using 5-point scales.

Results
As expected, there were significant interactions between gender and product color on all dependent variables (willingness to pay (WTP): F(1, 94)=19.34, p<.001; attitude: F(1, 94)=10.44, p<.01; liking of colour: F(1, 94)=21.98, p<.001; impression management concerns: F(1, 94)=45.53, p<.001). Simple effects analyses indicated that men bid less for the pink player (M’s=$41.20 vs. $84.43; F(1, 94)=22.54, p<.001), liked it less (attitude: M’s=1.27 vs. 2.13; F(1, 94)=12.38, p<.001), liked the color less (M’s=.25 vs. .48; F(1, 94)=44.62, p<.001), and were more concerned about the impression they would convey using the pink player (M’s=.29 vs. .95; F(1, 94)=73.17, p<.001). Women made no distinctions between the players (no differences were significant). Mediation analyses (Baron and Kenny 1986) conducted on the men’s results demonstrated that the effect of product color on WTP was mediated by impression management concerns (product color–WTP: β=.52, p<.001; product color–impression management–WTP: β=.08 and .58, p>.60 and p<.001), but not liking of the color (product color–liking of color–WTP: β=.35 and .22, p’=.09 and .29). Similar effects were obtained when examining the mediation of attitudes by impression management concerns and liking of the color.

General Discussion
The current study demonstrated that consumers’ desire to avoid creating a particular impression exerted an important influence on their attitudes and ultimately their willingness to pay for a product. The experimental manipulation was designed to create impression
management concerns that would primarily influence men. Specifically, a gender-typed color was chosen that was expected to be inconsistent with the image most men would want to create. Supporting this prediction, men liked the pink MP3 player less and consequently bid less than half what they offered for a functionally identical black player. In contrast, women showed no aversion to the pink player, presumably because they were not concerned about the impression it would convey. Future research will examine the influence of impression management goals on product choice and the nature of the specific impressions consumers wish to avoid or convey.

References

**Nostalgia Advertisements: A Content Analysis**

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**Extended Abstract**

*Background.* Very little work has been done on the use of nostalgia as an advertising tactic. Holbrook and Schindler note that “nostalgia has received relatively little attention from academicians in general and from scholars devoted to the study of consumer research in particular” (1991, p. 330). Research on nostalgia is now in its infancy and has focused on nostalgia proneness (Holbrook, 1993), the emotions produced by nostalgic advertisements (Holak and Havlena, 1998), and the consequences of its use in advertising (e.g., attitudes toward the ad, brand, etc.; Muehling and Sprott, 2004; Pascal et al., 2002). The research has shown that nostalgia preferences occur in a wide range of product categories (Schindler and Holbrook, 2003), that advertisements with a nostalgic theme are capable of producing nostalgic reflections (Muehling and Sprott, 2004), and that nostalgic ads create more positive attitudes toward the ad and the brand (Muehling and Sprott, 2004; Pascal et al., 2002). However, none of the research has actually considered the incidence of nostalgia cues in print advertisement. Our purpose is to extend the current research in this area by reviewing the current occurrence of nostalgia-themed ads used in popular magazines.

A variety of definitions of nostalgia exist in the literature. We borrow from a number of these (Holbrook and Schindler, 1991; Hirsch, 1992; Baker and Kennedy, 1994; Holak and Havlena, 1998) in defining nostalgia as a bittersweet emotional state comprised of many discrete emotions produced by reflection on things (objects, persons, experiences, ideas) associated with an idealized past. This definition was used in classifying ads that used a nostalgia appeal from those that were not.

*Method.* Using the *Top 100 ABC Total Paid Circulation* list of magazines for 2004, the authors distinguished ten different categories of magazines. The two most popular magazines from each category were selected. Two issues from 2004 were then randomly selected and reviewed. A total of 40 magazines were included in the current analysis. Two judges reviewed advertisements in the magazines looking for nostalgia ads one-third of a page or larger.

Havlena and Holak (1991) categorized nostalgia products and advertisements into two categories: (1) products or ads directly from the past and (2) new products or messages that “create a ‘period’ feeling” (p. 323). We adapted this framework in distinguishing the use of nostalgia in advertisements from that of products. Each ad was reviewed in detail to determine how nostalgia was being used. Three types of nostalgia were identified: Actual Nostalgia, Borrowed Nostalgia, and Classic Nostalgia.

**Actual Nostalgia** maps directly onto Havlena and Holak’s first category, and is defined as the use of nostalgia for products from or relating to the time period from which the nostalgia was taken. For example, advertisements promoting CD’s as “A Goldmine of Musical Memories” or movies described as “Timeless Classics” would be categorized as Actual Nostalgia. Havlena and Holak’s second category is split into two different uses of nostalgia, borrowed and classic. **Borrowed Nostalgia** is defined as the use of nostalgia for current or modern-day products. For instance, Johnson and Johnson’s use of black and white photos depicting a mother and child drawing together at the kitchen table with other crayon drawings hanging on the refrigerator in the background would be categorized in this type of nostalgia. **Classic Nostalgia** is defined as the use of nostalgia for modern products using old advertisements or memories for the same products from the past. An example of this is Jack Daniel’s use of an old advertisement and pictures of their old distillery and trucks in a current ad.

*Results.* Of the 2,354 ads reviewed, a total of 88 were identified as using a nostalgia theme. Interjudge reliability, using the Perrault and Leigh (1989) measure, showed agreement of .979. The use of the three types of nostalgia varied little, with borrowed nostalgia being
the most common type used, 93.2% or 82 ads (interjudge reliability=.99), and actual and classic nostalgia being far less used, with 5.7% (5 ads) and 1.1% (1 ad), respectively.

Our results also showed that the magazine categories of Family and Home & Garden were the two most popular types of magazines for nostalgia ads with 21 and 19 ads respectively. Also, the results indicate that nostalgia ads appear in a wide variety of product categories, from cars to cell phones, but most often in advertisements for consumable goods. Nostalgia ads were predominantly visual (86.3%, n=76). Far fewer of the ads combined visual with copy that included nostalgic statements. The ads in the actual and classic nostalgia categories all combined visual and copy (100%, n=6), while only 6 ads in the borrowed nostalgia category used both (7.3%).

A number of conclusions are drawn from this study. First, while research has been done about the effect of nostalgia ads on consumers, none has actually done a content analysis on the frequency of nostalgia in print ads. While nostalgic ads are not as common in print as was found for guilt appeals (Huhmann and Brotherton, 1997), previous research shows that the use of nostalgia has a number of practical implications for marketers including more favorable attitudes toward the ad and brand (Muehling and Sprott, 2004; Pascal et al., 2002), as well as increased intentions to purchase the product (Pascal et al., 2002). Given the ramifications of the tactical use of nostalgia, it is surprising that the actual incidence of ads using nostalgia is so small.

Previous research showed that the use of nostalgia is effective; the current research indicates that nostalgia is not a method used widely in print advertising. Further research can be done to show how nostalgia works in the ad, determining which type of nostalgia (actual, borrowed or classic) and which mode (visual, copy, or both) is most effective. Borrowed nostalgia appeared most often in our research, but that does not indicate it is the most effective. Lastly, research could ascertain whether nostalgic ads are more effective for certain product classes or in certain types of magazines.

References

The Impact of Information Format on Consumer Search Order and Choice in an Online Setting
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Extended Abstract
Consumers are having more control over the information flow on the Internet, which helps them to find information that better matches their preferences and be more confident in their judgments (Ariely 2000). However, it is also recognized that the information on the Internet is overloaded and highly manipulative, which can largely influences consumer information search and decision making. For example, research shows that the background picture and color of a web page can influence both novice and expert consumers’ choice and such an effect is mediated by the search behavior for novice consumers (Mandel and Johnson 2002).

This research builds on the literature of online consumer information search and preference construction and further investigates how online information presentation format influences consumer search order and choice. The objectives of this research is to examine (1) how attributes presented in digital versus non-digital format and salient versus non-salient format influence consumers’ search order of attribute and alternative information, and (2) how the search order affects consumer choice.

Built on Lal and Sarvary’s (1999) definition of digital versus non-digital attribute, we consider digital attribute information as information that is presented by numbers, scales, or categories; whereas non-digital attribute information is presented by detailed description. It is much easier and faster to examine digital attribute information. Consumers can easily apply a cut-off point on digital
attribute information to quickly screen all the alternatives. They can even use digital attribute information to make inferences about non-digital attribute information if they perceive there is certain correlation among the attributes (Kardes et al. 2004). Thus, we expect

**H1:** Consumers tend to examine the same digital attribute information earlier when a product is presented by more non-digital (vs. digital) attribute information.

We argue that an attribute examined earlier (vs. later) will have more impact on choice and such an impact is over and above the effect of attribute importance. First, an attribute examined earlier is more likely to be used as a screening criterion to exclude other alternatives. Second, given consumers do not always examine all the attributes, an attribute examined earlier tends to be accessed more frequently. This will make the attribute more accessible in the memory, which increases its impact on choice. Therefore, we predict

**H2:** Consumers’ tendency to search the same digital attribute information earlier when a product is presented by more non-digital (vs. digital) attribute information is likely to increase the impact of that digital attribute information on choice.

Consumers’ need for cognitive closure (NFCC) may moderate the hypothesized effect. NFCC relates to consumers’ motivation for information processing and judgment (Webster and Kruglanski 1994). It refers to individuals’ desire for definite knowledge, thus avoiding confusion or ambiguity. Individuals with high NFCC tend to reach a conclusion quickly and are reluctant to process further information (Kruglanski and Webster 1996). Therefore, we hypothesize that

**H3:** The impact of digital attribute information on choice is stronger for consumers with high (vs. low) NFCC.

Visually salient information can be created by increasing the object’s size and contrast (Janiszewski 1998). It is much faster and easier for consumers to locate and pay attention to visually salient information (e.g., Janiszewski 1998). It is also easier for consumers to visually screen and sort all the alternatives according to the visually salient attribute. Therefore, we predict that consumers tend to examine alternatives with higher values on the visually salient attribute earlier. They will examine alternatives with lower values on the visually salient attribute only when they are not satisfied with the alternatives examined earlier.

**H4:** Consumers tend to examine alternatives with higher values on the visually salient attribute earlier.

It is found that the amount of attention focused on an attribute directly affects its importance (MacKenzie 1986). Hence, visually salient attribute will receive higher importance in choice. In addition, as consumers process higher values of the visually salient attribute much earlier and more often in the search, they are more likely to anchor on those values and perceive choosing alternatives with lower values on the visually salient attribute as a loss. Given consumers’ general tendency of loss aversion, we predict that consumers will prefer the alternatives examined earlier, i.e., those with higher values on the visually salient attribute. Therefore, we expect

**H5:** Consumers’ tendency to examine alternatives with higher values on the visually salient attribute is likely to increase the impact of the visually salient attribute on choice.

Sorting alternatives according to the visually non-salient attribute may reduce such an effect. When alternatives are sorted by the visually non-salient attribute, that attribute will distract consumers’ attention and change consumers’ search order. Hence, we hypothesize that

**H6:** The impact of the visually salient attribute on choice is stronger when alternatives are not sorted by a non-salient attribute.

We propose to conduct two online experiments to test our hypotheses. Results from our pretest show that participants tend to examine the same digital attribute information earlier when there is more non-digital (vs. non-digital) attribute information. Study 1 focuses on the impact of digital attribute information on choice and study 2 examines the influence of the visually salient attribute on choice.

Our research adds to the literature of online consumer information search and preference construction by showing when digital attribute information can have more impact on choice and how visually salient attribute influences consumer preference. This research also shows the underlying processes of these effects: consumers’ search order for attribute and alternative information. Finally, this research discusses how individual difference and information organization may moderate these effects.

**References**


The Effects of Reciprocity in a Triadic Relationship

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Robert Cialdini, Arizona State University, USA
Eugene Schneller, Arizona State University, USA

Extended Abstract

The norm of reciprocity reflects both a socially stabilizing function as well as a relationship-initiating role, and is universal (Gouldner 1960). Reciprocity involves both rights and duties for each side of a gift exchange (Gouldner 1960), such that individuals have the obligation to give, to receive, and to give back (Mauss 1954 (1925)). Studies within dyadic relationships have shown that gifts, whether or not they are searched for or expected, elicit a sense of obligation in the recipient (Regan 1971). Despite the fact that these theories were developed to explain the role of reciprocity in networks, research designed to understand effects beyond the context of dyads has not been done. It has been proposed that “triadization either supports and reinforces or inhibits and upsets a dyadic reciprocity” (Lebra 1975). Examining the effects of reciprocity beyond dyads has important implications for researchers of social influence in many disciplines, public policy makers, and practitioners.

Consider the following scenario: A pharmaceutical salesperson visits a healthcare provider, intent on increasing prescriptions for a particular product. After delivering a sales message about the product and its benefits, the salesperson leaves some samples. The samples are presented so the provider can facilitate initiation of therapy with a patient, with purported convenience and financial benefits. But the provider may also utilize these pharmaceutical samples for his or her own use, to treat an existing condition. In practice, both transference and personal use are fairly common (Tesoriero 2006).

In healthcare, voluntary professional guidelines developed by both physician groups like the American Medical Association and the pharmaceutical industry, have limited gifts to items of relatively low value, such as pens and pads, as well as the distribution of free samples (AMA 1998-1999; PhRMA 2002). While it has been argued that items of nominal value such as pens and pads may elicit obligations that alter provider behavior (Katz, Caplan, and Merz 2003), in practice their use has become more limited recently (Tesoriero 2006). We focus instead on the effect of samples, as these are designed to be utilized in a triadic relationship.

We hypothesize that samples will be perceived as gifts, both in the dyad (salesperson-provider) and in the triad (salesperson-provider-patient) scenario, and will elicit obligation due to the norm of reciprocity. The provider will feel obligated to the salesperson in either situation, personal use or transference; the end-user patient will feel obligated to the provider or the pharmaceutical firm, or both. But in which scenario (dyad or triad) are obligations the strongest? How can the salience of a message of obligation affect compliance behavior? What is the nature of the underlying relationship, whereby each member of a triad can repay another? Finally, can liking be ruled out as an alternative explanation?

Instances when samples are retained by the provider, creating a dyad, seem to converge with research showing positive effects on reciprocal behavior (Guéguen and Pascual 2003; Regan 1971). Marketing literature has documented small positive effects of samples upon prescribing behavior (Gönül, Carter, Petrova et al. 2001; Mizik and Jacobson 2004). These studies, however, remain empirical in nature, not explicitly examining the underlying theoretical mechanism. Our study utilizes a similar context, yet diverges in its purpose: we aim not to explain an empirical observation, but instead to test and extend theory and to resolve competing explanations for underlying causes.

Among seven proposed triadic relationships (Lebra 1975), we suspect that acts of repayment in this context may be explained by either circular transference, where the end user attempts to repay the initial giver, or lineal transference, where the provider is involved in linked dyads as a ‘midelman.’ The role of the provider is such that “there is a distinct breach in the traditional buying decision process: the decision maker…chooses among an array of…alternatives” (Gönül, Carter, Petrova et al. 2001); the end user ultimately acquires the product and evaluates its utility. For us, a gift is a tangible sample relevant to a recipient’s role as a decision-maker, an object capable of either being utilized by the expert or transferred through to a third party.

Two arguments offer divergent predictions of the strength of the norm of reciprocity between dyadic and triadic relationships. On one hand, “triadization may bind the actor more effectively than does a dyadic bond,” while on the other hand, a triad may “reduce the intensity of an interpersonal bond characteristic of a dyad” (Lebra 1975). The conditions under which triads are more or less binding than dyads will be investigated here.

The first perspective stems from work on dyadic reciprocation. Posing as a vehicle for information, this “not-so-free sample” can automatically invoke a “natural indebting force” (Cialdini 1993), in a healthcare setting (Wazana 2000), and represents a lineal transference, where the provider is involved through the linking of two dyads.

Alternatively, when a sample is transferred to the patient, it is being utilized as intended, and the provider may feel indebted from value provided to the patient. However, in this situation the provider does not realize the direct benefits of the sample, and may be less apt to reciprocate. The patient’s receipt of the sample, however, may lead to a desire to reciprocate directly to the pharmaceutical firm (Oldani 2004), creating a circular transference. We suspect that the effects found in a circular transference are weaker than those in a lineal transference.

References:


Mandel, Naomi and Eric J. Johnson (2002), The Effects of Reciprocity in a Triadic Relationship, Extended Abstract.


Salience of the obligation may play a significant role. In conditions of high message salience, the salesperson may be exhibiting “creditor ideology,” where “creditors prefer to have others in their debt because they believe that the norm of reciprocity will produce generous repayments” (Eisenberger, Cotterell, and Marvel 1987). This may be perceived by the recipient, thereby producing ‘reciprocal wariness’ (Cotterell, Eisenberger, and Speicher 1992) or ‘persuasion knowledge’ (Friestad and Wright 1999). A recipient can mentally acknowledge that a gift is a ‘sales device,’ thereby sidestepping the obligation altogether (Cialdini 1993). This may be true in both dyads and triads. In conditions of low message salience, a sense of obligation may not manifest at all.

A pretest on high-expert students (n=52), utilizing sunscreen samples, found a significant interaction between sample condition, motivation orientation (extrinsic/intrinsic), and likelihood to recommend (F (1, 33) = 4.88, p=.05). Our next experiment will be a 2 (gift retained/transferred) x 2 (high/low salience) + 1 (control group) experiment conducted with approximately 150 physician assistant (PA) students. Our instrument will be a questionnaire where hypothetical scenarios focus on a fictitious PA’s liking of the salesperson, likelihood to recommend the sampled product, the perceived benefits of the samples, and sense of obligation toward the salesperson.

Healthcare providers overwhelmingly believe that the acceptance of gifts has little or no impact on their recommendation decisions (Harris 2006; Murray 2002). Therefore, conducting an experiment with providers requires overcoming some level of social desirability bias (Neeley and Cronley 2004). We propose an experiment that will utilize indirect-report questioning formats to mitigate this bias, where “participants will project their own opinions and behaviors onto [an in-group] referent person” (Cronley, Neeley, and Silversa 2006).

References

**Comparative Content Analysis of Thai and Vietnamese Ads, 1994 and 2004**
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**Abstract**
Thai and Vietnamese print advertisements were content analyzed to examine how content and advertising expression differed in the two countries at two different time periods, 1994 and 2004. Analysis focused on traditional Eastern and Western, and informational and emotional appeals. As hypothesized, Vietnamese ads contained more traditional and informational appeals than Thai ads, while Thai ads were found to contain fewer informational and traditional Eastern appeals than Vietnamese ads. Implications for practitioners and theoreticians are discussed.
In Southeast Asia, Vietnam and Thailand are among the countries most visible in the West. Although adjacent and culturally quite similar, they differ dramatically in their political systems and economic foundation. Thailand is a constitutional monarchy, with a widely revered king who exercises his powers through the National Assembly, the Council of Ministers (Cabinet), and the Courts. Vietnam is a socialist democracy governed by a single-party parliamentary system, with an Executive and Judiciary chosen by the party. Vietnam, of course, was deeply affected by the war, while Thailand managed to stay largely out of the conflict.

Thailand enjoys a vital consumer economy built on gold, gemstones, and other natural resources, and has been active trade with the West since the 1970s. Only in recent years have international trade and modern consumerism begun to emerge in Vietnam, and then only in the large cities like Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon). In economic terms, the Thai per capita GNP was roughly $5,500 in 1994 and $6,500 in 2004, an 85% increase. Vietnam’s was $1,200 in 1994 and $1,700 in 2004, a 70% increase (Global EDGE, 2004). This promising growth has attracted the attention of business leaders throughout Europe and North America.

With economic growth often comes an increasing interest in advertising, along with new challenges for Western advertising agencies that want to work in non-Western cultures (Zhou and Belk, 2004). Advertising practitioners and researchers are well aware of the dangers of applying American and British approaches in other countries. Many scholars have warned of the perils, e.g., Holstede (1980), and some have done empirical studies in their efforts to understand international audiences better. For example, Biswas, Olsen, and Carlet (1992) observed that French advertisements employed more emotional appeals, humor, and sex, while American advertisements used more informational cues. Partially consistent with these findings, Cheng and Schweitzer (1996) reported that more Westernized countries such as France, the US, Finland, the UK, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Philippines use emotional appeals more often than do traditional Asian countries such as China, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

In Southeast Asia, Wongthada and Leelakulthanit (1997) in Thailand and Schutlz and Que (1997) in Vietnam pointed out the substantial effects of socio-political transition on advertising, and Sar and Doyle (2002) showed that Thai ads expressed more Western values than Cambodian ads. The importance of all these studies, of course, is that they help refine the practice of advertising, especially advertising designed by Western firms for use in Eastern countries. They may also contribute to cross-cultural audience analysis and theory-building, and to theories of cultural transmission and “hegemony.”

The present study tries to advance our understanding of Southeast Asian audiences and culture by focusing on changes in the content of advertising in the ten years from 1994-2004. It applies tried-and-true comparative techniques, and adds a development dimension seldom seen in the cross-cultural advertising literature.

**Method**

This is a content analysis in which we draw inferences about the development of Thai and Vietnamese cultures from the Eastern versus Western content of Thai and Vietnamese magazine advertisements over the past ten years. We shall argue that practitioners who understand this cultural development better will be able to produce more effective ads and campaigns, and that theorists who peruse these data will be able to make finer distinctions than they previously could, particularly within Southeast Asia.

*The Magazines.* According to the Thai daily newspaper *Thairath* (2004) the three most widely read monthly magazines in Thailand are *Bangkok Metro, Prail* (“Shining”), and *Bambi News*. According to the Vietnamese daily newspaper “Vietnam News” (2004), the three most popular monthly magazines in Vietnam are *Song Manh, Phu Nu Viet*, and *Que Huong* (“People”). In both sets, the first magazine is a general-interest publication similar to *Life or Look* in the United States; the second is a women’s magazine similar to *Home and Garden*; and the third is a popular magazine similar to *People*.

*The Ads.* In the twelve 1994 and twelve 2004 issues of each of these magazines, we identified all ads for household products, personal and non-personal. Personal household products included shampoo, soap, body lotion, sanitary pads, and toothpaste; non-personal household products included detergent, fabric rinse, and dishwashing liquid.

From the total number of these ads—79 in 1994 and 90 in 2004 for Thailand; 56 in 1994 and 45 in 2004 for Vietnam—we randomly selected 35 from each year and each country, for a total final sample of 140 ads.

*Content Analysis.* The focus of the analysis was the relative frequency of traditional Eastern versus Western appeals (per our literature review) and emotional versus informational cues, in the two countries in the two years.

To define the first of these terms, twenty Thai students studying at a large Midwestern university in the United States participated in a focus group in which they were asked to define traditional “Eastern” appeals. This discussion identified four principle characteristics of traditional appeals: Respect for Elders, Collectivism, Conservative Sexual Morality, and Modesty.

To define the second of these terms, Western Appeals, we used Hong and Zhu’s (1995) scales: Sexy, Humorous, Comfortable, and Convenient. These scales have been used in numerous studies of international advertising, e.g., Lai Man So (2004), Zhang and Shavitt (2003), Tai (1997), and Wang, Pinkleton, and Morton (1997), and Graham, Kamins, Oetomo (1993).

To define Emotional Appeals, we used Plutchik’s abbreviated Mood Rating Scale (1980), which relies on four adjectives selected from his longer checklist. The four elements on the abbreviated scale are Happiness, Pleasantness, Interest, and Surprise. These scales were used in Hong, Muderrisoglus, and Zinkhan’s (1987) study of cultural differences in Japanese and American magazines.

Finally, we defined Informational Appeals with four elements from Stern and Resnick’s (1981) conception of “informativeness”: Price/Value, Quality, Guarantees/Warranties, and New Ideas, or Novelty. These scales, too, were used in Lai Man So’s (2004) study of cross cultural comparison between Hong Kong and Australia’s women’s magazines; Hong, Muderrisoglus, and Zinkhan’s (1987).

We created a five-point semantic differential scale for each of the 16 elements, e.g., Not Happy to Very Happy. Four judges then used these scales to code the Thai and Vietnamese ads for Eastern versus Western appeals, including emotional versus informational cues. Two Thai graduate students, one male and one female, coded the Thai ads, and two Vietnamese graduate students, also one male and one female, coded the Vietnamese ads. All coders were fluent in English as well as in their home languages. Reliability coefficients for this coding ranged from .79 (Traditional, Thai 1994) to .85 (Emotional, Vietnamese, 2004), with an average of .81, well within the recommended range for studies of this sort (Kassarjian, 1977); and Nunnally, 1978).
Results

With regard to Traditional Eastern Appeals in Vietnamese versus Thai ads for the two years combined, Table 1a indicates significant differences on Respect, Collectiveness, and Modesty, and a borderline-significant difference (p=.08) on Sexual Morality. These differences uniformly depict Vietnam as the more traditional of the two countries:

With regard to differences in the extent of Traditional Eastern Appeals between 1994 and 2004, Table 1b show significant difference across years on all four variables for the Vietnamese ads, and on two of the four variables—Collectivity and Sexual Morality—for the Thai ads.

In the Vietnamese ads, the Respect, Collectivity, and Modesty means are higher for 2004 than for 1994, the Morality mean lower. In the Thai ads, the situation is partially reversed: The Collectivity mean is lower for 2004, the Morality mean higher. At the same time, the Respect and Modesty means are unchanged. According to these data, over the past decade the Vietnamese ads have become more Respectful, more Communal, and more Modest, but also more sexual (lower Morality). The Thai ads have become less Communal and less sexual (more Moral), but remained unchanged in Respect and Modesty.

With regard to Traditional Western Appeals in Vietnamese versus Thai ads for the two years combined, Table 2a indicates significant differences on all four dimensions: Convenient, Sexy, Comfortable, and Humorous. These differences again depict Vietnam as the more traditional Eastern, the less Western, of the two countries.

With regard to differences in the extent of Traditional Western Appeals between 1994 and 2004, Table 2b shows significant differences on three of the four dimensions—all except Comfortable—for both the Vietnamese and the Thai ads. In the Vietnamese ads, the Convenient, Sexy, and Humorous means are all higher for 2004 than for 1994. In the Thai ads, the situation is again reversed: The 2004 means are all lower. In the Vietnamese ads, the 2004 mean ratings are always higher than the 1994 mean ratings. According to these data, the Vietnamese ads have become a little more Western than they used to be, but they remain less than Thai ads.

With regard to Emotional Appeals in Vietnamese versus Thai ads for the two years combined, Table 3a shows higher Thai means on Surprised, Pleasant, and Interesting, and a non-significant difference on Happiness. The Thai ads for the most part use more emotional cues than the Vietnamese ads.

With regard to differences in the extent of Emotional Appeals between 1994 and 2004, Table 3b shows significant differences on two of the four variables—non-significant on Surprised and Pleasant — for the Vietnamese ads, and on all four variables for the Thai ads. In the Vietnamese ads, the Happy mean is higher for 2004 than for 1994, the Interesting mean lower. In the Thai ads, all 2004 means are higher than the corresponding 1994 means. According to these data, the Thai ads have increased in all four kinds of emotional content, while the Vietnamese ads have increased in Happy content, decreased in Interesting content. The ads depict Thai culture as more emotional than Vietnamese culture, and Thai ads more emotional—happier, more interesting, more surprising, more pleasant—and growing still more so.

With regard to Information Appeals in Vietnamese versus Thai ads for the two years combined, Table 4a indicates significant differences on all four dimensions of Informational Appeal: Price Value, Quality, Warranty, and New Ideas (Novelty). These differences consistently depict Vietnam as using more informational cues than Thailand.

With regard to differences in the extent of Informational Appeals between 1994 and 2004, Table 4b shows significant differences on two of the four variables (Quality and Warranty), a borderline significant difference on one variable (p=.07 for New Idea), and non-significant difference on one variable (Price Value) for the Vietnamese ads. Table 4b also show significant differences on two variables (Price Value and Quality), a borderline difference (p=.06 on New Idea), and a non-significant difference (Warranty) on the Thai ads.

Again, the Vietnamese and Thai patterns are substantially opposite. On Quality—the only Informational dimension on which the change is significant for both countries—the 2004 Vietnamese mean is lower than the 1994 mean, but in the Thai ads, the 2004 mean is higher. On Novelty, borderline-significant for both countries, the 2004 Vietnamese mean is higher than the 1994 mean, but the 2004 Thai mean is lower. Vietnamese culture, per the above less emotional than Thai culture, is growing less concerned with quality information and more interested in novelty, while Thai culture, more emotional, is growing more concerned with quality information, and less concerned with Novelty. The inference we draw is that, just as the two cultures are moving toward each other in terms of emotional cues, so they are becoming more similar in terms of informational cues.

Discussion

The principal strengths of this study are that it is built on random samples of ads from the most widely read magazines in Thailand and Vietnam and that it evaluates those ads according to attributes identified as important in respected previous studies. The principal weaknesses are that the study analyzes only print ads, indeed only magazine ads, and that it samples ads from only two points in time. Despite these weaknesses, we believe the results are consistent enough that practitioners and theorists may draw conclusions from them.

Our analysis identified a number of important patterns: First, that Vietnam is the more traditional, less Westernized of the two cultures; second, that Vietnamese ads have become more Western over the past ten years, Thai ads in many (but not all) ways less Western (Collective, Sexual, Humorous); third, that Vietnamese ads have become more emotionally cued in the past ten years; and, fourth, that Thai ads have become more informationally cued in some ways (Quality), less so in others (Novelty), while Vietnamese ads showed just the opposite pattern, less informationally cued as to Quality, more so as to Novelty. The Thai patterns were often just the opposite of the Vietnamese patterns, despite the proximity and apparent cultural similarity of the two countries.

What are advertising practitioners and theorists to draw from these findings? The most obvious conclusion is that, despite the proximity and superficial similarity of the two cultures, they should not be treated the same. In more technical terms, they are not samples from the same population.

More specifically, practitioners and theorists can expect that Vietnamese print-ad audiences will respond positively to more traditional Asian appeals—those that rest on Conservative Sexual Morality, Collectivity, and Product Information—while Thai audiences will respond positively to somewhat more Western appeals. We cannot escape the image of a fundamentally Confucian culture (Doyle, 1999, pp. 89ff) in Vietnam growing increasingly Western as it sheds its Communist history and takes its place on the international stage.
### TABLE 1
Traditional Eastern Appeals in Vietnamese and Thai Ads (N=140 ads)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Appeals</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respect (between Countries)</td>
<td>1,138</td>
<td>9.99</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collective (between Countries)</td>
<td>1,138</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morality (Between Countries)</td>
<td>1,138</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modesty (Between Countries)</td>
<td>1,138</td>
<td>9.96</td>
<td>.00</td>
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</table>

#### Table 1a: Between Countries, Years Collapsed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Respect</th>
<th>Collective</th>
<th>Morality</th>
<th>Modesty</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>6.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>5.80</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>5.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>5.15</td>
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#### Table 1b: Means of 1994 and 2004 Ads on Four Traditional Eastern Dimensions

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>6.01</td>
<td>4.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>6.21</td>
<td>5.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morality</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>5.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modesty</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>4.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 2
Traditional Western Appeals in Vietnamese and Thai Ads (N=140 ads)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Appeals</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenient (between Countries)</td>
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<td>5.19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexy</td>
<td>1,138</td>
<td>6.12</td>
<td>.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>1,138</td>
<td>23.78</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<td>Humorous</td>
<td>1,138</td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td>.02</td>
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#### Table 2A: Between Countries, Years Collapsed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Convenient</th>
<th>Sexy</th>
<th>Comfortable</th>
<th>Humorous</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>3.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>5.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>6.01</td>
<td>6.21</td>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>5.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>5.48</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>4.21</td>
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</table>

#### Table 2B: Means of 1994 and 2004 Ads on Four Traditional Western Dimensions

<table>
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<tr>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenient</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>6.01</td>
<td>4.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexy</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>6.21</td>
<td>5.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>5.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humorous</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>4.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 3
Emotional Appeals of Vietnamese and Thai Ads (N=140 Ads)

| Table 3A: Between Countries, Years Collapsed |
|----------------------|-----|------|
|                        | df  | F    | Sig. |
| Happy (between Countries) | 1,138 | .98 | n/s  |
| Surprised (between Countries) | 1,138 | 9.73 | .00  |
| Pleasant (Between Countries) | 1,138 | 23.01 | .00  |
| Interesting (Between Countries) | 1,138 | 22.93 | .00  |

| Table 3B: Means of 1994 and 2004 Ads on Emotional Appeal |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Countries Years | Happy | Surprised | Pleasant | Interesting |
| Vietnam 1994 | 4.12 | 4.68 | 3.91 | 4.97 |
| 2004 | 5.41 | 5.06 | 4.40 | 4.14 |
| Mean Differences | -1.29 | -0.36 | -0.49 | 0.83 |
| F-Value | 16.89 | 8.9 | 9.71 | 9.87 |
| P-Value | p< | n/s | n/s | .00 |
| Thailand 1994 | 4.80 | 5.40 | 4.65 | 5.40 |
| 2004 | 6.32 | 6.32 | 6.27 | 6.30 |
| Mean Differences | -1.52 | -0.92 | -1.62 | -0.90 |
| F-Value | 15.74 | 4.75 | 15.34 | 3.96 |
| P-Value | p< | .03 | .00 | .05 |

### TABLE 4
Informational Appeals of Vietnamese and Thai Ads (N=140 Ads)

| Table 4a: Means Between Countries both years |
|----------------------|-----|------|
|                        | df  | F    | Sig. |
| Price Value (between Countries) | 1,138 | 7.51 | .00  |
| Quality (between Countries) | 1,138 | 4.29 | .04  |
| Warranty (Between Countries) | 1,138 | 14.71 | .00  |
| New Idea (Between Countries) | 1,138 | 4.36 | .03  |

| Table 4b: Means of 1994 and 2004 Ads on Informational Appeal |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Countries Years | Price Value | Quality | Warranty | New Idea |
| Vietnam 1994 | 5.02 | 4.92 | 5.25 | 5.88 |
| 2004 | 4.01 | 6.01 | 5.90 | 5.00 |
| Mean Differences | 1.01 | -1.09 | -0.65 | .88 |
| F-Value | 7.12 | 7.46 | 2.98 | 3.63 |
| P-Value | p< | .00 | n/s | .06 |
| Thai 1994 | 5.41 | 5.31 | 4.01 | 4.60 |
| 2004 | 5.90 | 4.35 | 4.81 | 5.32 |
| Mean Differences | -.49 | -.96 | -.80 | -.72 |
| F-Value | 1.75 | 4.74 | 4.40 | 3.18 |
| P-Value | p< | n/s | .03 | .07 |
The Thai ads seem to reflect a culture that may have peaked in terms of Western influence and is finding its identity in a cosmopolitan blend of East and West.

More specifically still, our data suggest that sexual images and allusions, a staple of Western advertising, will be more problematic in Southeast Asia than in most parts of the United States and Great Britain. Whether measured as traditional Eastern “Sexual Morality” or Western “Sexiness,” our data indicate that Vietnamese ads have grown more sexual, Thai ads less so. We take this as a sign that the two cultures are seeking a level of sexuality in advertising that fits their changing circumstances. Vietnam, newer to the game, is till experimenting with sexuality in advertising; Thailand, more experienced–Bangkok is well-known for its free if not libertine sexual culture–may be retreating to a more conservative state.

Both sets of ads seem to depict cultures that are more light-hearted than they were ten years ago. That is, “happy” cues are higher in both cultures, “surprising” and “pleasant” cues higher also in Thai culture, perhaps a sign of distancing from the turmoil of the 1970s, perhaps an indication of growing equilibrium between Eastern and Western influences. In either event, both Vietnamese and Thai audiences should respond well to “happy” cues as long as these do not overpower the essential information needs of Vietnamese culture.

From a theoretical view, our study supports and extends the findings of the relatively few studies of comparative Asian culture in advertising. It identifies both cultures as fundamentally Asian, but goes on to offer distinctions that, so far as we know, have not been made before, in particular the movement toward Easter/Western and Information/Emotional equilibrium. As such, it is compatible with theories of “globalization” (e.g., Tomlinson, 2000) and even “hegemony” (e.g., Gramsci, 1992), although our data are not sufficient to determine whether or not such cultural diffusion is welcome.

Like all research, our study raises as many questions as it answers. Among them, will these patterns hold up in broadcast as well as print media? Are the changes speeding up or slowing down? What differences will we find within these cultures, among older versus young audiences, for example, or males versus females, highly educated versus less so? Further empirical work should address these questions.

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Are “Paradigms Lost” in Marketing? Some Twenty Years Later…: A Content Analysis
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Extended Abstract

In the fall of 1983, Rohit Deshpande wrote an article in the Journal of Marketing entitled “Paradigms lost: On Theory and Method in Research in Marketing.” The article presented a discussion of the dominance of the positivist or quantitative paradigm over the much neglected qualitative one in marketing. Our objective in this paper is an attempt to provide a more statistical account of the article’s claim that quantitative research dominates the marketing literature, but after some twenty years later.

The quantitative-qualitative debate is a lengthy one that dates back to the late nineteenth century with the growth of the interpretive approach (qualitative approach) to social inquiry which was considered a reaction to the positivist approach (Giddens, 1976; Hughes, 1958; Outhwaite, 1975, 1983; Polkinghorne, 1983; Smith 1983a, 1983b). Several researchers point out the need for and importance of qualitative research which would help provide a better understanding of the complex nature of the social world we live in (Cronbach 1975; Hirschman 1986). Others disagree and state that such qualitative research is purely subjective (Smith and Heshusius 1986) and some go as far as claiming that “it doesn’t constitute market research” and that “two people doing the same qualitative study can obtain totally different results” (Achenbaum 2001, p. 14).

On comparing the two methodologies, some say that they can be considered as mutually exclusive (Tauber 1987) and each method has its own set of different evaluation criteria (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Brodbeck (1968, p. 573) states that “the quantitative-qualitative dichotomy is spurious,” and Seymour (1989) argues that consumer research should not be an “either/or” case when it comes to the type of methodology used but rather it should be able to encompass and build a more comprehensive understanding of the consumer. He further recommends staying away from being too focused on the method and the “technique-driven-and lose track of the real purpose in generating information” (p. 27). Likewise, Kassarjian (1989) offers a similar view as he says that “the appropriate question is whether or not it is good science, rather than what kind of science it is,” and “is it making a contribution to knowledge?” (p. 126).

In the “Paradigms Lost” article, the focus of our paper here, Deshpande argues that the marketing literature has been dominated by one paradigm and that is the logical empiricism/positivism or the quantitative paradigm. He offers a discussion on the dominance of the quantitative paradigm over the often abandoned qualitative one which may be responsible for the low development of theory construction in marketing research. He suggests attaining a balance between the two paradigms and calls for more triangulation of methods and using each method more appropriately. This would be in an attempt to reduce the current bias that exists especially when addressing the issues of theory discovery versus theory verification.

In this study we used a content analysis procedure to investigate our research question of whether quantitative methods research does dominate the marketing literature even after twenty years of the “Paradigms Lost” article. We reviewed all the articles for the top three marketing journals (Hult, Neese, and Bashaw 1997), namely: the Journal of Marketing (JM), the Journal of Marketing Research (JMR), and the Journal of Consumer Research (JCR) from the years 2002 to 2004. We chose the past three years to reflect a “snapshot” of the recent trend. We basically classified each article on whether it was a quantitative study, a qualitative one or both based strictly on the research methodology used. Thus articles that do not include any methodology used were considered not applicable.

We analyzed a total of 394 articles (109 in JM, 115 in JMR and 170 in JCR). Almost half (47.2%) of all the articles published were of the quantitative methodology. Purely qualitative articles made up a mere 7.1% and articles containing both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies made up 32.7%. Articles that were considered not applicable made up the remaining 12.9%.

When looking at the journals more specifically, we found that JCR had the highest percentage of purely quantitative articles (65.3%) and at the same time it had the highest percentage of qualitative articles (13.5%). JMR had the lowest percentage of qualitative articles with only one article in the three years investigated! And JM also had a very low percentage of qualitative articles (3.7%). However, both JMR and JM had the highest percentage of articles with both methodologies used. Based on this analysis, it may be feasible perhaps to say that a researcher looking to publish a purely qualitative study maybe far better off shooting for JCR than JMR or even JM.

In terms of the types of methodologies used, experiments showed up as the highest percentage of methodology used, accounting for 41.4% of all the journal articles. Surveys, interviews and secondary data analysis were all almost similar in the percentage used (15-17%). To be more specific, qualitative articles were dominated by experiments and qualitative articles were dominated by interviews. Furthermore, in terms of the journals, JM was dominated by surveys, JMR was dominated by secondary data analysis and JCR was dominated by experiments. These particular findings provide further evidence of the dominance of the qualitative methodologies in marketing journals and perhaps indicate the preferences of certain methodologies over others.

In conclusion, based on our limited study, we have attempted to provide some preliminary evidence of the dominance of the quantitative paradigm over the much neglected qualitative paradigm in the marketing literature, even after more than twenty years of the “Paradigms Lost” article. However, the clear sign of studies including both methodologies provides growing evidence that even though purely qualitative studies are still minimal, there integration with quantitative studies maybe catching pace.

References
Compulsive Buyers and the Emotional Roller Coaster in Shopping

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Extended Abstract

Shopping is increasingly seen as a recreational activity in which consumers are emotionally involved. Instead of going to a store to buy necessary items, consumers often stroll around and browse for hours just for the fun of it. Shopping provides a necessary escape for consumers whose lives are hectic or otherwise troublesome. However, for some consumers, shopping can become more than recreation. Compulsive shoppers are consumers who are addicted to shopping. For these consumers, shopping is part of their lifestyle, and strongly related to emotional goals.

The emotions compulsive shoppers go through influence their feelings and satisfaction of the shopping activity. For example, consumers who have a bad day might go shopping to cheer themselves up, or consumers who have completed a difficult task at work might reward themselves by going shopping. For compulsive shoppers, the emotions involved with the shopping activity are particularly important, as they play such a large part of the consumer’s life and influence their happiness as a whole. Feelings such as joy, anticipation, thrill during the shopping activity can quickly shift over to guilt, depression, and dissatisfaction with managing one’s finances. Based on previous research results, literature has termed these consumers bulimic shoppers, who crave for shopping in excess, but afterwards get emotional qualms.

The emotions involved with shopping activities have usually been studied by examining how consumers feel before and after the shopping activity. The purpose of this paper is to extend on this view by examining consumers feelings with the shopping activity before, during and after the shopping process, to receive a more comprehensive picture of the emotional shifts consumers go through during the shopping activity. By examining all three stages, we expect to get a more refined picture of how emotions can change during the shopping activity, and what the triggers involved in these changes are.

To achieve the goal of the study, a three-step research methodology was employed. We first utilized an online questionnaire to identify consumers who could be classified as compulsive shoppers. Then, we conducted a digital ethnography study by communicating with consumers using their mobile phones. By communicating with consumers before, during, and after the shopping process using SMS and picture messages, we were able to be sensitive to the emotional changes consumers go through while shopping. Finally, we conducted personal interviews with the compulsive shoppers to hear them describe their feelings involved with the shopping activity, and their emotions towards shopping in their own words. The three steps complemented each other, and provided us with the ability to cross-check and validate results across the different kinds of data collected.

The results show that compulsive shoppers go through an emotional rollercoaster during the shopping process. The trigger involved with the emotions is closely linked to finding a bargain. A bargain is defined as a good deal, or a situation in which the consumers perceive they get mental satisfaction from their purchase. If compulsive shoppers make a bargain, they feel pride, happiness, and goal achievement. However, if they do not manage to find a bargain, they feel disappointed, sad, and unsuccessful. These emotions switch back and forth during the shopping activity. The largest disappointment for these consumers comes if they think they have managed to find a bargain, but realize that it was not one, after all (e.g., the item is too expensive, or they do not have it in the customers’ size). However, this disappointment can be overturned if another bargain is found. These findings expand on those found by previous literature by showing the emotions consumers go through during the shopping process are not predominantly negative or positive before or after the shopping process. Instead, consumers move up and down on an emotional continuum during shopping, and can also feel pride and satisfaction after shopping if they manage to find a bargain.

References

Knowledge Transfer and Rhetoric: The Influence of Rhetorical Figures on Consumer Learning

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Extended Abstract

Recently, researchers in marketing have begun to investigate the processes of internal knowledge transfer that consumers engage in when learning about a new, unfamiliar product (Gregor-Paxton, Hibbard, Brunel and Azar 2002; Gregor-Paxton and Moreau 2003; Moreau, Lehman and Markman 2001; Moreau, Markman and Lehmann 2001, Roehm and Sterntal 2001). This stream of research promises to expand our understanding of how consumers use existing knowledge to help them learn about unfamiliar products as well as ways in which this learning process can be influenced. Based on work done in cognitive psychology, the dominant theory driving this stream of research is analogical reasoning, which holds that we learn about new products much in the same way as we solve analogies (Gentner and Gentner 1983; Genter, 1989; Holyoak, Gentner, and Kokinov 2001; Markman and Gentner 2001; Vosniadou 1989). In applying and testing this theory in marketing, consumer researchers have often employed analogies in the headlines or copy of advertisements used as experimental stimuli. The use of an analogy in an ad has been found to influence the way consumers learn about the products being advertised (Gregor-Paxton, Hibbard, Brunel and Azar 2002; Gregor-Paxton and Moreau 2003). In spite of this explicit use of analogy, consumer researchers have failed to acknowledge the fact that an analogy is a rhetorical figure and thus have neglected to incorporate findings from the literature on rhetorical figures (McQuarrie and Mick, 1992, 1996, 1999, 2003) and persuasive communication.

This research seeks to answer the following question: what influence does the use of rhetorical figures in marketing communication have on consumer learning? Specifically, the impact on consumer learning will be examined from the perspective of internal knowledge transfer and the validity of the inferences consumers draw after exposure to a persuasive communication containing a rhetorical figure. One goal of this proposed research is to expand the scope of studies on knowledge transfer to a different context: the health care industry, specifically prescription drugs. Prescription drugs represent a different category of products than consumer electronics on many levels: consumers cannot directly buy prescription drugs; prescription drugs are incredibly complex in terms of interactions with other medications and/or lifestyles; prescription drugs have a direct and potentially powerful impact on consumers’ health and well being as well as a far reaching impact on public policy and society in general (for example Coney 2002; Lexchin and Mintzes 2002; Roth, 1996; Menon, Deshpande, Zinkhan and Perri 2004; Narayanan, Desiraju and Chintagunta 2004).

In an initial study, 260 undergraduate students from the introductory marketing course at a large Canadian university were exposed to six versions of a print ad for Gentrex, a fictitious brand name for a medication to treat genital herpes. This study was intended to serve as a test of a selected medical condition (genital herpes) and drug therapy as well as to investigate whether there were any substantial differences among subjects at processing similes versus metaphors. Even though metaphors and similes are both technically analogies, they represent different forms (implied versus explicit) and may have a differential impact on knowledge transfer processes.

The experimental design for the study was a 3 x 2 between subjects design. The first factor refers to the type of rhetorical figure used in the headline, with the following three conditions: simile, metaphor or declarative (non-figurative) statement. A declarative statement

References


was included as a third headline in order to have a baseline against which to evaluate the simile and metaphor headlines. The different headlines for each category were: Gentrex is like a sleeping pill for genital herpes (simile); One Gentrex a day keeps genital herpes at bay (metaphor); Gentrex suppresses genital herpes (declarative statement). The second factor pertains to the copy that appeared in the ad, with the following two conditions: no copy, and copy. The amount of copy contained within the ad was varied to test for any differences in processing due to the inclusion of additional information.

A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant difference in the mean levels of perceived creativity between the figurative headlines (simile and metaphor) and the non-figurative headline, suggesting a successful manipulation. As expected, no significant difference was found between simile and metaphor, suggesting subjects perceived the two forms of analogy similarly. Following previous research on knowledge transfer in consumer research (Gregan-Paxton and Moreau, 2003), the nature and extent of subjects’ internal knowledge transfer was captured by having subjects complete two cognitive response tasks. Thought protocol analysis revealed that simile and metaphor comparisons were not significantly different at encouraging relational knowledge transfer. This suggests that simile and metaphor should have similar effects on consumer knowledge transfer.

More than one quarter of all subjects (26%) made the inference that Gentrex cures genital herpes. Currently, there is no cure for genital herpes and no information in the ads shown to subjects indicated that Gentrex can cure genital herpes; however, it is conceivable that subjects might have inferred this from the ad headline. When the ad contained no copy, subjects in the analogical comparison conditions were significantly more likely to make the curative inference than subjects exposed to the declarative condition. This finding suggests that subjects exposed to analogical comparisons engaged in further elaboration of the message than subjects exposed to the declarative statement, but that the analogical inferences made were not valid. All subjects were relative novices, and therefore might not have been able to judge the validity of their inferences. When the ad contained copy, there were no significant differences among conditions at making the invalid inference (proportions were .14 for simile, .25 for metaphor and .16 for declarative). Additionally, the finding points to the potential danger of analogical comparisons involving medication. If there is no text that corrects for invalid inferences, or, as is more likely the case in a natural setting, consumers do not pay attention to the copy and only read the headline, consumers are in danger of drawing invalid, misleading conclusions about the advertised medication.

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Distrust: An Alternative Source of Power For Consumers
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Extended Abstract

The broad objectives of this article are to make theoretical arguments and to provide empirical support for the significance of studying consumer distrust. More specifically, we study consumers’ distrust in various key institutions in the food system, and describe how consumer distrust in various social institutions shapes their beliefs about food safety. It has been argued that trust plays an important role in shaping consumer beliefs about food safety in general and beliefs about the novel food applications in particular (e.g. irradiated foods and genetically modified foods) (Juannillo 2001; McGarity and Hansen 2001). In this paper, we argue that, in order to have a more complete understanding about consumer beliefs in food safety, in addition to trust, consumer researchers and policy makers should also pay attention to the concept of distrust. A review of the literature both in consumer research and in other areas of social sciences suggests that as most researchers have dealt with the concept of trust, very limited attention has been paid to the concept of distrust.

Marketing literature does not provide a definition for distrust for the same reason that it treats distrust as the negative polar of a single trust continuum. Scholars in other disciplines provided a view of distrust; however, they, too, have mainly conceptualized distrust as “lack of” trust, not as a separate construct (these points will be elaborated in the next section). Deutsch’s (1962) conceptualization of trust and distrust appears to make clearer distinctions between the two. Deutsch (1962) viewed trust as an individual’s confidence in the intentions and capabilities of a relationship partner and the belief that a relationship partner would behave as one hoped. His view of distrust builds around suspicion and fear: confidence about a relationship partner’s undesirable behavior, stemming from knowledge of the individual’s capabilities and intentions. More recently, Lewicki, McAllister, and Bies (1998) mentioned distrust as confident negative expectations involving fear of another’s conduct.

We conceptualized distrust in terms of confident negative expectations regarding another’s conduct. More specifically, distrust in social institutions is conceptualized as consumers’ confident negative expectations regarding institution A’s conduct (words, actions, and decisions), and confident negative expectations as a fear of, a propensity to attribute sinister intentions to, and a desire to buffer oneself from the effects of institution A’s conduct.

Institutional distrust (described as distrust directed at social institutions such as the government or manufacturers) can be studied in two ways. One is to view distrust as “lack of,” “loss of,” or “decreased” trust, and therefore study it in “trust” terms. Another way to deal with institutional distrust is to call it by its name and work to understand what caused it and what is maintaining it. Most studies have followed the former view, which I see as shortsighted. For example, in their study of distrust in institutions in nine post-Communist societies, Rose and Misher (1997), conceptualized distrust as “lack of trust” and introduced subjects with the statements “There are many institutions in this country, for example, the government, courts, police, and civil servants. Please show me on this 7-point scale, where 1 represents great distrust and 7 represents great trust, how much is your personal trust in each of the following.” (p.8). When distrust is conceptualized as “decreased” or “lack of” trust, and measured along the same trust/distrust continuum, then it assumes that distrust exists in terms of trust, not as a separate concept (i.e. low levels of trust would mean distrust). As a result, respondents are forced to indicate either trust or distrust toward an institution. This generalized approach does not allow the possibility that individuals can trust an institution in some areas and distrust it in others. In other words, this view omits the possibility that distrust in institutions may exist independently of the level of trust individuals might have in these institutions given different contexts. For example, government may be trusted to deal with foreign threats but may be distrusted to eliminate corruption. In this case trust and distrust may grow or decline based on different elements and may be caused by different antecedents.

We believe that current conceptualizations of trust and distrust (distrust as opposite of trust) leave us only with the “tool” of trust to deal with social problems. However, when trust and distrust are considered as separate constructs, both can be utilized independently to deal with complex social phenomena. In other words, our view also suggests that elements of trust and elements of distrust towards an institution separately may be used as strategy tools by individuals in a complex social system. The Rose and Misher (1997) study, mentioned above, reported that individuals scored low on the 1-7 distrust/trust scale for most institutions, and therefore concluded that distrust is the persisting attitude in these societies. A summary analysis that low trust would actually mean distrust may lead us nowhere in solving social problems. In the end, the study concluded that as long as distrust exists, many post-Communist countries will remain far from idealized models of civic democracies. However, as we know, in most civic democracies distrust (and also trust) in institutions exists and persists, perhaps even as the backbone of these democratic societies. As Barber (1983) suggests “A democratic polity requires legitimate criticisms based on democratic allegiance, some distrust, in this sense, is essential for viable democratic order. Others have point this issue as paradox of democracy: “the more there is institutionalized distrust, the more there will be spontaneous trust” (Sztompka 1999, p. 140). In summary, we believe that there is both merit and need in investigating distrust as a separate concept. We further believe that insights gathered through such attempts can provide guidance for public policy makers in their attempts to handle social issues and problems. For example, by studying consumer distrust in the context food safety (like in this paper,) we can have a more comprehensive understanding about consumers’ orientations for various novel food applications including irradiated foods and genetically modified foods. In this paper, after providing an overview of our research context and activities that took place between 1999-2003 in the Midwest, we report our findings related to consumer distrust in social institution. Based on the data collected through in-depth interviews, we identified three dimensions of consumer distrust within which social institution of the food system can be viewed. Then, we conclude the paper with a general discussion of contributions and implications for consumer, for academicians, for practitioners (e.g. the food industry) and for public policy makers.

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Spinning Fantasies into Consumer Attitudes: A Fantasy-Realization Perspective of Attitude Formation

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Extended Abstract

Every consumer fantasizes about obtaining better things such as a better car, a new flat panel TV, or a dream vacation. Yet, as ubiquitous as such fantasies are, they are often times not realized. One reason individuals’ positive fantasies become doomed to the limbo of the mind is that individuals do not possess the goal, or at least a strong enough goal, to make their fantasies into reality. Interestingly, fairly little empirical attention has been given to determine how or why people set goals in the first place, and how committed individuals become to their goals. Yet, such empirical considerations are important if marketers are to understand when and how consumers form goals to purchase products.

Potentially guiding such considerations, Oettingen (1996) has suggested that how individuals think about the future may be important in understanding how they come to set goals and commit to them. She offers that individuals can think about the future in two ways—by generating or considering expectations about what outcomes are likely to occur in the future, or by indulging in free fantasies. Free-fantasies involve individuals’ imagination about what it would be like to attain a desirable future outcome (e.g., buying a desired new car). Importantly, free-fantasies can occur independently of individuals’ expectations that the events about which they fantasize are likely to occur. For example, many consumers can fantasize about owning a new Ferrari, yet fully expect that actually owning such a car will never be within their financial reach.

In her Fantasy Realization Theory (FRT), Oettingen (1996) offers three ways an individual might deal with fantasies about the future and relate them back to their current situation as a means toward realizing the fantasy. That is, FRT offers three ways by which individuals’ fantasies may influence goal formation and commitment. Two of the possibilities create a readiness to act that is independent of expectations that the goal is attainable (e.g., the Ferrari example), whereas the third entails an expectancy-based readiness to act.

First, individuals may largely disregard positive fantasies about the future and instead dwell on a negative reality that stands in the way of a desired future. When individuals engage in this type of thinking they are left without the necessity to act. Further, and more importantly, by not fantasizing about the positive future individuals also lack a direction in which to act. As a result, goal commitment will only be influenced by the negative aspects one considers about the current reality. That is, expectations about the attainability of the positive outcome do not tend to influence goal commitment.

Second, individuals can think about positive fantasies without considering current situations that may impede their fantasy-realization, a type of thought akin to daydreaming. In this situation, individuals merely fantasize about the future and consider no information in the present reality that would cause them to reflect on the fact that their fantasy of the future has not been realized. Further, because individuals in this frame of mind do not ponder their reality, their expectations for attaining the positive outcome is not considered and, therefore, does not influence their commitment to achieving the outcome in their fantasy. Rather, the positive incentive of the desired future outcome within the fantasy supplies the only motivation to act.

Third, individuals may indulge in an expectation-based type of thinking in which a positive fantasy is contrasted with a negative reality that blocks the potential realization of a fantasy. In essence, mental contrasting reveals the desired future as something that is to be attained, and the negative reality as something that needs to be overcome. A necessity to act is produced that questions whether reality can be turned into fantasy. Goals are enacted or forgotten based on the individual’s degree of expectation of achieving that future. If expectations are high, then a committed goal will be formed, if expectations are low, a goal will not be formed.

To this point, FRT studies have relied on identifying expectations already held by participants. Of note, persuasion research (e.g., Fishbein and Ajzen 1975) indicates that the presentation of strong or weak arguments influence individuals’ expectations that an attitude object is likely to produce positive or negative consequences. Thus, by manipulating argument quality, it is possible to manipulate individuals’ expectations that a fantasy is attainable (e.g., that they can, or cannot, purchase a car). Further, individuals form favorable attitudes toward the topic of the message when it is supported by strong arguments, but relatively unfavorable attitudes about a message if it is supported by weak arguments (Petty and Wegener 1991). Thus, FRT would suggest that individuals who compare positive fantasies and negative realities should be particularly influenced by the expectations induced by strong or weak arguments. As a result, these individuals should form favorable attitudes toward a message topic if it contains strong, relative to weak arguments. However, individuals who only consider positive fantasies, or negative realities, should not be influenced by their expectations, and thus should form attitudes independent of the quality of the arguments they read.

Testing these predictions we manipulated participants’ mindset using methods similar to those used by Oettingen et al. (2001). Specifically, participants were induced to either dwell on negative realities that stand in the way of buying a new car, positive fantasies
about buying a new car, or to mentally contrast both. They were then presented with an advertisement that offered excellent incentives for buying a new car (strong argument) or an advertisement that offered lackluster incentives for buying a new car (weak argument). We then administered a questionnaire about their expectations that buying a car was feasible and their attitudes toward buying a car in the near future.

As predicted, participants in the mental contrast condition who received a strong advertisement demonstrated more positive attitudes and higher expectations of buying a desired new car than those who received a weak advertisement. Further, participants in the other two conditions did not differ in their expectations or attitudes, regardless of which persuasive advertisement they received. These findings indicate that FRT can be usefully applied to research in consumer behavior.

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The Influence of Line and Surface Modifications in Product Design on Brand Recognition and Novelty
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Extended Abstract

The choice between novelty and familiarity when introducing a redesigned product is a crucial decision. How similar should the appearance of a redesigned product be compared to the old product to ensure brand familiarity? And, to what degree should the redesign look new in order to avoid boredom? A look into the processes of object perception reveals that novelty and similarity/familiarity are not two poles of the same dimension. Instead it is possible that consumers can perceive new products as both novel from and similar to a former product. According to the 4-stage model of object perception (cf. Palmer 1999; Palmer et al., 2003; Kreuzbauer & Malter 2006) a product which is perceived by a consumer passes 4 different stages until it becomes categorized within consumer memory. The first stage describes a 2-D retinal image which is a first impression of visual product stimuli that are projected to the viewpoint of the observer’s eyes. A retinal image is perceived without the consumer’s attention, and the information is unstructured and ‘uninterteped’ (Julesz, 1984; Treisman, 1993). In the second stage, the 2-D retinal product impression is further processed, so that elements such as lines and edges of the stimulus are detected and “sharpened” (image-based stage). Further in the surface-based stage, general surface and spatial information is recovered. True 3-D processing first occurs in the final stage, called the object-based stage, since the product perception process does not end with the mere representation of all the visible lines and surfaces. Instead, it is assumed that during perception surface information is related to general stored knowledge about the intrinsic nature of the 3-D object (Biederman, 1987; Palmer, 1999). An example would be aspects of products that are occluded from the current viewpoint (e.g., the backs or undersides of a camera, TV, car, bottle, etc.). By simply perceiving the curved lines and surfaces of a bottle, the observer is able to make clear predictions regarding the probable appearance and properties of the back of the bottle. Therefore, hidden assumptions about the nature of the visual world are also required to enable the inclusion of information about unseen surfaces or parts of surfaces.

Since line perception is an earlier process than other processes such as surface and texture perception, lines are the major visual elements that determine object recognition and similarity (cf. Biederman & Ju, 1992). Based on the ideas of Biederman & Ju, one can expect that products of a brand that share major line characteristics (e.g. the car grill or line-silhouette of the lights of a BMW car or its overall silhouette) should be considered as more similar (i.e. stronger brand familiarity) than products that share similar colors, textures or other surface elements but have different line-structure. When companies introduce redesigned products, consumers are confronted with differences between the lines and surfaces of the old and redesigned product. These modifications are hypothesized to influence both the perception of product novelty and brand recognition in the following ways:

H1: Line modification has a strong (−) negative effect on brand recognition. Surface modification has a small (−) negative effect on brand recognition.

H2: Line modification has a strong (+++) positive effect on novelty. Surface modification has a strong (+) positive effect on novelty.
To test our hypotheses, we redesigned the appearance of a Nokia phone. The 2-D stimuli were designed by a professional designer and differed on the degree of line and surface modifications. Stimuli were black and white sketches, no brand name was included. Our benchmark stimulus was a sketch of the most sold Nokia cell phone among our respondents. In study 1 (N=17), we assessed perceived line and surface changes to check our manipulations. Experts (Bachelor in design) compared 6 stimuli with the benchmark. Our stimuli indeed differed in line and surface modifications. Next to assess brand recognition, we asked the same respondents to indicate the brand of the stimuli and their degree of certainty on this. To test hypothesis 1, we correlated the perceived line and perceived surface modifications with brand recognition. Analyses showed a significant negative effect of both line (Pearson R=.47; P<.001) and surface changes (Pearson R=.28; P<.01) on brand recognition. Partial correlations showed that controlled for surface changes [line changes] the correlation remained significant (Pearson R=.41; P<.001) [correlation become insignificant (Pearson R=.10; P=.32)]. This confirms our hypothesis.

In a second study (N=17), we tested hypothesis 1 and 2. We asked respondents to compare our stimuli (differences in degree of line and surface change based on study 1) with our benchmark stimulus on newness and aesthetic evaluation. Results in this study for hypothesis 1 are comparable to those in study 1. Hypothesis 2 was tested with the use of partial correlations because of high correlation between surface and line change. Partial correlations showed that controlled for surface changes [line changes] the correlation was significant (Pearson R=.26; P<.001) [correlation was insignificant (Pearson R=.10; P=.32)]. This partly confirms our hypothesis 2.

As a next step we will make experiments with a bigger sample and with different products. In addition to that we will measure the interaction between line and surface changes on brand recognition and novelty as well as overall preference. The results will be presented at the conference.

The contribution of this research to consumer science is two fold: Firstly, it shows how different types of visual characteristics (line and surface) affect brand recognition, novelty and preference. Secondly, it provides an in-depth understanding of processes of product perception and should motivate further research into that direction. Whereas consumer information processing has mostly concentrated on the part of categorization and knowledge representation, this research focuses on the mostly overlooked part of (product) perception.

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Heuristic and Systematic Information Processing when Valuating Multiple Gains and Losses
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Extended Abstract
This research attempts to enhance our understanding of people’s preferences for separating or combining gains and losses. According to the normative decision theory of rational choice, people should demonstrate indifference towards the combination or separation of negative and positive events (Thaler, 1985). However, there are many examples and empirical studies demonstrating that preferences systematically violate normative decision theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979, 1984). E.g. winning $90 all at once is not perceived as being equal to winning $40 and $50 separately. Inspired by Kahneman and Tversky’s Prospect Theory (1979) a substantial body of literature has investigated the patterns of preference formation when judging consolidated versus segregated gains and losses. Thaler’s hedonic editing rules are based on the value function of the prospect theory and predict a preference for consolidating multiple losses and integrating multiple gains; empirical research confirmed these predictions (Thaler, 1985). Later studies confirmed the preference for segregating gains but stated—contrary to theory—a preference for segregating losses also (Linnville & Fischer, 1991; Thaler & Johnson, 1990). Explanations for these findings refer to the theory of renewable resources (Linnville & Fischer, 1991) or to the quasi hedonic-editing hypothesis (Thaler & Johnson, 1990). However, this previous research focuses on the emotional impact of segregated versus integrated gains and losses and the role of motivational underpinnings of preference formation for multiple gains and losses remain unclear.

Based on the heuristic-systematic model (HSM) of human information processing (Chaiken, 1987) this research attempts to shed light on the underlying logic of judgment of multiple gains and losses. The HSM differentiates systematic from heuristic information processing. Whereas heuristic processing is characterized by a relatively effortless application of simple decision rules, systematic processing is marked by a more cognitively demanding comprehensive analysis of judgment-relevant information. Which mode of information processing predominates depends on the individual’s current motivation (Chen, Shechter, & Chaiken, 1996). It is stated that accuracy motivation will enhance systematic processing (Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994). Numerous studies have demonstrated the differential influence of the two modes of information processing (heuristic and systematic) on judgment and decision making; Hsee and
Rottenstreich’s (Hsee & Rottenstreich, 2004) experiments demonstrate the influence of the two modes of information processing on valuation and subsequently on preferences for segregation and integration of gains and losses. Additionally, research by Agrawal and Maheswaran (Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005) lends support to the assumption that accuracy motivation eliminates outcome-biased judgments.

Based on the previous research on dual process models and valuation we predict that accuracy motivation will foster systematic information processing and will therefore take a substantial impact on how segregated versus integrated gains and losses are perceived and valued. To test the predictions an experimental study was conducted. 160 undergraduate students completed the study for a payment of $5. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four groups. They were primed either to be accuracy motivated or to value by feelings and assigned to either a gain or a loss scenario. They were presented both an integrated and a segregated scenario and indicated their preference for one of the scenarios.

In general, the current research establishes that accuracy motivation strongly influences or even reverses preferences when people value segregated versus integrated gains. However, the results obtained by this research raise interesting issues on how the type of event (gain versus loss) elicits different valuations of multiple events. We assume that loss aversion and specific emotions related to losses influence the way outcomes are valued. Therefore, further work is needed to scrutinize the effects of emotions in the context of the valuation of segregated versus integrated losses.

References

On the Importance of Non-dominant Cultural Dimensions: Effects of Vertical Individualism on Consumer Behaviour in Norway
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Introduction
Countries and cultures are typically characterised in terms of some dominant cultural variables. For example, the US is described as a vertical individualistic country, whereas Japan is vertical and collectivistic (Triandis 1995). Scandinavian countries are typically found to score high on horizontal dimensions (Nelson and Shavitt 2002; Silvera and Seger 2004). In this paper we promote the point that non-dominant cultural dimensions may play a more important role in explaining culturally related consumer behaviors than dominant dimensions.

Individualism-collectivism (INDCOL)
The original typology was later expanded with a new dimension of vertical vs. horizontal INDCOL (Singelis et al. 1995; Triandis and Gelfand 1998). Vertical dimension of INDCOL captures the degree of status and inequality present in this orientation whereas horizontal dimension captures the degree of egalitarianism (Singelis et al. 1995; Triandis and Gelfand 1998). Intracultural variation in INDCOL is conceptualised as idiocentric vs. allocentric tendencies (Triandis et al. 1985).

Effects of vertical and horizontal INDCOL
Vertical individualist subjects preferred domestic products only when they were perceived as superior, whereas vertical collectivist subjects were found to prefer domestic products regardless of product superiority (Gurhan-Canli and Maheswaran 2000). When individuals with independent self-constructs where presented with promotion focused appeals, i.e. emphasizing gains, hopes and aspirations, the messages were more persuasive than when they were presented with prevention focused appeals, i.e. emphasizing avoidance of losses, duties and obligations (Aaker and Lee 2001). The reverse was true for individuals with interdependent self-constructs. There is also evidence that these effects may hold only for vertical cultures.
The Norwegian culture

The Norwegian culture has been characterized as horizontal rather than vertical (Nelson and Shavitt 2002; Silvera and Seger 2004). The literature points to the predominance of the horizontal value orientations in the Norwegian culture so the researchers tended to use these to explain consumer behavior. However as we argue further and as our data shows other non-dominant dimensions may account for important differences in consumer behavior.

Cultural Embeddedness of Products (CEP)

The concept of CEP is defined as the degree of the various types of national cultural meanings that are transferred from the culturally constituted world (McCracken 1986) to the product category by means of various cultural media (Jakubanecs and Supphellen 2004; Jakubanecs and Supphellen 2005). For instance a product category that has high degree of CEP can serve as a symbol of the national culture. Consumers can draw on the meanings embedded in the product category in order to build their private and social self-concepts as a certain national, promote their national identity and distinguish themselves from other nations (Jakubanecs and Supphellen 2004; Jakubanecs and Supphellen 2005). The dimensions of INDCOL are in turn likely to have effects on CEP due to the importance of INDCOL in the definition of self.

Hypotheses formulation

Intracultural variation becomes an important factor when non-dominant dimensions are likely to account for important consumer behavior. The case is illustrated by the Norwegian example. The horizontal dimensions of INDCOL do not focus on hierarchies or status, which are important in the concept of CEP. Consequently we do not expect these dominant cultural orientations to have effect on this consumer behavior variable. Vertical individualists are likely to engage in national identity construction in order to enhance their status, provided that having strong national identity has a positive connotation. Being a good citizen is valued in the Norwegian culture.

Based on this discussion we formulate the following hypothesis:

H1: Vertical individualism has a strong positive effect on CEP (Cultural Embeddedness of Products) even in countries where vertical individualism is a non-dominant dimension (e.g., Scandinavia).

Methodology

The hypothesis was tested on a non-student sample from Norway (N=158). Vertical-horizontal INDCOL construct was measured by a 16-item, 7-point Likert scale (Singelis et al. 1995). The survey included 8 product categories: ketchup, bunad (a Norwegian national costume), cars, meat cakes (a national meat dish), make-up, goat cheese, pizza, cross-country skis. The concept of CEP was measured by a 22-item, 7-point Likert Cultural Embeddedness of Products (CEP) scale (Jakubanecs and Supphellen 2004; Jakubanecs and Supphellen 2005). The CEP Scale items included such as: “If I traveled abroad, and was asked about a typical Norwegian product, I could mention this one”, “When I was a child my family referred to this product as one of the symbols of our Norwegian identity”, “If other Norwegian were to see me using this product, he or she would perceive me as a typical Norwegian”.

Results

Consistent with earlier studies, horizontal collectivism is the most dominant dimension in the Norwegian culture followed by vertical collectivism. Norwegians are also high on horizontal individualism and as expected rather low on vertical individualism.

EFA of CEP Scale resulted in the three-dimensional structure (Tradition, Identity-building and Relationship CEP) for the eight product categories. The data was subjected to path analysis via LISREL (Joreskog and Sorbom 1993). Some of the LISREL model fit indices were: for ketchup-chi-square/df=2.895, GFI=.981, CFI=.974, RMSEA=.110; for pizza-chi-square/df=2.122, GFI=.983, CFI=.979, RMSEA=.085. The results strongly support H1. Vertical individualism has strong effects on the Tradition CEP (e.g., .359*** for meat cakes, .239** for cars; ***=p<.01), Identity-building CEP (e.g., .510*** for meat cakes, .335*** for ketchup) for most product categories, whereas very few effects are observed for the other INDCOL dimensions.

Discussion

The most dominant cultural orientation of the Norwegian society-horizontal collectivism has little explanatory power when it comes to perception and construction of the national identity. The same conclusion applies to the other dominant dimension-horizontal individualism. Instead the dimension of vertical individualism, existence of which previously was ignored in the studies of the Norwegian culture, provides consistent explanations in this behavior cluster across the product categories. It could be the case that in the Norwegian culture, the national cultural meanings could serve status-enhancing purpose of being a good citizen which is important to vertical individualists.

Implications

We find support for importance of recognising and measuring allocentric and idiocentric tendencies when conducting cross-cultural consumer behavior studies. Reliance on nation-level studies and ignorance of the intracultural variation may weaken research validity.

References


Flip-Flopping of General Action and Inaction States: A Study on the Mental Representation of Action and Inaction Goals
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Extended Abstract

Being active or inactive is essential to human life. People, cultures, and eras appear to vary in requisite levels of energy and productivity. Thus, we examined the possibility that general tendencies to engage in or abstain from behavior irrespective of the domain (e.g., buying, using drugs, exercising) can be due to the setting of general action and inaction goals. We have investigated general action goals that reside at the meta-level of goal systems (for goal-facilitation of specific behaviors, see Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Chartrand & Bargh, 1996; Kruglanski, 1996; for the concept of general action and inaction goals, see Albarracin, in press). Action goals are generalized goals to engage in action (e.g., activated with instructions such as “go”). The counterpart to these action goals are general inaction goals, which are generalized goals to not engage in action (e.g., activated with instructions such as “rest”). Importantly, general action/inaction goals are diffuse desired ends that can mobilize the execution of more specific activities. Hence, their activation may trigger the pursuit or interruption of any particular (overt or covert) behavior that is subjectively relevant to the goal. Action goals imply a need to “do” irrespective of what one does; inaction goals imply a need to abstain from doing, irrespective of the domain of abstinence.

Research by Albarracin and her colleagues (see Albaracin, in press) have shown that people with general action goals preferred action-oriented tasks, identified more behaviors, performed better on a text comprehension task, and formed attitudes on a novel topic more than people with inaction goals. Given these differences in performance across these domains, we wanted to further explore these goals at the level of mental representations. In this study, we explored the activation of the action/inaction goals via a priming task with icons related to action and inaction and in turn, identified the conditions that led to the satisfaction of those goals. Our basic hypothesis is that the action goal is “turned off” via satisfaction of that goal and as a result, the inaction goal is “turned on.” Thus, the purposes of this study were 1) to identify if general action and inaction goals are mentally represented and 2) to examine the “on and off” manner of action and inaction goals.

In the first part of study, half of the participants were exposed to the action primes while the rest were exposed to the inaction primes. To prime action goals, black and white icons concerning specific actions (e.g., running, throwing, and dancing) were employed. To prime inaction goals, black and white icons concerning specific inactions (e.g., lying down, meditating, and relaxing) were used. Participants in the action prime condition were exposed to 10 pictures related to actions and 14 pictures neutral to action. Those in the inaction prime condition were exposed to 10 pictures related to inaction and 14 pictures neutral to inaction. The participants’ task was to identify whether the black part of a picture was larger than the white part.

After the priming task, all participants were given a lexical decision task (LDT) to measure the activation level of action-related and inaction-related concepts. The LDT contained 10 action-related words (e.g., go, move, and create), 10 inaction-related words (e.g., relax, stop, and halt), 20 words neutral to action/inaction matched with inaction/action words on word length and frequency, and 20 other neutral words. The task had 10 blocks and each block contained 12 words. The blocks were divided into first and last five blocks to examine if the participants changed their action/inaction goal states.

Following the LDT, the participants were given an opportunity to either choose to work on questions from GRE (graduate record examination) or to rest. The choice made by participants served as our measure of the “on-off” nature of these goals. For instance, participants who are primed with action and then perform the LDT should “flip” to an inactive state and choose to rest.
First, it was hypothesized that action/inaction priming should lead to activation of associated concepts. Results showed differences in activation, such that the participants primed with action goal icons identified action-related words more quickly than the participants primed with inaction goal icons in the first five blocks of the LDT. However, in the last five blocks there was no significant difference between these two goal conditions on reaction times for action-related words. These results suggest that after performing half of the LDT, participants primed with action might have satisfied this goal by performing the LDT.

Second, it was hypothesized that participants in the action goal condition should flip to an inaction state following the LDT. Results showed that participants primed with an action goal were more likely to choose to rest than perform the GRE, and were more likely to do so than those primed with inaction. In sum, the results verified that these general goals can be activated, and suggest the “on and off” nature of these goals.

The study of these general goals may yield many practical applications in tandem with theoretical advances in goal theory and self-regulatory processes. For instance, action goals may exert effects inadvertently by being included in the title of an intervention such as “Youth in Action Against Drugs” (Lowell Housing Authority, 2005; the emphasis is ours). The richer effect here is that not only might people be primed for action, but that people with action goals are more likely in some instances to be persuaded as well. Albarracin and her colleagues (see Albarracin, in press) have shown that people are more likely to employ external information when they do not have prior attitudes about the topic, hence, are more apt to be persuaded. However, once the primed action goal is satisfied, then perhaps the window for persuasion is closed.

References

How Do Consumers Categorize Websites?
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Background
Similarity judgments have been used in many fields of research to serve as a cognitive categorization mechanism. This research presents the results of the perceptual mapping of stagnant (or mouse-free) images of multiple websites from the consumer perspective. The goal of our research is not from a decision making perspective, but more from a consumer perception framework. We aim to disentangle the internet into multiple separable pieces or frames, gather information from consumers on those frames, and then elaborate on ways in which they are categorized and conceptualized.

One of the key foundations of this pilot research effort is the de-activation of an otherwise interactive medium. Our effort was to gain insight as to how consumers may initially view websites—as images rather than “clickable” interfaces. We contend, then, that at first glance, a user categorizes websites according to some set of attributes. Those attributes, if further understood, can help guide our understanding of deployment of “effective” websites, from a consumer-centric viewpoint. Although the foundations of cognitive categorization are principally psychological, many other fields have employed them through use of mathematical techniques. Broken down at the lowest level, we see or discuss “things”, which then, in order to control for chaos and cognitive boundaries we have, we must categorize. (Smith and Medlin, 1981)

The fields of human factors, information systems, and marketing have also focused on the interesting implications of the internet as an interactive medium. Marketing research often studies the internet as an advertising medium and sees similarities with other forms such as television, where we have visual cues to stimulate action on the part of the consumer. Yet, we make note of something entirely unique in internet environments—the ability to have constant interaction with our consumer. (Hoffman and Novak, 1996) Consumer choice and decision making thus drives much of the literature on how a consumer can interact with the internet. (Peterson et al, 1997; Mandel and Johnson, 2002)

Hence, the contribution of this initial study is to break down and attempt to ascertain “first impressions” of consumers by using static as opposed to dynamic images. We posit that clickstream data, by focusing on either one consumer or one website, and presenting the internet in its full interactive complexity, may not be able to capture those initial categorizations which consumers make.

Experiment
Sixty-seven marketing undergraduates participated in this within subject study by completing a two part survey. Due to the subject matter of this study, namely internet websites, and the experience level of the participants, we considered this a homogeneous data set. Given a total of ten websites, part 1 of the study design called for a set of forty-five paired similarity/dissimilarity judgments. Two context areas, cameras and tourism, were selected, within which we selected five websites each. Our conjecture is that the participants in our study
had approximately equal exposure to these two context areas and thus would not show significant experience or gender bias. The ratings were given from 0 to 10 with 10 being the most similar and 0 being the most dissimilar. Since ALSCAL and INDSCAL algorithms expect dissimilarity measures, the results were converted into dissimilarity measures before being entered into a matrix. (Kruskal, 1984; Schiffman, Reynolds and Young, 1981).

Results

The three steps completed during the analysis phase of our study, namely ALSCAL, INDSCAL, and preference mapping, allowed us to determine four possible attributes which could explain the dimensionality of our stimulus configuration. In order to visually examine the resultant vectors, we plotted these four attributes. Studying this plot indicated that uniqueness and trustworthiness showed the closest match to two possible representative dimensions for our model. Interestingly, we could see domain clustering of the websites on two different sides of the uniqueness vector, i.e. the “C” websites on one side and the “T” websites on the other. The concept of uniqueness as a representation of this dimension, therefore, is intuitive. The remaining three vectors, classifying the website images as trustworthy, personalized, or educational, were all considered as possible attributes for the second dimension. We chose trustworthiness as the second dimension mainly based on its geographic representation.

There are several possible interesting implications when thinking of these two attributes as our dimensions. One of the interesting facets of the attributes we chose is their interpretation if viewed in terms of temporal significance, or what we are terming dynamism. Essentially, we are asking the question, “Does the consumer have to interact with the website in order to make this determination?”

Conclusions

The most interesting finding of this study centers on the relevance of several “non-dynamic” attributes as salient. This, given that we are making the web a static interface for the study, is a significant result. One may ask the question of whether or not it is effective to freeze a website and assess a consumer’s perception of it—or cognitive categorization of it. Our reasoning behind this study centers on what we see as a very important facet of the internet as an advertising medium. The fact that consumers constantly assess corporations using not only their websites, but the entire picture the consumer creates of that corporation. This assessment may consist of experience gleaned from other advertising media (television, magazines, newspapers, store presences, to name a few) as well as interaction with the website itself. But where does the consumer classify the website he/she interacts with? What motivates the consumer to interact with one website over another? These are questions we believe are at the foundation of the need to be able to classify key attributes consumers identify at an initial, static, level.

The quantitative analysis in this paper resulted in the finding of four salient attributes for mouse-free website impressions—uniqueness, educational value, personalization, and trustworthiness. The implications of this study are that we truly can freeze this otherwise interactive medium, allow consumers to categorize the images, and possibly use this information to help design the navigational aspects of a website.

The Use of Images of Dead Celebrities in Advertising–History, Growth Factors, Theory, Legality, Ethics and Recommendations

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Extended Abstract

A practice that has increased in frequency and scope in the advertising and merchandise licensing industries is that of the use of the images of dead celebrities. According to some in the advertising industry, this interest in dead celebrities is part of a larger trend that is currently taking place in America, namely an increasing interest by an aging baby-boom generation in imagery and experiences from yesteryear (Rodkin 1989).

One indication of the importance and significance of this practice is the annual exercise that Forbes magazines started in 2001, of compiling information on and ranking the “top earning dead celebrities” in America (see DiCarlo (2003), DiCarlo and Patsuris (2004), Fong and Lau (2001) and Kafka (2005) and Schiffman (2002)).

In this paper, we examine this practice, its history, growth, causes, dynamics, legality and ethics in detail.

First, we take the reader through a brief, but comprehensive survey of the most significant developments that have taken place in this area of the advertising (and the related law) industry, beginning in the mid-1800s and extending up to the present time. detailed time-line. We include a detailed time-line, to help the reader keep track of these developments and their sequence.

Next, we analyze some of the major demand-side and supply-side factors that have caused this practice to become so significant, especially lately. Some examples of these demand-side factors include the demographic ‘bulge’ moving through the American population, loosely referred to as the ‘baby-boom’ generation and their increasing (as they grow older) yearning for imagery and experiences from yesteryear (Rodkin 1989), which we refer to as ‘nostalgia’ in this paper.

Some examples of these supply-side factors include the increasing consolidation and shakeout that is taking place in the Archival (Digital) Image Acquisition, Storage and Licensing industry, as exemplified by the rise of Corbis, owned by Bill Gates (CNN 2006) and the challenge it is beginning to pose for the older, more established giant in the industry, namely Getty Images.

Following this, we look at two streams of literature to: (a) see how similar the practice we are interested in (i.e., consumer interest in dead celebrity images) is to the related practice, namely consumer interest in live celebrity images, and, (b) to see how different the
practice we are interested in (i.e., consumer interest in dead celebrity images) is different from the related practice, namely consumer interest in live celebrity images.

Nostalgia theory (e.g., Holbrook and Schindler 1994, 1996) is the first stream of literature we look at, because: (a) nostalgia is one of the most important factors driving demand for images of dead celebrities, and, (b) we wish to see if there are any new insights which this dead celebrity image preference trend can add to the extant base of theory on how Nostalgia drives consumption behavior.

A second stream of literature we look at is that pertaining to the use of celebrities (dead or alive) in advertisements (e.g., Kamins 1990). This stream of literature is important to look at because many of the principles/generalizations that dictate the use of live celebrities in advertising may not be substantially different from those that govern the use of dead celebrities as well. However, it must also be said that we are equally interested in seeking out those principles/generalizations/issues that: (a) must be different when the celebrity is dead (e.g., rights of heirs/estates), and (b) could be different (e.g., working with a static/time-frozen image versus a dynamic image).

Following this, we look briefly at some of the major legal issues in the area of dead celebrities’ image rights. Because the state of the law vis-a-vis the rights of those who claim ownership of the images of dead celebrities’ images is ‘not as developed’ in America as it is in other countries (e.g., France) we do the next logical thing: we examine some of the major ethical issues (i.e., harms and benefits) that surround the usage of images of dead celebrities. This is because in the absence of clearly-defined law (especially at the Federal level), the responsible user of these images must let their sense of ethics (i.e., who is harmed and who is benefitted) to guide how they use these images.

Finally, we conclude, by offering the reader a set of recommendations, for deciding when it is most appropriate, effective &/or efficient for using a dead celebrity’s image in advertising and when it is not.

In conclusion, in this paper, we are interested in the issue of how and why images of dead celebrities are being increasingly used in Advertising (and Merchandise licensing), with a particularly close examination of: (a) the confluence of events (i.e., the history) that made this practice possible, (b) the factors (both demand- and supply-side) that are driving this trend, (c) two major streams of literature that could explain why this practice works and is growing, (d) the legal issues that are intertwined with this type (i.e., dead) of image-usage, (e) a set of ethical issues that must be noted, for those who are concerned with responsibly using these images, and (f) a set of recommendations, for those who are concerned with using these images effectively.

References available on request.

Coping with Mixed Emotions
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consumer purchase decisions, particularly those that are important or highly involving, can be very stressful. The current research considers the effect of corporate social responsibility information on the dynamic relationship between consumer emotional responses and subsequent coping strategies in a purchase decision context. Discrete and mixed emotional responses are assessed and open ended responses are evaluated for the specific coping processes that consumers use when presented with either positive, negative, or conflicting information (i.e. both positive and negative information) about a company they are either considering a product purchase from or have already made a product purchase.

Theoretical Background

Coping occurs when a situation is sufficiently important to consumers and when they perceive a potential threat to their goals. This situation is often characterized by negative emotions, which have been the focus of the majority of coping research. Recently, however Folkman and Moskowitz (2000) considered positive affect in the presence of negative affect in the coping process. The relationship between emotions and coping is complex and people are likely to experience multiple and conflicting emotions (Folkman and Lazarus 1988). Our research focuses on coping in the context of positive, negative, and conflicting mixed emotional states.

Three coping strategies are emphasized in this research: problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and social support coping (Folkman and Lazarus 1988; Folkman and Moskowitz 2004; Duhachek and Iacobucci 2005). Problem-focused coping relates to ways the consumer can solve or manage the problem or change the conditions surrounding the stressful situation. Two specific examples of problem-focused coping include confrontive coping or planful problem solving. In confrontive coping, consumers stand their ground, try to get the company to change or express displeasure at the company, whereas with planful problem solving, consumers make a plan of action or make an effort or come up with solutions.

In emotion-focused coping, consumers attempt to change their understanding or the meaning of the perceived source of stress. There are four different areas of emotion-focused coping: distancing (e.g., acting as if nothing is wrong), self-control (e.g., keeping things to oneself), accepting responsibility (e.g., realized brought the problem on by oneself), and positive reappraisal (e.g., seeing the situation differently).

Social support coping is a form of coping where consumers seek either instrumental support, such as talking to someone who can do something about the problem or emotional support by accepting understanding from a friend (Folkman and Moskowitz 2004). This type of coping was identified by Duhachek and Iacobucci (2005) as important in consumer research because of its similarity to word-of-mouth behavior.
Method
Participants were undergraduate students enrolled in business administration classes. The information was presented via a series of internet websites and emotional responses and comments were collected with a web based survey. Participants were asked to read corporate social responsibility information about a fictitious company. The corporate social responsibility information was presented as if it were from an objective third party, The Calvert Group. This information was used to present positive information (e.g. the company was environmentally friendly, produced high quality and safe products, etc.), negative information (e.g. the company was not environmentally friendly, produce low quality and unsafe products, etc.), or mixed (e.g. the company was environmental friendly but produced low quality and unsafe products, etc.). Participants were either asked to imagine they were about to make a purchase from this company or they were told they had just made a purchase from this company. Their emotional response toward the purchase situation was assessed, and in an open-ended response format they were asked what thoughts and feelings they had, what decision they would make, and what they would do in this situation.

Results
As expected, respondents receiving positive information experienced significantly more positive emotion (M=5.24) than either the negative or the mixed conditions (M=2.59; t(161)=10.79, p<.01). Additionally, the negative condition was rated as being significantly more negative (M=4.98) than either the positive or mixed conditions (M=2.66; t(161)=10.68, p<.01). Finally, participants exposed to conflicting information experienced significantly higher levels of subjective emotional ambivalence (M=3.59) compared to participants in either the positive or negative conditions (M=2.54; t(161)=4.68, p<.01).

Based on the content analysis of three independent coders, consumers exposed to positive information did not seem to actively engage in coping strategies. However, consumers exposed to negative information engaged in problem-focused coping, both confrontive and planful problem solving, as well as social support coping. Those exposed to conflicting information seemed to engage in emotion-focused coping.

For participants exposed to negative information, specific examples of confrontive coping included statements about their displeasure with the company’s behavior, switching companies, and writing letters to the local paper about the company’s substandard levels or writing letters to the company or CEO to inform them of their displeasure. Planful problem solving strategies included plans to return the product, look for alternatives, or buy from another company. Following a purchase decision, respondents were still upset about their situation and engaged in similar coping strategies, however it seemed they were less likely to engage in complaining behavior and seemed more likely to keep the product.

Instances of social support coping were also found with the negative information. Participants stated intentions to engage in negative word of mouth or complaining behavior, stating they would talk to friends and family to tell them about this company’s negative business practices and to avoid this company and any of their products.

Consumers presented with conflicting information engaged in emotion-focused coping, mostly distancing and positive reappraisal. Some respondents were used to use social support coping. Prior to purchase, participants tried to see the company in a positive light, wanted the company to be good, and thought they weren’t doing anything wrong by thinking about this purchase. Following a decision, participants tried to justify or rationalize their decision and continued to reappraise the situation.

These findings are consistent with research in the area of coping and emotions. Negative emotions have been found to be negatively related to some emotion-focused coping (reappraisal) and positively related to some forms of problem-focused coping (Folkman and Lazarus 1988). Coping responses related to conflicting mixed emotions have not been assessed in previous research but it is understandable that consumers would try to reappraise the purchase situation, especially after having already made a purchase decision. Future research should further examine the relationship between emotions and consumer coping responses.

References

Website Image Transfer: Perception of Uninformative Online Ads
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Extended Abstract
This paper examines the role of context effects in online advertising, aiming to provide marketers with appropriate strategies to promote products in the new media. In the traditional media, effective ads typically provide vivid and specific information. An online ad is considered effective if it arouses curiosity and induces consumers to click through it. Thus, unlike traditional advertising, online ads often contain low level of information, due to high interactivity of the new media (Sicilia, Ruiz, and Munuera, 2005). Such ads may omit two types of information, product category related and personality related (Aaker, 1997).
Studies in social psychology have found that human judgment is highly context-dependent. Ad context can influence consumers’ perception and evaluation of ads, and thus ad effectiveness (e.g., Singh and Churchill, 1987). In the present paper, we address one important emerging context on consumers’ judgment due to the development of Internet–website image. From an associative memory net viewpoint, we define website image as “consumers’ perception of a website as reflected by the associations related to the website (including sub-sites) held in memory.”

We study website image from two dimensions: function and personality. Function of a website refers to the types of products and services it provides, which is reflected in the context and design of the website. Following the literature, we use brand image of a website to define its personality.

In this paper, we propose that function and personality of a website will impact consumers’ perception of and attitude towards online ads through an image transfer process. Site image transfer is defined as “consumers use their perceived site image to infer product-category related- and brand-personality related-information in uninformative online ads.”

The first set of hypotheses is concerned with the contingency under which such image transfer occurs. Website function is more likely to influence consumers’ perception of the product category of a brand, while website personality is more likely to influence their perception of brand personality in ambiguous online ads than in unambiguous ones.

The second set of hypotheses is related to the psychological process of website image transfer. We propose that consumers can “restore” or “interpret” the two types of omissions in online ads through either a systematic or heuristic way, depending on the level of cognitive resources.

The third set of hypotheses deals with specific context (website image) of an online ad. With a high (low) level of cognitive resources, consumers systematically (heuristically) interpret or “restore” the missing product category related-information in an ambiguous online ad. In contrast, when cognitive resources are highly available, personality-based image transfer is less likely to occur (Martin, 1991; Meyers-Levy and Tybout, 1997), while consumers engage in personality-based image, with a low level of cognitive resources at the time of ad exposure.

The last hypothesis indicates the consequences of site image transfer. Depending on the relevance between the actual and perceived (through a process of site image transfer) information, consumers’ attitude-toward-website may vary. The higher is the relevance, the more favorable is consumers’ attitude-toward-website, and vice versa.

An Influential Minority: Reaching the New Values-Based Consumers
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Introduction
According to Morris Holbrook (1996), consumer value refers to the experience of a relativistic consumption preference, while consumer values are “the standards or criteria on which the former depends.” Beyond this clarification, the exact definition of values remains fuzzy throughout the social sciences (see Rohan, 2000 and Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). For the purposes of this paper, values will be defined as “desirable transsituational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles” (Schwartz, 1994, p. 21).

As guiding principles, values operate in all consumption contexts. Yet the plurality of consumer values is not well understood. Much consumer behavior theory has assumed that “mainstream” American values are the ones that matter most. If we are concerned with trends, history would suggest that the “mainstream” is not the place to look. Significant social change begins not at the center but at the margins. There are many indications that a values-based social trend has been emerging in recent years, not from the center but from what was initially a marginal edge. Evidence of this can be seen in the social responsibility clauses of corporate mission statements, the appearance of organic and fair trade food sections in “mainstream” stores, and consumer demand for hybrid cars.

One Quarter of American Consumers
To understand this trend, sociologists Paul Ray and Sherry Anderson analyzed the role of “transformational values” in American life (Ray & Anderson, 2000). Over thirteen years, they gathered more than 100,000 survey responses and conducted hundreds of focus groups. Ray and Anderson’s 70+-item scale assessed consumer views related to gender, success, spirituality, altruism, optimism, financial solvency, corporate power, cultural diversity, violence, political polarization, environmental destruction, and global interconnectedness. This combination of values is not normally captured by national values surveys.

Ray and Anderson found that over 50 million adults in the United States (about one-quarter of American consumers), and approximately 80-90 million in Europe, hold values that are markedly different from the mainstream in the measured dimensions. These values drive consumption decisions for this mostly middle-class group. They have money to spend ($228.9 billion per year, according to www.lohas.com/about.htm), but their spending is not typical of mainstream American consumers.

Ray and Anderson see these consumers as catalysts of cultural change, and thus call them “cultural creatives.” They are difficult to reach through typical media and publicity channels because they hold worldviews that are in opposition to most national media and are not covered by, or targeted by, mainstream media (Ray and Anderson, 2000).

Research Questions and Methodology
Interviews conducted during the initial phase of this study suggest that these new values-based consumers watch little to no television, read multiple independently published news sources, and get most of their news online. However, it is not clear what forms of marketing they consider valuable. Specifically,
1. What are the media habits of “cultural creatives”?
2. How do they understand the role of their values in their media habits?
3. What challenges would they expect marketers to have in reaching them?
4. What forms of marketing are consistent with their values?

The second phase of this study involves structured interviews with ten “cultural creatives.” Potential informants are being approached outside stores where organic foods are sold, and screened using Ray’s criteria. Demographic diversity is being sought for a theoretical purposive sample with maximum variation. Each interview begins with a written media habits questionnaire, addressing each media type, including new forms such as podcasting and online communities. Each of the four research questions guides a section of the interview, following McCracken (1988). In the final section, informants are asked to imagine a marketing environment consistent with their values and needs as consumers. They are then asked to compare this projected scenario with marketing resources currently available. Analysis is concurrent with data collection.

Preliminary Findings

Completed interviews confirm that these individuals consume media very selectively and that they are skeptical of mainstream media for values-based reasons. The most salient values informing their media consumption decisions relate to the importance they attach to truthfulness, spiritual purity, education, and connections with people around the world. These informants interpret financial incentives and corporate ownership as an inevitable loss of objectivity and credibility in media content. They want uncompromised honesty in reporting, and they believe that while marketers are not usually deliberately or overtly deceptive, accuracy is reduced because “there are motives that are not for the bigger picture.” These interviewees envision ideal media environments in which they can access accurate information easily via light or sound, without being “bombarded,” which is their experience of the current media environment.

Each of these informants spontaneously talked about personal transitions from former mainstream media consumption habits to more selective media habits. These transitions occurred 5-15 years prior to the interviews, and involved discoveries of specific information about media ownership and psychological impacts of mass media. These informants applied their values to this new information to arrive at new meanings of the role of media in their lives and in the world, catalyzing more selective search behaviors. This suggests a developmental process of personal evaluation of media use driven by the application of personal values to new information received about the media and its impacts. Parallel developmental processes may operate in other contexts where consumers apply personal values to new information received.

References


Look Who’s Talking!

Technology-Supported Impression Formation in Virtual Communities

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The growing availability of consumer-generated information on the Internet about products, services, and companies has increased market transparency. Power is shifting from producers to consumers who share their knowledge, experiences, and opinions via virtual communities, electronic discussion forums, online opinion platforms, chat rooms, and weblogs. However, this abundance of readily available information also comes at a cost. How do you distinguish an expert from a fraud? Who is credible and trustworthy, and who isn’t? We form impressions of others based on cues such as age, gender, manner of dress and speech (e.g., Hamilton & Huffman 1971). But how do we construct and evaluate impressions in an online environment that lacks social cues normally present in face-to-face settings?

Cyberspace is in many ways distinctly different from the physical world. Two characteristics stand out. Firstly, interaction takes place through a technological interface, i.e., a computer, mobile phone, or an interactive television with Internet access. This means that the primary relationship is not between the sender and the receiver of information, but rather with the technology-mediated environment (Hoffman & Novak 1996). The second defining characteristic of cyberspace is its textuality. Communication and interaction online is based on the written word, audio, images, icons, and hyperlinks to other Web sites. This allows for new ways of self-presentation in which the physical self does not necessarily have to coincide with the digital self (Schau & Gilly 2003).

Schau and Gilly (2003) have demonstrated that consumers make active use of signs, symbols, material objects, and places to construct a digital self on their personal Web site. In this paper, we want to extend their research into online self-presentational strategies by looking more closely at the receivers’ side. The objective of our research is to investigate how consumers form impressions of senders in the context
of word-of-web recommendations within virtual consumer communities (Kozinets 2002). Specifically, we focus on the role of the technological interface. According to Foucault (1977), technology can be considered as a disciplinary mechanism that is embedded in power devices. Examining how technologies are used to form and manage digital impressions, may help us to understand how individuals influence each other online. Gaining systematic insight in this process is necessary for improving and developing tools that aim to aid consumers in their assessment of online contributions (e.g., reputation systems, member profiles, contribution accounts).

Method

The virtual community that serves as our focal research site is broadly organized around health issues. Its topics of interest include health, medication, pregnancy, nutrition, beauty, psychology, and sexuality. The community has been developed by a French independent company that exploits it by means of advertising. The community generates a total of 60,000 new postings per day (posted by French-speaking users worldwide) in its many discussion forums, chat rooms, and weblogs.

Our exploratory inquiry consisted of 3 semi-structured interviews; with the CEO, a moderator, and a back office technician. These interviews have given us insight in how the technological interface is constructed, managed, and used to exert control over member profiles and contributions by the administrators. Furthermore, we have conducted two online focus groups and follow-ups with animators (total of 18 informants). Animators are members selected by the administrators to serve as volunteer moderators. They play an important role in the day-to-day problem detecting and solving related to member behavior. Their extensive knowledge of community dynamics due to their double role as members and moderators has proven a valuable source of information. Combined with detailed observations and content analyses of the virtual community under study, this first round of data collection has given us a deep understanding of the process of technology-supported impression formation in virtual communities.

Next, we will systematically examine technology-supported impression formation in the context of word-of-web recommendations. Which signals are consulted and how are they interpreted? Does the impression formation strategy differ between member types (e.g., long-time versus short-time members, posters versus lurkers). Does it differ with the decision process at stake? We intend to collect data by means of an online survey among the members of the community under study.

Preliminary findings

Based on our first round of data collection, we can draw some preliminary conclusions of the interplay between technology and impression formation.

Technology uniforms impression formation. All members have the same tools at their disposal that serve as common references to form impressions on others; e.g., username, avatar, signature, personal web page with photo’s and hyperlinks, administrator-controlled member type label, orthography, emoticons.

Technology speeds up impression formation and makes it more reliable. Members have continuous and exhaustive access to all contributions of any member. Members’ past on the community is transparent.

Impression formation technology are self-nurturing. Members share tips to master the technology and they develop new tools, e.g., introducing group labels aimed at impression management.

Technology destabilizes impression formation. Technology enables members to have multiple identities, while it simultaneously serves as an identifier by means of, for example, orthographic style or IP address. Members who build multiple identities that are too different risk to lose their reputation. Similarly, if technology shows that formed impressions do not correspond with reality, for example by exposing markers of true identity, the backlash may be severe and technology is used as a release tool to express extreme ‘corrected’ impressions.

It is clear that the administrators play an important role in the dynamics of the impression formation process. They interfere by creating status, e.g., by introducing member type labels based on the number of contributions (regular, loyal, bronze, silver, and gold member), and by appointing members to be forum animators. Understanding the differential effects of the various technologies (member-controlled, administrator-controlled, administrator-bounded) on impression formation will aid both managers and consumers in optimizing the power of virtual communities as credible, trustworthy, and expert information sources. Our final aim is to contribute to this goal.

References

When A Good Impression Goes Bad: The Effect of Goal Changes on Repeated Attitudes

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Extended Abstract

Past consumer research has shown consumption goals impact product information processing, weighting and retrieving, which results in variances in the reported attitudes (Huffman and Houston 1993; Markman and Brendle 2000). However, the extant research has only examined how goals impact an initial attitude (Garbarino and Johnson 2001; Huffman and Houston 1993). In reality, a consumer’s goal can change from time to time. It remains unclear whether attitudes formed under different consumption goals impact each other. For instance, when consumptions goals change, will the prior goal-driven evaluation influence the later evaluation? If yes, why and in which direction (i.e., assimilating or contrasting)?

We answered the above two questions by relying on Selective Accessibility Model (SAM, Mussweiler 2003) proposed in social judgment literature. The model suggests that whether the evaluation target is judged as similar or dissimilar to the comparison standard will decide whether the contrast or assimilation effect will be resulted. If the target is judged as similar, the assimilation effect will be observed, but if the target is judged as dissimilar to the comparison standard, the contrasting effect will happen. Based on SAM, we argue that an initial positive (bad) attitude formed under a certain consumption goal can be used as a comparison standard, makes the later evaluation of the same object under a conflicting goal worse (better) off.

The current paper suggests that consumers use the relationship between consumption goals as a way to judge similarity or dissimilarity between the current and prior evaluations, (not only judging the applicability of the stored attitudes as suggested in extant attitude literature). Such judgment can be made quite quickly and colors the new evaluating process. In particular, we predict when two conflicting consumption goals activated at different times, attitudes reported under the later consumption goal would be judged as dissimilar to the initial attitudes formed under the earlier consumption goal, resulting in contrast effect. Our prediction was supported with two lab experiments.

Experiment 1 was a 2 (Consumption goal: Best driving experiment vs. economy to drive) by 2 (Timing of the attitude: First time Initial attitude vs. Second time later Attitude) mixed-design experiment. All participants were asked to learn the information of a luxury car (faked brand) and reported their attitudes towards under one consumption goal (i.e., initial attitude), and after a 10-min filler task, they were asked to read information again, and reported their attitude under a different consumption goal (i.e., later attitude). We found that when evaluation was made under economy goal, the later attitude was poorer than the initial attitude; but when evaluation was made under performance goal, the later attitude was better than the initial attitude. A clear pattern of contrast effect between evaluations under conflicting consumption goals were demonstrated in Experiment 1.

In Experiment 2, we demonstrated that the contrast effect was more robust when the cognitive resource was limited. In this one factor (cognitive load: high-rehearsing 7 digits vs. low-rehearsing 2 digits) design experiment, all participants first reported their initial attitudes under performance goal (the same car information as in Experiment 1 was used), and after a filler task were asked to reported their attitudes under economy goal (i.e., later attitude). Cognitive load was manipulated before the second time evaluation. Results revealed that though the initial attitudes reported under performance goal remained same, compared to participants under low cognitive load, those under high cognitive load evaluated the car less positively under economy goal. Our results in experiment 2 suggested that the comparison to the initial attitudes happened as a default, which was consistent with SAM.

Taken together, the current research suggests that when contextual cues (in this research, consumption goals) are salient, consumers can depend on the relationship between those cues to come up with an initial judgment and adjust from there. More specifically, when contextual cues are in conflict, the prior evaluation can serve a comparison standard rather than an anchoring point, resulting in a contrast effect that impacts attitudes reported later.

References


Understanding Consumers’ Perceptions of Fashion

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Extended Abstract

Despite the prevalence of fashion in the consumer market, previous research on fashion has primarily focused on the characteristics, motivations and behaviors of fashion innovators/leaders (e.g., Cassill and Drake, 1987; Goldsmith Flynn and More, 1996; Goldsmith, Moore and Beaudoin, 1999). Therefore little is known about the meanings of fashion to the broader range of consumers and their perceptions of fashion. This research attempts to fill this void.
The major objectives of this article are twofold. First, we aim to provide a conceptual foundation for understanding consumers’ perceptions of fashion. Second, as one of the first attempts in the literature, we develop and assess the validity of the consumer fashion orientation (CFO) scale that measures the different orientations toward fashion across consumers.

Based on a review of the literature as well as qualitative research inquiries (20 interviews), we identified three fashion orientations/focuses adopted by consumers toward fashion.

**Brand focus:** More than any other consumer brands, the fashion brand sustains itself on the image of the brand rather than aspects inherent to the product (Auty and Elliott 1998). It appears that many consumers use fashion as a way to communicate their status. In this regard, fashion serves as a symbol or sign. Moore (1995) stressed the positive association with brand, quality and status if the fashion brand is perceived to have a distinctive image. Auty and Elliott (1998) found that consumers perceive branded fashion items to be of higher quality therefore a better conveyer of their self-image.

**Trend focus:** Trend aspect is inherent in the definition of fashion. One of the very early definitions of fashion states that “Fashion is the prevailing style at any given time” (Nystrom, 1928). Adopting the current trend is a way for consumers to communicate their desire to be “a part of the community”. According to Simmel (1904), social tendencies are essential for the establishment of fashion, namely the need of becoming a part of the group on the one hand and the need for uniqueness on the other. Miller et al. (1993) emphasized the desire of consumers to be current by adopting styles that will identify themselves as up-to-date with the people whom they admire in a given situation.

**Design focus:** It appears that for many individuals, the actual design is another important aspect of fashion and that is what they focus on when it comes to fashion consumption. Many consumers wish to communicate their uniqueness via what they wear (Tian, Bearden and Hunter, 2002). A unique design is usually the answer for individuals who have such concerns when approaching fashion.

A total of 5 studies were conducted in developing and validating the CFO scale.

**Study 1: Item development.** Besides gleaning on published research related to fashion consumption, we conducted 20 in-depth interviews with undergraduate students in a southeastern university to generate a pool of items for CFO. A total of 33 items were generated (11 items for each dimension).

**Study 2: Initial item refinement.** The content validity of these items was assessed according to Bearden et al. (1989). After eliminating items that did not receive the appropriate categorization by at least two of the three judges used in this study, 23 items remained (9 items for brand focus, 7 items each for trend and style focuses).

**Study 3: Item refinement.** Each item was formatted into a seven-point Likert-type response scale in the questionnaires. A sample 98 undergraduate business students (45 females) was used in this study. Based on the data, items that did not have corrected item-to-total subscale correlations above .40 were deleted. Items that did not have statistically higher correlations with the dimension to which they were hypothesized to belong in comparison with item correlations with remaining dimensions’ total scores were also deleted (Bearden et al. 1989). These analyses resulted in a reduced scale of 15 items (5 items each dimension).

**Study 4: Scale validation-latent structure, reliability and discriminant validity.** A non-student sample of 133 consumers (64 females, average age 36) was used to validate the CFO scale. Respondents were recruited by students as an extra credit assignment. Using this data, first, the latent structure and reliability of the scale were assessed. Results show that the three-factor oblique model provided a better fit relative to five more restricted competing models. The hypothesized model was the only model to exhibit acceptable fit. Within the CFA setting, reliability of each dimension was calculated using the procedures outlined by Fornell and Larcker (1981) based on the work of Werts, Lin, and Jöreskog (1974). The reliabilities for the three dimensions ranged from .894 to .954 and the variances extracted ranged from 64 to 80.4 percent, which are highly satisfactory. In an effort to establish scale construct validity, we also conducted discriminant validity tests of the measure by analyzing CFO along with need for uniqueness and fashion innovativeness as pairs of constructs in a series of two-factor CFA models (Bagozzi and Phillips, 1982). The results provided evidence for discriminant validity.

**Study 5: Further scale validation-nomological validity.** A sample of 243 non-student respondents was used to further validate the scale by focusing on the nomological validity of the scale. We developed our tests based on the established models of fashion clothing consumption (e.g. O’Cass 2004). Age and gender of consumers were included as control variables in our tests. Our test of antecedents revealed that materialism and involvement were positively related to CFO. Moreover, our tests of the consequences found that individuals who are high on CFO scale also had higher self-confidence, tended to spend more and made more impulse purchases. Our results also showed interesting differential effects of the CFO dimensions. While all three dimensions of CFO were positively correlated with impulse buying tendency, only brand focus was significantly correlated with level of spending, and only design focus was significantly correlated with self-confidence.

This research offers both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this study provides an important contribution to current fashion research by first attempting to focus on consumers’ in general, rather than the limited number of fashion innovators/leaders’ perceptions of fashion. CFO may fit into a broader theory of fashion and fashion consumption (Miller et al. 1993). As such, CFO should be useful in empirical studies of consumers’ purchasing and consumption patterns of fashion products. This study also offers many important implications to fashion retailers to better understand and segment their market.

References
Information Search due to Extended Separation

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Extended Abstract

Information search allows consumers to learn about relevant product dimensions, compare alternative options, and ultimately select the product they prefer. Many factors contribute to consumers’ information search processes, including: uncertainty (Urbany et al., 1989), domain knowledge (Brucks, 1985; Ozanne et al., 1992), breadth of alternatives (Iyengar & Lepper, 2000), and the magnitude of perceived difference between choice options (Russo & Carlson, 2002). Oddly, little is known about how expectations influence search in situations where consumers know very little about the choice options.
**Expected separation** is the non-directional anticipated difference between the overall values of choice alternatives. As a belief that relates to the choice set, expected separation can exist even when consumers have too little information about the specific choice options available to warrant a clear directional prior belief. For example, sometimes consumers confront: really new products, as in the constantly changing realm of consumer electronics; product categories that are new to them; new choice options in existing categories, like major redesigns of auto models, or restaurants in a new city. Broadly speaking, any situation where the choice options are novel to the consumer is one where clear directional priors may not exist, but where expected separation may operate.

The effects of beliefs on product evaluation and choice have been demonstrated in numerous domains within consumer research (Allison & Uhl, 1964; Moorthy et al., 1997; Carlson & Russo, 2001). However, we know of no work that has focused on how expected differences among options influence information search. There are two possibilities in this regard, leading to opposite predictions.

It is well-known that the closer options are in value, the longer and deeper consumers will search, at least when they have sufficient expertise to evaluate the acquired information (Bockenholt et al. 1991; Huber and Klein 1991). Thus, if expected separation operates in the same manner as actual separation between choice options, then greater expected separation may lead to less overall search.

The prediction of less information search as expected separation increases is intuitively appealing. After all, if two options are expected to be very different from one another, one would expect to be able to easily tell the options apart, and thus, require less extensive information search to pick one.

However, when expected separation is high the anticipated costs of selecting the wrong option should be high. Thus, consumers may be more likely to fear making a mistake than under conditions of low expected separation. Consequently, search depth may increase as expected separation increases.

Two studies were conducted to test these competing predictions. To begin, we pre-tested expected separation manipulations in a variety of product domains. The manipulation effectively altered expectations of differences between options, as measured by perceived differences among options.

Study 1 employed a mixed 3*3 full-factorial design. The first factor included three levels of expected separation, manipulated by telling participants that the options given in the domain are either “very different,” “slightly different,” or “almost the same.” The second factor consisted of three product domains chosen following pre-testing.

Participants saw descriptions of three simulated scenarios, one in each product domain (hotels in a foreign city, vacation destinations, and imaginary products called gimpers). Each domain was coupled with an expected separation condition. Following each scenario participants answered a series of questions regarding their projected information search behavior.

Results showed that across product domains participants anticipated they would engage in more information gathering the greater the expected separation among alternatives. Participants expected to spend more time gathering information, examine a greater number of options, and use more choice criteria in higher expected separation. Our hypothesis regarding perceptions of cost of picking the wrong option was borne out by higher ratings of risk perception under higher expected separation.

Study 2 was designed to examine actual, rather than anticipated, information search behavior. In addition, the study was designed to allow us to examine potential interaction effects between expected separation and actual (objective) differences between options. Participants were given a simulated scenario where they were asked to choose between two potential date candidates for a friend. The study employed a between subjects 2*3 (expected separation*actual separation) design. Expected separation was manipulated by referring to the two candidates as either very similar or very different. Actual separation was manipulated by varying the average difference in candidates’ ratings across a variety of traits.

Participants read a description of the task and examined information about the two candidates. A trait “menu” listed different trait categories where evaluation information was available. Participants were asked to look through traits until they’ve gathered enough information to make a choice. The main DV was number of trait categories participants chose to examine.

As predicted by participants in study 1, participants in this study examined significantly more trait categories under high rather than low expected separation. While expected separation yielded a main effect on information search, no similar effect was found for actual separation, even though power analysis revealed sufficient power to detect an effect. Additionally, there was no interaction between expected and actual separation on information search.

Participants were more certain of their choice in high rather than low expected separation. This might demonstrate compensatory conviction in response to greater uncertainty during the search process (e.g., McGregor et al., 2001).

To sum, our studies thus far show non-directional expectations of difference between options lead consumers to search for more information. This is borne out in both expected and actual information search. Effects were demonstrated across a variety of consumer domains, adding to the generalizability of the findings.

Further steps in this research include an examination of the effect in real choice, to establish ecological validity, and an investigation of possible mechanisms underlying consumers’ extended search for information when expecting greater differences between options. We also wish to clarify the causal role of uncertainty in prompting greater information search following expected separation. This, and other factors, may play in as boundary conditions on the effects of expected separation.

**References**


Do We Really Need a Reason to Indulge?
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Extended Abstract

Consumers often need (seek) reasons to justify their decisions or choices (Shafir, Simonson, and Tversky, 1990). More importantly, decisions to indulge oneself (e.g., purchasing luxuries, going on a cruise) may require legitimate reasons because hedonic indulgences may be construed as wasteful and are likely to evoke guilt and (anticipated) regret (Kivetz and Simonson, 2002; Lascu, 1991). As a result, consumers are more likely to choose utilitarian/necessity items over hedonic items because it is easier to justify their purchases (necessities are simply needed as opposed to wanted). But do people actually enjoy more when indulging with a reason than without a reason? Do people enjoy more when indulging with a better reason? The answers depend on how consumers’ hedonic experience is assessed, with important implications for research methods and consumer decision making.

A large body of research has studied the decision inconsistency: i.e., people make decisions that do not seem to maximize their experienced utility and alternative explanations have been offered. One of the account on which this paper is based argues that people may hold incorrect beliefs or naïve theories that are rarely updated about how they will feel in certain consumption situations and that this belief or expectation does not correspond to their actual hedonic experience (Robison and Clore, 2002). According to Robison and Clore’s accessibility model, when people report on their current feelings, the feelings themselves are accessible, allowing for accurate reports. When they report their feelings during a specific past episode, they can often draw on episodic memory, retrieving specific moments and details of the past. In contrast, global reports of past feelings and predictions of future feelings are based on semantic knowledge. In this case, people draw on their general beliefs about the event class to infer what their feelings “must have” been or will be. These different sources of information give rise to systematic differences in people’s self-reports of emotion.

Study one is 2 (reason: yes vs. no) by 2 (reports type: global vs. episodic) between subjects design. We asked half participants to imagine they are consuming a hedonic item either with a reason (as a reward for hard work) or without a reason and to report their affective experience in that situation (global report condition). Half participants were directed to recall their most recent hedonic consumption episode and to report their feelings (episodic report condition). They then indicated whether there was a reason associated with that last consumption episode and how much they spent on this indulgence occasion. Our study shows that participants expect to experience more negative affect (e.g., guilt) if consuming a hedonic item without a reason than with a reason when asked in a global report fashion. However, when asked in an episodic condition, their hedonic enjoyment was unrelated to reasons or justifications. This is consistent with Robison and Clore’s (2002) accessibility model, which suggests that the information that is chronically or temporarily accessible at that point in time drives the differences in emotional reports. Interestingly, we did find that people reported higher spending on indulgence occasions where a reason was present (M=$127) than those where a reason was not present (M=$98). This provides empirical support for consumers’ willingness to spend more on an indulgence when it is justified for than when it is not justified.

Study two is a 2 (reports type: prediction vs. experience) by 2 (reason: reward vs. consolation) between subjects design. We hypothesize that people expect to enjoy an indulgence more as a reward (e.g., passed the exam) than as a consolation (e.g., failed the exam). We predict, however, actual consumption experience would not differ when indulging with different reasons. Participants in one condition (consolation) worked on some difficult GMAT math problems and were told that these problems are indicative of their success at a future GMAT test. We expect participants in this condition to feel bad about their performance and seek indulgence as a consolation. Participants in the other condition (reward) worked on the same math problems but were told that these were very difficult math problems (aimed for math major students) and were asked to give a shot at it. We expect them to feel good about their performance and seek indulgence as a reward. All subjects received feedback (right or wrong) after finishing each individual problem. Participants were then asked to choose between two items, two pieces of chocolate truffles or toothpaste (at equal dollar value) as a token of appreciation for their participation. Participants in prediction condition were asked to imagine that they are consuming the truffles (only those who chose the truffles) and report their affective experiences of eating the truffles. Participants in experience condition actually received their choice. Those who chose to have chocolate truffles were asked to eat as much as they want and report how they feel while eating the truffles. Consistent with previous work (Shafir et al., 1990), participants were as likely to indulge (i.e., choose the truffles) when they think they did well in a test.
(i.e., reward condition) as when they think they didn’t do well (i.e., consolation condition). As expected, the predictors in consolation condition expected to enjoy the truffles less than those in reward condition. However, the experiencers’ actual enjoyment did not differ systematically between the two conditions.

Our findings suggest that a lack of justification does not limit the immediate pleasure of indulging and that a better reason does not make an indulgence more enjoyable, in contrast to what consumers expect.

References:

**Effects of Self-Affirmation and Individualistic-Collectivistic Appeals on Open-mindedness and Advertising Effectiveness**

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**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

**Background and Scope**

Psychological research has demonstrated how self-affirmation in one domain leads people to be more open-minded and acknowledge the merits of counterattitudinal messages they would otherwise reject. Affirmation-induced openness to counterattitudinal information works because open-minded people are more objective (less biased) and more sensitive to argument strength, and thereby judge an argument on its merits. (Correll, Spencer and Zanna, 2004). Little research has been published within the consumer research or marketing literature about self-affirmation and its effects on consumer cognitions and behavior. It is hypothesized that self-affirmation will result in more open-mindedness and elaboration on information about an advertised product.

**Theoretical Basis:**

Psychological literature suggests close-mindedness stems from an individual’s concern for self-regard; in effect, a person resists and rejects conflicting information to protect a sense of self-worth derived from their “right” beliefs and attitudes. Self-Affirmation Theory (Steele, 1988; Steele, Spencer and Lynch, 1993), suggests that every person strives for positive self-regard, and draws on personal successes within a constellation of domains for its achievement. One of its crucial tenets is that the ultimate goal of a defensive reaction is the security of the global sense of self-worth.

Individual differences among consumers in their Need for Cognitive Closure (Kruglanski and Webster, 1996) may differentially affect consumers’ responses; people who have a strong Need for Cognitive Closure often will “seize” and “freeze” without elaborating on the full information available. It is expected that NFCC will moderate the relationship between self-affirmation on open-mindedness and advertising effectiveness.

**Potential Contribution**

This research contributes to extant literature in several ways. First, it expands what little is currently known about how self-affirmation works to influence consumer behavior. Second, it adds to literature focused on information processing in high involvement product categories. Finally, this research contributes to the understanding of the circumstances in which there is an opportunity for more unbiased consideration of products by considering the cognitive processing of the open-minded consumer.

**Research Methodology**

A sequence of experiments has been conducted to test the affects of self-affirmation on consumers’ responses to advertising regarding high involvement products. Respondents were recruited to participate in an experiment about the effects of advertising content on consumer elaboration, cognitions, and intentions. Subjects were randomly assigned to a treatment cell, received a disclosure sheet about the study, and then were asked to view an ad promoting a high involvement product. (The actual headings and phrases in the ad stimuli varied based on cell assignment). Reactions to the advertisement and trait and state measures were then collected.

Study 1 was designed test the impact of positive self-affirmation (ego inflation) on consumers’ responses to advertising. A hypothetical on-line job search portal was selected as the advertised product representing high involvement categories. Study 1 involved the use of a 2 x 2 experiment of the Self-affirmation treatment condition versus a neutral condition by high/low Need for Cognitive Closure. After viewing one ad, subjects first performed an open-ended thought listing. They next rated the advertising as to its effectiveness and were then asked to simulate a job search by rating their interest in a series of job postings. Next they were asked a series of questions about their attitudes and beliefs. Students from undergraduate business classes participated in the research in exchange for class participation credit. A total of 160 respondents completed Study 1.

Study 2 further examined the impact of self-affirmation on advertising effectiveness. A total of 52 undergraduate marketing students received only the affirmation treatment advertisement, and were also asked additional questions related to self-esteem and locus of control.
in addition to the other dependent variables and ratings from Study 1. This phase allowed more in-depth analysis of the relationship between individual differences related to self-esteem and effects of self-affirmation on advertising effectiveness.

Study 3, which is in process now, is designed to examine self-affirmation’s effects on advertising, in conjunction with individualistic/collectivistic appeals. In a 3 x 2 x 2 experiment, consumers will react to advertising that includes self-affirmation by individualistic or collectivistic appeals by high/low Need for Cognitive Closure. A minimum of 30 respondents per cell is planned (240 respondents.) The study is being conducted for hybrid/alternative fuel vehicles as the context for a public service announcement ad. The approach will be identical to that used in Study 1. Medialab software is being used to administer the survey in Study 3, allowing the ad to be presented as a prototype for a 30-second television ad. After viewing one ad, subjects are being asked a series of questions related to their attitudes and beliefs about hybrid/alternative fuel vehicles. Then they will give reactions to the advertising’s effectiveness and asked a series of questions about their general attitudes and beliefs, including an individual difference measure related to individualism/collectivism.

Variables of Study:
The following variables will be included.

- Independent Variables of “Affirmation Condition (positive affirmation, control)” and “Type of Appeal” (Individualistic, Collectivistic) will be tested.
- A Mediating Variable (Openness/Skepticism) will be assessed.
- The Dependent Variable is “Persuasion to Consider the Advertised Product.”
- Moderating Variables are:
  - Individual Differences related to Preference for Individualism/Collectivism
  - Individual Differences on Need for Cognitive Closure (NFCC)

Analysis involved using ANOVA/ANCOVA and special procedures to test for mediation/moderation as outlined in Baron and Kenny (1986).

Hypotheses
The hypothesized relationships among variables are as follows:

H1: Affirmations will lead to more opennes.
H2: More openness leads to more elaboration.
H3: More elaboration leads to more persuasion.
H4: “Individualism” will intensify the results: Individualistic appeals will be stronger than collectivistic appeals among “Individualists”, and Collectivistic appeals will be stronger than individualistic appeals among “Collectivists.”
H5: People low in NFCC will respond better to positive affirmations.

Experimental Stimuli
All advertising stimuli were pretested prior to conducting the experiments. The following headlines are being provided as illustrations of the advertising conditions to be tested.

Studies 1 and 2: On-line Job Search Portal
- Self-Affirmation Treatment Condition 1: “Smarter People Find the Best Jobs” (positive self-affirmation treatment condition)
- Neutral Control Condition: “People Find the Best Jobs” (represents non-affirmation condition)

Study 3: Hybrid/Alternative Fuel Vehicles
- Affirmation Treatment Condition/Individualistic Appeal: “You can work hard and do whatever it takes to overcome challenges and to accomplish your goals. You are smart. When faced with difficult and important decisions, you carefully analyze which choice is the right one for your unique situation. You can make more informed decisions. You can act now to make a difference for your future.”
- Affirmation Treatment Condition/Collectivistic Appeal: “We Americans work hard and we do whatever it takes to overcome challenges and accomplish our goals. Americans are smart. When faced with difficult and important decisions, we carefully analyze which choice is the right one for our unique situation. We can make more informed decisions. We can act now to make a difference for our future.”
- Control: No affirmation language

References
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Consumer Weighting of Hedonic and Utilitarian Dimensions across Judgments
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Extended Abstract

A fundamental assumption in the theory of choice is that of procedure invariance which suggests that individuals have well-articulated preferences and beliefs that remain constant regardless the method of elicitation. However, studies of decision and judgment show that people do not have well-defined values and beliefs and often construct these during the elicitation process (Fischoff, Slovic & Lichtenstein, 1980; Shafer & Tversky, 1985; Tversky, Sattath and Slovic, 1988; Schkade and Johnson, 1989). Thus, different elicitation procedures highlight different aspects of options and may result in inconsistent responses, or preference reversals.

In two studies we examined situations that involved trade-offs between utilitarian and hedonic dimensions across three elicitation methods: choice, pricing and liking. Previous work by Hsee et al. (2003) shows that when decision makers are faced to trade-offs between cold and hot factors they exhibit a systematic inconsistency between predicted experience (i.e., a liking judgment) and choice. They suggest that individuals weight more hot factors when predicting their experience, but place more emphasis on cold or rational factors in choice. Hsee and Zhang (2004) provide further evidence that easy-to-quantify attribute differences (i.e. quantitative differences) are weighted more in a joint evaluation mode (e.g., choice) than in single evaluation mode (e.g., predicted happiness judgments). For example, individuals overpredict the experiential difference between easy to quantify differences such as having an annual salary of $60,000 and an annual salary of $70,000 and between living in a 3,000 sq. ft2 house and a 4,000 sq. ft2 house, but are less likely to overpredict the experiential difference between doing an interesting and a tedious job or between having to work and having to drive to work.

In study 1 we used a stimulus composed of two attributes, a utilitarian and a hedonic attribute. Individuals made 240 judgments of three types: choice, pricing and liking. Previous work by Hsee et al. (2003) shows that when decision makers are faced to trade-offs between cold and hot factors they exhibit a systematic inconsistency between predicted experience (i.e., a liking judgment) and choice. They suggest that individuals weight more hot factors when predicting their experience, but place more emphasis on cold or rational factors in choice. Hsee and Zhang (2004) provide further evidence that easy-to-quantify attribute differences (i.e. quantitative differences) are weighted more in a joint evaluation mode (e.g., choice) than in single evaluation mode (e.g., predicted happiness judgments). For example, individuals overpredict the experiential difference between easy to quantify differences such as having an annual salary of $60,000 and an annual salary of $70,000 and between living in a 3,000 sq. ft2 house and a 4,000 sq. ft2 house, but are less likely to overpredict the experiential difference between doing an interesting and a tedious job or between having to work and having to drive to work.

In study 1 we used a stimulus composed of two attributes, a utilitarian and a hedonic attribute. Individuals made 240 judgments of three types: choice, pricing (essentially a matching judgment when participants had to price one of the option with the objective of matching a second option in value) and liking. The decisions were made in two consumer categories, cars and apartments, and were framed as acquisition decisions. In addition, we manipulated the size of the trade-off by including three levels of utilitarian and hedonic attributes. Consistent with the prominence hypothesis, we expected that utilitarian attributes would be weighted more in choice than in pricing (matching) and liking decisions, since they seem more important and provide a better justification for choice. In agreement with Hsee at al. (2003), we predicted that options described as high on hedonic dimensions, would be rated higher in liking judgments than options described as high on utilitarian dimensions. Our first prediction, the prominence of utilitarian attributes in choice in comparison to pricing and liking, was confirmed when the size of the trade-off was large. Thus, utilitarian attributes were weighted more in choice than in pricing (matching) and liking, however, when the size of the trade-off was small, individuals placed greater weights on utilitarian attributes in liking judgments than in choice (t(79)=5.19, p<.001). However, when the size of the trade-off was small, individuals placed greater weights on utilitarian attributes in liking judgments than in choice (t(79)=10.95, p<.001) or pricing (t(79)=10.25, p<.001). In conclusion, although decisions were largely driven by high utilitarian values, the size of the trade-off had an impact on the weights assigned to hedonic attributes in a joint evaluation context. Hence, smaller trade-offs resulted in increased weighting of hedonic attributes in choice and pricing decisions.

Study 2 tested whether framing a decision in terms of a loss (forfeiture) or a gain (acquisition) may further moderate attribute weighting across elicitation procedures in situations when the size of the trade-off is large. Dhar and Wertenbroch (2000) suggest that in choice, hedonic attributes receive a greater weight in forfeiture than in acquisition decisions, due to more extensive elaboration in a forfeiture context. In agreement with Dhar and Wertenbroch (2000), we expected that in forfeiture, options described as high on hedonic attributes would better predict preferences across elicitation methods in comparison to options described as high on utilitarian attributes. Our data presented only partial support for this hypothesis. We found that framing a decision as a forfeiture results in a greater weighting of hedonic attributes in liking judgments (t(83)=9.50, p<.001), consistent with an elaboration hypothesis. It can be concluded that individuals anticipate more regret associated with forfeiting a high hedonic option than with a high utilitarian option. This effect was not present in choice or pricing judgments. However, we found that, hedonic attributes were weighted more when individuals made pricing judgments in an acquisition context (t(83)=7.44, p<.001) than in forfeiture. This suggests that in acquisition, individuals expect to pay more for high hedonic options than for high utilitarian options. However, it is possible that the null effect for choice was caused by the nature of the stimulus. On each choice screen, participants were presented with three options: a reference option, which provided the acquisition or forfeiture frame, and two choice options. It is possible that individuals used decision short-cuts and failed to take into consideration the reference item in choice. Further studies are necessary to rule out this potential explanation.

References
Dimensions of Attitude Towards A Sales Promotion Offer

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Extended Abstract

Walk into a supermarket and you will not be surprised to see a great many products on promotion of one kind or the other. Promotions have rightfully become the ubiquitous element of consumers’ shopping experience with US marketers spending more than $100 billion in the form of annual promotional expenditure (Kerin et al, 2003).

The present study contends that consumers’ responses towards various sales promotions depend on their attitudes towards a given sales promotion and such attitudes depend on the intrinsic characteristics of a given promotional offer. Blatteberg and Neslin (1990), They define a sales promotion as “an action-focused marketing event whose purpose is to have a direct impact on the behavior of the firm’s customers.”

Different sales promotional tools serve different objectives. Some promotions such as in-store display and ‘two-for-one’ help generate un-planned purchases (Inman et al, 1990; McClure and West, 1969) and Mulhern and Padgett (1995) show how retail promotions induce consumers to buy regular priced merchandise. Sales promotions are also used to increase store traffic (Grewal, Monroe and Krishnan, 1998; Lichtenstein and Bearden, 1989) increase number of visits to the store (Walters and Rinnie, 1986) and reduce retailers’ inventory carrying costs by inducing consumers to stockpile (Blattberg, 1981; Soo Ong, 1999).

Prior research has studied the variations in consumers’ responsiveness to deals by product category, market, and type of consumer (Blattberg et al 1995). Evidently, there hasn’t been much of an attempt, bearing a few exceptions, to study the differences in consumers’ responsiveness to different promotions arising out of variation in the intrinsic characteristics of a promotional offer. We propose that consumers view promotions as a bundle of some combination of these attributes and each promotional offer represents a unique bundle of attributes. Based on literature review, the initial set of attributes viz. monetary benefits, non-monetary benefits, efforts needed, risk involved, ambiguity of benefits, imprecision in benefits, benefit delay, and effort delay were identified.

Monetary benefits are defined as the economic incentive offered by a promotion, the basic purpose of promotions is to offer an economic inducement to consumers for making the purchase of the product on promotion (Blattberg and Neslin, 1990). Many research findings suggest that consumers do respond to sales promotions for benefits other then monetary savings viz. joy of getting a good deal, the hedonic value of a free gift etc. (for a comprehensive analysis see Chandon et al, 2000). Some promotions involve immediate expense of efforts at the time of availing promotional offer e.g. early bird incentive, clipping coupons, entering in a lucky draw (sometimes entries for draws can be sent at a later date) etc. Sometimes consumers exert efforts in advance of the promotional benefit viz. registering for frequent flyer programs. Research in behavioral decision theory explicates procrastinating behavior by reasoning that future efforts are substantially discounted (Akerlof, 1991; Loewenstein, 1996). A promotional offer may offer an incentive at future date after the purchase is made with or without any additional conditions. Promotions like price-discounts are instantly received at the time of purchase but the benefits of many promotions arise only at a later date. The winners of contests, sweepstakes etc. are determined much after they have made their purchases. The ‘worthiness’ of all promotions is not easily determinable e.g. win a dinner with a TV star. Ambiguity also arises when the promotion is attached with many qualifications. Some promotions like lucky draws are risky where in the consumer may not gain anything and finally, in some instances the benefits offered are imprecise e.g. all items with red tags on sale, up to 75% off etc.

A composite scale representing all eight dimensions was developed and presented to 57 undergraduate students. The same scale was used for each of the seven most widely used consumer promotions viz. Coupons, Mail-in-rebates, Lucky draws, free gifts, price breaks, Contests, etc. The popularity of different sales promotions was assessed through literature review and consultations with an expert. The underlying dimensions were then identified by factor analysis techniques. The study also incorporated measures for testing convergent validity and criterion / predictive validity.

Based on the recommended scale development procedures (Gerbing and Anderson, 1988), the data analysis began with checking the dimensionality underlying the attitude towards sales promotions. The procedure undertaken involved factor analysis (both exploratory as well as confirmatory factor analysis), inter-item correlations (across entire scale and more importantly within each facet) and validity tests for criterion and convergent validity. The six components derived by factor analysis have eigen values of more than 1 and collectively they explain 67% of the total variance. All the components have alpha more than 0.6 except monetary benefits, which has alpha of 0.56. To ascertain the criterion validity the correlations between perceived dimensions (six components) and the predicted likelihood of use of that sales promotion were measured. Except Effort-delay (.05 level) all the correlations are significant at .01 levels providing a strong support for criterion validity. Finally, based on the empirical analysis the identified factors are 1) Perceived effort-return benefit, 2) Benefit transparency representing the degree of precision in stating the promotional benefits and the clarity with which the promotional benefits are communicated 3) Non-monetary benefits 4) Effort delay 5) Risk impact and 6) Perceived monetary benefits. We also discuss the explanation and interpretation of these derived dimensions.

References


**Affect, Affective Precision, and Primacy Effect in Stock Choices**

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**Extended Abstract**

The role of affect in everyday decisions has received an increasing amount of attention in recent literature. Esptein’s (1996) dual processes describe that we have analytical and experiential systems that are interrelated, and most of the time we use both of the systems to make decisions. Slovic et al. (2002) proposed the idea of the affect heuristic, which states that we often use affect as a shortcut to guide judgment and decision making processes. Zajonec (1980) claimed that all perception contains some affect, and it is capable of influencing the ensuing cognitive process to a significant degree.

However, until recently, numerical information was considered to be processed purely cognitively, therefore, free from affect. A few exceptions exist. Peters et al. (2006) demonstrated that affect can be calculated from numbers and used to guide decisions. Kida et al. (1998) also suggested that affect guides choices that involve numerical information. In their study, they presented two sets of stock information. When asked, about 80% of the participants chose the clearly better firm in the first set, although two firms from the second set were actually better. Combining this with other findings in their study, they concluded that participants chose the best firm in the first set because they did not remember the actual financial characteristics of stocks. Instead, they remembered having a higher affect toward that stock option, due to its clear superiority within its own set. An alternative explanation for this finding, however, is an order effect, specifically, participants may feel greater positive affect and choose the best options in a set presented first.

In our study, we investigated the role of affect in stock choice by replicating and extending Study 3 of Kida et al. (1998).

**Hypotheses**

H1a: The majority of participants will choose the best firm in Set A when the options are presented in the same order as those in Kida et al. (1998).

H1b: The majority of participants will not choose the best firm in Set A when the sets are presented in a reversed order as those in Kida et al. (1998).
H2: Participants have significantly higher positive affect toward the best choice in each set.
H3a: Affect toward stock choices will significantly predict choices independent of set order.
H3b: Affective precision toward stock choices and its interaction with affect will significantly contribute to the prediction of choices above and beyond affect and option order.

Method
We replicated the methodology used in Study 3 of Kida et al (1998). As in their study, each of two information sets (Set A and Set B) contained financial characteristics of five firms. The best firm in Set A was far better than the rest of the firms in its own set, and the best firm in Set B was not as clearly the best within its set. However, the best and second best firms in Set B were better than the best firm in Set A.

In our study, half of the participants were presented with Set A first, then Set B (a replication of Kida et al.); the other half of participants were presented with Set B first, then Set A. All participants were then asked to choose their most preferred stock from either set. They also rated their affect and affective precision towards each firm.

Results:
Hypotheses 1a and 1b were supported. Although the majority of participants (83%) chose the best stock in Set A when Set A was presented first, only 25% of participants chose the best stock in Set A when Set B was presented first; the remaining 72% chose the best from in Set B.

Conclusion
Over the last couple of decades, research has demonstrated that decision makers use affect to guide decisions: to decide where to go to vacation or which car to buy. However, numerical information in decisions is still thought to be processed very cognitively. Results of our study demonstrated that people develop affect not only to events, persons, and material objects, but also to numbers. Decision makers appear to draw affective meaning from numbers and to use this affect to guide their decisions. They may be even more likely to rely on affect when information is unavailable at the moment of choice and they have to make decisions from memory. Our findings can also be applied to many other decisions that involve numerical information, such as prices, nutritional facts about food and drinks, and drug information.

Our study also suggests that people are very susceptible to primacy effects with numerical information. This may be because once people develop affect toward a particular option, they tend to stick with it. Therefore, they are not very open to other choices. Further investigations are needed for clearer explanations. Affect’s role in judgments and decisions that involve numerical information is ubiquitous in everyday decisions. Yet, not many studies have been done on this topic. It is important to understand how people rely on affect to make choices and decisions so that we can facilitate better choices and decisions among managers and consumers.

References

The Role of Emotional Attachment in Consumers’ Responses to Service Changes
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Extended Abstract
Consumers are often faced with changes to services they consume; their ability to adapt to changes is moderated by their emotional attachment to the service. We explore the following research questions: (1) What is the relationship between a consumer’s emotional attachment and the level of human interaction the service provides? and (2) How does the level of emotional attachment to the service influence a consumer’s satisfaction, word of mouth, and repurchase intentions, in response to service changes?

For consumers, the “human interaction” element is an important service factor (Zeithaml and Bitner 2003). The level of human interaction consumers receive from services ranges from higher levels (e.g. financial advising) to lower levels (e.g. ATMs) (Schmenner
2004; Mersha 1990). Consumers develop strong emotional attachments to consumer packaged goods (Fournier 1998), as well as fulfill complex emotional needs through service consumption (Rosenbaum 2003). We propose:

**H1:** There is a positive relationship between the consumer’s perceived level of human interaction with the service provider and the consumer’s level of emotional attachment to the service.

Loss aversion and the status quo bias predict that consumers are reluctant to change and prefer the status quo (Samuelson and Zeckhauser 1988; Tversky and Kahneman 1991). We examine changes as gains (positive service changes) and losses (negative service changes).

In a service failure context, Mattila (2004) finds that high affective commitment consumers exhibit higher post-failure behavioral intention ratings than low affective commitment consumers. We propose a Favoritism Effect in which consumers with higher levels of emotional attachment (HEA consumers) have a positive bias toward service providers and would therefore rate the same services higher, after a gain, than low emotional attachment (LEA consumers) do.

In Mattila’s (2004) study, low affective commitment consumers are more “forgiving” with a successful recovery effort, while high affective commitment consumers feel “betrayed” from the failure. We propose that HEA consumers seek validation of their emotions through the reinforcement of service gains. Fiske (2004) notes that in interpersonal relationships people expect reciprocity. HEA consumers expect the service to exhibit gains that reciprocate the consumer’s high emotional attachment. We propose:

**H2a:** In the case of gains, consumers with high levels of emotional attachment to a service provider will have a higher level of favorability, than consumers with low levels of emotional attachment, to a service provider.

When HEA consumers experience service losses, the favoritism effect is positive, but invalidation of emotions is negative. The effects are in opposing directions, effectively canceling each other out. Consequently, HEA and LEA consumers have comparable ratings. We propose:

**H2b:** In the case of losses, consumers with high and low levels of emotional attachment will have comparable levels of negative responses to service losses.

### Study 1

A 1-factor (gain, loss) between subjects field study was conducted (N=32, 71% male, mean age 37) in a sandwich shop. Emotional attachment was measured using the Thomson et al. (2005) emotional attachment scale, dividing high and low with a median split. The dependent variables were satisfaction, word of mouth, and repurchase intention. Purchase frequency and perceived level of human interaction were also measured. For example, the “gain” level was manipulated as follows:

“Imagine that [this restaurant] is extending its hours of operation. Specifically, it would be open 2 hours earlier each morning and close 2 hours later each evening. In total, [this restaurant] would be open 4 additional hours each day.”

In addition to hours of operation, product selection, and number of available servers (both gains and losses) were examined. Results are presented in aggregate.

The test of H1 showed that the level of human interaction perceived by the consumers has a small positive effect on how emotionally attached consumers feel. These results are directionally consistent with H1; pearson correlation=.334, ns.

Supporting H2a, in the case of a service improvement (gain), high emotional attachment consumers have higher levels, than low emotional attachment consumers, of satisfaction (LEA $M=3.0$, $HEA M=4.8$, n.s.), word of mouth (LEA $M=3.0$, $HEA M=5.6$, $p=.034$), and repurchase intention (LEA $M=3.0$, $HEA M=6.0$, $p=.007$) levels.

When there is a service reduction (loss), high and low emotional attachment consumers have comparable satisfaction (LEA $M=3.67$, $HEA M=3.67$, n.s.), word of mouth (LEA $M=4.67$, $HEA M=5.50$, n.s.), and repurchase intention LEA $M=4.67$, $HEA M=4.83$, n.s. levels, supporting H2b.

### Study 2

A 1-factor (gain, loss) between subjects lab experiment was conducted (N=155, includes respondents who have visited the Starbucks coffee shops in question at least once in the last 30 days). Measured variables and dependent variables were consistent with Study 1. An example of the “loss” level manipulation is as follows (hours of operation and product selection were also examined):

“The Starbucks on campus typically have two cash registers and three employees available at a given time. Imagine that the Starbucks on campus now had only one cash register and two employees during busy times. This would be a staff reduction to two employees. The result is that it takes longer to get your order.”

The results for study 2 replicate the results of study 1 in a more controlled environment. H1 was supported with a pearson correlation=.467, sig (2-tailed)=.000.

When there is a service improvement (gain), high emotional attachment consumers have higher levels, than low emotional attachment consumers, of satisfaction (LEA $M=5.57$, $HEA M=6.46$, $p=.002$), word of mouth (LEA $M=5.43$, $HEA M=6.41$, $p=.002$), and repurchase intention (LEA $M=5.83$, $HEA M=6.70$, $p=.002$) levels, supporting H2a.

In the case of a service reduction (loss), high and low emotional attachment consumers have comparable satisfaction (LEA $M=2.39$, $HEA M=2.11$, n.s.), word of mouth (LEA $M=2.39$, $HEA M=2.89$, n.s.), and repurchase intention LEA $M=2.74$, $HEA M=3.00$, n.s. levels, supporting H2b.
Inferential and Perceptual Influences of Affective Expectations on Judgments of Experienced Affect

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Extended Abstract

Marketers often instill either positive or negative expectations for how an experience with a product will make consumers feel (i.e., affective expectations). After all, doing so will often congruently influence attitudes toward, and intentions to purchase, a product. However, one limitation of focusing on expectations is that the actual experience with the product is a fundamental attitude determinant (e.g., Regan and Fazio 1977). That is, the consumer attitudes created from implanting an affective expectation for a product are likely weaker and less predictive of behavior than are the attitudes formed following a direct experience with a product. Thus, the present research is an attempt to fill gaps in our knowledge about the interface between affective expectations, affective experiences, and the actual judgments of those affective experiences as well as resultant attitudes and intentions among consumers.

We propose that both inferential (conscious; Clore and Schnall 2005; Wyer, Clore, and Isbell 1999) and perceptual (nonconscious; Sherif and Howland 1961) processes can govern the effects of affective expectations on judgments of affect. Further, we suggest that both processes often lead to an “ironic effect” by which negative, relative to positive, affective expectations produce more positive affective reactions following an encounter with a product. Critical for the manifestation of this ironic effect is that the consumer is able to sufficiently identify, or focus on, their feelings (Albarracín and Kumkale 2003).

Whether an inferential or a perceptual process predominates depends on whether people endorse a naïve theory that affective expectations congruently influence affective experiences. Individuals who hold this belief may arrive at judgments of experienced affect in a predominantly inferential or reasoned manner. This naïve theory can lead consumers to believe that their affect resulting from an encounter with a product has been influenced by their expectation. Thus, they likely conclude following a negative (positive) affective expectation that the affect they currently experience is actually more (less) positive, producing the ironic effect. Further, individuals holding this naïve theory should spontaneously identify their feeling because they attempt to determine the influence of their expectations on their feelings. Thus, ironic effects should be commonly observed for these individuals unless they are artificially distracted from identifying their feelings.

Alternatively, individuals without this naïve theory may arrive at judgments of experienced affect only in a perceptual or nonconscious manner because they do not consider the influence of their expectations on their experiences, nor should they spontaneously focus on their feelings. Thus, these individuals will not demonstrate ironic effects as readily as will endorsers of the naïve theory. Rather, their judgments of affective experiences should be assimilated to their expectations. This prediction is consistent with research (e.g., Stapel, Koomen, and Ruys 2002) which suggests that judgments of an object (product) tend to be assimilated toward a context (or expectation) when the object and context are not seen as being distinct. However, if these individuals are experimentally induced to focus on the affect induced by the product, this affect will be seen as discrepant from an inconsistent expectation. In this case, contrast effects should be observed, producing perceptual ironic effects.

In two reported studies, participants received information instilling a positive or negative affective expectation for a “mood-altering” simulated-alcohol product, and then, a short time later, sampled the beverage. This beverage was associated with pleasant or unpleasant affect because it was immediately preceded by a mood induction in which participants wrote a letter about a happy or angering event to a friend. This mood induction (positive for Experiment 1, and positive or negative in Experiment 2) was presented to assure that participants had some affect identifiable since the beverage did not actually alter mood. Finally, participants reported judgments of their affective state,
beverage attitudes, and intentions to use the beverage. As well, we measured participants’ endorsement of the naïve theory and conducted a median split to isolate high and low endorsers of this theory.

Importantly, in Experiment 1, some participants were distracted by an audio-taped conversation from identifying their affect while they completed the main dependent measures, whereas others were not. For high endorsers of the naïve theory, we predicted that an inferential ironic effect would emerge under normal affect-identification conditions, but that no effect would be observed when a distraction was present. By contrast, under normal affect-identification conditions, low endorsers should perceive their experienced affect as being consistent with their expectation, but this effect should disappear when a distraction was present. The results of an analysis in which affect, product attitudes, and intentions to drink the product were combined confirmed these predictions.

In Experiment 2 we tested our prediction that consumers without a naïve theory may demonstrate perceptual ironic effects, but only when they are led to focus on their feelings. To do this, some participants were prompted to focus on their feeling just prior to completing the main dependent measures, whereas others were not. In these conditions, we expected low endorsers, and all high endorsers, to manifest the ironic effect. Otherwise, low endorsers were expected to demonstrate expectation-consistent effects. The results of an analysis in which affect, product attitudes, and intentions to drink the product were combined confirmed these predictions.

The proposed model is unique in positing two processes by which judgments of affect, and resultant consumer attitudes and intentions, are influenced by affective expectations. Importantly, this model predicts an ironic effect, which is related to other effects observed in the consumer behavior and social psychological literature (e.g., Oliver 1980; Mellers, Schwartz, Ho, and Ritov 1997; Wegener and Petty 1997) but also predicts an expectation-consistent effect under some conditions. Thus, the present model accounts specifically accounts for a variety of effects following affective expectations. Therefore, this model can prove useful in predicting when, and with whom, marketers will find most advantageous the creation of consumers’ positive or negative expectations for how a product will make them feel. Notably, careful advertisements may alter individuals’ naïve theories, and marketers can vary the extent to which consumers are likely to identify their feelings, thus controlling what effects are observed.

References

Consumer Evaluation of Brand Deletion and Feedback Effect: A Motivational Approach
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EXTENDED ABSTRACT
Introduction
Companies are increasingly deleting brands to rationalize their portfolios. This is usually a financial decision with little to no consideration for the consumer who actually bought the brands. An important question is to identify the repercussions of deletion decision on the existing consumers. This gap in the academic literature and management practice on brand deletion is addressed in this research, with the studies focusing on brand extension deletion.

Most new products, typically 80-90% in any year, are extensions. Many researchers studying consumer evaluation of brand extensions have followed a categorization perspective (e.g., Broniarczyk & Alba, 1994), much of which is driven by using the consumer learning approach. For example, a successful brand extension contributes to parent brand image by improving the strength, favorability, or uniqueness of its associations (Aaker & Keller, 1990.) Parent brand dilution has been shown to occur as a result of the introduction of an extension that has attributes inconsistent with consumer beliefs about the parent brand, but the flagship products have been shown as less vulnerable to dilution (John, Loken, & Joiner, 1998; Loken & John, 1993.)

This current research utilizes a motivational approach to study consumer evaluation of brand deletion and feedback effects. It is hypothesized that deletion of a brand extension, if it is the most preferred brand in the extension category, generates psychological
reactance (Brehm, 1966) in consumers. This reactance can be conceived as goal-directed motivational state (Brehm & Brehm, 1981; Wicklund, 1974.) It is proposed that liking towards the parent brand and the brand extension would be adversely affected by the brand extension deletion. One key variable moderating consumers’ evaluation of parent brand and its brand extension is consumers’ attribution of the responsibility of the extension deletion. If consumers believe that the transgression, i.e., deletion decision is made by the manufacturer, it is proposed that liking towards the manufacturer and the parent brand would be lower (as compared to no deletion controls). However liking towards the deleted brand extension would be higher as compared to no deletion controls, as the reactance generated leads to increased liking for the lost freedom (e.g. deleted brand extension).

Method
A lab based, primary experimental setup was utilized. The studies used a ‘before–after with control group’ design. In Study 1, mouthwash as the extension category was used, whereas in Study 2, ketchup as the extension category was used. All participants were exposed to credible information conveying that their preferred brand extension in a category had been deleted. A no-deletion group served as control. Pre-tests were conducted to identify participants’ involvement with multiple product categories. For a conservative test, categories with relatively low involvement were used. Pre-tests also confirmed that availability of most preferred extension was perceived as offering greatest freedom, and that Consumer Reports was perceived as the expert source to communicate deletion news. Additional data (e.g. close substitutes, usage etc.) was also collected.

In both the studies, all participants initially rated their preference for brands and extensions in multiple categories. Only relevant category information (mouthwash and ketchup respectively) was then used to manipulate deletion. Participants read a scenario informing them that their favorite extension had been deleted by the manufacturer due to financial performance. Finally the participants re-rated their liking towards the manufacturer, parent brand and the deleted extensions.

Major Findings
The findings from Study 1 (mouthwash extension category) are reported here. These were replicated in Study 2 (ketchup category). The initial and final attitudes towards manufacture (e.g. P&G, Pfizer), the parent brand (e.g. Crest, Listerine) and the brand extension (e.g. Crest mouthwash, Cool Mint Listerine mouthwash) were measured using either three 11-item measures or points allocation from 1-100. Paired-sample t-tests were conducted on the pre-manipulation and post-manipulation scores. There were no differences in the no-deletion pre-post control group scores.

For the deleted extension, this difference was significant, t (64)=2.27, p<.05 for Cool Mint Listerine, indicating that the preference for Cool Mint Listerine mouthwash post deletion was significantly higher as compared to their initial preference for Cool Mint Listerine mouthwash (Ms=88.63 & 91.80, pre-post deletion.) Similar findings were observed for the deleted Crest mouthwash. This indicates that consumers liking of their favorite brand extension increases after they become aware of the deletion, irrespective of it being line or category extension.

For the manufacturer, this difference was significant, t (64)=11.36, p<.001 for Pfizer, indicating that the subjects attitude towards Pfizer post deletion was significantly lower than their attitude towards Pfizer pre deletion (Ms=8.36 & 5.24, pre-post deletion.) Similar findings were observed towards P & G, manufacturer of Crest mouthwash. This indicates that consumers’ attitude towards the manufacturer of their favorite brand extension decreases strongly after they become aware of the decision of the manufacturer to delete the mouthwash brand.

For the parent brand, this difference was significant, t (64)=4.04, p<.001 for Listerine, which indicates that the subjects attitude towards Listerine brand post deletion was significantly lower than their attitude towards Listerine brand pre deletion (Ms=8.41 & 7.32, pre-post deletion.) Similar findings were observed for Crest brand. This indicates that consumers’ attitude towards the parent brand, whose extension is deleted, decreases strongly after they become aware of the decision of the manufacturer to delete the mouthwash extension.

Discussion
Evidence from initial experiments suggests that awareness of brand extension deletion leads consumers to develop negative attitude towards the manufacturer and its core brand. On the other hand, the liking towards the deleted brand extension increases significantly after awareness of deletion, if the deletion decision does not lead to quality questions. However, the attributions towards the company are only generated when the company is held responsible for the deletion.

This research implies that companies with multiple brands require a systematic consumer-focused brand deletion process in place. This would control the adverse impact of brand deletion on parent brand, as well as limit damage on corporate reputation.

The initial studies have focused on brand extensions to study brand deletion. Brand extensions are unique in their associations and future research would delineate extension specific effects from consumer evaluation based on the loss of a choice option.

References
Motivational Reasons for Misremembering Past Negative Events
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Extended Abstract

In recent years, a significant amount of research attention has been focused on documenting the relationship among experienced, predicted and remembered utilities of negative experiences. Much of this work points to discrepancies between how much an event is actually experienced and how much it is predicted to be experienced (Gilbert, Pinel, Wilson, Blumberg, & Wheatley, 1998; Redelmeier & Kahneman, 1996; Wilson, Meyers, & Gilbert, 2003). Across these papers, findings indicate that people expect future negative events to be even more negative than they actually are. Two conceptually distinct sets of mechanisms have been proposed to explain these findings. One set of theories (Trope and Liberman 2000) suggests that a perceptual mechanism underlies these findings. Specifically, these authors propose that people have a tendency to focus on the “central” aspects when events are far in the future and on more peripheral aspects when events are closer. Since a central aspect of negative events is, by definition, their negativity, these events appear more negative in the future than in real-time.

The work by Gilbert et al. (1998) hints at a motivational mechanism underlying the discrepancy between actual and predicted utilities. These authors offer a “psychological immune system” perspective to suggest that once a negative event has occurred, a series of mechanisms are triggered with the objective of ameliorating the negative feelings. These mechanisms work to protect the individual from harmful effects of negative feelings. Because people do not have an intuition about the functioning of the immune system, they expect future negative events to be even more negative than they actually are.

In this research, we advance the past research by examining the relationship between actual and remembered (rather than predicted) utilities of negative events. In doing so, we document the moderating role of the self-relevance of the negative event (events are high in self-relevance when they are diagnostic for assessing a relevant aspect of the self, such as one’s ability in math for a math student). Specifically, we find that past negative events portrayed as being more (vs. less) self-relevant are remembered as being less negative than they actually were. Because the functioning of the immune system should be especially appropriate in situations where the negative experience is more (vs. less) self-relevant, this pattern of findings suggests that a motivational mechanism biases memory for past events in a more palatable direction. Results from a second study provided further directional support for the idea that a motivational mechanism underlies the discrepancy between remembered and actual utilities for negative events.

Experiment 1

In order to test this effect of self-relevance on the recollection of negative experiences, we conducted a pilot study (Study 1) with 158 undergraduate students. Each student was randomly assigned to two experimental conditions—low self-relevance and high self-relevance. In both conditions, participants were asked to hold a plastic bag full of ice cubes for 120 seconds. This activity was chosen as a manipulation for two reasons. First it is a non-invasive pain-induction procedure (Chapman, 1976). Second, it is an unambiguously negative experience.

In the high self-relevance condition, participants read a mock article from a medicine journal, right after the ice cube task. This mock article reported high correlations between immune system strength and cognitive performance. The article also reported that the longer an individual can hold a plastic bag full of ice cubes, the stronger the individual’s immune system. In the low self-relevance condition, participants read a mock medicine article, from the same journal, with the exact same story. However, no link was made between the ability to hold ice cubes and the strength of the immune system in this condition. Consistent with these manipulations, the article was thought to be more relevant in the high vs. low relevance conditions ($M_{high\ self-relevance} = 5.02$ and $M_{low\ self-relevance} = 4.20$) on a 7-point scale, $F(1,156) = 11.33$, $p < 0.001$.

After the relevance manipulation, participants proceeded with an unrelated filler task for about 7 minutes. Finally, participants were asked to rate how painful the ice cube manipulation was. They did so by marking a point on a straight line, with no markers, anchored by “not at all painful” and “very painful”, with “somehow painful as the midpoint on this scale. The intensity of remembered pain (our dependent variable) was calculated by measuring the distance to the point that the participant marked on the line-scale from the (left) point of origin of the line.

The ice cube task was remembered as being less painful in the high self-relevance condition than in the low self-relevance condition ($M_{high\ self-relevance} = 7.74$ and $M_{low\ self-relevance} = 8.89$) on a 15.2 cm scale, $F(1,130) = 3.89$, $p = 0.05$. These results are consistent with our initial predictions. However, they also impose a series of further questions. First, one may argue that holding a plastic bag full of ice cubes is an unusual task, and one that involves physical, rather than emotional distress. As such, one may wonder whether the effects would be obtained in more cognitive tasks. Experiment 2 was designed with this aspect in mind. We also wished to provide additional evidence that people’s memories of negative events are revised through a motivational mechanism by using the tenets of the mood-as-a-resource (cf. Raghunathan & Trope 2002) hypothesis.

Experiment 2

According to the mood-as-a-resource hypothesis, positive moods act as a buffer against the affective costs of negative (but useful) information, enabling individuals to better cope with such negative information. On the flip side, the theory holds that negative mood decreases the ability to cope with negative information (Raghunathan & Trope, 2002). As such, we predict that, under positive mood, individuals in the high self-relevance condition will not remember the experience as having been less unpleasant than those in the low self-relevance condition. This is because the positive mood would have provided the buffer necessary to cope with the negative event, and, as such, allowed these participants to accurately remember the intensity of the past negative event. By contrast, we expect that individuals in the negative mood condition would continue to revise their memory of the intensity of the past negative event downwards. In this study, 347 undergraduate students were assigned to one of the 2 (low self-relevance, high self-relevance) x 3 (negative mood, neutral mood, positive mood) between-subjects condition.
The negative task consisted of a problem solving exercise, which was borrowed from Raghunathan and Trope (2002). The task consisted of responding to six multiple choice questions that purportedly measured the participants’ “Lateral Thinking Ability”. After responding to each of the six questions, participants received the same negative feedback (a “below average” score). Subsequent to this, participants in the high self-relevance condition read a paragraph in which they were informed that people with greater lateral thinking ability were better placed in better jobs, perform better at work and earn higher salaries. Participants in the low self-relevance condition were not exposed to this information. Confirming that the manipulation worked, the LTAT was rated more relevant (M_{high self-relevance}=3.71 and M_{low self-relevance}=3.05, on a 7-point scale, F(1,345)=16.56, p<0.01) in the high self-relevance condition.

Following this task, participants’ mood was manipulated using a procedure adapted from Trope and Neter (1994). More specifically, participants described, in details, a situation where they had performed either well (positive mood) or bad (negative mood) in an exam. Participants in the neutral mood condition were asked to describe, in details, their daily routine. Confirming that the mood manipulations worked as intended, participants in the positive mood condition reported significantly less negative (M_{positive condition}=2.61, M_{neutral condition}=3.02 and M_{negative condition}=4.44, on a 7-point scale, F(1,345)=65.10, p<0.001) and more positive moods (M_{positive condition}=5.13, M_{neutral condition}=4.52 and M_{negative condition}=2.70, F(1,326)=152.16, p<0.001). After the mood manipulation, participants proceeded with a filler task and, finally, reported their memory for the overall unpleasantness of the LTAT experience, using a 12-point scale, anchored in “not unpleasant at all” and “very unpleasant”.

Consistent with our predictions, initial analyses point to a two-way interaction between relevance and mood (linear) (F(1,321)=4.21, p=0.04). Under negative mood, individuals in the high self-relevance condition remembered the experience as being less unpleasant than individuals in the low self-relevance condition. However, consistent with our predictions, the results were reversed under positive mood.

Concluding Remarks

This paper sheds light on the accuracy of remembered utility and its antecedents. More specifically, it clarifies the importance and pervasiveness of motivational mechanisms influencing the memory for negative events. More important, the results of our first study contradict the predictions made by the literature focusing on perceptual mechanisms. This literature predicts that individuals would remember negative, self-relevant, events as being more unpleasant than they actually were.

This relationship between self-relevance and remembered utility is further qualified by an interaction. Specifically, the effect of self-relevance on remembered is moderated by mood valence.

References


Marketing Leisure Services to Sensation Seekers: The Relationship between Personality and Emotional Response in Novices Using an Artificial Climbing Wall

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Abstract

The market related to so-called extreme sports, such as rock climbing and sky diving, has burgeoned since the 1990s. Consumer behavior research has linked the personality trait of sensation seeking (SS) with involvement in the above sports. However, work on participation in risky sports has not thoroughly examined the influence of personality and subsequent emotional response, on behavioral intentions in this context.

The current study investigated the effects of the SS personality trait, along with demographics, on novice artificial wall climbers’ (n=241) emotional responses (PAD scale: pleasure-arousal-dominance) and related behavioral intentions to climb again. Results suggest participants’ emotions (e.g., arousal) and future intentions to climb are both a significant function of personality and gender.

Theoretical Background

The consumption of risky sports has dramatically increased over the past few years (Shoham, Rose, & Kahle, 1998). For instance, participation in artificial climbing walls has grown by roughly 60% in the three-year period from 1999 to 2001, while participation in some classic team sports, such as baseball, dropped by 6% (Flagg, 2005).

Arousal theory suggests that every individual has a characteristic optimum stimulation level (OSL) and this is the foundation of personality (Raju, 1980; Zuckerman, 1988). Based upon the OSL paradigm, Zuckerman (1979) defined sensation seeking as a trait
characterized by “the seeking of varied, novel, complex, and intense situations and experiences and the willingness to take physical, social and financial risks” (1979, p. 10). Furthermore, research findings have indicated high sensation seekers are more likely to participate in risky sports, such as hang-gliding, and rock climbing (e.g., Jack & Ronan, 1999; Zuckerman, 1983).

Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) suggested that consumers’ multi-sensory and emotive aspects of consumption experiences are crucial motivation for leisure and sport activity. Arnold and Price (1993) also argued that seeking emotional arousal drives sport consumers to participate in risky sports. Further, there have been evidences that enduring personality traits play a significant role in organizing transient emotional states (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985). Although Shoham, Rose, and Kahle (1998) provided support for the notion that the sensation-seeking trait is related to intentions to participate in risky sports, it is important to note that their study did not include the potential additive effects of emotions on behavioral intentions. Moreover, little empirical research has examined emotional experiences provided by risky sport (e.g., post-consumption emotions) and their relationship to OSL traits and behavioral intentions.

The advent of artificial climbing walls has created the possibilities for extreme sports to be marketed to consumers in urban settings. Moreover, it provides a relatively controlled setting, in which to study this form of hedonic consumption. To date, consumer psychology research on extreme sports has not thoroughly examined the potential additive effects of personality and emotion on participation. Therefore, the focus of the present research is to explore the influence of sensation seeking and consumption-related emotions (Pleasure-Arousal-Dominance) on novice (artificial wall) climbers’ behavioral intentions for using the facility again.

The following hypotheses were created, based on the literature dealing with consumption-related emotions and personality in this context:

H1: Respondents’ climb-related arousal level is a function of age, gender and ImpSS (α <.05).

H2: Respondents’ climb-related level of pleasure is a function of age, gender, ImpSS, arousal and dominance (α <.05).

H3: Respondents’ behavioral intentions for using the artificial climbing wall again are associated with their age, gender, ImpSS, and PAD, after controlling for prior level of climbing experience (α <.05).

Research Methods

Data for this study were collected at the artificial climbing wall facility of a large university in the eastern United States, over a several week period, during “Beginner’s Night.” Novice climbers (n=241) 18 years of age and older were chosen for this study, in an effort to examine how their initial experiences with this activity, along with their OSL, might influence their future usage of the facility (cf., Shoham et al., 1998). In an effort to gauge their experience and expertise (cf. Shoham et al., 1998; Holbrook, Chestnut & Oliva, 1984), respondents were asked to rate their level of climbing experience on a scale from one (inexperienced) to five (experienced). Based on responses to this question, 55 of the 296 climbers queried were excluded from the final analyses as they rated their experience levels higher than two.

Respondents’ Impulsive Sensation Seeking (Zuckerman, 1991) and demographics (e.g., age, gender) were also reported before they ascended the artificial climbing wall. Immediately upon completing their climbs, participants filled out self-reports of their emotional response to their consumption experience, by responding to an abbreviated version of the PAD (Holbrook et al., 1984) and multi-item scaled estimates of their future intentions to use the wall again (at both similar and more difficult grades).

Results

The sample was comprised of 55.6% males (n=131) and 44.4% females (n=110), with a mean age of 26.2 years old (S.D.=10.19). Reliabilities for ImpSS, PAD, and behavioral intentions were .82, .73, and .89 respectively. To check the construct validity of ImpSS, a two-way (age x gender) analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedure was used. The results showed significance differences by both age (F=7.36, p<.005) and gender (F=4.64, p<.005), which is in line with research on the above psychobiological trait (Zuckerman, 1994).

The results of multivariate linear regression analysis provided partial support for H1 as gender and ImpSS significantly predicted post-climb levels of arousal (df=3/238, F=7.45, p<.001, R2=.10). The directionality of the beta coefficient for gender indicated that females reported higher levels of the above emotion.

The second hypothesis also received partial support. Regression results indicated that respondents’ gender (being female), post-climb levels of arousal and dominance were significant predictors of post-climb levels of pleasure (df=5/236, F=14.99, p<.001). The model explained 25% of the adjusted variance in the dependent variable.

Multivariate linear regression results for intentions to use the wall again at a similar degree of difficulty (H3) showed that and post-climb levels of Arousal and Pleasure were significant (df=7/234, F=10.76, p<.001). The model accounted for 25% of the adjusted variance explained. Results for predicting intentions to climb at steeper angles showed that age, gender, ImpSS, climbing experience, and post-climb levels of Pleasure and Dominance were significant (df=7/234, F=17.32, p<.001). This model explained 35% of the variance in behavioral intentions.

Discussion

Findings suggest that climb-related emotions and future intentions are significant functions of personality (i.e., sensation seeking) and demographic factors. Furthermore, the more participants experience post-climb arousal and pleasure, the more they are likely to use the wall again. The results of the empirical research support the notion that personality and consumption-related emotions are significant predictors of hedonic consumption (e.g., participation in risky sport) (Holbrook et al., 1984). In addition, this is the first known work to examine the relationship between personality and emotional responses in participation in so-called extreme sports. The research also contributes to the literature for sport marketers in that the use of personality variables might prove useful as a segmentation tool in marketing facilities, like climbing walls, to sensation seekers (Shoham et al., 1998).

References

Extended Abstract

More and more, firms are using redemption caps as a form of promotional restriction. For example, GM ran a promotion tied in with a television show (the Apprentice) for their new vehicle, the Solstice. The offer was available for the first 1000 callers. The promotion cap was reached within hours of the show ending, yet a large number of consumers called for days after the promotion expired. In another example, a regional health club franchise ran a promotion for membership upgrade good for the first 100 responses. The promotion cap ran out on the second day, yet many members were still trying to redeem the offer weeks later. In this research, we examine how consumers process promotions that have redemption caps.

Prior research on promotional restrictions has focused on concrete and well-defined time limits (e.g., Raghubir, Inman, and Grande 2004). The findings have been mixed. Some studies find that consumers perceive short promotion durations as inconvenient, thus lowering their purchase intentions (Sinha, Chandran, and Srinivasan 1999), while other studies find that shorter durations can increase purchase intentions by increasing perceptions of deal scarcity (Inman, Peter, and Raghubir 1997) or by heightening the anticipated regret associated with not acting (Inman and McAlister 1994; Simonson 1992).

We propose that consumers evaluate redemption cap promotions, in part, by estimating the reach, response rate, and duration of the promotion. The reach of the promotion refers to the number of other consumers exposed to the promotion and the response rate refers to the percentage of exposed consumers who will act on the promotion. We argue that consumers’ estimates of these quantities are anchored off of the redemption cap itself. Thus, the larger the redemption cap size, the larger the estimates of reach, response rate, and duration. However, since the actual promotion duration will be negatively related to the reach and response rate of the promotion, consumers may tend to overestimate how much time they have to redeem. If this reasoning holds, we would expect that providing consumers with the actual reach of a promotion should diminish the anchoring effect.

We conducted an exploratory study using a 3 x 2 between-subjects design with redemption cap size (40, 400, and 4000) and promotion reach (known vs. unknown) as between-subjects factors. Participants were 145 undergraduate business students and were randomly assigned to one of the six experimental conditions. Prior to receiving the stimulus promotions, the participants were provided with a brief scenario asking them to imagine that they had just received a coupon via email from MostlyPosters.com. The stimulus promotions were for a 30% discount off any poster, and contained one of the three redemption cap size treatments. Participants in the known market size conditions were told that the promotion was only sent to the 9000 undergraduate students of their university. Those in the unknown market size condition were not provided with any information regarding the reach of the promotion. Participants evaluated the coupon and were asked a series of questions regarding purchase intent, deal evaluation, promotion reach, and redemption timing.

When the promotional reach was unknown, participants’ estimates of promotional reach (9500, 114000, 128000), response rate (.147, .248, .300), and duration (51.7 hours, 84.3 hours, 161.5 hours) all increased with redemption cap size, respectively. We also scaled the participants’ self-reported redemption timing estimates (e.g., the percent that said they would redeem in 1 minute, the percent that said they would redeem in 1 hour, etc.) to their estimates of promotional reach and response rates. This allowed us to determine actual expiration times in each condition by cumulating the number of responses. We found that in all three redemption cap size conditions, the actual coupon would expire in less than five minutes. Given that the participants’ estimates of response rates may be overestimated, we ran the same
analysis using only the proportion of subjects that stated they would definitely redeem this coupon (8.2%). We found that the 40 cap promotion would still expire in less than 5 minutes, but that the 400 and 4000 cap promotions would expire in approximately one hour. The results are not significantly different when even more conservative estimates of response rates are used. Thus, we conclude that at all levels of redemption cap size, participants grossly overestimated the duration of the promotion.

By comparison, when the promotional reach was known, participants’ estimates of response rates (.116, .247, .309) and duration (14.7, 25.6, 157.9) increased with redemption cap size, respectively. Although the estimated duration increases with redemption cap size, the actual estimates are significantly smaller in this condition than for the unknown promotional reach conditions. However, the estimated response rates for the known and unknown promotional reach conditions differ only slightly with the largest difference between the estimates for a redemption cap size of 40. Thus, providing participants with the actual promotional reach removed the anchoring effects from estimates of promotional reach but not from estimates response rates and duration. Computing the actual redemption time as before, we again find that the redemption cap of 40 would expire in less than 5 minutes. However, the redemption cap of 400 would take 1.5 hours to expire and the redemption cap of 4000 would only be half used after two months. Again if we use a more conservative estimate of response rate (8.2%), the redemption cap of 40 would still expire in less than 5 minutes, while redemption caps of 400 and 4000 would take 10 hours and over 2 months to expire, respectively. Thus, while the estimated expiration time is overestimated for the redemption caps of 40 and 400 (14.7 hours vs. <5 minutes and 25.6 hours vs. 10 hours, respectively), the expiration time for the redemption of 4000 is grossly underestimated (157.9 hours vs. more than 1440 hours). Additionally, subjects reported greater confidence in their ability to redeem the coupon as the redemption cap increased, regardless of whether the promotional reach was known or unknown.

It would appear that estimates of duration are disconnected from estimates of reach and response rates. In the examples mentioned earlier, Solstic sold out within hours of the show ending. Many more continued to call for days after the promotion expired. Similarly for the health club; this promotion ran out in the second day yet consumers tried to redeem the offer weeks later. However, questions still remain. We intend to extend this research to examine the impact of risk aversion on estimation. Additionally, we will investigate perceptions of fairness, scarcity, and blame.

References


The Role of Expectations in Set-Size Evaluations
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Extended Abstract

There has been a surge of research in recent years re-examining the effects of choice set size and alternative proliferation on a number of issues from choice confidence to perceived responsibility. Most of this research uses objectively limited and overwhelming sets in a direct manipulation design. But what effect do expectations of set size have on set-size perceptions? While research has begun to examine how set sizes affect expectations (Diehl and Poynor 2005), there remains a need for research exploring how expectations can affect judgments of set size (Van Raaj 1991).

It is proposed that set-size expectations create a sort of anchor. If one expects a limited set, the expectation is bounded by two, the smallest set possible. If one expects an extensive set, the expectation is bounded by an estimate of the total number of products available in that category, usually a quite high number. When the actual set size is truly limited or very extensive, reality should win out over expectations and the set should be perceived accurately as the set size should be near one of these perceptual boundaries and thus easy to put into a particular perspective. However, when the actual set size is of a moderate nature, the set will appear less like the expectation being held. So will the moderate set be assimilated or contrasted with expectations (Biernat 2005)? Prior work has suggested a general trend towards contrast instead of assimilation, but this was conducted in a more hedonic setting and did not explore set sizes (Zellner, Stickhouser, Tornow 2004).

To explore this issue, an online study was conducted using choice sets of digital cameras at a fictitious online electronics store. 106 undergraduates at a large east-coast private university participated in the experiment. A 2x3 (expectations by set size) fully-crossed factorial design was conducted. Before exposure to the online choice set of digital cameras, participants were randomly assigned to an expectation condition and read a page telling them “Please note, the product selection at this online store is known to be very limited (extensive), and you will probably have to pick from only a few (a very large number) of alternatives.” Then participants were exposed to a set of digital cameras that was very limited at four alternatives, moderate at twelve alternatives, or very extensive at twenty-four
alternatives. These set sizes had been extensively pre-tested and shown to be considered too small and quite limiting (four), an average or moderate number of products in this category (twelve), or far too large and overwhelming (twenty-four). After making their selection, participants were asked to record the degree to which they found the set restrictive, overwhelming, difficult to choose from, incomplete, and the likelihood they selected a non-optimal choice (all multi-item Likert scale measures collapsed into constructs). The data was then analyzed by way of a multivariate ANOVA, and planned-contrast t-tests for specific comparisons.

First, there was a main effect for expectations on all outcome variables (F>8 for all, p<.01 for all). Planned-contrast t-tests reveal that participants who expected an extensive set viewed choice sets in general as more incomplete (p<.01) and restrictive (p<.05), less overwhelming (p<.01), and felt they were less likely to pick a suboptimal choice (p<.05) than participants who expected a sparse set. There was also a significant expectations by set-size interaction effect in the ANOVA (F>5 for all, p<.01 for all). Planned-contrast t-tests here reveal that the effect of expectations is actually largely confined to the moderate set size. When the actual set-size is limited or extensive, no differences between extensive and limited expectations participants on the outcome variables is significant above .05. When the actual set-size is moderate, however, all outcome variables are significant.

Consistent with our propositions, the pattern of results in this moderate-set conditions suggests that the actual set size is viewed in contrast to expectations, rather than assimilated to expectations (Fiske & Taylor 1984). When participants were expecting a limited set, they view the moderate set as having reduced incompleteness and reduced choice restriction, but elevated error likelihood and increased perceptions of being overwhelmed. In short, the results looked not significantly different from when the limited expectations participants viewed the actually extensive set (all p>.05), but significantly different on all variables from the actually limited set (all p<.02). A similar pattern emerges for the extensive set expectations participant. When expecting an extensive set, participants view the moderate set as very restricted and incomplete, but not overwhelming with little choice error. In short, they view the moderate set as not significantly different from the actually limited set (all p>.05), but significantly different from the actually extensive set (all p<.01).

In summary, when participants viewed a truly limited or extensive set, reality trumped any expectation-based effects on size judgments. But when the choice set was, of moderate size, participants expecting either a limited or extensive set exhibited a contrast effect, where extensive expectations made the moderate set appear limited while limited expectations made the moderate set appear extensive. This not only has implications for retailers and consumers in how they react to common moderate set sizes, research suggests that the act of expectation disconfirmation itself can lead to lowered satisfaction regardless of the positivity of the outcome (Bennet, Ordonez & Gilliland 2003).

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Investigating the Additive Effects of Demographics, Lifestyles, and Personality on Physical Activity Levels in Adult Consumers
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Extended Abstract
Obesity and its related health problems are a growing concern in the U.S. and abroad, which has prompted a call for transformative consumer research in this area (Mick, 2006). For example, it was recently reported that nearly 40% of adult consumers in America are sedentary and 65% of adults are overweight (body mass index ≥ 25.0 kg/m²) (National Center for Health Statistics, 2005). Given that engaging in regular vigorous physical activity is not only beneficial for the general wellbeing of consumers but also important in terms of the related financial cost to government and businesses, it is imperative for health marketing professionals to understand various determinants of physical activity levels. The objective of the current study is to investigate the additive effects of demographics (e.g., age, gender, and ethnicity) lifestyle (e.g., TV watching, smoking, and drinking) and personality (e.g., sensation seeking) on physical activity levels, which can have implications to effective segmentation and targeting of health communications about the latter.

A growing body of evidence suggests that age and gender are the most consistent determinants of physical activity levels in adults (Caspersen, Pereira, & Curran, 2000; Ingram, 2000; Nelson, Gordon-Larsen, Adair, & Popkin, 2005; Sallis, 2000). Studies have found males tend to exercise more vigorously than females and overall exercise levels decline with age. Age-related decline in exercise levels has been well supported in non-human studies as well, indicating that age-related decline has a strong biological basis (Ingram, 2000; Sallis, 2000). In addition to age and gender, ethnicity has also found to be related with exercise levels in adults. Caucasians are reported to be more physically active than non-Caucasians (Caspersen & Merritt, 1995). Lifestyles characterized by certain types of consumption
(i.e., drinking, smoking and excessive TV viewing) can adversely affect physical activity levels as well (Sale, Guppy, & El-Sayed, 2000; Tucker, 1986; Tucker & Bagwell, 1991). The current study builds upon the literature which has found the above demographic and lifestyle variables to impact physical activity levels. In addition, the biologically-based personality trait, sensation seeking (Zuckerman, 1994), is also examined given its negative relationship to age and its use as a segmentation tool in other health marketing research (Palmgreen, Lorch, Donohew, Harrington, D'Silva, & Helm, 1995).

A telephone survey methodology was employed here, to investigate the relationship between adult respondents’ demographics, lifestyles and personalities and the reported physical activity levels (n=790). A stratified random sampling technique was used to generate a list of names and telephone numbers for adults 18 years of age and older, from two top 25 DMAs in the eastern United States. Demographic data were collected on respondents’ age, gender, and race (Caucasian/minorities). Respondents were also questioned about certain consumption behaviors, including the amount of time they spent watching TV (average hours of daily viewing and average days viewed) and health related behaviors such as smoking (smoking/non-smoking) and drinking (drinking/non-drinking). The personality trait of sensation seeking was measured using the 19-item Impulsive Sensation-Seeking scale (ImpSS, Zuckerman, 1994; 1996). Finally, respondents’ level of physical activity was gauged by asking them how many days during the past week that they engaged in vigorous physical activity that lasted 20 minutes or more (0 to two days per week/three or more days per week), based on the recommended criterion suggested by the Healthy People 2000 (U.S. Public Health Service, 1991).

Caucasians made up 69% of the sample, which had a mean age of 42.5. Slightly over half of the study participants were female (56%). Logistic regression analyses were used here and findings are as follows: Males were significantly more likely than female to exercise three or more days per week. Caucasians were significantly more likely than non-Caucasians to report that they exercise three or more days per week. Non-smokers were significantly more likely to report exercising three or more days per week. Heavy TV viewers were significantly less likely to report exercising three or more days per week, compared to those who are light viewers. Lastly, high sensation seekers were significantly more likely to report exercise three or more days per week than low sensation seekers.

In line with previous studies, results suggest that demographic variables (i.e., gender, race), lifestyle (i.e., smoking, TV watching), and personality (i.e., sensation seeking) were significantly related to self-reported levels of physical activity among adults. For high sensation-seekers, they were more likely to involve in regular physical activity than low sensation-seekers. This finding suggests that a biological-based trait such as sensation seeking might account for the age-related decline trends in physical activity levels. Moreover, this biosocial phenomenon is in line with what Sallis (2000) and Ingram (2000) found with physical activity declines in non-human species. This suggests that more research in this area should be conducted looking at the relationship between optimum stimulation level (OSL) constructs like ImpSS, and physical activity. The present study also provides some practical implications as well. Along with demographic segmentation, targeting consumers via psychographic and lifestyle patterns can advance the goals of public health communication (Albrecht & Bryant, 1996; Maibach, Maxfield, Ladin, & Slater, 1996). Thus, studies in this area might help answer the call for transformative consumer behavior research in this context (Mick, 2006).

References


The Effects of Recurrent Mortality Salience Mediated by the Availability Heuristic on Risky Behavior and Subjective Probability

Evidence from AIDS Related Cognition and Sexual Behavior of Indian Truckers

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Extended Abstract

Cognitions related to HIV/AIDS as well as sexual behaviors of Indian truckers have been the targets of attention from social marketers, as well as the foci of research by academic researchers yielding intriguing results. For example, it was found that only 14% of Indian truckers were aware that using condoms reduces their chances of contracting HIV/AIDS, yet 79% of them were aware that AIDS is incurable. These and other findings suggest that Indian truckers demonstrate better knowledge of HIV/AIDS in general than of the specific knowledge that condoms are effective in preventing the spread of the disease. In addition, 75% of Indian truckers believed that the women they had casual sex with could have HIV/AIDS, but 92% of them believed that there was “no chance” that they would contract the disease in their lifetimes (Bryan, Fisher and Benziger, 2001). It can be assumed that persuasive messages targeted at Indian truckers would urge them to use condoms and such messages would be placed in media patronized by them. Why then, do Indian truckers exhibit low awareness of the protection against HIV afforded by condoms, demonstrate low usage of condoms and believe that they are immune to HIV despite their beliefs that their partners are highly susceptible to HIV? The answer may lie in the high rate of fatalities among Indian truckers on the highways.

The highway network in India is comparatively unsafe with the majority of accidents involving dilapidated trucks driven by truckers who are often either intoxicated or under the influence of cheap narcotics. Major accidents result in wrecks of trucks that are pushed to the side of the highway where they are visible to other truckers (Mohan, 2004). As a result, death due to a highway accident is made much more salient to Indian truckers than that due to diseases such as HIV/AIDS. In general, death as a result of an accident is highly visible as opposed to death as a result of disease—which claims one victim at a time in a private space.

People who are non-professional drivers judge accidents to cause as many deaths as disease, although disease causes 16 times as many deaths as accidents (Slovic, Fischhoff and Lichtenstein, 1982). This effect might be exacerbated for Indian truckers due to the visibility of instances of fatalities resulting from truck accidents, which would probably increase truckers’ subjective probability of death due to accident, owing to the operation of the availability heuristic (Tversky and Kahneman, 1973). Support theory (Tversky and Koehler, 1994) describes subjective probability as a relation between the judgment of the support for a focal hypothesis (description of an event) and that of the alternative hypothesis (description of the other event). Refinements of support theory suggest that if truckers judge the focal hypothesis of death due to accident as highly probable, it would result in discounting of the alternative hypothesis of death due to causes other than accident, as a result of the enhancement effect (Koehler, Brenner and Tversky, 1997). Unpacking the alternate hypothesis into components such as death due to HIV/AIDS would result in implicit subadditivity. Implicit subadditivity results when the aggregate of the subjective probabilities of the components of the alternate hypothesis exceeds that of the alternate hypothesis. However, a reminder of the typicality of the behavior for the trucker population may result in implicit superadditivity for oneself, since the individual trucker would like to distance himself from the delinquent behavior and implicit subadditivity typical of the trucker population (Sloman et al, 2004) based on a finding related to terror management theory (Arndt et al, 2002).

It is likely that seeing wrecks of trucks by the side of the highway would induce mortality salience in Indian truckers. It would also seem plausible that seeing a number of accidents and wrecks of trucks would result in recurrent mortality salience. Mortality salience effects have been explained by terror management theory. According to terror management theory (Greenberg, Pyszczynski and Solomon, 1986), self-esteem serves to protect individuals from anxiety under conditions that remind them of their mortality. Individuals seek to deny their mortality by embracing a cultural worldview and deriving self-esteem from living up to its values. When mortality salience occurs, individuals seek to defend their cultural worldview as well as to increase their self-esteem. An example of the former effect would be resistance to persuasion that carries messages counter to their worldview (Shehryar and Hunt, 2005) especially if the source of such messages was seen to be a member of an out-group (Harmon-Jones et al, 1997). The latter effect could be seen in efforts to reinforce self-esteem in domains that are held to be most relevant to the level of self-esteem of individuals (Goldenberg et al, 2000; Ferraro, Shiv and Bettman, 2005).

Due to the perceived deficiency in self-esteem as a result of mortality salience, it is likely that Indian truckers perceive a loss in self-esteem relative to their subjective reference points. As a result, Indian truckers might be exhibiting risk-seeking behavior due to their perception of relative loss as described in prospect theory (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979). Risky driving behavior has been induced as a result of mortality salience in those for whom driving is important to their self-esteem (Ben-Ari, Florian and Mikulincer, 1999). Similarly, risk-seeking hedonic behavior of unprotected casual sex would probably result due to recurrent mortality salience. Further, it is suggested that release from recurrent mortality salience would serve to boost self-esteem resulting in risk-averse behavior as described in prospect theory.

It is expected that this paper will contribute to social marketing. Apart from Indian truckers, there are myriad other groups who labor under recurrent mortality salience such as the military on active service and even the general population living under threat. It might be seen that the military on active service display a greater frequency of non-combat injuries and fatalities. An understanding of the attitudes toward risk and risky behavior will enable description of risk behavior and cognition under recurrent mortality salience.

References


The Director’s Cut: Exploring Cultural Implications in HIV/AIDS Communication from the Producer’s Perspective
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Abstract
Negotiating the challenges of communicating HIV/AIDS messages, which include stigma, conflicting cultural ideals, and politically-charged resource constraints, requires a systematic stream of research. Using a series of phenomenological interviews in our exploration of the main constituencies in successful message development and delivery, namely the creative producers, the message developers, and the target audience, we acknowledge the contributions of Cultural Studies theory (Hall 1993) and to a lesser extent the Political Economy of Media (Schiller 1995).

Summary
According to UNAIDS, in 2003 approximately 38 million people globally were estimated to be living with HIV and nearly 3 million died from the disease (www.unaids.org). In fact 95% of the people living with HIV/AIDS are in the developing world with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries suffering the most. Although awareness and knowledge of AIDS levels are steadily increasing among targeted populations, the spread of AIDS in these countries continues to rise at alarming rates.

In response to repeated calls for transformative research and to the moral mandate for a compassionate response to the world’s AIDS crisis, this paper—on an admittedly micro level—investigates the impact of culture and government in mediated communications about HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention in the Caribbean (Rothschild and Anderson 1998; Nowak and Siska 1995; Hill 1993; Mody 1991). Negotiating the challenges of this sensitive topic, which include stigma, conflicting cultural ideals, and politically-charged resource constraints, requires a systematic stream of research. Using a series of phenomenological interviews in our exploration of the main constituencies in successful message development and delivery, namely the creative producers, the message developers, and the target audience, we acknowledge the contributions of Cultural Studies theory (Hall 1993) and to a lesser extent the Political Economy of Media (Schiller 1995). This study focuses on the perspective of the producer of the messages (i.e., creative personnel).

Conceptualization
Cultural Studies theory’s most applicable assertion in the context of this study is its challenge to the linear “sender-message-receiver” pattern of traditional communication theory. According to Hall (1993), there are several complex relationships within each step of the communication process and they are often iterative and vulnerable to what is termed that “oppositional readings” where the intended
meaning of the message is lost or misinterpreted. As a result the audience is empowered and can now be seen as active participants in the communication process. This concept of audience participation is not new to the marketing literature and has been addressed in terms of message comprehension (Burnkrant and Unnava 1995; Greenwald and Leavitt 1984), ascribing meaning (McQuarrie and Mick 1992, Mittal 2002; Thompson, Pollio and Locander 1994), and experiential consumption (Arnould and Price 1993; Bitner 1992) among other concepts.

Additionally, Cultural Studies theory holds that in the course of communication another series of relationships determine what is produced and how it is produced. It is this aspect of the process that is the focus of this particular endeavor—the relationship between the message producers (i.e., advertising agencies and creative shops) and the message developers (i.e., government and community-based organizations). The cultural background of the message designers themselves is significant as the collective experiences of the message designer may help or hurt the message production process. For example, a message producer who belongs to the same cultural background of the audience “…may be more knowledgeable about their problems, but may share their caste and class prejudices…” (Mody 1991, 105).

Those prejudices may very well be the ones which contributed to adverse conditions for the audience—conditions which the communication campaign may be designed to reverse or eradicate (e.g., HIV/AIDS stigma).

As Johar, Holbrook and Stern (2001) have duly noted, creativity is appreciated in the marketing discipline, but rarely studied. Much of the literature surrounding the creative aspect of advertising revolves around consumers’ response to various forms (Stewart and Koslow 1989; McQuarrie and Mick 1992; Clow, Roy, and Hershey 2001), the interpersonal relationships among agency personnel and between client and agency (Thompson and Haytko 1997), or the motivational perspectives of a career in art direction or copywriting (Kover, James, and Sonner 1997; Young 2000). The call for scholars and practitioners to think more about the “creative spark, which drives much of advertising” remains virtually unanswered (Zinkham 1995). Consequently, it behooves marketers to gain a richer understanding of the lived experience of the creative personnel who bring these messages to fulfillment.

Method

The proposed study will take place in May 2006 and is in response to an initial round of research by a native graduate student, which dealt with three key issues: 1) assessing the baseline knowledge of key HIV/AIDS issues among the producers and recipients of the message, 2) determining the degree of experiential overlap between these two groups, and 3) gauging the effectiveness of message communication. It considered three main constituencies: 1) the producers and developers of the work (via 11 interviews), 2) the target audience (via a five-person focus group), and 3) the crafted messages themselves (via content analysis of 17 posters). No formal hypotheses were submitted. All activity took place between January and June 2003; however the communication artifacts were used island-wide between 1999 and 2003.

The results showed there was acceptable baseline knowledge of key HIV/AIDS issues among the producers and selected recipients of the message; however the degree of experiential overlap between these two groups was ambiguous as target audience participation was decidedly problematic. In a similar vein, the lack of a structured research instrument made the task of evaluating messages effectiveness difficult to ascertain. Before developing a subsequent round of research to address the gaps in the preliminary study and collect more statistically compelling data, the study has been reduced into smaller segments, the first being conversations with the producers.

Participants will be asked to describe the events that led up to involvement with this project per the guidelines put forth in Thompson, Locander, and Pollio (1990) for phenomenological interviewing. Interviews will be conversational in nature with the interviewee leading the exchange (both researchers will be present whenever feasible and appropriate). Rather than include explicit inquiry about the professional relationship with non-profits and public sector organizations or the impact of cultural heritage on their work, those lessons are expected to emerge from the data. The interview transcripts will be revisited using a deliberately iterative interpretative approach (Thompson 1997).

Current research objectives revolve around gaining a richer understanding of the following areas of inquiry 1) each participant’s personal journey in their career, 2) the knowledge of key HIV/AIDS issues among the producers, and 3) the process of negotiating form and content of the HIV/AIDS production project. This should help to develop a more theoretical understanding of the process used in message production and uncover any latent patterns in both the content and construction of the mediated communication.

Two frameworks will likely guide the retrieval of meaning from these narrative accounts. The first is the Social Adaptation of Thompson’s Hermeneutic Framework, which includes the following constructs: 1) perception of benefits; 2) consumer resistance; 3) countervailing consequences; and 4) countervailing socio-cultural forces (Rothschild and Andresen 1998). The second is the UNAIDS/Penn State framework, which affirms five inter-related, behavior-shaping contextual domains—government policy, socio-economic status, culture, gender relations and spirituality (Airhihenbuwa, Bunmi, and Obregon 1999).

Findings/Implications

Preliminary findings from the first study suggest a possible relationship between “consumer resistance” (from the Thompson framework) and “gender relations” (from UNAIDS/Penn State framework), which may help explain, for example, why messages that feature a woman purchasing condoms lack credibility within the Caribbean context. Other issues such as the use of Jamaican patois (a national dialect of broken English), the challenge to solicit the insight of political influencers without obligation to physically represent them in posters, and the need to honor both legislative and cultural restrictions on the type of information shared (e.g., fear appeals or heavily rational, numbers-driven tactics are discouraged and likely will not be funded), exemplify the intersection of theory and practice within a social marketing context and offer tactical routes to improving message effectiveness. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that a richer understanding of the producer’s perspective will further illuminate the meaning of the preliminary findings.

References


